ABSTRACT

of the dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty «6D050100 – Sociology»

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on topic «Sociological analysis of ethnic entrepreneurship in a large city: case of Almaty»

General information about the Dissertation. This work is devoted to a sociological analysis of the phenomenon of ethnic entrepreneurship in a large metropolitan area, using the city of Almaty as an example. The goal of the study is to identify the characteristics, strategies, and social mechanisms inherent in the entrepreneurial activity of representatives of different ethnic groups. The dissertation topic is at the intersection of economic sociology, migration studies, and urban sociology. The research focuses on identifying the characteristics of ethnic entrepreneurship in Almaty, a major metropolis in Kazakhstan, and how Almaty residents perceive it.

The relevance of the work is determined by the following circumstances. Firstly, Ethnic entrepreneurship as a social and economic phenomenon is becoming increasingly prominent in the contemporary urban space. In the context of globalization, increased international migration, and the growing complexity of the ethnocultural structure of the urban population, the entrepreneurial activity of ethnic minorities is becoming an important indicator not only of economic adaptation, but also of the degree of social integration, the stability of interethnic relations, and the transformation of the urban social landscape. These processes are particularly acute in megacities, where the interaction of migrants with the host society takes on a systemic and multi-level nature. Secondly, the study of ethnic entrepreneurship in the urban context is becoming especially relevant due to the need to rethink existing theoretical models in the context of a rapidly changing urban reality. Traditional explanations, cultural and structural approaches, no longer fully reflect the complexity and variability of practices characteristic of entrepreneurs of migrant origin. Today, hybrid and dynamic concepts, such as the mixed embeddedness model, are becoming increasingly important. Embeddedness, translocal and transnational business strategies, and consideration of the institutional characteristics of specific urban contexts. In this regard, Almaty represents a unique research laboratory where diverse ethnic trajectories, models of social capital, and forms of entrepreneurial embeddedness in the urban economy and society intersect. Thirdly, despite its significant social and practical significance, ethnic entrepreneurship in the Kazakhstani context remains an understudied phenomenon. Existing sociological and economic research only briefly addresses this topic, focusing primarily on general aspects of migration policy, labor mobility, or ethnocultural integration. A comprehensive sociological analysis of the entrepreneurial activity of ethnic minorities, its social mechanisms, institutional constraints, and adaptation strategies in urban space requires a targeted and empirically grounded approach.

The purpose of this dissertation is a sociological analysis of ethnic entrepreneurship in a large city, using the example of Tajik entrepreneurs in Almaty. This analysis

focuses on social practices, embeddedness mechanisms, institutional constraints, and identity strategies that emerge within the context of the urban economy and migration environment. Achieving this goal requires a comprehensive study of ethnic entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon arising at the intersection of individual motivations, ethnocultural resources, network interactions, and the institutional environment. The purpose of the dissertation research is revealed by solving the following tasks:

1. To analyze the main theoretical approaches and conceptual models used in the study of ethnic entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on the cultural, structural, institutional and interactive paradigms.
2. To explore the potential of an interactive and mixed embeddedness model for analyzing ethnic entrepreneurship in an urban setting.
3. Conduct a bibliographic and cluster analysis of modern scientific publications devoted to ethnic entrepreneurship, highlighting key areas and geographical contexts.
4. To identify the social mechanisms of functioning of ethnic economies, including adaptation strategies, mobilization of social networks and characteristics of family business in a metropolitan environment.
5. To assess the attitude of the urban population of Almaty towards ethnic entrepreneurs, the level of interethnic trust, ethnic identity and readiness for social integration.
6. Conduct an empirical analysis of cases of Tajik entrepreneurs in Almaty, examining their migration trajectories, forms of social integration, identity and entrepreneurial practices.
7. Develop a typology of ethnic entrepreneurship based on a comparison of family, individual and transitional models identified in the Tajik diaspora.

The object of the dissertation is ethnic entrepreneurship in the conditions of a large city, considered as a form of social and economic activity of migrants and ethnic minorities in the context of urban transformations, migration processes and institutional conditions.

The subject of the study is the social practices, mechanisms of embeddedness, and identity strategies of Tajik entrepreneurs in the city of Almaty, formed within the framework of the urban economy, ethnic networks, and interactions with the host society.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the research.

The study draws on conceptual principles of migration theories and paradigms, a structural approach, and methods for investigating the causes of ethnic entrepreneurship in the sociology of migration. The interdisciplinary approach employed allowed for the study of migration processes and the phenomenon of ethnic entrepreneurship using sociological, economic, and cultural approaches and methods. A questionnaire survey was used to identify host countries' attitudes toward ethnic migrants. In-depth interviews were employed to understand the motives of ethnic entrepreneurs and examine their activities in detail.

The empirical basis of the study is based on the results of two sociological studies:

1) A questionnaire survey was conducted to determine public tolerance levels toward migrants from the following groups: skilled professionals and migrant entrepreneurs. The sample consisted of 526 respondents aged 18 to 70 years.

2) In-depth interviews with 10 migrants representing a group of ethnic entrepreneurs (2024-2025)

Main scientific results research :

– defined conceptual apparatus and operationalization concepts that reveal essence ethnic entrepreneurship;

– studied methodological basics research ethnic entrepreneurship with justification applicability mixed approaches;

– research methodology has been tested approach aimed at on identification factors influencing on processes development of business migration and activities ethnic entrepreneurs;

– an analysis of the manifestation is presented degrees tolerance among respondents, by attitudes towards different groups of migrants;

– integration mechanisms have been identified ethnic minorities in entrepreneurship activities in the city context.

Practical significance of the work:

Results research can be used For generalizations theoretical ideas about modern migration; prevention phenomena interethnic conflicts; as information base for developments effective measures by regulation and ordering migration streams both in Kazakhstan and abroad his beyond.

Scientific novelty of the research. This dissertation This study is one of the first in Kazakhstan to conduct a comprehensive sociological analysis of ethnic migrant entrepreneurship in a large metropolitan area. The scientific novelty of this work lies both in the formulation of the research problem and in the theoretical and empirical results obtained, which expand existing understanding of the forms of social inclusion and identity of migrants in the urban economy, namely:

1. To analyze ethnic entrepreneurship among the Tajik diaspora, a comprehensive empirical study was conducted, including methods such as in-depth interviews, observation, and mass surveys of urban residents. Examining the phenomenon of ethnic entrepreneurship in the research discourse allowed us to identify the important role of migrants' economic activity, which had previously not been the subject of study in Kazakhstani sociology. Furthermore, analyzing Tajik entrepreneurship as an unnoticed yet stable element of the metropolitan economy provided a deeper understanding of hidden forms of entrepreneurship in the city, which are an important part of the city's informal economy, where migration and ethnic groups play a key role in the socioeconomic situation.

2. A typology of Tajik entrepreneurship has been developed, including three main and stable models: family, individual, and transitional. These models differ in a number of factors, such as organizational forms of business, the degree of participation in social networks and institutionalization, as well as the role of ethnic identity in business decision-making. The development of this typology allows us to systematize the various forms of ethnic entrepreneurship in the city and highlight the key

characteristics of each, opening new horizons for further study of the influence of cultural, social, and economic factors on entrepreneurial activity in migrant communities.

3. The feasibility of using a mixed integrated model in a metropolitan environment is substantiated. This suggests the existence of an agency of Tajik entrepreneurs in Almaty, operating within a combination of horizontal and vertical networks, which is a response to the specific economic and institutional conditions of the post-Soviet space. Kazakhstan, as a country with a highly informal economy and a developed system of regional connections, offers unique opportunities for interaction within these networks.

4. A new concept of "adaptive autonomy" is introduced and empirically tested. It describes the specific strategies of entrepreneurs of migrant origin who are forced to start a business in the absence of family or diaspora resources. This conceptual innovation emphasizes that such entrepreneurs, faced with a lack of internal resources and limited support from the ethnic community, rely on external social networks and their mobility to create flexible business models.

5. A conceptual framework for a localized analysis of ethnic economies in the context of post-Soviet countries has been developed, where various mechanisms—such as formal and informal, ethnic and market, identity and adaptation—intersect in unique trajectories of socioeconomic integration. It is worth noting that the post-Soviet context in Kazakhstan (and other countries of the former USSR) presupposes the presence of a complex and multi-layered system of economic relations, in which both formal state structures and informal networks, including regional and ethnic associations, interact.

6. A new interpretation of ethnic entrepreneurship is proposed, not as an isolated phenomenon, but as a resource for social integration in migrant-hosting societies. Traditionally, ethnic entrepreneurship is perceived as a type of business limited to a particular ethnic community, sometimes closed and isolated from mainstream society. However, the authors of the study offer a broader interpretation, demonstrating that ethnic entrepreneurship serves not only economic self-realization but also an important function in promoting social integration.

7. A sociological survey revealed contradictions in the perceptions of ethnic entrepreneurs among Almaty residents. Despite general recognition of the usefulness of migrant businesses, caution regarding trust remains, particularly among certain social groups, demonstrating the need for a balanced migration and integration policy in megacities.

Testing and implementation of research results. The dissertation was discussed on department sociology and social work (Protocol №13) and recommended for defense. The main scientific results of the dissertation work were presented at various international scientific-theoretical and practical conferences, in scientific journals. The main ideas of the dissertation were reflected in 7 scientific papers, in particular 1 article in international scientific journals, included in the Scopus database, 3 articles in journals recommended by Committee By provision quality in the field science and higher education Ministries science and higher education Republics

Kazakhstan, 3 articles in the materials of international conferences and publications of domestic and foreign countries.

The structure and scope of the dissertation are determined by the objectives and logic of the research. The work consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices. The length of the dissertation is 179 typewritten pages. The bibliography includes 141 titles, of which approximately 130 are in English (from foreign sources). The structure and content of the work reflect a step-by-step solution to the stated objectives, and the length meets the requirements, ensuring a comprehensive presentation of the material and substantiation of the conclusions.