

REVIEW

on the Master thesis by Chekulaeva Yuliya Andreevna

“Ethnic self-identification of second-generation immigrants in Germany
(cases of the Russian and Turkish immigrants in comparative perspective)”

(040100 – Sociology, MA “Studies in European Societies”)

Master thesis by Yuliya Cherulaeva focuses on the analysis of ethnic identity (self-identification) with reference to the second-generation immigrants from Russia and Turkey in Germany. Ethnic identity is a traditional topic for sociology and anthropology. The main aim of Chekulaeva’s research was to study the variations of the second-generations immigrants ethnic self-identification, as well as examine the mechanisms, strategies and motivations, involved in this process. In Chapter 1, the author considers various theoretical approaches to interpretation of ethnic self-identification and turns to the concept of multiple identity elaborated by M. Song and other researchers. This concept is associated with constructivist and instrumentalist interpretations and, from the author's point of view, is most relevant to understand the nature of the identity of second-generation immigrants. The object of analysis of the thesis are Russian and Turkish second-generations immigrants.

Chapter 2 is devoted to history and conditions of Turkish and Russian immigration to Germany. The author gives a general description of Germany's immigration and integration policy from the 50's XX century to the present day. Characterizing flows of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union (“Russian Germans” from Kazakhstan and Russian regions) Yu. Chekulaeva notes they “may be considered as the most privileged immigration group in Germany”, because “unlike labor migrants, they are granted with German citizenship shortly after arrival and get access to governmental support aimed at integration”.

History and conditions of Turkish immigration are different: besides the one-year contract for work, immigrants were also given a residence permit. As a rule,

Turks were employed as unskilled and semi-skilled laborers in sectors which German workers considered as unattractive.

Historical, cultural, social differences inherent in both groups of immigrants resulted in different forms and ways of ethnic self-identification. This issue is considered in Chapter 3 titled "Comparative analysis of experiences of Russian- and Turkish-speaking second generation immigrants in Germany". Author describes her empirical research where the qualitative method of semi-structured in-depth interviews was used. The informants were young second-generation immigrants aged 20–30, a total of 10 young people: 5 people with Russian immigration background and another 5 people with Turkish roots. Interviews were conducted in two German cities - Osnabrueck and Bielefeld. In the in-depth interviews the following issues were examined: the migration experience of the family; the attitude of parents towards their homeland and receiving country; everyday personal experience of second-generation immigrants in German society; the relations of the second-generation immigrants with the country of origin; friend circle of the interviewees.

As a result of the conducted research, the author comes to the conclusion that the mechanisms used by the second-generations immigrants to identify and represent themselves as Turkish, Russians or Germans may be allocated to the deconstruction or reconstruction of linguistic and cultural specificities of the ethnic groups they refer to. They differ depending on the ethnicity concerned. Author reveals and by herself formulates the following mechanisms of the Turkish or Russian identity construction: mechanism of acquiring specific skills; mechanism of reproduction of the settings; mechanism of ethnicity reproduction; mechanism of bonding with the country of origin; mechanism of folkways reconstruction; mechanism of cultural adoption; mechanism of in-group shaping; code-switching; etc.

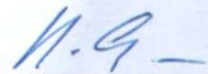
From my point of view, Yu. Chekulaeva performed an original scientific study of a very complicated topic. The author relied on modern and relevant

theoretical approaches. Empirical research was conducted at a high level. The author showed herself as a talented researcher, capable of generalization and significant conclusions.

I propose to evaluate the MA thesis by Yuliya Chekulaeva as an *excellent* one. The work contains all necessary elements of the scientific research. The text is of a high quality. Findings and conclusions are valid and original.

The thesis contains 99% of original text.

Prof. Dr. Nikolay Skvortsov



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