EVOLUTION OF ANTHROPONYMS: TRANSFORMATION IN THE NAMING OF NEWBORN BABIES AND ITS ROLE FOR SOCIETY IN THE PERIOD OF LINGUISTIC TRANSITION

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The study is aiming to show that name is a kind of social identification code, i.e., the names serve important social and legal functions that contribute to the identification of the person in society, allowing joining various social institutions. The functioning of personal names plays a significant role in the lives of every member of society.

Methodology: The authors of the research article offer an empirical exploration of the transformation of naming newborns in the Republic of Kazakhstan. More specifically, the paper utilizes a grounded theory research procedure to investigate the transformations in the naming of newborn babies in Kazakhstan from the pre-Soviet times to the present.

Main Findings: The authors indicated that from the pre-Soviet times, the changes in naming systems in Kazakhstan have been consistent with the socio-cultural and political events of each era recognizing, appreciating, and accommodating Kazakh identities, histories, languages, and cultures. The names should serve as beacon lights that imbue in them self-esteem, health, and wellbeing on the path of their adulthood.

Applications of this study: The factual material, scientific results, and conclusions can be widely used in onomastic research, special courses on the theory of onomastics, on Kazakh anthroponymy, comparative onomastics, in lectures on semantics, word formation, lexicography. The results of the research can provide an opportunity for linguists, sociologists, psychologists, cultural scientists, etc. to draw appropriate conclusions on the formation of the national language and national consciousness.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The paper carries implications for contemporary anthroponyms. It is important to consider traditional thought as a viable knowledge source for naming newborns and conceptualizing research in anthroponyms, this does not mean the denunciation of newborn naming practices borrowed from other cultures in favor of traditional naming practices. Every newborn is named by the parents for a purpose and a reason.

Keywords: *Anthroponym, Transformation, Normative Structures, Naming of Persons, Self-Esteem, Health and Wellbeing.*

INTRODUCTION

In this context, the current pattern of naming newborns, particularly in traditional, non-Western societies appears to provide evidence of some change away from previous naming patterns (Agyekum, 2006; Al-Qawasmi & Al-Haq, 2016). In other words, the naming of newborns has depended on name borrowing, emphasizing selective socio-culturally-related patterns that somewhat take away the identities of people (Agyekum, 2006; Naumova, 2014; Wykes, 2017; Zhao & Biernat, 2018).

The formation and evolution of a naming system depend on the development of the state, legal institutions (Jarvis et al., 2020), and the level of socio-economic transformation. Anthropological data indicates that the authors can judge the quality and level of national consciousness through the naming system of a country.

The transformation of the Kazakh naming system can be divided into several historical periods. According to Zhanuzakov (1971), the first period dates back to the origin of Kazakh personal names between the 5th and 8th centuries when people believed in the powerful spirit of *tengri*, the moon, the sun, natural phenomena, birds, wild animals, for instance, *Tanirbergen* (given by tengri), *Aikun* (moon + sun), *Aitoldy* (full moon) and so on. In these ancient times, blue wolf and blue bull were perceived as totemic symbols, and their names were given to newborns, like *Boribai* (*bori* – wolf + *bai* – rich), *Bukabai* (*buka* – bull + *bai* - rich).

The second-period dates between the 10th and 17th centuries when the spread of Islam began to transform the Kazakh naming system borrowed from the Arabic language and the formation of Kazakh khanate in 1465. Names were semantically and grammatically similar, but rather different in structure, for example, *Абу Вакг – Әбубәкір*, *Beegzan – Бекжан*, Mahmud – *Махмұт*, *Tabdu – Табылды*. There are several appellative variants of the Prophet Muhammad changed in the form: *Mahmud*, *Mahanbet*, *Muhambet*, *Muhametkali*, *Muhametkanafia*, *Mambet*, *Mamet*, *Mahmet* (EDKL, 2008).

"Traditionally, philosophers and semanticists proposed theories to account for the naming process, but there are controversies on whether proper names have meanings or not." (Charwi, 2019)

"Names may convey the wishes and desires of parents, and people may internalize the meaning of their names as part of their self-concepts" (Zhao & Biernat, 2018). Accordingly, the power potential of names requires a realistic appraisal by parents when naming their newborns.

My comrade whose name was *Zhanazar* left the following message (scream of his soul) before he passed away. It is quite significant to give beautiful and meaningful names to newborns because he was a victim of his ugly given name Zhanazar (*Zhan* - soul, *Azar* – suffer torments) something unknown inside his soul always tortured him and felt bad".

These were words of one of the authors' 80-year-old grandfather who was telling about the importance of names. From this story, the authors have to be conscious of the importance of the naming of people and be aware of the impact that names can have on people's destiny.

These days, as international relations are actively developing, questions about giving names become more relevant. German (2004) studied the naming tradition of Brythonic-speaking countries such as Brittany, Cornwall, and Wales. He reports about the recent trend, a revival of ancient custom followed by Breton, Cornish, and Welsh parents by giving 'neo-Brythonic' forenames (*Awenna*, *Blodwen*, *Morwenna*, *Aneirn*) to their children. This study will trace transformations that have taken place in the Kazakh naming system from the 1930s to the present.

Linguistically, anthroponymy studies the naming of persons. The term anthroponymy is derived from two ancient Greek words *Anthropos* "man" and *onoma* "name". Accordingly, anthroponym is the collection of personal names in any language or a particular region. Various types of anthroponyms that can be found in society: personal names, patronymics, surnames, pseudonyms, nicknames (Zhanuzakov, 1971). In Dictionary of the Social Sciences, anthroponymy is defined as "study of the derivation of personal names" (Hugo, 1976). "Personal names have followed the same sort of evolution and transmittal that other language components have based, as they usually are, on common, everyday words. They may be assimilated from one culture to another" (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998).

"Personal names, thus, have a significant role in building a person's individual and social identity and constituting links between generations, families, clans, and tribes. They also reflect political, religious, or axiological changes and build historically multi-layered systems that can be implemented in the cultural reconstruction of the past world views" (Ainiala, 2017).

Hough (2016) states that "Also referred to as 'anthroponymy', anthroponomastics encompasses the study of names given to individuals or to groups of people".

Around the world, in any human society, every person has a name. It is quite impossible to meet people without names. According to Nikonov (1974), any fantasist could not imagine what would happen if suddenly people's names have disappeared. He also indicated that it is unknown when and how at what stage of development of society and language that people began to adopt names to identify themselves and one another. But it is highly known, that names existed in all historical periods of human society. Therefore, there always was a big interest in the nature of anthroponymy, i.e. names of people (Euskaltzaindia - Academy of the Basque Language, 2017).

The study investigated of how the Kazakh naming system has changed during the period of the 1920s to the present. The study will identify the transformations that have taken place during the different historical and sociocultural periods. The following are the research question that will drive the investigation in this study:

1. What types of names did the Kazakh people adopt before the 1930s or before the period of the Soviet Union?

2. How did the Kazakh naming system change during the Soviet era?

3. How has the Kazakh naming system transformed after gaining independence?

4. What are the current trends in naming newborns in Kazakhstan?

LITERATURE REVIEW

British linguists Hanks and Hodges (1996) took into consideration the history and culture of Britain studying British proper names while another British linguist Cristal (2004) investigated changes in British and American names, identifying some reasons for how some names become more or less popular in contemporary times. According to Cristal (2004), the British royal family names and religious names such as *Elizabeth*, *Philip*, *Eve*, *Joseph*, *Patrick* are not among frequently given names, on the contrary, the impact of mass media makes the names of literature or film characters, singers (*Alice*, *Elvis*, *Marilyn*) popular in choosing a name to newborns.

Virkkula (2014) studied the effects of parents' social intuition, educational attainment, and the child's gender, on choosing names for children in Zagreb, and Sofia, the capitals of Croatia and Bulgaria. She indicated five themes influencing parental reasons for children's names: tradition and family, international names (Adel & Enayat, 2016), aesthetic values and positive meanings (Aldrin, 2017), current names, and special names (Virkkula, 2014).

Vrublevskaya (2017) in her study investigates language fashion in Russian onomastics, identifying the phenomenon of fashion in anthroponymy. She states that some names from the category of rare or outdated become fashionable and popular in certain time intervals, and the frequency and popularity of some names fades, and they go to the category of rare and even forgotten.

Boykova (2017) makes conclusions about the spheres of nominative activity in which a name is given to a child, the characteristics of the naming person (gender, age, level of education, psychological characteristics), and his or her attitude to the name, which determine the final choice of the nominal unit – the name of the. A significant role in the nominative situation of naming is played by subjective factors that stimulate the influence of fashion on the nominative process.

Since ancient times, humans have shown great consideration for the nature of names. A person was always interested in his own bestowed name, and the name that he gave to someone: his child, a close friend, even an unfriend. Proper names have been attracting a lot of attention from philosophers ever since the Ancient Greeks, but only in the 20th century from theoretical onomasticians (Van Langendonck, 2007). Today, the topic of names is in the sphere of interest not only of philosophers but also of historians, anthropologists, linguists, and ordinary people.

Similarly, Akinnaso (1980) contends that "Like every aspect of society, the name, which is a symbolic system of identification, is usually historically constructed, socially maintained, and based on the shared assumption of a particular community". According to Walkowiak (2016), in particular, many name policies are a reflection of societal cultural values, of tradition, of what is in very imprecise lay parlance sometimes referred to as 'the spirit of a language.

By using a sociolinguistic method of study, Adminiene and Nauseda (2009) analyzed names of newborns in the United States, Canada, and Britain and attempted to define the similarities and differences in giving names in those countries. They state that in the context of sociolinguistics, the reasons for the choice of the baby name could be related to the peculiarities of the speech community, as well as the influence of the media. This shows the flexible nature of names that are adaptable to social factors.

Jordanian linguists Al-Qawasmi and Al-Haq (2016) studied the evolution of newborn names from the 1970s to 2015 and identified changes in sounds and morphemes. According to these authors, "for human beings, a name is definitely the most important rights for a human being that should carry an esthetical characteristic and have an acceptable meaning in society (Bila-Tiunova et al., 2019), so everyone should have a good name" (Al-Qawasmi & Al-Haq, 2016). They indicated that Muslims must follow the instructions of the Quran and Sunnah by choosing meaningful names during the name-giving process.

Similarly, Agyekum (2006) investigated the social function of personal names in Akan society in Ghana and concludes that "Akans believe that there are some inherent power and linkage in names, and expect the names to reflect and indexicalise the lives and behavior of people either positively or negatively". According to Agyekum (2006), Akan people have multiple names that can be changed according to the social context and situation. This means that individuals alter their social status through the roles they play in society.

Mathúna (2004) explores native Irish male and female surnames (married/unmarried) that were differentiated before being anglicized, and how naming was transformed by applying one surname to all. According to Mathúna (2004), a distinguishing feature of nomenclature in Ireland today is the phenomenon of dual Irish and English language naming, with most individuals accepting that there are two versions of their name. Glukhova et al. (2016) also investigates ethnic values in Mari naming system and distinguishes twenty-one values united into four groups. She contends that "the main meaning in Mari personal names lies in the guarantee and security of the future family and clan existence conflict-free circumstances thanks to the health, strength and wealth of the family members" (Glukhova et al., 2016).

In a study of Chinese international students in the U.S., Zhao and Biernat (2018) found a contradiction between goals in the attempts to Anglicize names for social benefits and health and wellbeing. Zhao and Biernat (2018) state, that across two cross-sectional studies, the authors found a consistent pattern that the adoption of an Anglo name was associated with lower levels of self-esteem, which further predicted lower levels of health and well-being. These findings resonate with Berry's acculturation model that assimilation is generally associated with lower well-being than an integrationist or biculturalism approach.

Similarly, in her study of naming kids in the UK, Wykes (2017) contends that those names, which are perceived to be white British appear to be conceived by my participants as unmarked, familiar, of greater privilege in symmetry with embodied notions of white privilege.

Bayazitova and Khaziyeva-Demirbash (2016) also examine vocabulary used in the ceremony of naming which reflects the role of Tatar tradition and culture. They report that a newborn must be given a name within three days after birth, as according to Tatar tradition, even still-born (dead) babies are given names because according to Tatar beliefs, a dead child without a name immediately turns into a mythical evil substance. If a child remains without a name for more than a week, it is considered to be dangerous, because it is believed that Satan would give a name to the child and that would cause the child to be ill.

Similarly, Naumova (2014) investigates changes in name-giving customs, legal and linguistic aspects of transcription of foreign personal names in the Latvian language. She proposes an excellent compromise between human rights and the maintenance of language. She states that "the changes are quite obvious, and if these amendments are made in order for the name or surname to correspond to the rules of Latvian grammar and orthography, the word "Latvianization" naturally comes to mind".

According to Kuznetsova (2010) thousands of years ago, among Judaic tribes, the name *Johohanas* (translated as the grace of god, god's gift) was widely spread, and with the expansion of Christianity all over the world this name was adopted in Greece. Because the foreign word (especially the sound *h*) was difficult to pronounce in Greek, it led to the transformation of *Johohanas* to *Johannes.* She contends that language is always a developing phenomenon, and therefore to understand native tongues, foreign speakers have to know about the deep connections of words. These connections will help them to learn the peculiarities of not only a foreign language but also become aware of the culture and traditions of different nations.

Ashirova et al. (2016) examine the usage and functions of Bashkir nicknames in earlier times. She noted the changeable nature of layers of anthroponyms that are due to socio-cultural and historical aspects: "it is known that nicknames penetrate the area of informal socializing, colloquial, grass-roots language and lexical units that react actively to social changes and reflect historical, social and economic processes are represented in such nicknames.

The personal name is regarded as an essential lingua-cultural source of information expressing different worldviews, beliefs, moral and material culture (Howard, 2018), traditions, and customs of an indigenous nation.

The etymology of Kazakh anthroponyms has been studied and investigated from synchronic and diachronic aspects, ethnolinguistic characteristics, linguocultural system, and lexical-semantic classification (Zhanuzakov, 1971; Zhanuzakov, 2004; Musabayeva, 1995). The results and conclusions of scientific works done for this purpose are making contributions to define theoretical problems of cognitive linguistics, applied linguistics, linguo-conceptology, ethnolinguistics, and onomastic semiotics (Musabayeva, 1995).

In her research on the theme anthroponymic system of the Kazakh language, Kuldeeva (2001), presents the formation and development of the Kazakh anthroponymic system based on the historical and cultural traditions and how material and moral culture influence the anthroponymic system and stratification of ethnolinguistic levels of the anthroponymic system. Further, she did structural analysis and genetics of lexical-semantic groups of Kazakh anthroponyms. Kuldeeva (2001) reports the development of 20th-century personal names of women and men and their influence on each other and shows the changes in the anthroponymic system in five regional centers of Kazakhstan from 1920 to 2000. She divides Kazakh personal names into three periods:

a) The anthroponyms related to the period of the Great War (pre-war, post-war, during war times - 1940-1950 years).

b) The anthroponyms related to socio-economic and cultural transformation (1950-1980 years).

c) The anthroponyms (1980-2000 years) related to the revival of national traditions, national culture, and national language of the Kazakh people.

Kuldeev`a (2001) also emphasizes a large layer of personal names given in accordance with national traditions. These names were formed based on of the native lexical material of the Kazakh language, such as *Symbat* (gracefulness, elegance), *Zhaina* (shine, be beautiful), *Moldir* (bright, transparent), and so on. Kuldeeva (2001) asserts that most of the new Kazakh personal names are formed from the simple structure of nominal words of the Kazakh language, having positive semantics, for example, *Moldir*, *Ardak* (Kuldeeva, 2001).

Madieva and Tayeva (2014) study the formation and development of the Kazakh naming system over centuries and changing surnames' traits from the time of their official registration. They take note that this change of family names and surnames formulas verifies the fact that in Kazakh language consciousness, people can be witnesses of changes of priorities conditioned by referring to national sources which are regarded as markers of identity and reflection of the ethnic culture.

Sakalli (2016) investigates new trends in name-giving in Turkey and finds out interesting trends in name-giving. One of the interesting trends is that parents choose names for their children from television series or movies. This is a universal trend that is now spreading in Turkey. After the television series Kuzey Güney started in 2011, in which two brothers called Kuzey 'north' and Güney 'south' were the main characters, these names have become particularly popular in the country.

The impact of globalisation on the anthroponymy and current trends in name-giving practices of the Buton people are studied by Dunifa (2019). According to Dunifa (2019), the names of Arabs, the names of Western people, and the names from other domestic cultures are getting more and more prevalent among Buton people. In official documents the names such as Agnes, Jessica, Anwar, Jonathan, Akbar, Ahmad, Mansour, Luisa, Abdullah, Chris, John, etc. are commonly used. Because of the impact of globalisation and communicative technology people leave behind their traditional naming system inherited from ancestors and consider the names of other cultures more prestigious.

In an increasingly globalized world, the choice of domestic vs. international names among non-immigrants is another theme that could be fruitfully analysed in terms of how this affects the development of different local or global identities (Aldrin, 2016).

Similarly, Madiyeva and Aliakbarova (2020) investigate current trends in Kazakh anthroponymy and present the recent trend in name-giving: names adopted from West European languages have recently become much more common among young citizens. These include masculine names such as Oscar, Daniel, Rafael, Samuel, Roland, Edward, Einar, and feminine names such as Angelika, Bella, Vanessa, Giselle, Chiara, Rebecca, Sabrina, Diana, etc.

"In modern Kazakh society, as in most modern societies, there are significant changes in the tradition of naming, due to the transformation of its function (Abildayeva & Aiseyeva, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

The present study utilizes a qualitative methodology. The study draws on ethnography, grounded theory, and document analysis procedures for the data collection. According to Creswell (2012), ethnography describes, analyzes, and interprets "a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time". This study aims at understanding the patterns of the Kazakh naming system according to Kazakh people's shared values, rituals, language, political structures, life stages, and interactions. The present study also utilizes a Grounded Theory design. Creswell (2012) contends that grounded theory designs are systematic qualitative procedures that researchers use to generate a general explanation (grounded in the views of participants, called a grounded theory) that explains a process, action of interaction among people.

Furthermore, instead of studying a single group, you might examine some individuals who have all experienced action, interaction, or process (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the experiences of some individuals that have named their children during specified historical periods in Kazakhstan are examined. The methods involved in building a grounded theory include the collection of interview data and categorizing the information that expresses the responses of the interviewees that are grounded in the data according to historical periods (Creswell, 2012).

The present study has used interviews as the primary procedure of collecting data and providing an in-depth analysis of the data collected from the interviewees.

The study was also conducted from a transformative paradigm viewpoint that concerns "Issues of power and social justice, discrimination and oppression" (Creswell, 2013).

Creswell (2013) describes a transformative paradigm as containing "an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, [and] the institutions in which individuals work or live". As this study is focused on the changing nature of Kazakh naming systems through historical and socio-political periods as an issue of power, the study is situated within the transformative paradigm. Accordingly, one of the core purposes of this study was to rejuvenate Kazakh identity so that the names of Kazakh citizens reflect Kazakh culture and lived experiences.

Research Site and Participants

The data for this study were collected from two sites in southern Kazakhstan. In both sites, the Kazakh people have been known more to keep their culture and traditions than other parts of the country (Kuldeeva, 2001). The data were specifically obtained from the town of Kyzylorda and the city of Almaty. The participants were purposefully selected to reflect the research questions and the periods involved in this study. All the participants were parents that gave names to their newborns at various periods of Kazakh history. Six participants were selected for interviews as part of the Grounded Theory process (Creswell, 2012). Two of the participants were between 70 and 80 years to represent responses about the pre-Soviet and Soviet Union periods. Two other participants who were between 50-60 years were purposefully selected to provide the data about the naming system in the 1970s and 1990s just before the end of the Soviet period. The last two participants, between 30 to 40 years, were also purposefully selected to provide the data required about the current naming system of newborn babies in Kazakhstan.

Interviews

The data for this study were mainly obtained from semi-structured, open-ended interviews. The interviews were conducted at a location of the choice of the participants. Each interview lasted about thirty minutes. All the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed soon after the interview. Before the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were asked to consent to their participation. They were further informed that they could refuse to answer any of the questions that they did not want to answer and could also opt-out of the study at any time and ask that the data they provided could not be used to report the findings of the study. They were then asked to sign a consent form that details their rights for participation. They were further informed about the procedures in place to ascertain their anonymity. In reporting the findings of the present study, all the participants' names are represented by pseudonyms.

Document Analysis

It is difficult to understand anthroponym without giving attention to documentary material. Hammersley and Atkinson (1989) argue that researchers should consider official documents as social artifacts and should judiciously examine them rather than merely considering them as resources. In the present study, the authors, therefore, considered official documents in the same way as information the authors gathered using other research procedures. This study used documents produced by the Ministry of Internal Affairs as well as those produced by the government.

Data Analysis

Interview data comprised the majority of the data obtained for the present study. All the interview transcripts were coded and categorized according to several criteria such as time period, the commonality of responses, emphasis from respondents, and sometimes surprises from the responses obtained (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To obtain the trustworthiness of the data, responses from participants were sent back to them after transcribing, for the participants to confirm their responses (Lather, 1986).

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Three main perspectives that emerged from the present study

The first is specific old-time or pre-Soviet period names. The second perspective has to do with Soviet-era names. The final perspective concerns names given by young parents to their newborns in contemporary times. The first perspective, old-time or pre-Soviet period names, explored how names were given according to traditional beliefs, clan identity, and societal heroes (Robertson & Dale, 2015). These names usually carried specific meanings that are related to phenomena or objects of the universe (Ainiala & Östman, 2017). Soviet-era names investigated how naming was influenced by socio-cultural and political events, religion, character traits, famous people, traditional beliefs, and names with similar ending such as *-khan*, *-a*. The final perspective, young parents' naming of newborn children discusses how children are named according to tradition and beliefs, socio-cultural and political events, religion, positive character traits, and also names ending with specific letters *-a,* and *-ya*. In what follows, the authors present the findings of the present study by using pseudonyms for all the respondents in the study. In other words, the names used in reporting the findings of the present study do not represent the names of the participants of the study.

The naming system in pre-Soviet Times

Respondents indicated that the naming of people in pre-Soviet times was predicated by the day of the week on which a person was born. Accordingly, the prefixes for the names of boys and girls were the name of the day of birth and the suffixes indicated the gender of the individual. For example, boys that were born on Monday could be named *Duisenbai, Duisenbi* for Monday, and *bai* meaning rich. Girls could be named *Duisengul*, *Duisen* for Monday, and *gul* for flower. While suffixes in names of boys signify affluence (rich), bravery, power, and so on, those for girls signify beauty (flower) and gracefulness. Seventy-nine-year-old Sultan gave a succinct elaboration of the naming system based on the days of the week as he stated:

In the old days' parents gave such day names to their newborns, due to that very day on which they were born as *Duisenbai* for boys (duisenbi – Monday, bai -rich), *Duisengul* for girls (Duisen – Monday, gul -flower), *Seisenbek* for boys (seisenbi – Tuesday, bek – ruler), *Seisengul* (seisenbi – Tuesday, gul - flower), *Zhumatai* for boys (zhuma – Friday, tai – demunitive suffix), *Zhumagul* (Zhuma – Friday, gul - flower) and so on.

Another naming system of newborn Kazakh babies in pre-Soviet times has to do with animal names. As a nomadic group, the Kazakh had a special reverence for animals and the roles they played in giving life. The Kazakhs, therefore, named their children according to the animals on which they depended, such as *zhylky* (horse), *nar* (young camel). Thus, a name such as *Zhylkybai* signifies *rich* (bai) person with a lot of *horse*(s) (*zhylky*). As 79-year-old Sultan stated:

The Kazakhs were pastoral nomads, and they named their sons with such names as *Zhylkybai* (zhylky – horse, bai - rich), *Bukabai* (buka – bull, bai - rich). To trick the evil, parents could not have babies for a long time gave such names as *Itbai* (it – dog, bai - rich), *Kotibar* (he has a butt).

Again, the Kazakh people were nomads that moved from one place to another during the seasons and therefore had a reverence for the shepherds that tended the animals, and thus naming their children as *Koishybai* (*koishy* – shepherd and *bai* – rich). The 79-year-old Sultan clearly explains how names were depended on the nomadic life of the Kazakhs:

The Kazakhs were a nomadic nation. As the main activity was connected with cattle and sheep breeding the Kazakhs gave the above-mentioned names to their children. In four seasons of the year, the nomads moved from one place to another searching for a good place for cattle, horses, and sheep. Names such as *Koishybai* (Koishy – shepherd, bai - rich), *Nartai* (nar – young camel, tai – diminutive suffix) shows the nomadic nature of the Kazakhs.

Similarly, the elderly respondent, Sultan rather gave a very interesting way of naming children of multiple births such as twins, triplets, or quadruplets. Giving the example of names of quadruplets as *Aman, Esen, Turar,* and *Meken* respectively, Sultan indicated that these names represented the wishes for the children. In the Kazakh language *Aman-*

esen, turar ma eken simply translates into three rhetoric wishes namely: a) If they would be safe and sound; b) Will they be safe and sound? and/or c) May they be safe and sound. At a period when traditional societies easily lost their newborn babies, parents were wont to name their children with names that gave them hope about the survival of the children.

Another interesting finding in the present study was that the Kazakh people did not always name their children according to glory and beauty with the suffixes *bai* and *gul*. Rather, children were also given *magical* names that were purposefully given to ward away evil spirits. Names such as *Zhamanbala*, *Zhamankul* were names that mean "*bad boy*" and "*bad slave*" respectively. Such names were considered protective of children through their magical powers, and that they could ward away evil spirits by their magic. As 76-year-old Asan stated:

In the past, parents preferred to give names with the following endings: *bai*, *bek*, *gali*, *kali*, *tai*, *kul*, *gul*. For instance: *Kabanbai*, *Bogenbai*, *Nauryzbai*, *Kaskyrbai*, *Baidibek*, *Amangali*, *Tanirtai*, *Zamzagul*, *Turgankul*, *Atirgul*. Protective names such as *Zhamanbala*, *Zhamankul*, Itbai were given to trick the evil spirit and with belief on the magic nature of names.

What Asan meant was that such magical names were powerful enough to provide the wellbeing of the children.

Furthermore, clan names were prominent in pre-Soviet times. Names indicated clan identity. The first names of people were the clan names or *ru* to which they belonged. The Kazakh people comprise three groups (*zhuz*) namely the *Uly zhuz* (Great zhuz), the *Orta zhuz* (Middle zhuz), and the *Kishi zhuz* (Young zhuz). Each of these zhuz is further divided into subgroups known as *ru* (or clan). The name of the *ru* (clan) constituted the first name of the individual, followed by a given name. For example, the name *Shapyrashty Naurzyzbai* signifies that *Naurzyzbai* (the given name) belongs to *Shapyrashty* ru (clan). Asan, the 76-year-old respondent explained the importance of clan names in the Kazakh naming system:

The authors of the article are proud of their strong and powerful heroes such as Karakerei Kabanbai, Kanzhygaly Bogenbai, Shapyrashty Nauryzbai who displayed their strength during the battles, wars between the Kazakhs and the Djungars. Their first names are the names of ru (clan) to which they refer. The Kazakhs are divided into three zhuz (group): Uly zhuz (Great zhuz), Orta zhuz (Middle zhuz), and Kishi zhuz (Young zhuz). Each of these zhuz is subdivided into different subgroups which are known as ru (clan). The ru was the first component in the naming system in the old days. For example, Shapyrashty (name of ru) Nauryzbai (first name). These naming models can show the Kazakh national identity.

Asan's response above indicates how it was important to name people after traditional heroes such as wartime battlefield leaders, khans (leaders, chiefs, or kings), and prominent people in society such as the intelligentsia.

When asked for advice for young parents on names to give their children, 79-year-old Sultan echoes Asan's idea about naming people after national heroes. As Sultan stated:

I wish young parents name newborns in honour of statesmen, Alash intelligentsia such as Beimbet, Saken, Iliyas, Kurmangazy (father of Kazakh *kui*) for boys. The name Dina (pupil of Kurmangazy) is quite suitable for girls.

Sultan's recommendation is to keep the memories of the great people of the Kazakh nation such as *Kurmangazy*, the composer of *kui* who is considered the father of the Kazakh *kui* or the melody that signifies the heartbeat of the Kazakh nation.

Soviet Era Naming

The findings of the present study indicated that naming of people during the Soviet times was predicated by social, cultural, and political events of the time; religions; desirable character traits; fame; similar endings; and traditional beliefs with regards to socio-cultural and political events. People were also named after important milestones during this period. As 60-year-old Murat who named his 4 children as *Sovethan*, *Elmira*, *Doskhan*, and *Fariza* indicated:

Sovetkhan was born during the Soviet period, that is why this name was given to him by his grandfather who lived in that period and witnessed all the social and political events and always wishing to go back to that period when all people were treated equally. The name *Elmira* is of Arabic origin, and the meaning of *Elmira* is "princess". I gave her this name that she is my princess. *Doskhan* (*dos* – friendly, *khan* – ruler), the first reason for giving this name was connected with the idea of wanting him to be friendly, sociable. The second reason is related to the wish he would be a famous Kazakh actor as *Doskhan Zholzhaksynov*. *Fariza* is also the name of Kazakh poet *Fariza Ongarsynova*, and some parents wanted their daughter to be famous like *Fariza Ongarsynova*. Her mother gave her this name, as she liked to read *Fariza Ongarsynova's* poems. She could not sleep if she did not read her poems.

Murat's response indicated that the four children were named according to socio-cultural and political events at the time, the Muslim religion, desirable character traits, and famous people accordingly. Undoubtedly, the Muslim religion has influenced the naming of children since the Soviet era. For example, Murat expressed that his daughter's name, Elmira was derived from the Islamic faith. As he said:

The name Elmira is of Arabic origin, and the meaning of Elmira is "princess". I gave her this name because she is my princess.

Similarly, 38-year-old Aliya who bore 5 girls, named some of her five children according to the Muslim faith. As Aliya noted how her children's names were taken from an Arabic background:

My husband, their father gave names to all of them. When he chose names, he took into consideration the following peculiarities: all names should be ended with vowel sounds, all of them should be Muslim names, be short ones, be meaningful. In Arabic *Nuria* means light, *Gania* is wealth, *Aisha* is the name of the Prophet Muhammad's wife *Malika* – a queen, *Amina* means honest, trustworthy, loyal.

At the time of the interview, Aliya was pregnant with her sixth child and that having had girls for all her five children, she was hoping that the next child would be a boy. The authors asked her about the name that she would give to a baby boy especially after having had five girls and for what reason that she chose that name. Like her five girls, Aliya indicated that she and her husband had decided to give the Muslim name *Abdulla* to their baby boy, an Arabic name, meaning 'the slave of God'. She said they had chosen the name *Abdulla* because it is the name of the Prophet Muhammad's father.

Another significant naming system that emerged during the Soviet era was giving names to children to influence their character as adult citizens. The names signify positive character traits that were believed to bring wellbeing to the children. For example, Murat explained the power of the name *Doskhan*:

Doskhan (*dos* – friendly, *khan* - ruler), the first reason for giving this name was connected with the idea of wanting him to be friendly, sociable. The second reason is related to the wish he would be a famous Kazakh actor as *Doskhan Zholzhaksynov*.

This naming system was meant to influence the character of the child as it is believed that children would behave according to their names (Juncal, 2018).

Aliya also expressed the importance of giving names that portray positive character traits that would engender children's wellbeing:

As the authors believe in a strong influence of names on fate, before giving names to a child, there are supporters who take the time in thinking over their meanings. People really want their children to have positive character traits, be lucky, successful, wealthy when they grow up and wishing them all good things, and hope they will grow with all the above-mentioned good qualities.

The Soviet-era also saw the naming of children according to fame. Children were named after actors, poets, politicians, and musicians. Sixty-year-old Murat said he named his daughter *Fariza* after a famous Kazakh poet. So like Aliya indicated above, Murat also believed that *Fariza's* character would be determined by her name and would grow up to become a famous person in the future. As Murat explained:

Fariza is also the name of Kazakh poet Fariza Ongarsynova, so there were people who wanted their daughters to be famous like Fariza Ongarsynova. Fariza's mother gave her this name, as she liked to read Fariza Ongarsynova's poems. She could not sleep if she did not read her poems.

A significant trend that emerged in naming children during the Soviet era in naming children is the names of family members with similar endings. Aliya's children's names, *Nuriya, Ganiya, Aisha, Malika,* and *Amina* end with the letter "*a*" and "*ya*". It is significant to know that all of these children were girls. Similarly, a recent parent, Akgul's three children were named *Aman, Esen,* and *Sultan* with the names ending with the letter "*n*".

Similarly, 61-year-old Kasym named his five children as follows: *Zharaskhan*, *Zhalgaskhan*, *Asylkhan*, *Orynbasar*, *Saule*. Like Alia and Akgul, the names of all Kasym's three boys end in "*khan*". It is interesting to note that Kasym had named all his four boys the same way ending in "*khan*" until the tragic event of the children's grandfather's passing away made Kasym change his last son's name from *Darkhan* to *Orynbasar*. Sixty-one-year-old Kasym said:

My fourth son's name was *Darkhan* until the tragic event. My of the children's grandfather's passing away made me change my last son's name from *Darkhan* to *Orynbasar*.

Post-Soviet Era Naming

Like the pre-Soviet eras, the post-Soviet era naming system also depends on traditions and beliefs (Pavlenko, 2008). Dreams have been found to play an important part in naming children. "*Ayan*" (ancestor's message to a person in dreams) determines names that should be given to some newborn babies. Forty-year-old Akgul who named her children *Aman*, *Esen*, and *Sultan* explained how she came by her children's names:

When I got married I saw my grandfather who passed away many years ago in my dreams. He asked me to take three children, two of them were at the same age and one is little. He also said that my little child would become a leader, ruler when he grew up. I gave premature birth to my first two children, they are twins whose names are *Aman* and *Esen*. My

brother gave them these names by wishing them strong health, as aman-esen means to be safe and sound. When the Kazakh people greet they ask from each other: "Aman-esensizder me?" (Are you safe and sound? or Are you doing well?). My little kid's name is Sultan, I gave this name because it was a message sent by a grandfather who is in paradise now.

So, Akgul's brother's consideration of the choice of names for her children also followed a system of naming that was supposed to provide wellbeing for the children. The names, *Aman* and *Esen* were considered appropriate for premature newborn babies because the names would make them strong and sound. The choice of the name Sultan for Akgul's youngest son was by premonition, a revelation from a dream that Akgul had about her grandfather.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural and political events that took place in the early 1990s leading to the independence of Kazakhstan from the Soviet Union have affected the naming of children. Notably, children were named after politicians, particularly the first president of Kazakhstan. Akgul's idea about her youngest son's name. *Sultan* is consistent with how young parents name their children in contemporary times:

As for *Sultan*, his name means ruler, and the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan's name is *Nursultan*, therefore the authors have found his (son's) name matches him. They are a superstitious nation.

Akgul goes on further to explain that because the Kazakh people are superstitious, his son, *Sultan* "is a boss in the house, and people are always do whatever he orders" (Akgul). And, Akgul believes that by his name, her child may one day become the president of the country.

Religion, particularly, Islamic and its Arabic names have also been featured in contemporary naming systems. Sixty-year-old Murat preferred to name his daughter Elmira, a derivative from Arabic meaning "princess". Similarly, all of 38-year-old Aliya's children were given the Arabic names of *Nuriya* meaning light, *Ganiya*, meaning wealth, *Aisha* is the name of the Prophet Muhammad's wife, *Malika* meaning queen, *Amina* meaning honest, trustworthy.

In all generations of Kazakh history, the findings of the present study indicated a pattern of naming children that are dependent on socio-cultural and political events; the Islamic faith and the Arabic influence; famous people's names; character traits; traditional beliefs, and similar endings of names of siblings. In contemporary times, children have been named more on borrowed Arabic, Persian and European names. Sultan identified the differences between old-time and contemporary names:

In the old days, names could show the Kazakh national identity and names were long, meaningful. In comparison, past names are longer while present names are modernized by making them shorter. Original Kazakh names are replaced by borrowed names from Arabic, Persian and European languages.

What Sultan means is that the naming system of the Kazakh people has transformed through several periods with the Kazakh traditional naming system being infiltrated by the socio-cultural antecedents of different historical periods and naming systems of other cultures.

Finally, the author' document analysis indicated that with the gaining of independence in 1991 the Kazakh naming system changed, removing Russian suffixes *-ov*, *-ova*, *-ev*, *-eva*, *-in*, *-ina* in surnames and reverting to Kazakh traditional suffixes such as *-uly*, *-kyzy*. In official documents such as passports, identification cards, certificates, and diplomas, the holder's name should contain the first name, a middle name, and the last name; or first name and last name; or first name and middle name. For example, *Ospan Omaruly Baiken*, *Ospan Omaruly*, *Ospan Baiken*.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Zhanuzakov (1971) identifies the next period of the development of Kazakh anthroponymy as between the 17th and 19th centuries, under the rule of the Soviet Union when the Kazakh naming system began to reflect the political ideology of the time with the following names: *Sovetkhan*, *Sailau* (Election), *Marlen* (Маркс, Lenin). Kazakh surnames appeared in 1930 as a result of tight social and political relations with Russia accepting Russian suffixes *(-ov, -ova, -ev, -eva, -in, -ina)* at the end of surnames. For instance: *Abai Kunanbaev*, *Akhmet Baitursunov*, *Magzhan Zhumabaev, Ybyrai Altynsarin, Saken Seifullin*, *Beimbet Mailin,* and so on.

The last period is linked with the gaining of independence in 1991 when the Kazakh naming system changed, removing Russian suffixes *-ov*, *-ova*, *-ev*, *-eva*, *-in*, *-ina* in surnames and using Kazakh formats *-uly*, *-kyzy*. The process of evolving the anthroponymic formula was confirmed in the *Conception of Regulating Kazakh Personal Names, Middle Names and Family Names of Kazakhs of the Republic of Kazakhstan*. According to the *Conception* (1994), the following models should be used in official documents (passport, identification card, certificate, diploma): first name, middle name or patronymic and surname; first name and middle name or patronymic; first name and surname. For example, *Ospan Omaruly Baiken*; *Ospan Omaruly*; *Ospan Baiken*.

The naming of newborns is a pivot of cultural identity (Agyekum, 2006; Al-Qawasmi & Al-Haq, 2016). Some of the most significant insights into understanding the role of naming in cultural and national identity have been advanced by Agyekum (2006) who has located the determinants of the tribal identity of the Akan people of Ghana in naming. Unlike Western English-speaking countries such as Britain, Canada, and the US where the naming of babies is determined by

royalty, religion, works of literature and film, TV, and popular music (Adminiene & Nauseda, 2009; Wykes, 2017), the naming of babies in Kazakhstan and other non-Western societies is predicated by several factors including natural phenomena, events, and important milestones of the society (Adminiene & Nauseda, 2009; Agyekum, 2006).

The findings of the present study shows that the naming of newborns in Kazakhstan during pre-Soviet times was grounded in the days of the week, that is, newborns were named according to the day they were born is similar to what pertains with the Akan people of Ghana (Agyekum, 2006). For example, in Kazakhstan, a Friday born was named *Zhumatai* for boys (*Zhuma* – Friday, *Tai* – demunitive suffix), and *Zhumagul* (*Zhuma* – Friday, *gul* -flower). Similarly, with the Akan people of Ghana, a Friday born is *Kofi* for boys and *Afua* for girls (Agyekum, 2006). Probably, one of the major points about naming newborns in Kazakhstan is that suffixes such as *bai* and *gul* determine the gender of the newborn. Suffixes in names of boys usually signify affluence (rich), bravery, power, and so on, whereas those for girls is aesthetical, signifying beauty (flower) and gracefulness.

The findings in this study also support other findings that first, the purpose of names is the transmission of a national people's cultural heritage, and secondly, the importance of naming is to imbue the individual with a unique cultural identity (Agyekum, 2006; Al-Qawasmi & Al-Haq, 2016; Bayazitova & Khaziyeva-Demirbash, 2016). Agyekum (2006) argues that the makeup of names and their substantial components suggest that the most expedient and realistic way to characterize people is to name them in ways that protect, preserve and hand on the cultural inheritance of their society, and by means of their names, to foster a sense of tribal belongingness among the people of a particular nation and to assure the cultural continuity of the tribe (Aldrin, 2016). Similarly, Zhao and Biernat (2018) report that appropriate cultural names are associated with the wellbeing, health, and self-esteem of the individual.

Another major finding in the present study that is supported by other findings in non-Western societies is what could be termed as 'bad names' that are deliberately given to newborns for cultural reasons (Ainiala, 2016). In Kazakh mythology, in pre-Soviet times, children were given 'magical' names that were purposefully given to ward away evil spirits. Names such as *Zhamanbala*, *Zhamankul* were names that mean "*bad boy*" and "*bad slave*" respectively. Such names were considered protective of children through their magical powers, and that they could ward away evil spirits by their magic. Similarly, Agyekum (2006) reports that "The Akans, like other cultures in West Africa, believe that if a mother suffers constant child mortality, then the reason is that it is the child's mother in the underworld that does not want the child to stay in the living world. To combat such an unfortunate situation, the parents give the child a weird name. They believe that if the name is unattractive the other mother in the underworld will not like to accept the child over there and this would make the child 'stay'".

So, 'bad names' or 'weird names' are given to children in some other societies, like in Kazakhstan, to keep them alive. This finding is quite significant in showing similarities among Indigenous cultures.

While the literature on anthroponyms has indicated a relatively strong appeal to modernize the names of newborn babies around the world, the authors' findings indicated that despite the transformations in naming systems from the pre-Soviet times to the present, parents in Kazakhstan have stayed away from Western names that seem to be prevalent in some Indigenous societies as Agyekum (2006) has specified is the case with the Akan people of Ghana. Accordingly, parents in Kazakhstan have concentrated the naming of their newborns on socio-cultural and political events of the times while still maintaining a cache of Kazakh traditional values. However, there have been transformations in the naming system between pre-Soviet and recent times. Admittedly, the naming of newborns has shifted from the traditional names that involve the days of the week, names of animals, nomadic features, magical and clan names to more romanticized Arabic and Muslim names (Hugo, 1976).

The ability to hold on to traditional values in naming newborns as the authors found in the present study is well illustrated by some socio-linguistic studies that examined relations between the effects of modernization and naming practices (Agyekum, 2006; Al-Qawasmi & Al-Haq, 2016; Bayazitova & Khaziyeva-Demirbash, 2016). These researchers have concluded that generally, despite the influences of globalization, traditional societies do not easily give up their values and traditions.

Andereck (1992) asserted that on one hand, traditional societies may choose to be completely assimilated (or absorbed) by modernization by accepting or ingesting modern values, norms, and beliefs. On another hand, they may decide to gradually move towards acculturation (or absorption) by not overtly accepting modern values but respecting them to make sure there is cordial and effective co-existence. Furthermore, Andereck reiterated that traditional people may unflinchingly hold onto their traditions and values and preserve their homogeneity by adapting any values or outside norms by setting the limits that may lessen the possibility of acculturation or absorption. Of these studies, Agyekum (2006) tried to make the association with naming most explicit. He noted that the Fante, a subset of the Akan people of Ghana literally translate Akan names into English words because of their early association with the English. Names such as "*Kuntu*" (blanket in English) and "*son of Kuntu*", for example, becomes *Blankson*. Thus, the transformation of naming over time can be seen in the light of how contacts with other cultures reshape traditional names. However, the authors' present study has shown that the people of Kazakhstan have mostly held on to their traditions in naming their newborns from pre-Soviet times to the present day, with modifications in naming directed towards Muslims and Arabic names.

The findings of the study that indicated a significant trend that emerged in naming children by giving them names with similar endings such as *Nuriya*, *Ganiya*, *Aisha*, *Malika*, and *Amina* ending with the letter "*a*" and "*ya*", are supported by Al-Qawasmi and Al-Haq (2016) who reported that like Kazakhstan, similar names were given to siblings in Jordan to distinguish them from members of other families.

CONCLUSION

The naming of newborns worldwide has undergone significant changes. The transformation in naming does not seem unusual as globalization has, through the information and communications technologies of recent times, brought all nations, all peoples, and all cultures into face-to-face proximity in which there is no escape from the influences of other nations.

However, the present study does not support the general belief that the naming of newborns around the world is undermining the traditional trends of naming by emphasizing foreign names to such an extent as to subdue the real identities of people (Agyekum, 2006; Al-Qawasami & Al-Haq, 2016). Admittedly, in some traditional societies, the current pattern of naming newborn babies appears to provide evidence of some change away from previous naming patterns (Agyekum, 2006; Al-Qawasami & Al-Haq, 2016). What is evident is that unlike typical ethnic societies, contemporary name borrowing is marked by an increasing degree to which racialized minorities in advanced economies such as the United States and the UK tend to focus on borrowing names of the dominant society, not merely to respond positively to changes in their material lives but also embedded in this view of dominant culture name borrowing is the idea of equivalence with members of society held to be respectable to the extent that they approximate the attributes of prestigious and privileged humans (Wykes, 2017). Apart from the complicated question of whether parents can ignore privilege and prestige as a prime mover of naming, it is undeniable that parents are capable of choosing names that meet their social and cultural needs. Such choice, may, to be sure, assume a variety of forms.

According to Zhao and Biernat (2018) by suggesting that names that are given to newborn babies should serve as beacon lights that imbue in them self-esteem, health, and wellbeing on the path of their adulthood. Parents cannot avoid doing so even though they may choose to give their newborns names that give them immediate gratification of being prestigious in the society in which they live (Wykes, 2017). Accordingly, there have been times when parents have hailed naming as an economic lifeline. The danger is that young adults from ethnic cultures will be satisfied with platitudes of pleasant-sounding Anglicized names such as John, Michael, and Jason – names that are more harmful than helpful to them when they realize in their adulthood that the names conceal their underlying cultural differences. Therefore, parents should be careful in selecting names that bring self-esteem, health, and well-being to their newborns.

This paper offers an empirical exploration of the transformation of naming newborns in Kazakhstan. More specifically, the paper utilizes a grounded theory research procedure to investigate the transformations in the naming of newborn babies in Kazakhstan from the pre-Soviet times to the present. We present the findings of the study done between 2017 and 2019 years by three scholars that investigated the anthroponymic transformations in the naming of newborn babies in Kazakhstan from the pre-Soviet times to the present.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The article is limited by the naming system in the Republic of Kazakhstan and its transformations during different periods. Future research will be devoted to the people of ethnic groups. Naming is the organizing construct that supports the formation of individual identities and value systems.
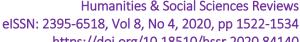
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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Aigerim Aliakbarova proposed and conducted a methodology of research and compiled an article following academic standards. Gulmira Madiyeva provided relevant literature in the field of study and conducted parallel author's ideas with proper and related questions on this topic in the study of previously published sources of scholars. Chen Xiao analyzed the data provided and formulated the findings according to them and structured the data research into a single overall composition.

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