

Determinants of the political culture of Kazakhstani students

Shakhnaza Khalikova*, Department of political science and political techniques of al-Farabi Kazakh National university, 71 al-Farabi Ave., Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050040

Gulnar Nassimova, Department of political science and political techniques of al-Farabi Kazakh National university, 71 al-Farabi Ave., Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050040

Nina Saitova, Department of political science and political techniques of al-Farabi Kazakh National university, 71 al-Farabi Ave., Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050040

Aikerim Kamaldinova, Department of political science and political techniques of al-Farabi Kazakh National university, 71 al-Farabi Ave., Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050040

Suggested Citation:

Khalikova, S., Nassimova, G., Saitova, N. & Kamaldinova, A. (2016). Determinants of the political culture of Kazakhstani students, *Global Journal on Humanities & Social Sciences*. (Online). 04, pp 843-850. Available from: <http://sproc.org/ojs/index.php/pntsbs>

Received June 01, 2015; revised August 20, 2015; accepted October 20, 2015.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Andreea Iluzia IACOB

©2016 SciencePark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

Abstract

The problem of political activity and political culture of youth in general, and student's youth in particular, have gained an importance recently. Lack of interest in the existing political processes in Kazakhstan and in the world among the younger generation became the norm. Recent numerous monitoring and researches show that the youth of Kazakhstan takes a passive position concerning process of elections. In this research it was made an attempt to reveal the determinants of political culture of the Kazakhstan student's youth. In article there presented and analyzed the results of the sociological polls concerning the main indicators of social and demographic situation, social well-being of youth. Research showed that the world economic crisis attracts social stratification of society which seriously influences an electoral activity of the Kazakhstan student's youth. Exactly, the difficulties in the solution of social and economic problems for youth in modern Kazakhstan are becoming the most important indicators of its relation to policy and participation in electoral process. The current stage of development of the Kazakhstan society is characterized by deep changes in all spheres of life. Processes of reforming took the forms of essential transformational changes, having thoroughly transformed the economic, political, social, civil relations, political system of the state. Problems of youth came to the forefront,

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Shakhnaza, Khalikova**, Department of political science and political techniques of al-Farabi Kazakh National university, 71 al-Farabi Ave., Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050040

E-mail address: shahnaz.khalikova@mail.ru

The reform of the human capital is a basis. Here legal bases and traditions are necessary. Therefore we need to solve fundamental basic problems from the economic point of view.

Keywords: Kazakhstan student youth, young people, political activity, determinants of youth political culture.

1. Introduction

The issue of formation and development of political culture under contemporary conditions has one of the central positions in the political science. Without careful attention to the scientific analysis it is impossible to practically implement the most important issues of the establishment and the formation of democratic political culture of the youth, the future of Kazakhstan.

The relevance of the study of democratic political culture of student youth is caused by the current state of socio-economic and political transformation of the Kazakhstani society. The young people are not socially homogeneous. These are students and workers; rural and urban young people; individuals from different social strata. Different categories of young people differ greatly from one another in their interests and needs; level of education and intelligence; wealth; and lifestyle. A specific social group is represented by young students that are characterized as follows: "driven by their youthful energy, idealism and romanticism before they were tied down by the heavy burdens of family, career and property ownership" (Huang, Jianli, 2006).

It is during a university time when young people gain professional skills, as well as develop social ideological maturity; undergo an intensive process of political consciousness and political culture development (Aleshina, 2006). Success of these processes depend on how much educated, active and responsible people join the social life sooner, and such people needed to Kazakhstan at the stage of the society modernization.

Political knowledge and culture are necessary today to any student regardless of his professional training, as they help to navigate in the complex political issues, to competently build relations with the legal power, to exercise control over its activities.

2. Political participation of Kazakhstani youth

Participation of young students in public associations is aimed at building a democratic political thinking, a willingness to actively participate in the development of Kazakhstan's statehood and civil society.

The process of democratization of public life in Kazakhstan requires from young students as a mobile social group, the ability to implement new features of a democratic society, where a huge role is played by the level of their political culture.

President N.A. Nazarbayev in his "Address 2012" set a high value on social and economic modernization. The modernization acts as the maximum utilization of institutional capacity. It includes the solution of housing issues; rational distribution and efficient production management; agricultural development; and implementation of business initiatives. Today, Kazakhstan is moving towards a balanced socio-economic model of the modern state structure (Nazarbayev, 2012).

The need to study the political culture of young students is also caused by the current state of the Kazakhstani society going through profound changes in all spheres of life. Today we can see that the reform process took the form of significant transformational changes, having fundamentally modified the economic; political; social; civil relations; and the political state system. In addition to the above, the pre-existing social order with its rules, values, attitudes has been destroyed, but not extinct. The

creation of the new one is going on irregularly, inconsistently, vaguely, without clearly tangible progress, in acute struggle.

Under these circumstances, the new generation enters the real life; interacts with the social realities; prepares to replace the seniors in industries; culture; political arena; and public service. Young people tend to have special ability to create, and are the bearers of great intellectual potential.

It is important to note that current political; economic; social; and ideological transformations wouldn't help if dominate in the formation of political and civil activity of a young personality, as well as its civil orientation. Thus, the specificity of youth political culture is defined by its most important characteristics such as age; social; psychological; moral; ethical; physiological; biological; as well as the development terms of a society in which it is formed as a subject of political life.

The student youth is a specific social group. It is a university time when young people gain professional skills, as well as develop social ideological maturity; undergo an intensive process of political consciousness and political culture development.

The students' political culture shows their level of knowledge of political power and political relations; the ability to objectively assess the processes and phenomena of social and political life; take a certain political stance expressed in specific political actions.

The process of building the students political culture has to be considered against the background of the socio-economic and political changes in the development of modern society, causing the society need in education; the opportunity to develop a politically educated, competent personality, capable to self-determine in the social and political life of a society.

The transformations in the economic; political; and social life of the country virtually put a modern student to a new position, especially in relation to people; to himself; and to society, which results in the mentality restructuring; change of goals, political values and attitudes of students; the emergence of new requirements and opportunities of their realization.

New characteristics of a student as an individual and as an activity subject were identified as a result of the student's personality investigation. The student youth being insecure, search and uses the experience of the older generations, but is guided by new life principles, seeking to comprehend the social and political reality in a more active way.

The process of translation of social and political experience to the new generations occurs in certain institutional forms.

Formation of political culture in the course of political socialization begins at the family, given that the nature and reliability of understanding by a young man of different political phenomena and events is largely determined by the level of political culture of his parents and political views and orientations dominant in his family. Further, this process is continued in secondary and higher educational institutions. At this time, there is a rapid gaining of new political knowledge by a personality due to his study of social science and humanities. Gradually, the young man shows a need to compare the knowledge gained in the classroom from textbooks, lectures, and mass media with a real life. Thus, a critical approach to assess the validity of a word; news; events; and information emerges. Next comes a time when a young citizen can independently analyze and systematize all sorts of political phenomena (Yeshpanova, 2013).

As was noted, specific political interests, preferences and settings distinguish the political culture of young people. Youth political interests imply those ones that are important in the political sphere and serve as a source; incentive; and a motive for political actions. The awareness of interests occurs when the political status of young people compared to other groups or communities. Structurally, the political interests include young people's attitudes to the totality of political relations in the society; government agencies; assessment of their activities and actions to implement their interests.

However, the specifics of the youth political culture formation are characterized by the destruction in the minds of the Kazakhstanis of the Soviet values and ideology and insufficient level of patriotic and civil upbringing of the modern youth. The sharp decline in the activity to develop the spiritual and moral values of the younger generation has resulted from exacerbation of the crisis in the perestroika and subsequent democratic transformations in our country.

Socio-psychological characteristics and social values of the student youth are determined by the level of socio - economic and cultural development, as well as the level of political development. In addition to the above, the politics, political relations are present as a necessary attribute of all life spheres and relations of the life-sustaining activity of young people, even if it takes a fundamentally passive position. The more significant is the influence of this or that political system, the character of the political regime on the development of political culture of students.

Among the socio-psychological specificities of student youth development the following can be noted: awareness of their own identity; increased attention to one's own inner world; desire to create its own social environment; heightened emotionality supplemented by more pronounced differentiation of emotional responses; mastering the skills of self-control and self-regulation; awareness of its continuity, personality stability over time; gradually developing ideas about its life perspective to understanding of the prospects of a social nature.

It is established that the activation of subjective efforts of students happens not only in the socio-psychological sphere, but also in mastering the social values and norms. The values system develops to reflect the most common social determinants of behavior, which on the one hand, testifies to an awareness and acceptance by an individual of the society values, on the other hand - the process of self-education, self-creation and self-affirmation of its identity in the society (Dosanova, Teslenko, 2013).

In view of the above, it is necessary to identify the factors that promote and prevent the development of political culture of student youth, among them: mass communication; family; peer group; higher education institution; church; army; political parties; and other.

It should not be unnoticed that the student youth is the most active population part, so the state's interest is to ensure that its political socialization had a positive attitude. The priorities of the public interest and the whole society for the student youth should be education and formation of a citizen actively involved in the political and social life, in the functioning of social institutions on the basis of legal norms, goals and values.

Obviously, political culture is subject to changes and transformations. The changes outcome, as a rule, is the changed basic system of values. The major socio-political values include freedom; equality; national unity and harmony; social responsibility; justice; and security.

Currently, the world of values of Kazakhstani student youth undergoes changes: new values emerge that correspond to a certain stage of historical development and the era needs. So, a palette of changing values of students includes the priority issues of employment and professional activities after graduation; career opportunities; material prosperity; financial independence; and housing solutions.

The formation of political culture is directly connected with the national and historical past; the current spiritual culture of the society; national character; national-psychological, religious attitudes, traditions, customs; and socio-cultural factors.

For example, the historical experience defines the quality of political culture. Historic events play a special role there – national liberation wars, revolutions, crisis, etc.

The level of economic development and welfare of a state, and as a consequence the related level of the citizens' satisfaction with material and spiritual needs represent the paramount importance to develop political culture in the society. The determining factors are also the national composition of the population; religion influence; geographical location; and etc.

Traditions; forms and methods of state administration; management style; activities of social institutions such as political parties and their ideological platform, public organizations and movements developed in the society should be considered.

The activities of state institutions are designed to lay the foundations of the political consciousness of citizens and behavior patterns. It is the political parties that form the attitude of the youth towards the parties and the party system in the country, electoral behavior.

Economic, political and legal knowledge play a significant role in forming the political culture of the student youth. Thus, the system and model of education and upbringing functioning with appropriate educational and fostering institutions, as well as mass media approved by a society, act as a factor determining the political culture.

Economic factors influence on the level of political culture: provision of entrepreneurial freedom; presence or lack of private property; economic stability; availability of laws governing the economic activity.

Mass media can form the basic political-cultural values of the student youth and the stereotypes of political behavior.

Factors that form the political culture of student youth currently should also include democratization in terms of political reform; successful socio-economic modernization; economic freedom; a qualitative change in the content of social sciences in Kazakhstani educational system.

Social modernization of the country implies the developed political culture, restructuring consciousness of youth - from paternalistic attitudes towards active life position. Therefore, the further progression of Kazakhstan on the way of democracy, progress and social modernization depends on the right choice by each prospective student of specialty and future profession.

Youth political culture is formed by a special mechanism, which is a system of interacting elements and links. "A person is formed by social relations, which the person establishes in the course of life activities" (Kim, Muhitdenova, Kamaldinova, Khalikova, 2013).

The first of these links is education, which implies building a system of knowledge about social life and to this end the laws of political life. Preparation of young people for political activities is done at schools and universities by the humanities and the legal disciplines, which generally form the basic framework of the political and the legal culture in the form of knowledge. However, this knowledge doesn't suffice alone to develop high political culture.

3. Determinants of political culture of young people

We conducted a study that aimed to identify political; social; and cultural determinants of political culture of student youth.

Study tasks:

- identify preferences of prospective students by industry;
- examine the specificities of the political culture of prospective students;
- quantitative processing and qualitative analysis of the data obtained.

The study was conducted in the period of the admission committee's work for students who had passed the ENT (Edinoye Natsionalnoye Testirovaniye) and the KTA (Kompleksnoye Testirovaniye Abiturientov.) The enquiry was done at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Department of Philosophy and Political Sciences, between June 20 - August 25, 2015, prior to the students' enrollment into the student's university community. The sample group consisted of 79 persons,

namely those who passed "World History" subject during the ENT as the fifth subject, aged between 17 - 19.

Respondents in the survey showed quite a pronounced interest in such specialties as: "Religion studies" and "Political science". And in some cases, they showed a slightly fading interest when facing difficulties in choosing a particular specialty: "Cultural Studies"; "Sociology"; and "Philosophy".

During the study, it was found that the prospective students had a very high level of civil responsibility and activity, as the greatest number of applicants chose to study the field of "Religion studies" and "Political Science".

Despite the relatively high level of competition, future religious scholars referred their choice to the "false social orientation" in the society, a problem of quality content of religious consciousness, painful processes associated with the intensification of religious extremism in Kazakhstan. Therefore, the study of "Religious Studies" promotes understanding of conscience freedom in the system of rights, freedoms and responsibilities of a citizen.

The prospective politicians have been discussed and discuss political issues with friends, relatives and classmates on a regular basis. At the same time they want to learn how to assess the political processes and are confident they will be able to influence on the political situation in the country.

It should be noted that 85% of respondents has a conscious approach to the choice of the two popular specialties. These results suggest that the enrollees are aware of the socio-political life of the country and recognize the value of the national unity and civil accord. In its turn, this contributes to the formation and development of the youth legal and political culture.

An important proof-point to choose these professions is the demand and employment factor and access to work. According to students, the basic needs of young people are housing and employment (Molotov cocktail, 2014).

In 2014, at the World Economic Forum the youth unemployment was named an issue No.1. Worldwide there are 73 million young unemployed. In Kazakhstan, according to the statistics, the unemployment rate of 3.8% in 2012; in 2013 - 5.9%. But if compared with the European countries, the number is 5% in Austria; Germany too; while in Russia - 14% (Easy to Be Young, 2013).

Now we address the dual education, which will be more closely associated with the practice. Education should provide a confidence to a young man that he will be employed. However, the current system doesn't guarantee anything, even if a scholarship was granted (i.e. under government contract.) For example, such confidence was there in the Soviet Union. Once a person graduates from a university by assignment, he at least has a place where he can self-realize.

The enrollees are attracted by the work prospect in various fields: civil service; public administration; research and teaching; expertise; journalism; and etc.

We can assume that these respondents actively participated in the social and political life of the city they used to live, prior to admission to the university, they are aware of their responsibility as citizens, for the events happen in the country and for the future.

Thus, 58 of 79 test persons (74%) have a high level of civil responsibility and activity. This category includes young people chosen the following specialties: "Religion studies"; "Political Science".

Satisfactory level of civil responsibility and activity have 15 of the 79 test persons (19%). During the enquiry, it was revealed that these test persons are interested in specific aspects of the political life of the country, but there was no participation interest, or it was caused by some factors such as financial reward; popularity; and etc. They have chosen the specialty "Philosophy" and "Sociology."

The level of civil responsibility and activity of 6 of the 79 test persons (7%) is assessed as unsatisfactory. We can assume these individuals were not interested and didn't participate in the socio-political events; they were not interested in news and are indifferent (Kenesov, 2015).

This raises the question of career guidance. The child's propensity to certain types of activities is not defined in this country. On the contrary, there is a tendency: I want to become a financier or a scientist. A person goes there; defends himself; moves heaven and earth; and then turns out to be completely incapable. Therefore, we need to work on career guidance from school: identify abilities where a young person can self-realize himself; earn money; and etc. There are young people who have found themselves very well, but, unfortunately, they are not so many. Then, the competition for the scholarships award is not ideal. The enrollee shall have the right to contest in four specialties. For prospective students it becomes unimportant what specialty he will study, the main thing is to get a scholarship. For example, some special fields enroll students according to a leftover principle. Which is also undesirable.

Social engagement for education was formed with a human in society in general, including in the family. All parents want the child to finish a high school, but no one is bothered which high school will finish the child, and what he is to do with this in future. Here is the most important task - to get admitted anywhere.

4. Conclusion

Thus, it would be good to review the competition conditions with the purpose of efficient distribution of scholarships by special fields between the enrollees.

A number of expert publications named the unemployment as a factor of growing youth aggressiveness and a cause of sudden network revolutions (Institute of Political Solutions, 2015)

The third most important challenge for the students is an access to education, namely the high cost; its quality; and the fact that even high education wouldn't guarantee any employment (6, p.87.) Here it should be noted that the state provides scholarships, but of course they are in short supply to satisfy all. Education in the cheapest high school in Almaty is about 300,000 KZT per year. While the average salary is about 56,000 KZT. One can imagine how much shall be saved each month to pay for a child's education for all four years. The very low level of social security of students gives rise to concern too. The student's educational allowance is 15,000KZT, and the subsistence level – 19,000KZT. How to live with the negative difference? Obviously, this amount is not enough to buy even bread and water, given that the hostel is also paid (Social equity, 2015).

Thus, the political consciousness of Kazakhstani student youth has come under increasing influence of modernization trends that cover all areas of life. Political reforms in Kazakhstan determine the political consciousness of Kazakhstani students. The political consciousness of students is being formed under modernization of the education system. In the context of social and economic modernization the teaching forms and facilities are continuously improved in educational institutions; forms of youth upraising in the spirit of patriotism and faith in the future are being improved.

References

- Huang, Jianli. (2006). Positioning the student political activism of Singapore: articulation, contestation and omission. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Volume 7, Issue 3, 403-430. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14649370600849280>.
- Aleshina, E.A. (2006). The political culture of students of modern Russian society: status, trends and ways of formation.
- Message of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan - Leader of the Nation Nursultan Nazarbayev to people of Kazakhstan "Socio-economic modernization - main direction of development of Kazakhstan" (27 January, 2012). Retrieved from <http://www.akorda.kz/en/search?q=message&page>.
- Yeshpanova, D.D. (2013). Socio-political orientation of the Kazakh youth. *Patriotism in Kazakhstan*, №1 (19), 36.

Khalikova, S., Nassimova, G., Saitova, N. & Kamaldinova, A. (2016). Determinants of the political culture of Kazakhstani students, *Global Journal on Humanites & Social Sciences*. (Online). 04, pp 843-850. Available from: <http://sproc.org/ojs/index.php/pntsbs>

Dosanova, C.C., Teslenko A.N. (2013). Changing the youth in a changing world: view from inside: Proceedings of the International Youth Scientific and Practical Forum, 28-29 March, 2013. Kokshetau: KUAM.

Kim, L. M.; Muhitdenova, A. M.; Kamaldinova, A. A.; Shakhnaza, Khalikova. (2013). Phenomenon of Social Identification: The Fundamental Problems. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2nd World Conference on Psychology and Sociology (PSYSOC). Brussels, BELGIUM

Molotov cocktail. Anatomy of Kazakhstani Youth. (2014) - Almaty, Alliance of Analytical Organizations, the Foundation named after Konrad Adenauer, P.109-110.

Easy to Be Young. Retrieved from: <http://agkipr.kz/archives/346>

Kenesov, A.A. (2015). Formation and Development of electoral culture in the Republic of Kazakhstan. *Young scientist*, N 7.2 (87.2), 25-30.

The problem of youth unemployment in Kazakhstan. Institute of Political Solutions. Retrieved from: www.ipr.kz/analytics/1/1/216

Social equity through the eyes of young people. Retrieved from: <http://agkipr.kz/archives/43>