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SOCIAL VITUALISATION AND SELF-REPRESENTATION OF DIGITAL KAZAKH DIASPORAS

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Introduction

Diaspora groups exist through cultures, landmasses, and peoples. Online communities of migrants represent a kind of centralizing field for their cultural identity, linking them to their place of origin. In this case, the created online communities can be regarded as virtual centers around which imaginary national and ethnic spaces are formed.

New media influence migrant diasporas in a similar way to how the print media played a key role in creating virtual images of national communities: online communities emphasize common aspects of their individual identities, such as shared history, culture, geography, and contribute to the emergence of a sense of solidarity [1].

Materials and methods

Representatives of the Chicago School of Sociology, headed by R. Park, drew attention to the fact that a migrant in the host community does not exist in isolation from others, but is a part of the migrant community and lives in a specific socio-ecological area (“life world”). This community helps to create and accumulate the resources necessary for successful adaptation, but in return requires compliance with certain interactions [2] run by R. Park, together with his followers, further interprets the migrant community, primarily as a collection of institutions that organize the life and leisure of its members (coffee shops, newspapers, pray houses, mosques, sports fans' clubs). The researcher notes that the effectiveness of community institutions is measured by the ability to organize the free time of their participants (leisure and religious practices).

The followers of R. Park, researchers W. Thomas and F. Znanetsky substantiated the thesis that in order to explain the functioning of a community, it is important to take into account the intention of migrants to transplant the social “matter” (normative patterns, behavioral code, status system) of the parental society into the host community as much as possible. Another important explanatory principle of migrant behavior is the need to maintain prestige both in the receiving society and in the sending one [3]. To review, M.A. Safonova lists

all those benefits that a migrant receives from participation in the ethnic community, which makes him show strong solidarity and participation in it: cited by his colleagues and students [4]. The community can give the migrant access to housing and work, i.e. provide a sense of relative safekeeping, generate a group that produces status, recognition and personal contacts acceptable to him, organize free time. The community, among other things, bequeaths the migrant with a set of consistent and coherent definitions of situations, as well as rules of conducting that correspond to these definitions, since a number of the previous ones taken out of the emigration country are no longer relevant. In terms of the representatives of the Chicago school, “the community provides the migrant with the social world where he lives” [5].

Since the 1990 in explaining why migrant communities persist rather than liquefy through assimilation in the host community, sociologists are beginning to use the concept of social capital.

J. Coleman is one of the first to try to describe the mechanisms of social capital circulation in migrant communities [6]. He defines social capital as some elements of the social structure that actors use in order to obtain various profits, and not only of an economic nature. Social capital, according to Coleman, can take the following forms: 1) obligations and expectations, 2) information channels, 3) norms [7]. An additional condition is the closure of the agents' social relations, otherwise the accumulated social capital may simply dissolve in the unidentified receiving community.

The concept of social capital makes it possible to explain the desire to unite migrants into virtual ethnic communities by those benefits, both economic and informational and emotional-psychological, which they acquire as a result of membership in virtual groups. Social capital in relation to social networks can be understood as a virtual social infrastructure that allows a migrant member of the community to receive various profits. For instance, in the form of useful contacts and mutual commitments, realistically important information and news from the homeland, emotional and psychological strengthen communication, opportunities for making contacts offline.

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