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POLITICAL MOODS OF THE KAZAKHSTANI YOUTH: EVALUATION AND ORIENTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Institutional changes in the spheres of economy, politics, education and culture became decisive prerequisites of changes in living space of today's youth. In the current social and cultural conditions features and mentality of young people are modified. The political moods in modern Kazakhstan are characterized by their specificity, due to transformations taking place under the influence of social changes developed in the Soviet period of traditions.

At the moment, young people have more opportunities to participate in political life than ever before. In the article data of the sociological research conducted in 2015 indicate that the level of participation of youth in politics and their interest is very low. In general, Kazakhstani youth can be characterized as apolitical.

The political culture of young generation is formed as the process of integration to the socio-political relations. It is particularly in these relations young men and women realize their innovative activities by taking part in the actions of some organizations, being indifferent to others and denying the activity of other organizations. It should be noted that the political positions of Kazakhstani youth have not yet been formed. The system of political values and a perfunctory ideological choice of young people do not depend on important socio-demographic characteristics and economic status.

Monitoring political orientations in the projection on regional identity showed some significant differences: the youth of the "Northern", "Western" and "Eastern" regions is with a tendency to the "troubled" perception of the political situation, while respondents of "Southern" and "Central" regions have "neutral" assessment of political situation, a high degree of political tolerance and displaying the ability to political discourse.

The political profile of young Kazakhs is mostly characterized by uncertainty. Also, the boundaries of political preferences are blurred: the main factors of the formation of the ideological and political positions are to the greater extent cultural (preferences and stereotypes) rather than social factors.

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Keywords: political mood, values, attitudes, youth, political culture, political engagement

INTRODUCTION

Kazakh society is experiencing significant changes due to the processes of external global factors. On the one hand, these processes largely influence the social and political attitudes of young people, which are closely interrelated and depend on each

other. On the other hand, political activity / passivity of youth, its direction is a kind of barometer of maturity / immaturity of society development. It is particularly in the youth environment are present all the contradictions inherent in society as a whole in one form or another.

During the period of diverse transformations in the precedent decades the role of politics and its influence on the formation of value consciousness of young people have changed significantly. In the youth environment there is no general picture of Kazakhstani mentality, with a defined political component. Although the politics acquires a new status, today in the expert community coexist mutually exclusive points of view on its role and function as a social institution. Politics in modern Kazakhstan contributes to the accentuation of the process of youth identity and expansion of citizenship and patriotism manifestations opportunities. In the period of independence the number of political organizations and groups has increased significantly, but role of political movements is rather "passive" and their integration into tolerant Kazakh society is inactive.

In a fast-changing situation, constant monitoring of youth's political activity is important. Its relevance is predetermined by the fact that at the stage of perfection of Kazakhstan's statehood special importance is given to the process of development of the political consciousness of young Kazakhs. Today two opposing trends can be seen among young people: on the one hand, there is a strong desire of young boys and girls to participate in political life of the country, on the other hand, a passive attitude of young people to political processes taking place in the country. Kazakhstan - a multi-confessional and multiethnic state in which there are an intensive processes of finding a new identity, including a political component. During the economic crisis of 90s of the last century emigration and migration rates have risen sharply, the political map of the country has significantly changed. Under the influence of both external (globalization) and internal development trends in the Kazakh society in recent decades there is an evidently observed political renaissance, which is associated with an increased interest of a specific part of youth to the political phenomena, the emergence of new forms of politically oriented youth organizations.

This article analyzes the political moods of today's youth in Kazakhstan as the most informed, educated and mobile part of society. Studying this issue represents in our view the interest from several positions. Firstly, in order to understand the overall dynamics of the changes taking place in the value consciousness of the younger generation of Kazakhstan. Second, in the article we analyze how the process of socio-economic transformation in the country affected the formation of political values of youth. The main results of the research on political values and preferences of young Kazakhs during the 24 years of independence are presented¹.

Research Methodology: Research of 2015 was aimed at identifying the political tendencies among young people and its main trends on the basis of public opinion monitoring, judgments interpretation of the "open questions". For this purpose, the task was to find the general contours of the political consciousness of young Kazakhs, to understand the scope of political conversion and show the attitude of young people to

this process, identify the value judgments of respondents about the activities of new political organizations, the criteria for measuring the effectiveness of its performance.

For the analysis of empirical data questionnaires and interviews have been used. Measurement of public opinion by questionnaires were held in 2014 and in 2015. Research methodology, methodology of surveys and applied tools are comparable qualitatively and quantitatively: sample population is 1,500 respondents from 14 regions; aged 14 to 29; regional centers, district centers, as well as big cities - Astana and Almaty. Two-staged quota sampling). During the interpretation correlations were conducted among gender, age, ethnicity, education level, socio-professional affiliation, type of settlement, region, income level of the respondents.

Participation in Politics: the realization of opportunities: Political moods act as dynamic elements of youth psychology and represent indicators of its engagement in politics, demonstrating their level of adaptation, particularly to the authorities, standards and values existing in the country. The notion of "political culture" is associated with Herder and Almond's [1] article, which initiated the theoretical study of political culture [2]. James carries out the connection between the categories of political education and upbringing [3]. Main presentations of Peter Struve on a political culture are defined by the fact that the latter is part of the spiritual culture, based on the political maturity and responsibility [4, p.287].

In the political and psychological dimension political attitudes are complex sensitive signaling reactions of a sufficiently large number of young people experiencing the comfort / discomfort, expressing satisfaction / dissatisfaction with the general social and political conditions of life. Political moods become noticeable with the divergence of at least two factors: the expectations of young people associated with common needs and interests on the one hand, and the real conditions of life - on the other. Olshansky characterize this notion as a specific state of consciousness that precedes reaction-actions of significant communities to the mismatch of the desired and actual, and this reaction can take various forms from hatred to the delight to the political forces [5].

At the moment young people have more opportunities to participate in political life than ever before. However, the findings of a research suggest that the participation of the youth in politics and an interest in it has decreased significantly compared to the 2014. Research revealed a low interest in youth policy. Kazakhstani youth can be characterized as apolitical. As can be seen from the Fig. 1, research data shows that 43% of boys and girls are interested in politics, of which only 15.2% are following attentively information on political developments in the country. Whereas in 2014 the percentage of youth actively interested in politics was 65.9% [6, p. 117].

The relatively low interest of young people in politics is largely due to the priorities and strategies in the choice of life interest, limitations in acquisition of social experience and focus on interpersonal and intra-family communication.

Statistically significant differences in the political preferences of the young respondents are observed in the context of the following socio-demographic characteristics:

In the context of ethnicities: the socio-political events almost equally discussed by representatives of the Kazakh - 14.3%, Russian - 11.8%, other ethnicities - 13.2%. Number of people personally involved in the political events is greater among Kazakhs (11%), less active Russians are less active - 1.1%, as well as other nationalities (1.1%).

¹This research is conducted within scientific - research project #00114RK00692 «Ideology and moral values of youth on the modern stage: evaluation of state, issues and solutions» (2013-2015) in accordance with the thematic plan of Administration of President of RK.

- In the context of family status: the degree of political involvement of people under the criteria of "personal involvement over the past year in political activity" and "follow attentively information on political developments in the country" is higher among widowers - 25% and among married respondents - 15.8%. This figure is slightly lower among those who cohabit - 13.3%, unmarried 12.8% and divorced - 10%.

- By region: a large percentage of those not interested in politics observed among the residents of Uralsk (66.70%); Ust-Kamenogorsk (62.20%) and Shymkent (62.10%). Political activity of the youth of Astana has slightly increased compared to 2014 (50.0% - 2015, 43.3% - 2014). Youth living in Astana (20.80%) and Pavlodar (19.70%) attentively follow the information about political events, and actively discuss them.

By gender: 48.2% of young men are interested in politics and are attentively following and discussing political events (14.5%), as well as participating in it (1.9%). Majority of young women however are not interested in politics (60.9%).

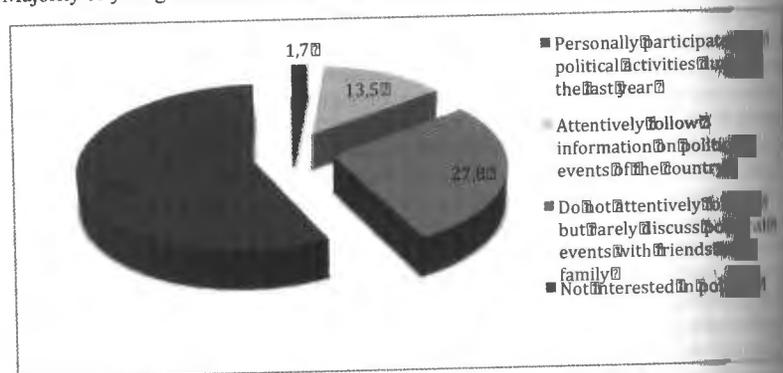


Figure 1 – The degree of interest of Kazakh youth to the politics, N=1000.

As can be seen from Table 1, the higher the education level, the higher is the percentage of those interested in politics. 20.10% of young people with higher education, including bachelor and master degree, are following political information.

The data shows that 61.7% do not consider themselves as supporters of any political direction, since they do not show any interest to the politics. The percentage of not interested in politics is directly proportional from the minimum value by the criterion of "having higher education" to those who haven't. The number of supporters of an independent development path of our country includes 17.70% of respondents with secondary special education and 17.4% of respondents with incomplete higher education. 17.10% of the young respondents, living in the northern regions, are active supporters of effective market reforms.

Youth political culture includes a variety of aspects: knowledge of the politics in the first place, the emotional component of political beliefs (sense of patriotism and attitude to the Homeland) the demonstration of interest in social and political life, the ability to assess political developments, analyze government policy.

The political culture of the young generation is formed as the process of integration in the socio-political relations. It is in this relation young people realize their innovative activities by taking an active part in the activities of some organizations.

being indifferent to others and denying the activity of third ones. Thereby 53.4% of young people assert the necessity of development of new democratic institutions and laws in Kazakhstan; 65.5% agree that our country needs highly professional management personnel. Respondents point to the inefficient management of managers in ensuring "a better, decent life".

Table 1 – Distribution of responses to the question "Are you interested in politics?" In correlation with the respondents' level of education, N=1000.

Response options	No education, primary education.	Incomplete secondary (basic).	General secondary education, vocational schools	Secondary education (technical, college, school, etc.).	Incomplete higher education	Higher complete education (including bachelor and master).
Personally participated in political activities during the last year	-	2.4%	1.6%	0.5%	2.4%	2.2%
Actively follow information on political events of the country	6.3%	7.3%	7.3%	14.40%	12.0%	20.10%
Do not attentively follow, but rarely discuss political events with friends and family	7.8%	25.2%	26.8%	26.30%	26.9%	34.7%
Not interested in politics	85.9%	65.0%	64.3%	58.9%	58.7%	43.0%

The study showed that 55.7% of young Kazakhstanis participated in clothing donations and fundraising for people caught in difficult living conditions, and 51.0%, participated in the signing of petitions and complaints regarding significant events in the life of the country over the past two years. According to data, the most active is the youth of Ust-Kamenogorsk (15.7%) and Karaganda (14.25%), the lowest activity (6%) is presented in Almaty.

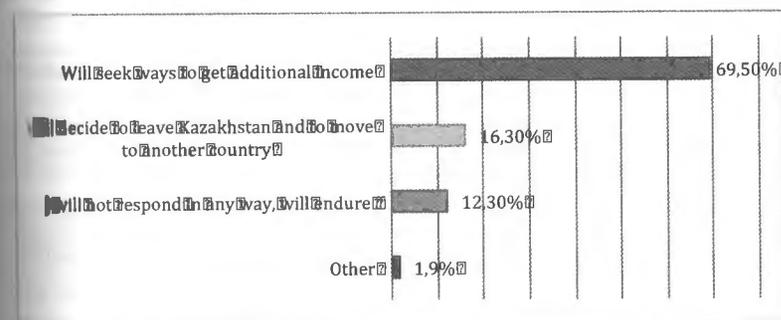


Figure 2 – Plans of young people in Kazakhstan in a situation of significant deterioration of living conditions and the economic situation in the country, N=1000.

To leave or to stay? Competitive state must be flexible and effective in the face of deteriorating socio-economic environment must be able to cope with problems and build security policy for the most vulnerable segments of the population. As can be seen from Fig.2 16.3% of young people, in the case of a significant deterioration of the conditions are ready to decide leaving the country: significant differences are observed in the context of the following socio-demographic characteristics:

- By region (values identified from minimum to maximum: Almaty - 7.1%; Astana- 14.6%; Karaganda - 22.2%, Pavlodar - 18.4%; Uralsk - 29.2%; Ust-Kamenogorsk - 35.4 %).

- By ethnic group (34.80% of the young people of Russian ethnicity and 7.5% of Kazakh ethnicity are ready to leave Kazakhstan, while 77.30% of the Kazakhs will seek a way to get additional income).

- By level of education (26.60% of young people who do not have higher education and 13.40% of the respondents with higher education are willing to consider the relocation. 40.6% and 75.2%, respectively will seek ways to get additional income).

Table 2 - Distribution of answers to the question "How much do you trust the following institutions?"

Response option	Completely trust	Trust	Do not trust very much	Absolutely do not trust	Nothing to say
Mosque/church	21,2	46,2	22,8	6,9	2,9
Armed forces	11,8	57,0	21,9	5,3	4,0
Press	4,0	33,8	48,0	12,7	1,5
TV	6,8	34,7	45,7	11,1	1,7
Trade union	3,8	33,5	38,9	14,7	9,1
Police	6,6	39,1	38,9	13,4	2,0
Government	12,6	48,9	28,0	6,9	3,0
Political parties	5,4	35,5	37,9	14,1	7,1
Parliament	9,4	48,4	27,0	9,2	6,0
Big companies	5,6	34,1	37,5	15,5	7,3
Eurasian Customs Union	5,9	45,7	27,5	10,9	10,0

As can be seen from the table 2, most of the youth population in Kazakhstan trust to religious organizations (67,4%), armed forces (68,8%), government (61,5%).

Young Kazakhstanis, for whom political issues are not in the first place, express their attitude to other states through the perception as "own/friendly and alien/hostile". Respondents were asked about countries that can be listed as most friendly to Kazakhstan. 91.3% of young boys and girls consider Russia as a "friend" number one. In the second place in the ranking of friend-countries is Kyrgyzstan (84.4%), and in the third is Belarus (77.6%) (Fig.3). The United States, according to the respondents, was determined as "rather unfriendly" country (45.1%).

According to the research data, 49.4% of young people may decide to leave the country, "but only for a while, to earn money" - 25.1% and "for internship or education" - 24.3%. 27.5% of respondents do not see a necessity to leave the country, and only 11.5% expressed a desire to leave Kazakhstan and stay abroad forever.

Analysis of correlations:

- Age. In the distribution of answers to this question in the context of respondents' age it should be noted that among respondents aged from 14 to 19 years - 10.1% "want to leave the country", in the age range from 20 to 24 years statistically significant

differences were not revealed, in the age range from 25 to 29 years - 33.4% "do not see a necessity to leave the country". Among the respondents in the present age range with a slight difference in percent rates dominate young people that are most satisfied with their education, employment and financial situation. This trend is likely to be a consequence of the higher education level; the higher is the income and the reduced perception of life risks.

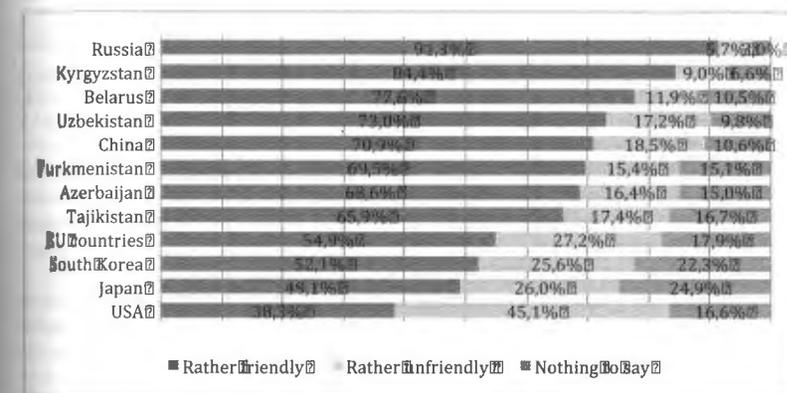


Figure 3 - Assessment of other countries by the criterion of friendliness / unfriendliness to Kazakhstan, N=1000.

Of the two paired statements only in the first pair may be noted a definite dominance of one alternative over a second one (Table 4).

Table 4 - Young people's attitudes to statements

Statements	%
1	
The modern youth are interested in the history and culture of Kazakhstan	35,6
Youth have little interest in our history and culture, it is more oriented to Western values	64,4
2	
Statement	%
The majority of young people whom I know would prefer to live and work in Kazakhstan	48,4
The majority of young people whom I know would prefer to leave Kazakhstan and live abroad	51,6

Analysis of the responses to the statements proposed revealed the following features on the basis of:

Region of residence (among those who agreed with the statement "the youth has little interest in our history" - 83.5% live in Uralsk; 69.1% of respondents from Karaganda and 82.9% of respondents represent Pavlodar).

81.80% of the respondents with low level of material status "not enough money even for food", and the presence of incomplete education also chose the statement "the youth has little interest in our history and culture, it is more oriented to Western values".

The opinions of the respondents in the evaluation of submitted statements are ambiguous and show that 48.4% noted that "majority of young people whom I know would prefer to live and work in Kazakhstan", slightly larger percentage of those (52.6%) who chose the statement "majority of my acquaintances would prefer to live abroad".

CONCLUSION

In general, it should be noted that the political positions of Kazakhstan youth have not yet been formed. The system of political values and a perfunctory ideological choice of young people do not depend on important socio-demographic characteristics and economic status. Frustration of ideological views occurs in the age range from 14 to 25 years.

Monitoring of political orientations in the projection of regional identity showed some marked differences: young people of "Northern", "Western" and "Eastern" regions with a tendency to "turbulent" perception of the political situation, while respondents of "Southern" and "Central" regions with "neutral" perception and with a high degree of political tolerance and displaying the ability to a political discourse.

The political profile of young Kazakhstanis is characterized to a greater extent by uncertainty. Also the boundaries of political preferences are blurred: the main factors shaping the ideological and political positions are rather cultural (preferences and stereotypes) than social ones.

Summarize the results of the research/paper and write the conclusion with a few sentences here.

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POLITICAL PORTRAIT OF KAZAKHSTAN YOUTH: SYMBIOSIS OF EDUCATION AND CONTEMPORARY REALITIES

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ABSTRACT

Youth of Kazakhstan is the same age as the independence, children of socio-economic and political reforms. Their socialization occurred under the influence of divergent ideas and patterns of behavior. The famous Polish sociologist W. Adamski, defining 90s as a period of "selective acceptance of capitalism" notes that the accelerated modernization of social systems is largely determined by the age factor. Young age is a project of a long-term social action. Institutional changes in the spheres of politics, economy, education and culture in the last decade proved decisive prerequisites for changes in the political profile of today's youth in Kazakhstan. The study of the social and political position of youth allows us to interpret their social actions, to predict future behavior and reaction to political decisions. A significant determinant of the features political participation of young people is the belief in its effectiveness, confidence in the real possibility to influence the decisions made by the authorities, the notion of the democratic character of social order. Evaluation of new social phenomena by young people, the expression of themselves as an active subject and their critical evaluation of social and political institutions determine the direction and vector of further development of the country. This article presents an analysis of the following issues: young people's attitudes to politics, sources of information received on the policy, the impact of education level on political activity.

This article was prepared on the basis of the results of a sociological survey conducted in 2015. The research methodology, methods of interviewing and application tools are comparable qualitatively and quantitatively: sample population in the study was 1,500 respondents from 14 regions from 14 to 29 years: regional centers, as well as big cities as Astana and Almaty. The sample population is two-staged quota sampling. On the interpretation stage, correlations in relation to gender, age, ethnicity, education level, socio-professional affiliation, type of settlement, region, income level of the respondents were conducted.

Key words: political values, youth, education, political activism, citizenship

INTRODUCTION

Education has been a powerful prognostic tool for understanding young people's political portrait for a long time. But significant changes in the ways and possibilities of acquiring it actualize the importance of studying the interrelations of education, professional activity and the degree of political activity of youth. Surveys conducted among students (1), working youth with higher education (2) and working youth without higher education (3) extend the boundaries of understanding of present political resources, opportunities and participation degree of the named three categories of youth in the political life of the country. Civil correlates of higher education include: