
CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION AND CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION

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Original article

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THE SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITY OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING GERMANS ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN RUSSIA, KAZAKHSTAN, AND GERMANY

The article examines the sociocultural identity of Russian-speaking Germans and how it is represented in social media. The ontological issue concerns the risks of impoverishing the established sociocultural ties and the anti-Russian transformation of the sociocultural identity of Russian-speaking Germans against the background of the spread of anti-Russian rhetoric. Both Russian and German researchers highlight the paramount importance of sociocultural identity over political identity for Germans. Focusing on sociocultural identity and based on V. N. Myasishchev's concept of relations and A. Sacks' concept of involvement, the authors examine the involvement of Russian-speaking Germans in online representations and substantiate the hypothesis that social media are significant platforms for the reproduction and formation of sociocultural identity. A constructive information campaign on social media, based on the priority of the sociocultural unity among Russian-speaking Germans, could contribute to the task of strengthening the sociocultural ties between nations and creating a solid foundation for Russian-speaking identity. The empirical basis of the study was data collected through offline observation in Russia (St. Petersburg Youth Club Jugendblitz); in Kazakhstan (Astana German Youth Club Diamant and Wiedergeburt Society); and in Germany (Würzburg Youth Club of the informal self-organized initiative community of Russian Germans) between May 2022 and May 2025; online surveys of Russian-speaking Germans living in Russia, Kazakhstan and Germany between 3 and 20 May 2025; content analysis of key Telegram channels of Russian-speaking Germans "RusDeutsch", "Germans of Kazakhstan", "Riwweldeutsche", data collection between 1 March 2024 and 1 March 2025. The study found that that Russian-speaking Germans perceive themselves as a single people formed due to a unique social history on the border of two cultures. It is revealed that the online practices and ways of representing the sociocultural identity of Russian-speaking Germans vary depending on their country of permanent residence. It is concluded that the media is a platform for the reproduction and dynamics of the sociocultural identity of Russian-speaking Germans and a resource for adapting to new social and political conditions.

Keywords: *sociocultural identity, Russian-speaking Germans, Russian Germans, Germans of Kazakhstan, heat map of identity*

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