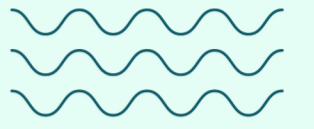


NATION BUILDING AND IDENTITY IN KAZAKHSTAN: CONFLICTS AND CHALLENGES

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BACKGROUND

- Nation building = crucial process in developing a strong and cohesive national identity within a country
- Benedict Anderson argues nation states are “imagined communities”
- State-building as a process is never complete, issues related to identity recur in the post-Soviet region

MY RESEARCH

Filling gaps on views of the Kazakh population on their national identity and current nation building policies

METHODOLOGY

- Conducted analysis of existing literature on Kazakhstan and national identity
- Interviews with a sample of Kazakh nationals via Zoom, transcripts were generated for analysis of common themes



Kazakhstan Basic Facts

Location: Central Asia, bordered by Russia and China

Population: 19 million people

Land Area: 9th largest country in the world

Ethnic Composition: Around 70% ethnic Kazakhs, with a significant Russian minority

Official Languages: Kazakh (state language) and Russian (widely spoken).

Religion: Officially secular, Islam the largest religion, including a significant Christian minority

FINDINGS

Factors influencing national identity:

- Traditional news outlets are distrusted due to perceived biases and agendas.
- Social media, especially Instagram and Telegram, shapes national identity.
- Music, both Q pop and traditional folk, influences identity.

Government Policies:

- Support for promoting the Kazakh language and ratios.
- Seen as moving away from Russo-Soviet identity for cohesion.
- Government efforts need social media and civic involvement to complement.

Effects of Ethnic Composition:

- Tensions between ethnic and national identity.
- Fluid understanding of ethnicity needed to push past the Soviet lens.
- Some interethnic conflicts, exacerbated by the Russo-Ukraine war.

Language:

- Increased use of Kazakh in public spaces is positive.
- Bilingualism is a key part of Kazakh identity.
- Concerns about limited Kazakh in STEM, texts being translated from Russian to Kazakh.
- Improvements in English-Kazakh translation.

Other Challenges:

- Civicness needs societal roots, not just regime influence.
- Officials with Soviet-era thinking hinder nation-building.
- Westernisation, globalisation, and regional divisions pose challenges.

CONCLUSIONS

- Digital ethnographies and social media analysis can provide more insights.
- Understanding identity barriers is crucial for stability.
- Comparative studies with neighbours can offer valuable practices.

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