



**Murat O. Nassimov**

*Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University  
29A Aiteke bi str., Kyzylorda, 120014, Kazakhstan  
nassimov\_m@mail.ru*



## The Relationship between Religious Identity and Ethnic Identity: Views of Russian Scientists

**Abstract.** The relationship between religious and ethnic identities has long been a topic of fascination and debate. The article provides an overview of research on religious and ethnic identity conducted by Russian scientists. Only works indexed in the Scopus database are included in the analysis. A theoretically informed case study analysis is presented in this article. Considering the views of scholars across various

disciplines, the article explores how religion and ethnicity have been perceived to influence one another. Drawing on Russian scientists' studies, the article explores how religious identity might impact perceptions of ethnic in-groups and out-groups, potentially impacting inter-ethnic relations. Additionally, it examines studies on how people's ethnic identity can affect how they understand and practice their religion. By synthesizing the views of Russian scientists, the article aims to provide a thorough understanding of the heavy and active relationship between religious and ethnic identities in social and humanitarian research. This analysis provides significant insights into the characteristics of the social fabric of religious and ethnic identities, while also providing a wider perspective on the construction of identities in multireligious and multiethnic societies.

**Key words:** religious identity, ethnic identity, confessional identity, belief, values, ethnicity

**Насимов М.О.**

*Кызылординский университет имени Коркыт Ата  
120014, Казахстан, г. Кызылорда, ул. Айтеке би, 29  
nassimov\_m@mail.ru*

## Взаимосвязь религиозной идентичности и этнической идентичности: взгляды российских учёных

**Аннотация.** Связь между религиозной и этнической идентичностью уже давно является предметом интереса и споров. В статье осуществляется обзор исследований по религиозной и этнической идентичности, проведённых российскими учеными. В анализ включены только работы, индексированные в базе данных Scopus. В статье представлен теоретически обоснованный анализ тематических исследований. Принимая во внимание взгляды учёных из разных областей науки, в работе исследуется, каким образом религия и этническая принадлежность воспринимаются как влияющие друг на друга. С опорой на исследования российских учёных в статье анализируется, как религиозная идентичность может влиять на восприятие этнических групп внутри и вне их, потенциально влияя на межэтнические отношения. Кроме того, в ней рассматриваются исследования посвящённые способности этнической идентичности людей влиять на то, как они понимают и практикуют свою религию. Работа направлена на выявление глубокой связи между религиозной и этнической идентичностью в социальных и гуманитарных исследованиях. Этот анализ даёт представление об особенностях социальной структуры религиозных и этнических идентичностей, а также позволяет более широко посмотреть на формирование идентичностей в многоконфессиональных и многоэтнических обществах.

**Ключевые слова:** религиозная идентичность, этническая идентичность, конфессиональная идентичность, вера, ценности, этническая принадлежность

### Introduction

The human experience consists of relationships between different identities. Among these, our worldview, values, and sense of belonging are shaped by our religious and ethnic identities, which are highly influential. Navigating the combinations of social interactions and group movement requires an understanding of their relationship.

Globally, social science and humanities study has focused on the complex link between religious identity and ethnic identity. According to Smith [Smith, 1986], religious rituals and symbols frequently act as a basis for ethnic communities, giving them a feeling of heritage and continuity. Additionally, the researcher discovered [Smith, 1998] that religious practices and ethnicity might reinforce one another, with common religious practices and beliefs promoting a sense of ethnic togetherness. Geertz [Geertz, 1973] emphasized that religion is a cultural system that not only shapes worldviews but also reinforces group cohesion and identity through shared beliefs and practices.

Every nation's history is characterized by the intricate interactions between religion, ethnicity, and political power. Simultaneously, recognizing the connections between religious and ethnic identity offers a singular study opportunity. We thought it was appropriate to highlight the findings of Russian scientists research in this regard. We still don't fully comprehend how modern Russian researchers view the connection between religious and ethnic identities, despite a wealth of scholarship on the subject. Studying the opinions of Russian scientists in the fields of religious studies, political science, history, and sociology, this article seeks to close this disparity. In order to fill this gap, this article looks at Russia's present state of research, paying particular attention to the following questions.

How do Russian scientists perceive the impact of religion on ethnic identity and vice versa?

What aspects do Russian scientists pay attention to, and what scientific conclusions have they come to while studying this problem?

How do Russian scientists define the interaction of religious identity with ethnic identity, and in what forms does their intersection manifest itself?

This article aims to contribute to the study of Russian society as well as the larger understanding of identity formation in multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies by exploring these research questions and providing an understanding of the difficult and active relationship between religious and ethnic identities within the Russian context.

This article considered the substance of Russian scientists' studies on religious and ethnic identity in order to support our findings and validate the traits and similarities across the research. Using the Scopus database's "Article title, Abstract, Keywords" tool, we narrowed down our search to articles that were found using the keywords "religious identity" AND "ethnic identity". This led to the discovery of 203 documents in the Scopus database, of which it was determined that 25 belonged to scientists in Russia. There are joint publications with scientists from the United Kingdom, South Africa, the Netherlands, France, and Australia. This approach, thanks to the presence of a leading citation database and the clarity of all materials, allows for a systematic analysis of studies reflecting the current situation of religious and ethnic identity in the scientific works of Russian researchers.

Following this sampling, we identified key research themes that link religious and ethnic identity. We separated the articles into directions that correlated with the research subjects to guarantee a methodical presentation of the findings. Consequently, six directions were created from the chosen scientific articles, and the primary issues were determined as follows:

- 1) studies conducted for book chapters;
- 2) studies focused on a particular region or city;
- 3) subjects pertaining to youth and students;
- 4) issues with religious and ethnic identity abroad;
- 5) broad research issues and problems within the framework of ethnic intolerance, the influence of the Islamic factor, the social function of identity, the conflict of identity in religion, religious education in Russia, and the distinction between confessional and religious identity;

6) issues related to religious and ethnic identity in Kalmyks.

It is important to note the limitations of the systematic review before moving on to the results of the qualitative analysis in the article:

1) the study is restricted to Russian scientists' work that is indexed in the Scopus database;

2) the majority of the examined studies had Russian-language publications, and the findings of many studies with restricted access were considered;

3) since identity is inherently linked to other social identities, we would like to make it clear that religious and ethnic identity constitute the primary analytical categories in this study;

4) primary data collection, including questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and fieldwork, was not done as part of this research because the article is a theoretically based examination of a case study.

## Results and Discussions

### Studies Conducted for Book Chapters

The research of Russian scientists is published in two books; respectively, two studies are chapters of one book. The investigation of Islam in post-Soviet Russia by Russian scientists offers a look at the complex interplay among politics, religion, and identity in a multiethnic community. A comprehensive performance of ethno-confessional traditions is given by Omel'chenko, Pilkington, and Sabirova [Omel'chenko, Pilkington, Sabirova, 2003], who frame these traditions not just as subjects of study but also as crucial components influencing modern discourse. Their examination accentuates the importance of these traditions in the context of scholarly inquiry and how more holistic and contextually rich approaches are replacing more traditional paradigms. Through exploring the social integration of religious and ethnic identities in Tatarstan and Dagestan, the researchers examine the intricate relationships between polyethnicity and bipolarity, acknowledging their influence on the many interpretations of ethnic identity. But the writers do more than just admit these complications; they also offer fresh viewpoints that bring Islam's interactions with the ethnic milieu up to date. They proposed a connection between Islam and ethnic identity while also admitting the strengthening of ethnic identity in Tatarstan and its overcoming in Dagestan.

Together with the research of Omel'chenko, Pilkington, and Sabirova, the studies of Galyapina and Lebedeva [Galyapina, Lebedeva, 2018] offer a comprehension of identity development in the setting of Russia's multiethnic societies. Galyapina and Lebedeva expand this examination to include intergenerational analysis in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, highlighting the key identities of ethnic, religious, republican, regional, and national. Research reveals that national and regional identities are primary bases for identification, with a clear distinction in how Russians and Ossetians in North Ossetia-Alania navigate these identities. For Russians, republican identity serves as a mediator between national and regional identities. In contrast, for the adult generation of Ossetians, ethnic and religious identities interlink national and regional identifications. These findings suggest that identity formation is deeply influenced by the socio-cultural processes unique to each generation. By emphasizing how identities are flexible throughout time and space, integrating various viewpoints improves our knowledge. In Tatarstan and Dagestan, the dynamic between religious and ethnic identities underscores the importance of the ethnic environment, with varying outcomes in each region. Meanwhile, in North Ossetia-Alania, generational differences reveal how socio-cultural evolution impacts identity, suggesting that it is influenced by historical context and contemporary changes.

When compared and updated with modern views, the research on language and ethnicity in Uzbekistan by Isaeva, Adams, and van de Vijver [Isaeva, Adams, van de Vijver, 2018] provides a comprehensive picture of identity creation in a confessional environment. They discovered that language and ethnicity were distributed very evenly across the groups and that interethnic attitudes and experiences had a greater influence on national and ethnolinguistic identities than did ethnic identification. To be more precise, Uzbek-speaking Uzbeks have the strongest feeling of national, ethnic, ethnolinguistic, and religious identity, whereas Russian-speaking Russians have the weakest. Adding to this with fresh perspectives, we see that language and identity are linked in a way that reflects

and responds to wider socio-political evolutions and the state of interethnic reciprocity. The findings suggest that linguistic choices are both a marker and a driver of identity strength. This aligns with the global trend where language serves as a critical medium for cultural and national identity assertion. Because of this, we highlight how language policy shapes religious identity. As language continues to be a potent symbol of identity, its role in education, media, and public life becomes even more significant.

#### **Studies Focused on a Particular Region or City**

Research that is concentrated on a particular region or city yields important local data that is frequently overlooked by larger investigations. Understanding regional variations in religion and ethnic identity requires a focus like this.

The study by scientists from the Southern Federal University [Lubsky, Bedrik, Stukalova, 2016] in 2016 provides concepts into how confessional identity acts as a supplementary factor in maintaining ethnic identities in the Rostov region. The findings emphasize that for the Jewish and Armenian diasporas, national religion is a primary model for ensuring identity. This implies that these communities, probably as a result of historical circumstances where religion was essential to community cohesiveness and resistance to assimilation pressures, mostly rely on religious practices and beliefs to maintain their cultural and ethnic distinctiveness. The Poles, Greeks, and Georgians, in contrast, place a greater emphasis on cultural identification beyond religious limits and regard religion as only somewhat essential. This suggests a more secular approach to ethnic identity. The study also suggests that there may be a complex link between Islam and ethnicity, one that is influenced by sociopolitical variables and interethnic relations, as Islamic identity may not always strengthen ethnic identities in the southern Russian regions.

The study by Makarova [Makarova, 2017] distinguishes between the ethnic and cultural identities of people living in rural and urban areas. Religious identity is strongly linked to ethnic identification and shapes attitudes toward interethnic marriages among rural Tatars and Russians. A tense attitude toward interethnic marriages may stem from the preservation of traditional lifestyles and community structures in rural areas. On the other hand, urban populations are more accepting of interethnic marriages and demonstrate a looser connection between religion and ethnic identities. This discrepancy implies that urbanization promotes flexible identity frameworks, maybe as a result of greater exposure to many cultures and an independent way of life.

HSE University researchers [Алагуев, Галяпина, 2022] emphasized that Russians in Buryatia exhibit stronger ethnic, civil, and religious identities compared to those in Moscow Oblast. This difference may be attributed to the unique cultural and historical context of Buryatia, where ethnic minorities and traditional lifestyles might reinforce a stronger sense of identity. The relatively uniform attitude towards intercultural marriages across regions suggests that social integration and multicultural interactions are prevalent, yet the intensity of identity markers varies by region.

Nikiticheva's [Никитичева, 2022] research focuses on the ethnic and religious identity of Muslims in the Moscow region, particularly their views on the All-Russian Population Census. The suggestion to include a section on religious affiliation indicates a desire for formal recognition and representation. This reflects the growing significance of religious identity among Muslims and the need for official acknowledgment to address their socio-cultural needs. Therefore, it is important to analyze the impact of census data on policy-making and resource allocation for Muslim communities. In addition, we need to explore the implications of formal recognition for the socio-political integration and empowerment of minority religious groups.

Ustyantsev's [Устьянцев, 2023] study on the Mari people in the Kirov region underscores the significant role that traditional holidays, sacred rituals, and folklore heroes play in maintaining religious and ethnic identities. This cultural preservation emphasizes the critical importance of intangible cultural heritage in sustaining community identity and cohesion. Through these practices, the Mari people are able to reinforce their cultural continuity, ensuring that their traditions and values are passed down through generations, thereby strengthening communal bonds and fostering a sense of belonging. We think that studying the role of intangible cultural heritage in religious and ethnic identity preservation will impact younger generations. Besides, modernization will affect the practice

and perception of traditional rituals and the balance between tradition and contemporary religion.

Shtyrkov's [Shtyrkov, 2023] study examines ethnic activity in North Ossetia-Alania, framing it as a form of religious protest. The research delves into Ossetian ethnic religion, exploring the intricate relationship between religion and ethnic identity within social opinions. This relationship is significant whether the Ossetian ethnic religion is perceived as pre-Christian or rooted in Orthodox Christian heritage. In our opinion, religious practices and beliefs can serve as a powerful means of expressing and reinforcing ethnic identity, playing a key role in the progress of social opinions in the region. Also, analyzing the factors driving religious protest opinions can determine their impact on ethnic identity and social cohesion. A study of the relationship between ethnic activism, religious identity, and socio-political change in multi-ethnic regions can define the development forecasts of the region.

Analyzing these studies, the installed interaction between religious, ethnic, and regional identities varies across different communities and regions, influenced by historical, cultural, traditional, and sociopolitical factors. Awareness of this trend is crucial for developing rational policies and fostering social cohesion in multi-ethnic societies.

#### **Subjects Pertaining to Youth and Students**

Sakaev's [Sakaev, 2016] research explores the problematic issue of identity among young people in Russia, highlighting the importance of national, ethnic, regional, local, and religious identities. The hierarchical structure that is established, prioritizing national identification over ethnic, regional, local, and religious identities, offers significant understanding of the socio-cultural milieu of Russian students. Notably, this hierarchy suggests a prioritization of a broader of identity (national and ethnic) over more particularistic ones (local and religious). The study also outlines a pattern of differential emphasis, with ethnic Russians placing greater emphasis on national, regional, and ethnic identities than do non-Russians, who place more emphasis on religious and local identities. Therefore, it can be emphasized the potential for competition between ethnic/religious and national identities, tension that could influence socio-political cohesion and policy-making in multicultural regions. The way that young view and prioritize their identities may be changing as a result of globalization and technology improvements, which can be used to reexamine the hierarchical structure of identity relevance. The development of cultural and educational initiatives that cater to the many identity requirements and possible conflicts among young people may be influenced by the attainment of these identity hierarchies.

According to Khaskhanova and Vereshchagina [Хасханова, Верещагина, 2019], a more thorough examination of religious identity is required in light of the rising religious consciousness among Russian young, especially among Chechen students. Their findings indicate the majority of Chechen students have an endogenous religious orientation in which religion has a significant impact on behavior and values. A number of categories are used to classify religious identities, with the most common category being ethnocultural-religious identity. The detailed classification of religious identities among Chechen students provides a shade of how religion connects with cultural and ethnic factors. This complexity can be explored further in other ethnic groups to see if similar patterns or entirely different dynamics exist.

Gurko and Tarchenko [Гурко, Тарченко, 2019] note a notable trend towards increased acceptance of interreligious and interethnic marriages among students in Stavropol and Moscow. This pattern points to a thawing of religious tensions as well as an increasing acceptance of ethnic and cultural diversity. Particularly among female students in Moscow, there is a greater inclination to marry non-Russian citizens, which suggests a wider trend of social liberalization and the influence of globalization on youth viewpoints. The increase in acceptance of interreligious and interethnic marriages is probably influenced by globalization, greater mobility, and exposure to diverse cultures. To determine this trend's wider relevance, more research in different geographic areas and demographic categories could be done.

These studies collectively illustrate an evolving trend of identity among Russian youth. While Sakaev emphasizes the relative importance of different identity forms, Khaskhanova and Vereshchagina highlight the profound role of religion among specific

ethnic groups, and Gurko and Tarchenko observe increasing openness to cultural and religious diversity in personal relationships.

#### **Issues with Religious and Ethnic Identity Abroad**

In particular, Yusha [Юша, 2017] explores the Tuvans' settlement, self-determination, ethnic organization, and religious identity in China. The syncretism of traditional beliefs is a noteworthy observation, indicating a sophisticated intertwining of cultural and religious activities in their identities and ceremonies. This syncretism reflects a cultural adaptability in which Tuvans maintain their distinct identity by fusing their native beliefs with outside influences. The study emphasizes the importance of ethnocultural tourism in preserving Tuvan ethnic identity. This shows that the social and economic advantages of tourism not only promote cultural pride but also give the Tuvans a stage on which to present and thereby sustain their traditional culture. The role of tourism here can be viewed as a modern mechanism of cultural preservation, offering insights into how economic activities can serve as a means of cultural resilience.

In order to maintain the ethnic identity of the Russian diaspora in Slovenia, Kerimova [Керимова, 2017] highlights the significance of the Russian language and religious identity. This notes how important language and religious components are to a diaspora community's cultural codes. Language serves as a primary vehicle for cultural transmission, while religious identity provides a sense of belonging and continuity with the homeland. This dual mechanism of preservation underscores how cultural elements can serve as stronghold features for diaspora communities, enabling them to maintain their distinct identity amidst foreign cultures. We assume that the interplay of language and religion creates a robust framework for identity preservation, reinforcing the importance of these elements in sustaining ethnic identities in diaspora settings.

Mossaki [Мосаки, 2021] focuses on the impact of the Armenian factor while addressing the intricate questions of ethnic and religious identity among the Yezidis in Georgia, Russia, and Armenia. The study challenges the assumption that Yezidi identity is heavily dependent on the Armenian context, arguing instead for a more autonomous ethnization process. This perspective introduces a scrupulous idea of identity formation, suggesting that Yezidis actively construct their ethnic identity independent of external factors. Additionally, Mossaki notes the transformation of religious identity into ethnic identity, a process that has led to significant religious conversions among Yezidis, particularly in the post-Soviet context. This transformation demonstrates the malleability of identity categories and the influence of societal shifts on religious and ethnic identities.

The ethnic and religious identity of the Pamirs is examined by Vasil'tsov and Kazurova [Васильцов, Казурова, 2022] via the prism of Erofeev's newsreel "The Roof of the World" (1928). Their analysis reveals rare aspects of the Pamirs' religious life, including the weak spread of communal prayer traditions and the veneration of holy places. The study of these features offers a historical vision of religious practices and spatial constructions of sacredness, reflecting how the Pamirs' identity is intertwined with their spiritual world. The period between the 18th and 19th centuries saw the formation of a distinct religious identity centered around the "religion of five [sacred] persons", indicating a localized religious evolution. This historical context provides a foundation for understanding contemporary religious practices and their role in ethnic identity. The emphasis on sacred spaces and practices suggests that religious identity in the Pamirs is deeply rooted in spatial and ritual elements, highlighting the importance of place and tradition in sustaining religious and ethnic identity.

These studies collectively underscore the diverse mechanisms through which religious and ethnic identities are preserved, transformed, and expressed across different communities. Yusha's focus on ethnocultural tourism introduces the idea of economic activities as facilitators of cultural resilience. Kerimova's emphasis on language and religion highlights the foundational role of these elements in diaspora identity preservation. Mossaki's examination of Yezidi identity transformation and religious conversion reflects the fluidity and adaptability of ethnic and religious identities in response to sociopolitical changes. Vasil'tsov and Kazurova's historical analysis of the Pamirs emphasizes the deep connection between place, ritual, and identity. A key takeaway from these analyses is the importance of context-specific factors in shaping identity.

### **Broad Research Issues and Problems**

Scientists in Russia examine broad research issues and problems related to religious and ethnic identities within the framework of ethnic intolerance, the influence of the Islamic factor, the social function of identity, the conflict of identity in religion, religious education in Russia, and the distinction between confessional and religious identity. The provided studies explore the relationship between religious and ethnic identities and their impact on intergroup attitudes in different regions of Russia. Each study highlights various factors, such as settlement density, perceived discrimination, and the evolving nature of religious identity, emphasizing the context in which these identities operate.

Lebedeva and Tatarko's [Lebedeva, Tatarko, 2005] study explores how intergroup sentiments in the southern regions of Russia are shaped by the intersection of perceived discrimination and religious and ethnic identities. The findings imply that immigrants who have settled down densely and who have distinct religious and ethnic identities typically have higher intolerance. On the other hand, identity valence and perceived discrimination are more important predictors of intolerant views in sparsely populated places. The influence of settlement density on intergroup attitudes can be contextualized within broader social cohesion and integration theories. Dense settlements might heighten religious and ethnic salience due to more frequent intergroup interactions and competition for resources. Sparsely settled areas might experience less direct competition but could suffer from heightened perceived discrimination due to isolation, which exacerbates negative attitudes.

Belonozhko et al. [Belonozhko, Barbakov, Khairullina, 2017] conducted a study on the Tatars residing in the Tyumen region. The study highlights the growing blurring of the socio-demographic attributes that differentiate religious and non-religious groups. The article emphasizes how Islamic tolerance and appreciation of regional ethnic diversity are becoming more commonplace. We believe that the blurring of socio-demographic characteristics points to a move toward a liberated interpretation of religious identity, which may be influenced by shifts in socio-political life and the growing significance of globalized, pluralistic values. The increasing emphasis on tolerance might be a strategic adaptation to enhance social cohesion in a multicultural region, reflecting broader trends in religious and ethnic identity negotiation.

Variash [Варьяш, 2019] argues that monotheistic religions historically strengthened ethnic identities and facilitated intercultural interactions, particularly in the Middle Ages. Modern research on Variash's historical analysis could examine how contemporary interfaith initiatives might draw on these historical precedents to foster intercultural understanding and cooperation. The concept of interculturality can be expanded to include how modern social media platforms facilitate intercultural dialogue and identity formation.

Yurasov and Tanina [Юрасов, Танина, 2019] differentiate between primary (ethnic and social) and secondary (sociocultural and religious) identities, exploring their impact on religious worldviews. Understanding the hierarchy and interaction between primary and secondary identities can inform policies aimed at managing multiculturalism and religious pluralism in modern societies. Future research could explore how these identities interact in virtual spaces, where primary and secondary identities might be re-configured and expressed differently.

Nadyrshin [Nadyrshin, 2020] identifies the influence of ethnic, religious, urban, and educational factors on parental choices regarding religious education for their children. It suggests that urban environments dilute religious and ethnic features, promoting a compromise between institutional ethos and religious identity. This phenomenon can be linked to urbanization and globalization theories, where urban environments often necessitate a degree of identity flexibility. The role of educational environments in negotiating religious identity underscores the potential for schools to act as mediators of religious and cultural diversity, promoting curricula that reflect diverse student backgrounds.

Two sociological categories are distinguished by Yurasov and Yurasova [Юрасов, Юрасова, 2020]: confessional religious identity. Researchers contend that in Russian social science, confessional identity has historically been closely linked to religious identity. The authors draw the conclusion that confessional religious identity is a projection of national and ethnic identity based on their examination of the values of citizens of Belarus,

Russia, and Ukraine, whose populations identify as Orthodox. Furthermore, it is said that confessional identity develops from national identity and serves as the foundation for the development of religious identity. The intersection of confessional and national identities highlights the potential for religious institutions to influence nationalistic sentiments and vice versa. Exploring the implications of this interplay in a geopolitical context could provide insights into how religious and national identities are mobilized in political discourses and conflicts.

#### **Issues Related to Religious and Ethnic Identity in Kalmyks**

Dzhundzhuzov and Lyubichankovskiy's [Джунджузов, Любичанковский, 2017] study focuses on the interethnic interactions among the Kalmyks in the Southern Urals, emphasizing the critical role of Tibetan Buddhism in preserving their group identity. Their findings indicate that despite the pressures of Christianization and Islamization, Kalmyks consciously adopted these religions without allowing them to replace their core spiritual and cultural identity. This suggests that religious identity among the Kalmyks was resilient and adaptable, maintaining its essence even when superficially altered.

Orlova's [Орлова, 2018] research complements and extends the findings of Dzhundzhuzov and Lyubichankovskiy by focusing specifically on the Kalmyks who converted to Christianity. She argues that despite extensive Christianization efforts, Kalmyks retained their Buddhist practices and identity. This resistance to religious assimilation highlights the deep-seated nature of Buddhist beliefs within the Kalmyk community and their role as a core component of ethnic identity.

Bakaeva's [Бакаева, 2018] analysis offers a broader perspective on the evolution of religious and ethnic identities among the Kalmyks, particularly in the context of historical transformations in Kalmykia. She notes that prior to the 20th century, the ethnic identity of the Kalmyks was closely intertwined with their religious practices, supported by the extensive network of Buddhist monasteries and a hierarchical societal structure. This connection provided a stable framework for self-identification and community cohesion. The article also states that religious identity among the Kalmyks has become more detached from ethnic divisions, reflecting broader changes in societal structures and cultural interactions.

Moving forward, it is essential to consider how contemporary influences, such as globalization and modernization, continue to reshape Kalmyk identity. The shift noted by Bakaeva towards a more fluid religious identity suggests that while historical roots remain significant, new factors are increasingly influential. Future research could explore how younger generations of Kalmyks navigate these changes, balancing tradition with modernity.

#### **Conclusion**

The intricate relationship between religious and ethnic identities across various regions and communities in Russia and beyond is a subject of profound significance. This study shows that the historical, sociocultural, and political factors that define how people perceive and express their identities have a significant impact on their identities. Our research underscores the changing nature of religious and ethnic identity formation, demonstrating that it is subject to generational shifts, regional variations, and broader socio-political changes.

A key finding from our investigation is the intricate relationship between religion and ethnicity in post-Soviet Russia. For instance, in Tatarstan and Dagestan, Islam is intimately linked with ethnic identity. Conversely, in North Ossetia-Alania, there is a distinct generational difference in the prioritization of identities, highlighting the socio-cultural evolution that influences identity formation.

Regional variations further emphasize the unique local factors that shape identity. Studies in the Rostov region, Buryatia, and the Kirov region underscore how urban-rural divides and traditional practices influence identity. For instance, in the Rostov region, confessional identity acts as a supplementary factor in maintaining ethnic identities among Jewish and Armenian diasporas, while urban populations show greater acceptance of interethnic marriages and looser connections between religion and ethnic identity.

Among Russian youth, there is a notable trend towards prioritizing national identity over ethnic and religious identities. This hierarchy, influenced by ethnicity and



region, reveals potential competition between religious, ethnic, and national identities. Additionally, there is an increasing openness to interethnic and interreligious marriages, particularly among female students in Moscow, indicating a shift towards more free social attitudes.

For diaspora communities, such as the Tuvans in China and Russians in Slovenia, language and religion play crucial roles in maintaining ethnic identity amidst external cultural influences. This dual mechanism of preservation through language and religious components underscores the robust framework needed to sustain ethnic identities in diaspora settings.

Historical analyses of the Kalmyks illustrate how religious identity has evolved over time, often maintaining core beliefs despite external pressures for assimilation. The resilience and adaptability of religious identity among the Kalmyks highlight the importance of historical context in understanding contemporary identity.

The analysis of these publications allowed us to carry out some thematic differentiation and identify the main priority areas that would allow Russian scientists to formulate research tasks for the future:

- investigate how younger generations in multireligious regions balance religious identities with modern influences, particularly in urbanized areas where exposure to diverse cultures is greater;
- explore the effects of language policies on religious and ethnic identity formation, particularly in regions with significant linguistic diversity;
- conduct comparative studies on the differences in religious and ethnic identity formation between urban and rural populations, focusing on how urbanization and modernization impact traditional practices and beliefs;
- investigate the potential of interfaith initiatives to foster intercultural understanding and cooperation, drawing on historical precedents and modern social media platforms, etc.

#### **Благодарность**

Данное исследование выполнено при финансовой поддержке Комитета науки Министерства науки и высшего образования Республики Казахстан (Грант № AP19677146. Кросскультурный и аксиологический анализ процессов этнической идентификации этнических меньшинств южного региона Казахстана).

Я хотел бы заранее выразить свою благодарность анонимным рецензентам за их ободряющие и конструктивные отзывы.

#### **Acknowledgement**

This research was funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Grant No. AP19677146. Cross-cultural and axiological analysis of the processes of national identity of ethnic minorities in the southern region of Kazakhstan).

I would like to express my gratitude in advance to the anonymous reviewers for their encouraging and constructive feedback.

#### **Библиографический список**

1. Алагуев, М.В. Роль социальных идентичностей в выборе супруга другой культуры: кросс-региональный анализ / М.В. Алагуев, В.Н. Галяпина // Психология. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. – 2022. – № 19 (2). – С. 259–277.
2. Бакаева, Э.П. Вопросы этнической идентификации калмыцких буддистов первой трети XX в. в контексте современных проблем исследования этнической истории калмыков / Э.П. Бакаева // Oriental Studies. – 2018. – № 38 (4). – С. 52–67.
3. Варьяш, И.И. Идентичность как функция социального: интеркультурный контекст средневековья / И.И. Варьяш // История. – 2019. – № 10 (4).
4. Васильцов, К.С. На «Крыше мира» или у подножия Митры: исма'илизм и этническая идентичность памирцев в историографии и кинохронике В.А. Ерофеева (1928) / К.С. Васильцов, Н.В. Казурова // Этнография. – 2022. – № 3 (17). – С. 179–196.

5. Гурко, Т.А. Динамика брачных установок и планов студентов / Т.А. Гурко, В.С. Тарченко // Социологические исследования. – 2019. – № 7. – С. 102–113.
6. Джунджузов, С.В. Калмыки на Южном Урале в XVIII – начале XX века: проблемы ассимиляции, аккультурации и сохранения этнической идентичности / С.В. Джунджузов, С.В. Любичанковский // Былые годы. – 2017. – № 46 (4). – С. 1194–1206.
7. Керимова, М.М. Российская диаспора в Словении после 1990-х гг.: этнокультурный аспект / М.М. Керимова // Вопросы истории. – 2017. – № 10. – С. 157–163.
8. Мосаки, Н. Армянский фактор в формировании езидской идентичности, или Кто «изобретает» езидов? / Н. Мосаки // Антропологический форум. – 2021. – № 51. – С. 72–112.
9. Никитичева, А.О. Этнический и религиозный факторы Всероссийской переписи населения в понимании местных мусульман Московской области / А.О. Никитичева // Этнографическое обозрение. – 2022. – № 4. – С. 192–208.
10. Орлова, К.В. «Крещенные живут по-прежнему, по-калмыцки»: к вопросу о конфессиональной идентичности крещеных калмыков / К.В. Орлова // Вестник Калмыцкого института гуманитарных исследований РАН. – 2018. – № 35 (1). – С. 31–35.
11. Устьянцев, Г.Ю. Богатыри и правители: герои фольклора в этнической идентичности и религиозных практиках марийцев Вятки / Г.Ю. Устьянцев // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: История России. – 2023. – № 22 (4). – С. 532–545.
12. Хасханова М.Т. Типы религиозной идентичности чеченских студентов / М.Т. Хасханова, М. В. Верещагина // Образование и наука. – 2019. – № 21 (9). – С. 80–97.
13. Юрасов, И.А. Конфликт идентичностей в религиозной семиосфере: дискурс украинской автокефалии / И.А. Юрасов, М.А. Танина // Религиоведение. – 2019. – № 3. – С. 80–88.
14. Юрасов, И.А. Конфессиональная и религиозная идентичности: этнос. Дискурс / И.А. Юрасов, О.Н. Юрасова // Религиоведение. – 2020. – № 4. – С. 108–118.
15. Юша Ж.М. Тувинцы Китая в XXI веке: веки истории и современное состояние / Ж.М. Юша // Новые исследования Тувы. – 2017. – № 1. – С. 101–118.
16. Belonozhko, M.L. Islamic factor influence on religious identity / M.L. Belonozhko, O.M. Barbakov, N.G. Khairullina, S.S. Siteva, I.Y. Fomichev // Journal of Political and Military Sociology. – 2017. – Vol. 45. – No. 1. – P. 36–48.
17. Galyapina, V. Probing the relationship between group identities of Russians and Ossetians in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania: Intergenerational analysis / V. Galyapina, N. Lebedeva // Changing values and identities in the post-Communist world / Ed. by N. Lebedeva, R. Dimitrova, J. Berry. – Cham: Springer Cham, 2018. – P. 243–258.
18. Geertz, C. The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays / C. Geertz. – New York: Basic Books, 1973. – 470 p.
19. Isaeva, K. The kaleidoscope of language, ethnicity, and identity in Uzbekistan / K. Isaeva, B.G. Adams, F.J.R. van de Vijver // Changing values and identities in the post-Communist world / N. Lebedeva, R. Dimitrova, J. Berry (Eds.). – Cham: Springer Cham, 2018. – P. 295–311.
20. Lebedeva, N.M. Ethnic identity, group status and type of settlement as predictors of ethnic intolerance / N.M. Lebedeva, A.N. Tatarko // Psikhologicheskii Zhurnal. – 2005. – Vol. 26. – No. 3. – P. 51–64.
21. Lubsy, A.V. Confessional factor of ethnic community reproduction in the South of Russia / A.V. Lubsy, A.V. Bedrik, D.N. Stukalova // International Journal of Environmental and Science Education. – 2016. – Vol. 11. – No. 16. – P. 9560–9572.
22. Makarova, G.I. Ethnic-cultural identities of Kazan residents / G.I. Makarova // Anthropology and Archeology of Eurasia. – 2017. – Vol. 56. – No. 3–4. – P. 230–255.
23. Nadyrshin, T. Religious education in Russia: factors of non-religious parents' choice / T. Nadyrshin // British Journal of Religious Education. – 2020. – Vol. 42. – No. 3. – P. 285–297.
24. Omel'chenko, E. Islam in multi-ethnic society: Identity and politics / E. Omel'chenko, H. Pilkington, G. Sabirova // Islam in post-Soviet Russia / H. Pilkington, G. Yemelianova (Eds.). – London: Routledge, 2003. – P. 210–241.
25. Sakaev, V.T. The problem of youth identity in the Russian multi-cultural society / V.T. Sakaev // Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict. – 2016. – Vol. 20. – No. Special Issue 2. – P. 159–165.
26. Shtyrkov, S. Fear and loathing in North Ossetia: How ethnic activism can turn into religious nativism / S. Shtyrkov // Religion, State and Society. – 2023. – Vol. 51. – No. 1. – P. 83–101.
27. Smith, A.D. The Ethnic Origins of Nations / A.D. Smith. – Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 1986. – 312 p.
28. Smith, A.D. Nationalism and Modernism / A.D. Smith. – New York: Routledge, 1998. – 288 p.

*Текст поступил в редакцию 10.06.2024.  
Принят к печати 10.07.2024.  
Опубликован 24.12.2024.*

References

1. Alaguev M.V., Galyapina V.N. *Psihologija. Zhurnal Vyshej shkoly jekonomiki* [Psychology. Journal of the Higher School of Economics]. 2022, no. 19 (2), pp. 259–277 (in Russian).
2. Bakaeva E.P. *Oriental Studies*. 2018, no. 38 (4), pp. 52–67 (in Russian).
3. Belonozhko M.L., Barbakov O.M., Khairullina N.G., Siteva S.S., Fomichev I.Y. Islamic factor influence on religious identity. *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*. 2017, no. 45(1), pp. 36–48.
4. Dzhundzhuzov S.V., Lyubichankovskiy S.V. *Bylye Gody*. 2017, no. 46 (4), pp. 1194–1206 (in Russian).
5. Galyapina V., Lebedeva N. Probing the relationship between group identities of Russians and Ossetians in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania: Intergenerational analysis. In Lebedeva N., Dimitrova R., Berry J. (Eds.). *Changing values and identities in the post-Communist world*. Cham: Springer Cham, 2018, pp. 243–258.
6. Geertz C. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, 1973, 470 p.
7. Gurko T.A., Tarchenko V.S. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya*. 2019, no. 7, pp. 102–113 (in Russian).
8. Isaeva K., Adams B.G., van de Vijver F.J.R. The kaleidoscope of language, ethnicity, and identity in Uzbekistan. In Lebedeva N., Dimitrova R., Berry J. (Eds.). *Changing values and identities in the post-Communist world*. Cham: Springer Cham, 2018, pp. 295–311.
9. Kerimova M.M. *Voprosy Istorii*. 2017, no. 10, pp. 157–163 (in Russian).
10. Khaskhanova M.T., Vereshchagina M.V. *Obrazovanie i Nauka* [Education and Science]. 2019, no. 21 (9), pp. 80–97 (in Russian).
11. Lebedeva N.M., Tatarko A.N. Ethnic identity, group status and type of settlement as predictors of ethnic intolerance *Psikhologicheskii Zhurnal*. 2005, no. 26(3), pp. 51–64.
12. Lubsky A.V., Bedrik A.V., Stukalova D.N. Confessional factor of ethnic community reproduction in the South of Russia. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*. 2016, no. 11(16), pp. 9560–9572.
13. Makarova G.I. Ethnic-cultural identities of Kazan residents. *Anthropology and Archeology of Eurasia*. 2017, no. 56(3–4), pp. 230–255.
14. Mossaki N. *Antropologicheskij forum* [Forum for Anthropology and Culture]. 2021, no. 51, pp. 72–112 (in Russian).
15. Nadyrshin T. Religious education in Russia: factors of non-religious parents' choice. *British Journal of Religious Education*. 2020, no. 42(3), pp. 285–297.
16. Nikiticheva A.O. *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* [Ethnographic Review]. 2022, no. 4, pp. 192–208 (in Russian).
17. Omel'chenko E., Pilkington H., Sabirova G. Islam in multi-ethnic society: Identity and politics. In Pilkington H., Yemelianova G. (Eds.). *Islam in post-Soviet Russia*. London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 210–241.
18. Orlova K.V. *Vestnik Kalmyckogo instituta gumanitarnyh issledovanij RAN* [Bulletin of the Kalmyk Institute for Humanities of the Russian Academy of Sciences]. 2018, no. 35 (1), C. 31–35 (in Russian).
19. Sakaev V.T. The problem of youth identity in the Russian multi-cultural society. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*. 2016, no. 20 (Special Issue 2), pp. 159–165.
20. Shtyrkov S. Fear and loathing in North Ossetia: How ethnic activism can turn into religious nativism. *Religion, State and Society*. 2023, no. 51(1), pp. 83–101.
21. Smith A.D. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 1986, 312 p.
22. Smith A.D. *Nationalism and Modernism*. New York: Routledge, 1998, 288 p.
23. Ustyantsev H.Yu. *Vestnik Rossijskogo universiteta druzhby narodov. Serija: Istorija Rossii* [RUDN Journal of Russian History]. 2023, no. 22 (4), pp. 532–545 (in Russian).
24. Variash I. *Istoriya*. 2019, no. 10 (4) (in Russian).
25. Vasil'tsov K., Kazurova N. *Etnografija*. 2022, no. 3 (17), pp. 179–196 (in Russian).
26. Yurasov I.A., Tanina M.A. *Religiovedenie* [Study of Religion]. 2019, no. № 3, pp. 80–88 (in Russian).
27. Yurasov I.A., Yurasova O.N. *Religiovedenie* [Study of Religion]. 2020, no 4, pp. 108–118 (in Russian).
28. Yusha Z.M. *Novye issledovaniya Tuvy* [New Research of Tuva]. 2017, no. 1, pp. 101–118 (in Russian).

Submitted for publication: June 10, 2024.

Accepted for publication: July 10, 2024.

Published: December 24, 2024.