

# In the twilight of two states: The 'German House' in Tekmok,<sup>1</sup> Kazakhstan<sup>2</sup>

**Rita Sanders**

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, sanders@eth.mpg.de

## ABSTRACT

The article investigates the nexus of minority group, 'host-state' and 'homeland' as well as exploring the organization of the German minority in Kazakhstan and how it is linked to the objectives of the two states. In this endeavour, the article takes a perspective from below and shows how people not only cope with contradictory state policies, but also how they creatively use state-given conditions for their own purposes. Though the Kazakhstani Germans, at a first glance, seem to comply with the ascribed role of being a minority within Kazakhstan, their activities often run contrary to the intended outcomes of the two states' policies. The article focuses on ethnographic descriptions while embedding them in a broader discussion of nationality policies. The data presented here is based on a year-long fieldwork on the topic of German identity, which was conducted in the city of Tekmok, Kazakhstan in 2006–2007.

KEYWORDS: nationality policies, ethnic organization, Kazakhstan

## Introduction

According to official statistics, Kazakhstan is today home to more than one hundred different ethnic groups. Germans, whose ancestors had mostly come to Russia over 200 years ago, were deported to Central Asia and Siberia during World War II. Later, President Gorbachev's policies of glasnost, as well as Germany's ethnically-defined immigration policies, offered them the opportunity to immigrate to Germany. Today, less than one fourth of what were once one million Germans remain in Kazakhstan.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the quickly-growing field of nationality studies (Carrère d'Encausse 1995; Kaiser & Chinn 1996; Smith 1996; see also Jones Luong 2003 for a critical review of 'Sovietologists' analysis of the topic) interpreted the Union's dissolution as the '...triumph of nationalism over communism' (Dave 2007: 8) and foresaw a surge of ethnic tension in all of the former Soviet Union's states. However,

ANTHROPOLOGICAL NOTEBOOKS 15 (1): 37–47.

ISSN 1408-032X

© Slovene Anthropological Society 2009

---

<sup>1</sup> The city of Tekmok does not exist; its name is invented to ensure anonymity to the persons presented here.

<sup>2</sup> The first version of this text was presented at the EASA conference in Ljubljana in August 2008. I am grateful to the workshop's participants for their comments and suggestions.

as for Kazakhstan, ethnic conflict largely failed to appear and the very existence of the state is certainly not the result of Kazakh nationalism but might rather be seen as accidental (Dave 2007; Olcott 2002). Nevertheless, more recent publications (Cummings 2005; Diener 2004; Holm-Hansen 1999) emphasise that, in the course of the Kazakh nation-building process, ethnic identity has obtained an increasing importance. In this process, ‘...the President [of Kazakhstan] often plays the role of “protector” of the ethnic groups [...], i.e. the smaller ones’ (Holm-Hansen 1999: 212). On this note, the president founded the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan in 1995, with the official aim to ‘...strengthen public stability and interethnic accord’ (Oka 2006: 367).

As the president’s consultative body, the Assembly unites pro-regime ethnic movements, one of them being the German *Wiedergeburt* [Rebirth] organization. However, the German minority organization was actually founded by political activists in 1989, with the objective of reinstalling the Volga Republic (Römhild 1998: 128–130). However, in present-day Kazakhstan, the rebirth organization has de facto become a national cultural centre; hence, the assembly supervises it in conjunction with Kazakhstan’s president. Furthermore, the rebirth organization is still partly financed by the German state and thus shaped by German state policies.

The situation of Kazakhstani Germans is, therefore, likely to be heavily influenced by the policies of the two states, their concepts of ethnic belonging, their aims and means of implementing them, and, last but not least, their relationship to one another. This ‘nexus’ (Brubaker 1999: 44) between the national minority, the nation-state in which the minority resides and the external ‘homeland’ to which the minority belongs, in terms of ethnic affiliation, shall be explored here. However, the focus of this article is concerned with how the Kazakhstani Germans in Tekmok react to and make use of the conditions that were decided ‘for them’ by the high-ranking politicians of the two states.

Kazakhstan’s German minority is often referred to as a diaspora (Akiner 2005; Brown 2005; Diener 2004). The term *diaspora*, in its broadest sense, refers to feelings of belonging to an imagined or real historic homeland. However, since it has most often been applied to the Jewish experience of diaspora, the term connotes oppression and ‘moral degradation’ (Safran 1991: 83). The notion of diaspora seems applicable to Soviet Germans for they were forced to leave their homeland and to live in scattered settlements after 1945. However, by applying the concept of diaspora, one runs the risk of presupposing feelings of belonging to a historic homeland which is, for the case of Kazakhstani Germans, further complicated by the fact that there is no single homeland: people might long for living either in Germany, the former Volga Republic, or previous German settlements in Ukraine. Moreover, the term’s connotation of victimhood presumes how Kazakhstani Germans themselves perceive their situation.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> However, since the 1980s, the concept of diaspora has been used in a broader sense and expanded to various kinds of migrant communities. Cohen (1997), for instance, developed a diaspora typology that comprises seven distinct types, in which only the first two types entail the connotation of victimhood. But the concept’s extension up to ‘trade diasporas’ and ‘labor diasporas’ (Cohen 1997) is also criticized for overly broadening it and, thus, depriving it of its analytical capacity (Brubaker 2005).

Another framework for investigating migrants' inclusion into two states is the concept of transnationalism (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1992). Generally, both the concept of diaspora and transnationalism seek to allow the conceptual inclusion of scattered populations into a global societal perspective that intends to overcome the equation of the nation-state and society (cf. Nieswand 2007: 33–37).

Transnationalism is defined by Basch et al. (1997: 7) as a '...process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.' Migrants establish transnational social networks, which also incorporate those who stayed behind into transnational social fields, '...through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed' (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1009). A transnational social field approach distinguishes between the transnational networks and the awareness of being embedded in them. Thus, in contrast to the concept of diaspora, transnationalism accounts for concrete nets of personal relationships (Nieswand 2007: 42). Furthermore, the latest trends in transnational research stress the role of organizations and their impact on transnational social fields (Pries 2008).

Generally, migratory processes raise '...questions of place, and the relations between cultures and places' (Massey 2003: 3). However, despite the increasing effects of 'globalization', 'place' is not irrelevant, and might serve as a primary point of reference for people's identity (Massey 2003). To what extent Kazakhstani Germans express feelings of belonging to a historic homeland, however, should be a question of research and not assumed by applying 'diaspora' to their experiences.

In order to grasp the interconnectedness of state policies and people's perceptions and actions, I conducted fieldwork<sup>4</sup> in the city of Tekmok in 2006–2007 for one year. Tekmok is a medium scale city (with about 60% of its inhabitants being Kazakh, 30% Russian, and about 1% German). In Tekmok, there is a local branch of the Rebirth organization founded in the beginning of the 1990s that people simply refer to as the *Deutsches Haus* (German House). The article investigates what people do in the German House in Tekmok, and how this is linked to the desired outcomes of the two states.

## **The Kazakh state and its wish to document interethnic harmony**

According to the head of the German House, the primary wish of the German House is to demonstrate Kazakhstani German skills and traditions, which is, at the same time, its official duty as a Kazakh state minority centre.<sup>5</sup> All minority centres are directed by the

---

<sup>4</sup> Next to participant observation, I conducted a large number of life stories and qualitative interviews with Germans, Kazakhs, and Russians. Furthermore, I used 'pile sorts' (a method from cognitive anthropology) to explore the nationality category. Moreover, I conducted personal networks in order to assess the practical relevance of ethnic categories and the significance of transnational relationships.

<sup>5</sup> Altogether, there are three main areas of activity at the German House in Tekmok: the allocation of goods like sugar and meal, the organization of different kinds of group activities, for example, summer camps for learning German and the performance of 'German culture' during various festivals.

Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. Its head defines the institution's main objective to be the preservation of the *edinstvo narodov* (unity of peoples) by which the *druzhiba narodov* (friendship of the peoples) can be ensured. One important means for the fulfilment of this aim is, in his opinion, to present the minority group's culture to the public so that they might learn about their culture, tradition, religion, etc. This view is shared by the person responsible for 'language and culture' in the *akimat* (town hall) of Tekmok. The administrative officer also stresses the importance of presenting different 'cultures' during various festivities. In this context, he critically remarked that the German minority centre – unlike the Russian and the Korean ones – has not managed so far to have its own small house – *domik* – which could be temporarily built on the festival's main grounds. He emphasizes the relevance of 'cultural items' and explains that it would be really interesting for people from outside of Tekmok, where there are no Germans, to see what a 'pure German House' would look like.

Those Kazakh officials did not develop their ideas on nationality from scratch. Instead, their statements strikingly resemble those proclaimed during the 'Great Transformation' of 1928–1932, which was, according to Slezkine, 'the most extravagant celebration of ethnic diversity that any state had ever financed' (1994: 414). The idea of equal nationalities that, moreover, could and should learn from one another had always been very popular in Soviet times, and what could be learned from one another was each nationality's distinct *kultura* (culture) which became a crucial concept. Furthermore, Soviet culture was understood as the result of each nationality's individual development.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, it was each nationality's duty to celebrate its own language and costumes in order to be able to contribute to the overall Soviet culture (cf. Hirsch 2005: 316).

In the following, I will depict one particular festivity by highlighting the German House's role within it. *Nauriz* – the 'Kazakh New Year' – as it is widely called, was celebrated on the March 21. The main road – Independence Road – leading to the *akimat* had already been closed the day before since many booths had to be constructed for the upcoming event. On the following day, at 9 o'clock, I was supposed to be at the stand of the German minority centre. On my way to it, I passed by about 40 other booths; most of them were actually yurts, representing university departments, banks, and companies as well as concession stands. In between the booths were several stages for dance and music performances to hold by school and university groups. The booths closest to the *akimat* were the ones set up by minority centres opposite the largest one for *Nur-Otan*, the president's party. The nine minority stands<sup>7</sup> were still busy with the arrangement of dishes, handicrafts and information posters when I arrived. The German stand exhibited various wool handicrafts as well as sausages, meatballs, a streusel cake, and deep-fried

---

<sup>6</sup> Certainly, the category Russian had a prominent position as to the Soviet culture but Slezkine (1994: 435,443) and Hirsch (2005: 317) stress that Soviet culture was not at any time equated with Russian culture.

<sup>7</sup> They were for the Tatar, German, Kurdish, Chechen, Jewish, Korean, Polish, Uighur, and Russian minority centers.

bread. Furthermore, there were posters informing the visitors about the Kazakhstani Germans' history and the minority centre's current activities. In addition, two dancing choruses and one singer were dressed in German costumes: none of the German House's employees were dressed in such costumes. The head of the German house wore a suit whereas the representatives of all the other minority centres were dressed in their traditional costumes, or at least they were identifiable by known ethnic markers like hats or caps.

At exactly 10 o'clock, during the event's official beginning, the German House's head made sure that the first dancing chorus started its performance. All in all, their repertoire consisted of four dancing acts, one of which was performed to an English song and three to German music, and two singing acts, one in German, the other in Kazakh. The audience formed a circle around them and applauded politely, particularly after the Kazakh song, which was presented in 'pure Kazakh' – as one of the spectators informed me. However, most of the spectators did not linger for more than a couple of minutes and were moved onward by the mass of people. Only a very few approached the exhibition stand, or talked to the German House's representatives.

At about half past twelve, when the 25 performing children and teenagers were already quite tired, the event reached its peak for the German House. Both the mayor (*akim*) of the City of Tekmok and the *akim* of the oblast<sup>8</sup> came to visit all the minority stands. They were accompanied by an entourage of administrators and bodyguards. Seeing that they were about to leave the neighbouring Tatar stand, everybody at the German stand became slightly nervous as the streusel cake was hastily cut into pieces and the dancers were directed to stand in line in order to begin their performance. They performed a 'German polka' exactly as both *akims* embraced first the representative of the *Seniorenclub* (club for elderly people) – an elderly woman – and then shook hands with the centre's head and all the others. The *akims* showed how pleased they were to drink the beer and to eat the cake offered to them with gracious compliments. They exchanged some flowery language about German cuisine, how the beer is the best in the world and the good German-Kazakh relationship. After they left, the head of the German House expressed his satisfaction by saying that it was a very good sign that they had drunk the offered beer and stayed much longer at the German stand than at any other, which was true, at least for the neighbouring Tatar and Kurdish stands. Afterwards, all the minority centres were eager to pack up as quickly as possible and, within two hours, the event of *Nauriz* seemed to be closed to the public.

During the year, I attended a couple of other festivities – the May Day, the town's day, and the day of the cultures; which all aimed at demonstrating interethnic harmony. For those festivities, the minority centres are asked to show their particular traditions and to demonstrate a variety of customs, which are actually non-existent in everyday life. For instance, except for the German House, I had never witnessed Germans dancing polka and – since nobody knew how to bake a 'traditional German apple pie' – I was frequently

---

<sup>8</sup> An *oblast* is an administrative unit in countries of the former USSR which resembles the English word *province*.

asked. I finally looked up a recipe on the internet and baked an apple pie for one of the festivities. Furthermore, the performed and exhibited cultural items, such as handicrafts, dances, music and dishes, are those which are above all associated with ethnic groups. The realization of all those festivities is certainly helpful for preserving this view of ethnicity, which backs the attribution of ethnicity to the realm of rather circumstantial, and at least for the German minority, up to then partly non-existent cultural expressions. In this way, the Kazakh state is able to demonstrate its liberal position towards minority groups while at the same time diminishing the political significance of ethnic belonging.

Consistent with the Soviet understanding of ethnicity, Kazakhstan's president Nursultan Nazerbayev wants the nationalities to be *cultural*, not *political*, entities. The national cultural centres are chiefly concerned with performing that culture, an undertaking in which '...culture is constructed in a folkloristic sense, with fixed meaning and insignias, devoid of a subjective identity dimension' (Dave 2007: 130). Therefore, the German House perfectly supports the president's view of ethnic belonging as a folkloristic expression and does not seem to transgress the allowed depoliticized role of ethnicity. Likewise, the German state might appreciate that its minority is allowed to show its ethnic traditions so openly.

## **The German state and its conflicting wish to overcome the 'old primordial categories'**

*Germany* comes in on two levels in the work of the German House: first, Germany is the state which supports the Kazakhstani Germans financially and, secondly, it is the country to which they have or might be assumed to have some kind of emotional bond. It is often argued (Diener 2004: 133–134; Brown 2005) that the financial support from Germany is not welcomed by all Kazakhstani Germans since it makes people different and almost stigmatizes them as being German. However, this attitude does not hold true for the Germans I met in Tekmok. Though the majority of Germans do not themselves use the services of the German House, since many of them do not need the offered help, none of them on principle criticized the aim of the German House to support Kazakhstani Germans. I never came across the argument that such help, exclusively for Germans, might be perceived as a negative categorization and/or that it had caused envy from those who do not profit from it. Likewise, Kazakhs and Russians did not complain about the German House supporting only Germans. This might be striking, but it shows that belonging to ethnic categories is basically seen as something positive and, on this note, it is largely seen as logical that Germans first of all help other Germans.

Many people in Tekmok, irrespective of their ethnic belonging, appreciated the work of the German House and, with it, the attitude of the German state. The German House is generally seen as a reliable institution that seriously pursues its goals and even the town's prominent Kazakh businessmen address the German House with their problems. Therefore, the fact that such a German institution is generally esteemed can first of all be seen as symbolically valuable. Thus, the financial means provided by the German state and how they are employed by the German House have in a way strengthened the position

of Germans in Tekmok, not so much because many of them directly profit from the help, but that the good reputation of the German House supports positive stereotypes of Germans.

How do the Kazakhstani Germans themselves estimate the work of the German House, and do they link their 'Germanness' to Germany? To begin with, I have the impression that the reason few high number of Germans mention the German House might also be found in that many Germans are not particularly interested in Germany and its culture, or at least not in the culture presented by the German House. Obviously, the Germans themselves know – simply because many of have been to Germany in order to visit their relatives – that those German traditions and customs taught in the German House have little to do with life in Germany.

Likewise, the German state strives to promote a 'modern image' of Germany and so the German House regularly receives information material about Germany which is provided by the GTZ.<sup>9</sup> A map showing Germany was used by the head of the *Seniorenclub* for decorating the room in the recreation home where a couple of elderly Germans recuperated for a week. The map was subtitled *Lebendigkeit, Witz und Vielfalt* (liveliness, wit, and diversity).<sup>10</sup> I was asked what it meant and found it hard to, not only translate into Russian but also to explain what such words ought to imply about Germany. It was not understood that these words could be perceived as main concepts for a state. Certainly, younger people are more open-minded and curious about Germany; however, there is not much offered about contemporary German issues, and the map of Germany was merely decorous, not an attempt to engage in a discussion about the country.

So why do people in the German House hold to an unrealistic picture of Germans and Germany? My answer is that most of the lessons in the German house do not even aim at saying something about Germany today, thus children learn about the story of *Sankt Nikolaus* or how to bind an Advent wreath, or they learn about German philosophers and composers and get to know many German songs and dishes. Obviously, it is not helpful to operate with categories like right and wrong in regard to the subject matter, because German traditions and customs in the German House are widely assumed to exist beyond time and space and, therefore, an essentialized notion of 'Germanness' is aimed at. Although teachers in the German House might agree on the fact that Germans in Germany do not dance the polka, they also believe that a type of 'German spirit' nevertheless exists and has to be culturally expressed. Thus, Germany is the place of reference through which people in the German House define their ethnic belonging, but how they conceptualize a

---

<sup>9</sup> The GTZ (Society for Technical Support) hands at the financial support for the Eastern European and Central Asian rebirth organizations of the German State (Department of the Interior) and is obliged to supervise its disposition.

<sup>10</sup> To be sure, Germany's policies towards immigrants and minorities are certainly not adequately described as a 'diversity approach' – on the contrary, the state's ethnically-defined immigration policies, which allow only 'true Germans' to immigrate, have fostered primordial notions of ethnic belonging. However, in the contemporary context of Kazakhstan, Germany's organizations (such as the Goethe Institut and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) strive to promote the opposite.

German identity (as a timeless category) contradicts the current-day German state's discourse though the state's policies have ultimately stimulated the inclusion of Kazakhstan's Germans into the German nation.

## Using ethnic belonging

There is more to the German House in Tekmok than courses about German culture, since its head is above all concerned with running a business. The German House is very often visited by official delegations, be they from the Red Cross, the GTZ, a Russian German association, the Catholic Church in Poland, or the German embassy. Thus, an institution like the German House in Tekmok is very well connected to persons working in other (state) institutions and companies in Kazakhstan and beyond. Furthermore, once those personal contacts are established, they have their own effects on the implementations of policies and the work of an institution in general.

The fact that the German House is externally supported, and therefore has means, opens up the opportunity to distribute the money and to run other businesses. In doing so, the German House can use both its established contacts and its positive image, whereas the new enterprises can reciprocally influence the German House's image and network. The German House in Tekmok is currently starting to run a tourism enterprise. With the help of *friends*, the head of the German House managed to rent one of Kazakhstan's most scenic areas. In 2007, the area was used to conduct summer camps for teenagers for the first time. In the following years, the German House, however, plans to also attract tourists from Germany; for example, by advertising horse riding and hiking in one of the world's remotest areas. One of the *friends*, a German businessman, rented the neighbouring valley, having similar, but complementary, plans in mind. A GTZ delegation that was brought to the mountainous area by helicopter expressed their sympathies and generally appreciated the German House's proactive spirit. The (German) helicopter pilot was another friend who brought others, beside the GTZ delegation, to the area. The head of the German House uses his good relationship to the GTZ and others to run his own business. The fact that he is active and successful, however, also helps the German House. His projects stimulate a wide social network around the German House which will be useful in creating further projects.

Therefore, the existence of minority organizations, with their institutionalized relationships to other organizations in Germany, give people the possibility of creatively using such existing ties for purposes that go beyond the role of a cultural minority centre. However, a business network of mostly Germans is certainly not what Nazerbayev's nationality policies aim at, since his foremost objective is to distil any real significance from ethnic belonging.

## Conclusion

The rebirth organization was founded on the eve of the Soviet Union's collapse with the aim of strengthening the position of German minorities and to act for their rights, even in opposition to the home states. This, one might say, erstwhile initiative from below became



a state institution many years ago. The formation of the Assembly for the Peoples of Kazakhstan in 1995 led to the incorporation of all local rebirth organizations, which became the assembly's minority centres. Moreover, the rebirth organization is still partly financed by the GTZ and thus shaped by German state policies.

Kazakhs and many Russians assign their mostly positive image of Germans and the German House to the German state. The Germans themselves, however, and in particular those around the German House, take up a more critical stance towards Germany. That is also why the German House employees are not particularly concerned with propagating information about Germany, but instead focus on German habits and culture, which is perfectly in line with what the Kazakh state expects them to do: the public performance of such traditional ethnical habits is done in order to show the president's liberal stance towards ethnic minorities.

Though being shaped by the attitudes and operations of Kazakhstani and German politicians, the German House members also make use of their institution and its financial and social potential. Since their activities stimulate social ties to other Germans in Kazakhstan and Germany, an awareness of being Kazakhstani German might be one by-product. Furthermore, their business activities go beyond their allowed role as a cultural minority centre.

Two states with rather contradictory visions of ethnic belonging and different means of implementing their visions obviously leave enough space for the Kazakhstani Germans to define their ethnic belonging and 'Germanness' (which contradicts that of the German state) and to use their ethnicity for diverse activities (which is not exactly in line with what the Kazakh state wants them to do). Certainly, states do not have full control over the outcomes of their policies, and it is often the unexpected results that play the most decisive roles. In this case, it is the ethnically-defined network centred on the German House and its positive image that have triggered unexpected activities. Nationality policies – like any other policies – can therefore only be assessed by taking into consideration people's perceptions and actions.

All in all, the German House in Tekmok might be seen as a 'transnational organization' (Pries 2008) that effects transnational social networks, and that accounts for Kazakhstani Germans' inclusion into two nation-states. However, the case presented here is of particular interest for Kazakhstani Germans' resistance to value flowing out of Germany, and not so much for and further incorporation into the German nation.

## References

- Akiner, Shirin. 2005. Towards a Typology of Diasporas in Kazakhstan. In: Touraj Atabaki and Sanjyot Mehendale (eds.), *Central Asia and the Caucasus*. London: Routledge, pp. 21–65.
- Basch, Linda, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc. 1997. *Nations Unbound. Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach.
- Brown, Andrew J. 2005. The German of Germany and the Germans of Kazakhstan: A Eurasian Volk in the Twilight of Diaspora. *Europe-Asia Studies* 57 (4): 625–634.

- Brubaker, Rogers. 1999. *Nationalism reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 2005. The 'Diaspora' Diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (1): 1–20.
- Carrère d'Encausse, Hélène. 1995. *The Nationality Question in the Soviet Union and Russia*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- Chinn, Jeff, and Robert Kaiser. 1996. *Russians as the New Minority. Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States*. Boulder: Westview.
- Cohen, Robin. 1997. *Global Diasporas. An Introduction*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Cummings, Sally N. 2005. *Kazakhstan. Power and the Elite*. London: Tauris.
- Dave, Bhavna. 2007. *Kazakhstan. Ethnicity, Language and Power*. London: Routledge.
- Diener, Alexander C. 2004. *Homeland Conceptions and Ethnic Integration among Kazakhstan's Germans and Koreans*. Lewiston: E. Mellen Press.
- Glick Schiller, Nina. 1992. *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration. Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered*. New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Hirsch, Francine. 2005. *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Holm-Hansen, Jorn. 1999. Political integration in Kazakstan. In: Pal Kolsto (ed.), *Nation-building and Ethnic Integration in post-Soviet societies*. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 153–226.
- Jones Luong, Pauline. 2003. *The Transformation of Central Asia. States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Levitt, P., and N. Glick Schiller. 2004. Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society. *International Migration Review* 38 (3): 1002–1039.
- Massey, Doreen. 2003. *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nieswand, Boris. 2007. *Ghanaian Migrants in Germany and the Status Paradox of Migration. A Multi-Sited Ethnography of Transnational Pathways of Migrant Inclusion*. Halle/Saale: Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg.
- Oka, Natsuko. 2006. The 'Triadic Nexus' in Kazakhstan: A Comparative Study of Russians, Uighurs, and Koreans. In: Osamu Ieda (ed.), *Beyond Sovereignty: From Status Law to Transnational Citizenship?*. Sapporo: Hokkaido University, Slavic Research Center, pp. 359–380.
- Olcott, Martha Brill. 2002. *Kazakhstan. Unfulfilled Promise*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Pries, Ludger. 2008. *Rethinking Transnationalism. The Meso-link of Organisations*. London: Routledge.
- Römhild, Regina. 1998. *Die Macht des Ethnischen: Grenzfall Rußlanddeutsche. Perspektiven einer politischen Anthropologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang.
- Safran, William. 1991. Diasporas in Modern Societies. Myth of Homeland and Return. *Diaspora* 1 (1): 83–99.
- Slezkine, Yuri. 1994. The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism. *Slavic Review* 53 (2): 414–452.
- Smith, Graham. 1996. *The Nationalities Question in the post-Soviet states*. London: Longman.

## **POVZETEK**

Prispevek se ukvarja s povezavo manjšinskih skupin, 'države gostiteljice' in 'domovine', pa tudi z raziskovanjem organiziranosti nemške manjšine v Kazahstanu in o tem, kako je le ta povezana s cilji obeh držav. V tej obravnavi je uporabljena perspektiva 'od spodaj', ki razkriva, kako ljudje ne le obvladujejo kontradiktorne državne politike temveč tudi ustvarjalno in v svojo korist izrabljajo pogoje, ki jih država omogoča. Čeprav na prvi pogled zgleда, kot da se kazahstanski Nemci podrejajo pripisani vlogi manjšine v Kazahstanu, pa so njihove dejavnosti pogosto v nasprotju s pričakovanimi rezultati obeh državnih politik. Članek se osredotoča na etnografske opise, ki jih umešča v širšo razpravo o nacionalnostnih politikah. Predstavljeni podatki temeljijo na enoletnem terenskem delu na temo nemške identitete, ki je bilo izvedeno v mestu Tekmok, Kazahstan v obdobju 2006-2007.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** nacionalnostne politike, etnična organiziranost, Nemci, Kazahstan

**CORRESPONDENCE:** RITA SANDERS, Max Planck Institut for Social Anthropology, Advokatenweg 36, 06114 Halle/Saale, Germany. E-mail: sanders@eth.mpg.de.

