

Development of political culture of Kazakhstani students: Political and cultural determinants

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Abstract

Nowadays the problem of political activity and political culture of students has assumed some current character. The following article considers the degree of interest and participation of Kazakhstani youth in the politics and their political orientation in accordance with the results of content- analysis.

The content-analysis was held within the framework of scientific project "The development of political culture in students of Kazakhstan as a strategic resource of the country ". The research and the analysis were fulfilled on the base of materials and publications in 15 associations with social-political direction registered in social network. The research period is March - May 2015, in the period of preparations and conducting the extraordinary president elections in the RK.

According to the results of the research it was revealed that most Kazakhstani students are equally interested in political processes and show interest in social-political life of the country. Also the results let us reveal the level of social state and students' attitude towards different directions of the government policy, the level of possibility of students' protesting mood.

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In conclusion the author gives recommendations for organs of government authority to think of the system of organisation of social monitoring of Kazakhstani youth's election mood. By organisation it could be realised on the level of holding social interviewing, focus-teaming and expert interviewing, also by content-analysis of communities registered in social network.

Keywords: Kazakhstan student youth, political culture, political activity, determinants of youth political culture, elections, modernization.

1. Introduction

The active youth involvement in social and political development of Kazakhstan is one of the most important conditions for successful social and economic modernization of the country.

As a rule, a society transformation implies a transformation of political culture. This process is often a long lasting one and may be associated with a generational change; hence, the youth doesn't only bear social and political experience of previous generations, but shares their experience adapted to the new social conditions and future generations.

The major factors of students' political culture development at this stage would be democratization under political reform; successful social and economic modernization; economic freedom; and qualitative change of the social sciences in Kazakhstan's education system.

Political reforms in Kazakhstan define political consciousness of Kazakhstani students. The GoK implements measures to strengthen the spiritual and ideological institutions such as media; cultural and educational institutions, as well as social and political organizations.

Among political determinants of students' political culture there can be specified political identity, as a result of political determination process. In this case it refers to students' awareness of their social and economic interests and sufficiently clear idea of what exactly political powers (political parties, leaders) they are interested in and to whom to delegate authority to represent their interests in power structures. In the context of high-level political identity among students, favorable factors of rational model of democratic electoral system will be created.

The set of internal factors is presented by social and cultural determinants. As part of the study, it was found that the main group of determinants defining features of political culture identified through the choice of a profession, would be social and demographic characteristics of a social group such as age; sex; and ethnicity, as well as educational, professional, social and economic status of parents.

The most critical element in the development of political culture would be the pursuance of communication politics and morality. Social degradation mostly affected the moral values. The inevitable consequence of this process became the growth of political apathy.

Confidence among students for state institutions is formed under successful implementation of social projects in Kazakhstan such as "Zhasyl Yel" [Green Country]; "S diplomom v selo" [With diploma to the village]; and "Molodezhnaya praktika" [Youth Practice.]

Political consciousness of students is formed under interconnection of education; training and working conditions; and elimination of consumerism ideology. Thus, in the article by Nursultan Nazarbayev "Social Modernization of Kazakhstan: Twenty Steps to a Society of Universal Labor" the idea to focus young people's attention on interconnection of an individual's goals and objectives with goals and objectives of the whole Kazakhstani society is proclaimed (Nazarbaev, 2012).

Forms and means of teaching patriotism and faith in the future to young people are continuously being improved under the social and economic modernization. The idea of "Mangilik El" [People

forever] voiced by President Nazarbayev in the "Nation's Plan - 100 Concrete Steps to Implement Five Institutional Reforms" proclaims national unity; peace and harmony; high spirituality; and the state economic growth and industrialization (Nazarbaev, 2015).

To solve the issue of higher education that would adequately reflect its content in today's global challenges, it is necessary to consider humanities not as a set of common truths, but as a base, which gives a person an understanding of its connection with the world.

Humanities should not entertain or provide "civic education," acting as a complex of ideological disciplines. It helps young people to reveal their personalities, and then higher education will belong not to functional units and individuals, but personalities. Universities, to a greater extent can prevent the social attitudes that affect the moral values; promote the growth of political apathy; skepticism; and lack of spirituality.

Teaching Politics plays a significant role in political culture development. This discipline was introduced to the Kazakhstani universities not only to reform our society, but also due to changes worldwide. Social and political disciplines develop a high level of political culture of young citizens of Kazakhstan, providing stability and development of democracy and civil society.

There is a wide range of means and methods to increase the level of political culture of the student-age youth. One of the most effective would be the development of political knowledge by increased number of academic hours of political disciplines; creation of conditions for a personality capable to determine his own political positions, views and beliefs. This personality shall be capable to self-realize and self-determine in politics and have civil maturity. Thus, effective political socialization of student-age youth is important means of political culture increase.

Educational process; teaching the "History", the "Politics", the "Sociology", the "Religious studies" serve as a good base to inform about political system and its norms in higher educational institutions. History and the Public sciences are the most important means to establish patriotic values; to justify the existing political system; to educate a citizen respectable, law-abiding and loyal to the authorities (Kim & Zhumataeva, 2013).

Youth political culture is developed by its involvement in social and political activities that meets and pursues economic, cultural and political needs and interests. As a result, young people have a new model of behavior, which of course is reflected in political culture as a whole, and its political consciousness in particular.

Factors to develop political culture of young people are the following: the level and degree of development of political culture; norms and ideals of social order; social and political organizations; and political institutions. As a rule, the social circle forms political consciousness of the students. Close friends; relatives; classmates can directly influence their political psychology; values; and attitudes.

The issue of developing youth political culture cannot be solved by gaining of theoretical knowledge only. This process supposes the solution of a number of economic and social issues. The market economy; variety of ownership; free choice of work for living, improved living standards develop youth political culture adequate to current conditions of Kazakhstan.

Long-term investment in youth policy is not just a financial investment. This formation of ideals and moral principles and guidelines establishes its civil qualities, shows the essence of its attitude to politics and forms of political participation. The world experience shows that the principle of long-term investment in youth policy suggests that desired results can be expected within one generation. Therefore, the challenge is not to lose a generation of Kazakhstani youth, which is partially or fully developed in its personal capacity in an era of democratic transition of the country.

So, under the scientific project "Formation of Political Culture of Student's Youth of Kazakhstan as Strategic Resource of the Country" the content analysis was done.

The goal of this research was to study the political culture of Kazakhstani youth. That is, studying the changes in consciousness, interests and values. Object of research: the social network "vk.com" (V Kontakte), namely: the Kazakhstani groups and the web communities of political orientation.

The authors have chosen the social networks, since today the Internet becomes an effective means to build political opinions, expectations and reactions in the field of political relations. Information and telecommunication development of Kazakhstan under the State program for accelerated industrial-innovative development enables youth to actively explore new technologies, mainly the Internet (Gosudarstvennaia Programma Industrialno-Innovatsionnogo Razvitiya Respubliki Kazakhstan 2015-2019).

Research terms: April-May, 2015 during preparation for early presidential elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Research methodology: The content analysis was done on base of materials and publications of 15 web communities "Presidential elections in Kazakhstan 2015"; "Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev – Elbasy"; "Youth of Kazakhstan"; " the Altyn Adam" [The Golden Man]; "In Astana"; "Uly Kazakh YYely"; "Property of the Republic"; " For you, Bakhe"; "Patriot KZ"; "Kazakhstan in my heart"; "Interesting Kazakhstan"; "In Kazakhstan"; "Kachovy Kazakhstan"; "Kazakh Pie"; "ZTB KZ") (Kulsarieva, 2015).

The following criteria were used to choose the web communities:

- Sufficiently long existence;
- Large number of subscribers;
- Stable functioning;
- Site popularity;
- Regular publications

The analysis covered the publications made between April 8 – 29, 2015 (till the inauguration day of the President of Kazakhstan.)

By data analysis results the following conclusions were made:

As, on pages of studied web communities the type of publications as the news (90%) is the most widespread, it enables subscribers to create a discussion platform where readers express opinions by writing comments, thereby express the civic stand.

In the course of the research, the big number of viewings and rather average level of comments was recorded.

Thus, there is an essential difference between a number of viewings and a number of comments.

It should be noted the subscribers' interest in the web communities was stable and attendance was regular.

However, there was a slight decline in interest in the web communities' publications concerning the presidential elections and during the resonant events in the country. Namely: the flood in Karaganda region; beating and trial in the Alibi Zhumagulov v. Kairat Zhamaliyev; bridge collapse in Almaty; the fire in the market "Adem"; and the sudden death of a legendary singer Batyrkhan Shukenov. Average of early April one item was commented 57 times, then in the period of the mentioned events this indicator fell to 28 times.

The greatest number of comments is caused by news lines, posts and videos where the issues of the current and future political development of the country; prospects of development; consolidation and patriotism are brought up.

Under research three categories of comments were defined:

- 1) positive;
- 2) critical;
- 3) neutral.

According to the calculations, the share of neutral publications and items with positive character prevails. Either, critical comments occur in publications equally to neutral ones. Most of all subscribers are critical about information on possible devaluation and crisis in the country; on trade wars between Kazakhstan and Russia. Also there are critical publications concerning N. A. Nazarbayev focus on corruption, as well as pompous and "useless events" (for example, EXPO-2017.)

However, according to the research results, it was revealed that absolutely positive image of the President Nazarbayev is formed. This circumstance confirms merits and an invaluable contribution of the Head of the State to the development of our Republic.

Each generation participating in elections and expressing the civic stand, bears responsibility for preservation of political culture of society and its enrichment by new positive experience. Each young individual shall understand this responsibility, as a high political culture of a personality is a basis for development (Butorina, 2006).

It should be noted that electoral activity of Kazakh youth has been already seriously affected by social stratification. Access to education; well-paid work; possibility to have a family; purchasing and receiving other social benefits for the majority of youth are complex and interconnected challenges (Nasimova, 2014).

The results of research show, difficulties to solve these issues by youth in modern Kazakhstan become the most critical indicators of its negative attitude to policy and participation in electoral process. Therefore, through the system of state regulation it is necessary to create more or less equal starting opportunities for representatives of various groups of the Kazakhstani youth. Thus, it is also important to consider the regional aspects of this issue.

Thus, the younger generation cannot be accused of full political apathy, but you can't to call its political activity high (Kim, Muhitdenova, Kamaldinova, Shakhnaza & Khalikova, 2013). In Kazakhstan, this activity is done by a group of the youth organizations and the parties youth wings. There is a noticeable politicization of the Kazakhstani youth. However, most of the students considerably separate from political life. Political activity is observed as situational reaction to elections; resonant processes in society in the form of protest actions; and performances to support a candidate.

Established stable international and religious relations in Kazakhstan and the Government measures for peacekeeping and consent have created tolerant attitude of youth. A pride for the national identity, aspiration to support and value traditions and customs of the people are important social background of youth's tolerant consciousness (Molotov, 2014).

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