

Civil Identity of Young Kazakhstanis in the Context of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to conduct a sociological survey to assess the state of civic identity among Kazakhstani youth within the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It aims to explore the correlation between young citizens' ethnic backgrounds and their acceptance of citizenship. Data was collected through a questionnaire developed by researchers to examine the multifaceted dynamics involved. A total of 754 citizens between 14 and 35 took part in the survey. The findings indicate that, in the present circumstances, the sense of belonging to the state among young Kazakhstanis is primarily contextual, prevailing over other identity constructs when queried about their attitude towards citizenship. However, when measuring the level of identification—how frequently individuals perceive themselves as citizens—ethnic identity takes precedence over civic identity. The survey underscores that ethnic origin stands out as the foremost determinant of social belonging for young people in Kazakhstan in the current scenario. Moreover, this study emphasizes the significant role played by information sources in shaping civic identity. We have elucidated the intricate relationship among ethnic identity, citizenship perception, and contextual factors among Kazakhstani adolescents amidst ongoing geopolitical events using our analytical approach.

Keywords: civic identity, national identity, nation-building, self-identification

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The article considers the features of the formation of the civil identity of young Kazakhstanis at the time of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Given that identity formation is influenced by various factors and conditions, the direct impact of conflict on civic identification is undoubtedly difficult to determine. The challenge was in the fact that the residents of Kazakhstan were not direct participants in this conflict. However, it should be taken into account that the Russian-Ukrainian conflict caused a certain split in the worldviews of Kazakhstanis. This is confirmed by research conducted by the non-governmental organization “MediaNet” International Centre for Journalism” in November 2022 as part of the Demoscope project. The survey involved 1,100 people over the age of 18 from 17 regions and three cities of republican significance (Almaty, Astana, and Shymkent). A definite position divergence regarding the Russian-Ukrainian conflict can be seen in the responses received in 2022 regarding the interpretation of current events: 22% believe that Russia is on the war path against Ukraine with the goal of its occupation and further annexation, 18% of respondents claim that Russia is on the war-path with Western countries and NATO on the territory of Ukraine, 15% believe that Russia is conducting a special military operation against the Nazis in Ukraine, 45% found it difficult to answer (Davletshin, 2022). At the same time, the survey says that the share of young citizens supporting Ukraine is four times higher than those who support Russia - 23% and 6% percent, respectively.

It should be noted that the present survey was conducted in March 2022, and perhaps the results were dependent on the position of the authorities of Kazakhstan, which at that time was characterized by its uncertainty. The repeated survey recorded a significant decrease in the number of Kazakhstani citizens supporting Russia: in March, there were 39%, then in December 2022 13% (Weiskopf, 2022). However, the latest public survey showed that among Kazakhstanis, there is no clear position: only was revealed an increase in the share of Kazakhstanis from 22% to 28% who believe that Russia is on the war-path against Ukraine, aiming to occupy and further annex it. This happened due to a decrease in the proportion of those who found it difficult to answer this question. As noted in the research material, the survey was conducted through telephone interviews among mobile users in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The sampling frame was a database of numbers obtained using a random number generator. The interviews were conducted with a total of 110 respondents over 18 years of age. The maximum error with a probability of 95% does not exceed 3% (Demoscope, 2023).

Transitioning from the discussion of survey results and public sentiment in Kazakhstan, it is evident that understanding the dynamics of societal perspectives is crucial in shaping a nation's civic identity. Civic identity encompasses the collective sense of belonging, shared values, and active participation in the public sphere (Escalera-Reyes, 2020). In the context of Kazakhstan, as reflected in the survey findings, shifts in attitudes towards neighboring countries like Russia can influence how citizens perceive their national identity and their role in the broader geopolitical landscape. Exploring the nuances of civic identity within Kazakhstan provides insight into how individuals perceive their relationship with their government, their fellow citizens, and the international community, ultimately shaping the fabric of their society. In light of the continuing crisis between Russia and Ukraine, the purpose of this study is to conduct a sociological survey in order to evaluate the level of civic identity among Kazakhstani youth.

Civic Identity

Civic identity refers to the sense of belonging and connection individuals hold towards their political community and their understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens (Wray-Lake et al., 2023). It encompasses feelings of shared values, history, and destiny, shaping individuals' engagement with public life (Kilinc & Tarman, 2022; Sherrod et al., 2010; Tarman & Kilinc, 2023). This identity is multifaceted and influenced by diverse factors

including nationality, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status (Ekici, 2021; Gurr & Moore, 1996). Civic identity can be a powerful motivator for participation in democratic processes, promoting active citizenship and collective action (Ajaps & Obiagu, 2020; Enright & Toledo, 2023; Wray-Lake et al., 2023). However, it can also be a source of exclusion and division when based on narrow definitions of who belongs (Isin, 2009). Understanding the complexities of civic identity is crucial for fostering inclusive and participatory societies.

The civic identity of Kazakhstanis has undergone significant changes over the course of 30 years since gaining independence—there has been a transformation from Soviet identity to Kazakhstani identity. At present, it is fair to say that Kazakhstanis have formed their own model of civic identity, characterized by their own unique system of values. A model of nation formation has emerged. This process is called the formation of a civil nation in modern scientific literature (Kaliyev & Ventsel, 2022).

It should be noted that in Kazakhstan, for a long time, the formation of civic identity was carried out according to the American model of “melting pot”. This was evidenced by such slogans as “unity in diversity,” “multinationality is our value,” “our strength is in unity.”. Nowadays, the situation has changed a little. In his last speech at a meeting of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, President K. Tokayev noted that “our society is a union of free and responsible citizens, united by common ideals and values. And this is another vivid manifestation of our national identity.” At the same time, one of the important statements was that the President called Kazakhstani society a nation, emphasizing its ethnic component. The President said that our citizens feel like members of one large and united Kazakh family (Tokayev, 2023). Previously, the word nation was mainly used in official texts in the Kazakh language in political statements. In Russian versions, the word “nation” was replaced by “Kazakhstanis,” “Kazakhstan society,” “we,” and “citizens of Kazakhstan.”

Taking into account the fact that the transfer from one type of identity to another is a complex process and takes much time, also taking into account the transitional state of our state, characterized by the presence of social, political, economic, and cultural problems, civil identification exists and remain the object of attention not only authorities, but also scientists (Karimova et al., 2023; Shah et al., 2023). A weak civic identity can have an impact on internal stability in the country, the success of various reforms, and the results of modernization of society’s institutions (Assyltayeva et al., 2012; Clabough, 2021; Orakova et al., 2024). And here, undoubtedly, maintaining the country’s unity should be considered as an important condition for successful functioning. Therefore, the state’s agenda should include educating a generation positioning itself as a true, full-fledged citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan. An important issue here is to reveal the essence of civic identity, giving a new approach to the definition of the present concept (Kilinc et al., 2023). Currently, there is a need to clarify the concept of “citizen of Kazakhstan,” the formation of a true nation of Kazakhstan with a high level of civic identity. The relevance of such an approach is also explained by the fact that a large number of small identity forms characterizes modern Kazakh society. In this context, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict became one of their manifestations (Alshawi et al., 2023).

The sovereignty of the country, the legitimacy of power are currently closely related to the level of civic identity. The primary problem is how much the society has formed as a nation (Kaya, 2022a, 2022b). In this context a nation is understood as a single community that can be self-determined and can ensure its interests. As well as society gains unity through the common identity formation. Therefore, the formation of national, civil identity in the consciousness of Kazakhstani society plays a big role in preserving and strengthening the sovereignty of the state.

The process of formation of civil, national identity is considered one of the pressing topics in every modern state. While for some states the formation of the intrastate society identity is relevant, some states are engaged in the formation of a supranational type of identity

that unites citizens of several states. The primacy of civilian identity over other identities is considered to be extremely important in times of war (Nikolaiets & Syniavska, 2022).

There are some studies in the literature that handles civic identity from different perspectives. For instance, Lep and Zupančič (2023) constructed a Civic Identity Status Scale and gathered data from 493 people who are at the age of 18-29 with this scale. They found that the scale was valid and reliable and could be used in further research. Johnson and Ferguson (2018) found in a longitudinal research that graduates had difficulty in advancing their civic identities in a contentious political climate and in professions that frequently made them feel constrained or incapable of doing so. Vickery (2020) carried out a qualitative study on civic identity and migration with an African American woman and teacher. The results show that the participant employed her family's experiences to reintroduce diverse bodies into the American civic curriculum, and the researcher discovered that she saw migration as a key motif in comprehending Black culture. The participant also gained an understanding of how educators can draw from their own experiences to develop curricula that serve as healing environments by incorporating real-life experiences.

Civic identity refers to the beliefs, emotions, and experiences of individuals regarding their membership in a particular community and the perceived opportunities for their civic participation. It represents one of the most important predictors of civic engagement, yet there is little empirical evidence of its development in diverse samples (Lep & Zupančič, 2023; Suntana & Tresnawaty, 2021). And for Kazakhstan today the main goal is to form an identity that ensures integrity within the country. At the same time, civic identity is considered a factor in ensuring the stability of the state. Therefore, this study is not only a step towards filling the gap in the field but also a step towards the creation of Kazakhstan's civic identity. Although there are some studies on Kazakhstan and civic identity in the literature (Assyltayeva et al., 2012; Tolen & Assyltayeva, 2017; Yussupova et al., 2023), studies that collect data from individuals who form this identity and present the results of this research are insufficient. For this reason, it can be said that the empirical data of the study will contribute to the field and is important for exploring civic identity. The study will also provide data to government officials and educators working on the formation of civic identity. Furthermore, as the social, economic, and political effects of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the world are still ongoing, this study is important for uncovering the key factors that shape individuals' sense of belonging to their communities, their participation in civic activities and their perceptions of collective responsibility. As a result, the implications of this study are relevant for all countries affected by a problem that arises anywhere in our ever-shrinking world.

In light of geopolitical tensions, the aim of this article is to delve deeper into the condition of civic identity among the youth of Kazakhstan within the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. To achieve this aim, the following research questions guided the inquiry:

1. What factors influence the self-identification of young people?
2. What are the participants' views on civic identity?
3. Which country do the participants consider as their homeland?
4. What are the participants' views on the official language?
5. What is the impact of media on the formation of civic identity?
6. How has the Russia-Ukraine conflict affected participants' attitudes towards Kazakhstan?
7. What are the views of participants on being a citizen of Kazakhstan?

Method

Research Design

The empirical basis of the survey is a sociological survey. The sociological survey method is a cornerstone of social research, enabling the collection of data from large populations to understand social phenomena and group characteristics (Babbie, 2021). It involves administering questionnaires or conducting interviews with individuals, gathering their responses on various topics related to their attitudes, behaviors, and experiences (Foddy, 2016). This method offers several advantages, including reaching a diverse sample, gathering quantitative data for statistical analysis, and providing insights into large-scale social trends (Bryman, 2012). Since there are not many studies on the civic identity development of Kazakh citizens and the effects of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the need to collect data from a large group of participants arose, and this need was met by using the sociological survey method.

Participants and Settings

The survey was conducted in August 2023 among young people in Almaty city. A total of 754 citizens aged 14 to 35 took part in the survey. When forming the sample, we took into account changes in legislation on increasing the age of citizens classified as youth to 35 years. 350 of the participants were male, while 404 of them were female. According to official statistics, the number of youth in Kazakhstan, taking into account increasing age, is 5 726 629 people (Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan, 2023). To analyze the results of the sociological survey, it was proposed to consider youth according to the age periodization proposed by Erikson (1994), divided into 3 groups (adolescence, youth, maturity). According to Erikson (1994), in youth, the “ego-identity” is finally formed, and a dominant positive identity is established. In youth, people achieve the ability to give part of themselves to another person without fear of losing their own identity. At the maturity stage, a new personality parameter appears with common humanity at one end of the scale and self-absorption - at the other end of the scale. Eriksson names general humanity the ability of a person to be interested in the destinies of people outside the family circle, to think about the future life of generations, the forms of the future society and the structure of the future world (Erikson, 1994).

The choice of the youth of Almaty city is explained by the fact that Almaty city is the largest metropolis, where, firstly, a large number of educational institutions are concentrated, and secondly, the city is attractive for employment of youth from different regions of Kazakhstan. At the same time, attention is to be paid to the low level of participation of residents of Almaty city during the presidential elections in 2022 (28.72%), which indicates a low level of their political activity (the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022).

The survey was conducted anonymously. The sample is stratified, territorial, and representative. Citizens living in every district of Almaty city took part in the survey. The permissible error was no more than 2.5%.

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey included questions that are often used when surveying of civic identity. Therefore, a comprehensive literature review was conducted and draft questions were developed based on the studies on civic identity. In addition, the questionnaire consisted of questions developed by the authors. The questions developed by the authors have been examined by three leading Kazakhstani experts involved in sociological research in practice

who took part in the examination. Considering the participation of young people in the survey, experts made proposals to simplify the questions so that they sound as simple and understandable as possible for young people. The experts' comments were fully taken into account. After the examination, the questionnaire underwent 2 pilot surveys. During the first pilot survey, it was decided to add a new answer option, which is often mentioned by young people and not reflected in the survey. The questionnaire was successfully tested in the second pilot survey without any comments. A total of 70 young citizens took part in the pilot surveys. As a result, the survey consisted of a total of 26 questions, with 9 related to demographics and 17 related to civic identity, each with options. The survey results were processed in SPSS program. The percentages of participants' responses were calculated according to categories and presented under each category title.

Findings

In order to survey the problematic aspects of the civil identity formation and find ways to strengthen national unity in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it is undoubtedly, first of all, important to determine the hierarchy of self-identification of citizens of Kazakhstan in line with the first problem of the research. Table 1 shows the factors the self-identification of participants.

Table 1

Factors that Influence the Self-Identification of Participants

	Often	Sometimes	Never	Struggle with the answer
With people of your age, generation	69,3%	24,4%	2,7%	3,6%
With people of the same profession, occupation	39,5%	49,0%	6,1%	5,4%
With all citizens of Kazakhstan	48,0%	32,4%	8,0%	11,6%
With those who live in the same city, village	46,5%	37,4%	8,4%	7,7%
With people of your ethnicity, nationality	52,9%	33,8%	8,0%	5,2%
With people of the same income as you	30,1%	35,1%	20,7%	14,1%
With people close to you in political views	37,4%	37,4%	12,3%	12,8%

The results of a sociological survey among young people in Almaty city showed the opinion of participants on the key elements of self-identification. The issue of self-identification showed that for young people, the main thing for self-determination and separating themselves from another part of society is age, belonging to youth (69.3%). In general, the basic indicators of civic, group closeness, and unity are most often age, ethnic origin, and residence in a common city, town, or village. It is these indicators that help most young people identify themselves. The question allowed us to determine the most intense and less intense factors that influence the self-identification of young people.

As a result, it can be understood that the younger generation, students, and schoolchildren quite specifically separate themselves from the middle and older generations of the population of Kazakhstan. We can conclude that for the majority of young people, general age and being young are more important than political views, economic wealth, profession, and occupation. This basic question also confirms the traditional nature of Kazakhstani society. Traditionalist elements are as important and powerful indicators of self-determination as language. Despite the fact that traditionalism has always been inherent in the older generation

of Kazakhstanis, the results showed that young people continue to perceive ethnic origin as the most important indicator for self-determination (52.9%). Obviously, a single ethnic origin also means a common language, culture, and traditions, which may be even more prevalent among rural youth in the regions of Kazakhstan. We hope that this survey will be the first stage and will continue through the civic identification survey in the regions of Kazakhstan, especially in the rural part of the country. Further research will allow us to assess the entire situation with civil identification of the population and youth of Kazakhstan.

In turn, what is surprising is that citizenship did not become overwhelming among the urban youth being surveyed. The expected common citizenship for all, residence in one country, which was supposed to be the first and main thing, was chosen by only half of the respondents (48%).

It should be noted that young people aged 14 to 19 years, in comparison with other age categories of citizens, show a high intensity of civic identity (48.7%), citizens aged 20 to 24 - belonging to a social class (38.7%), while citizens aged 25-29 years are characterized by a high intensity of ethnic (90.9%) and age (81.8%) identities. The data obtained correspond to the concept of identity crisis by E. Erikson (1994). Thus, according to Erikson, in adolescence, people are in search of identity and determining their significance for the people around them, while in adulthood, on the contrary, they distance themselves from the masses.

Table 2

Distribution of Answers by Age about the Factors that Influence the Self-Identification of Participants

	Often			Sometimes			Never			Struggle with the answer		
	14-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	14-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	14-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	14-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years
With people of your age, generation	69,6	67,3	81,8	25,0	22,6	18,2	1,4	7,1	0,0	3,9	3,0	0,0
With people of the same profession, occupation	39,1	38,7	72,7	51,4	44,0	0,0	4,1	13,1	0,0	5,4	4,2	27,3
With all citizens of Kazakhstan	48,7	47,3	27,3	31,6	34,7	36,4	7,0	11,4	9,1	12,7	6,6	27,3
With those who live in the same city, village	47,1	43,7	54,5	37,1	38,3	36,4	8,0	9,6	9,1	7,7	8,4	0,0
With people of your ethnicity, nationality	52,9	50,6	90,9	35,8	28,9	9,1	6,7	13,3	0,0	4,7	7,2	0,0
With people of the same income as you	27,6	38,7	27,3	35,9	32,7	27,3	20,5	21,4	18,2	16,0	7,1	27,3
With people close to you in political views	36,1	41,7	45,5	37,0	41,7	0,0	12,3	11,5	27,3	14,7	5,1	27,3

In turn, sometimes, profession, occupation, and residence in the same city or village are important indicators of belonging to one population group for young people. The most difficult questions to assess were questions about wealth, economic status and political views and preferences. These indicators caused the most difficult moments for the youth being surveyed to understand their role in self-identification and perception of themselves as a member of the group.

The second research problem of the study is “What are the participants' views on civic identity?” In order to answer this question, respondents were asked to what extent they consider themselves citizens of Kazakhstan. Table 3 shows their answers according to their nationality.

Table 3

Distribution of the Answers by Nationality about Civic Identity

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
Yes, I feel it completely	78,9%	61,5%	57,0%
I feel it to some extent	16,5%	21,2%	31,4%
No, I don't feel it	2,6%	3,8%	1,2%
Struggle with the answer	,8%	1,9%	9,3%
I'm a citizen of the whole world	1,1%	11,5%	1,2%

The question was formulated to understand the value self-assessment of respondents on belonging to civic identity in Kazakhstan, in general. It is obvious that all the young people being surveyed were citizens of Kazakhstan and it was expected that the answers would not depend on the ethnic or national origin of the respondents. However, despite living, surveying and registering in Almaty city, the young people being surveyed showed a significant difference in their answers and preferences. When being asked whether those surveyed felt fully citizens of Kazakhstan, respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Kazakhs” showed the highest percentage of agreement (78.9%). Also, the present group of respondents showed a small percentage (16.5%) of a neutral answer and noted a certain degree of recognition of themselves as a full-fledged citizen of the country. Only a small percentage (2.6%) spoke negatively, which indicates almost complete confidence and absence of doubt regarding recognition of oneself as a citizen of Kazakhstan. Young respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Russians” also showed a high percentage of confidence that they were full-fledged citizens of the country (61.5%). The neutral option that they “feel to some extent” themselves as citizens of Kazakhstan (21.2%) also received a significant percentage, which indicates recognition of their Kazakhstani citizenship. The serious point is that this group of young respondents practically did not choose the option that they did not have any feeling of belonging to Kazakhstan. The overwhelming majority confirmed their clear civic position of involvement in Kazakhstan.

For other ethnic groups who did not identify themselves as “Kazakhs” or “Russians,” this simple question was not so simple and identified some features. The question of recognizing oneself as a citizen of Kazakhstan was not so intense and unambiguous. Among respondents who identified themselves as “another nationality,” there is a larger percentage of responses on some degree of feeling themselves as full members of the state, in comparison with “Kazakhs,” but also “Russians.” Only half of the present group showed confidence in recognizing themselves as a full-fledged citizen of the country. A surprising point may be the unique result, where 11.5% of “Russians” recognize themselves as citizens of the whole world, in comparison with other groups of respondents.

This issue was important for determining the hierarchy of self-identification of respondents in comparative characteristics when citizenship, ethnic origin, place of residence, religion, and clan membership were compared without determining the intensity of identification.

Respondents were asked to choose more than three answer options if they wished, which made it possible to identify the most important indicators influencing self-identification. As a result, it became clear that the nationality and ethnic origin of respondents has a significant impact on the preferences and opinions of young people.

Table 4

Distribution of Answers by Nationality According to Different Dimensions

	Distribution of answers by nationality		
	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
A representative of his nationality (I am Kazakh, I am Russian, etc.)	46,3%	15,4%	33,3%
A representative of his/her religion (I am a Muslim, I am a Christian)	31,6%	23,1%	33,3%
Citizen of Kazakhstan	67,9%	50,0%	34,5%
Citizen of the world	15,2%	28,8%	9,2%
Representative of your region/city	4,9%	7,7%	6,9%
Representative of a kind/ru (brood)	4,9%	15,4%	8,0%
Other	3,9%	3,8%	26,4%

Respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Kazakhs” showed, in the hierarchy of self-identification, that citizenship is the highest sign of self-identification (67.9%), more than ethnic origin (46.3%) and religious preferences (31.6%). A surprising result may be that the traditional problem of dividing the older generation of Kazakhs into clans and tribes, often declared in the scientific and political environment, has not found its confirmation among young people, as well as the place and city of residence.

Respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Russians” showed a different opinion on the questions posed. Citizenship of Kazakhstan, although it became the main one in the hierarchy of self-perception, was supported by only half of the respondents. A serious difference with the previous group was reflected in the option on ethnic origin. The results of a sociological survey showed that for “Russians” ethnic origin and nationality are not particularly unimportant and significant. In the hierarchy of identification, in addition to citizenship, the perception of oneself as a citizen of the whole world and religion especially stood out. This supports the theory that members of peripheral and marginalized groups demonstrate greater global identification (Gorman & Seguin, 2018). In this case, we are talking about insufficient knowledge of the Kazakh language by representatives of Russian nationality. According to the 2021 census, only 25.1% of Russians speak Kazakh. It should be taken into account that representatives of Russian nationality occupy second place in number after Kazakhs. The population census also showed that a third of Russians living in Kazakhstan do not plan to survey the Kazakh language at all (Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan, 2021).

Respondents who subjectively identified themselves not as “Kazakhs” or “Russians,” but as “another ethnic group” also showed an unusual opinion. In the hierarchy of identification factors, citizenship received the smallest percentage, in comparison with “Kazakhs” and “Russians” (34.5%). In the hierarchy of identification, ethnic origin, and religion have become equally important as citizenship. The “other” option also became surprisingly popular among the present group, where people most often chose family, relatives, loved one,s and relatives as the main indicator of self-identification.

The third question of the research concerns their views about homeland. During the self-identification survey of the youth of Almaty City, it was impossible to ignore the direct question of the complex concept of “homeland,” which can only be explained by subjective perception and personal preferences. Table 5 shows the answers of the participants according to their nationality.

Table 5
Distribution of Answers by Nationality about Homeland

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
Kazakhstan	94,9%	73,1%	76,7%
Russia	0,2%	3,8%	1,2%
Former USSR	1,1%	1,9%	0,0%
Citizen of the world	0,5%	19,2%	7,0%
Another country	1,3%	0,0%	1,2%
Struggle with the answer	2,0%	1,9%	14,0%

As expected, respondents who identified themselves as “Kazakhs” overwhelmingly chose Kazakhstan as their homeland (94.9%). Only a few individuals noted the former USSR, Russia, or another country as their homeland. Respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Russians” also showed a high percentage that they recognize Kazakhstan as their homeland. Only a small percentage noted Russia as an answer option (3.8%). An interesting point is that the youth of the present group chose not Russia but the whole world, identifying themselves as free people or “citizens of the world” (19.2%).

The group of young people surveyed who did not identify themselves as “Kazakhs” or “Russians” also showed a high percentage of self-identification in their homeland, Kazakhstan. However, unlike other groups surveyed, they showed a significant percentage of doubts and found it difficult to give a simple answer to this question (14%).

The fourth question of the study concerns the participants’ views on the official language. Tables 6 and 7 show their answers according to their nationality.

Table 6
Distribution of Answers by Nationality about Official Language

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
It is very important	70,4%	9,8%	24,7%
This is important, but not always	21,2%	56,9%	29,6%
It's not such a big issue	3,0%	11,8%	16,0%
Sometimes you need	3,7%	7,8%	23,5%
Doesn't matter	1,6%	11,8%	6,2%
Struggle with the answer	,2%	2,0%	0,0%

The second group of sociological research questions was devoted to the task of understanding issues of self-identification of young people through specific problematic and most pressing issues of Kazakhstani society. One of the most pressing and discussed issues of Kazakh society and political environment remains the language problem of the future and the role of the Kazakh language in the country.

Based on the results of the question on the importance of knowledge of the state (Kazakh) language, particularly important results were obtained for understanding the complex situation of civic identification among Kazakhstani youth. The problematic formulation of the question made it possible to see differences in civic identification among young people when

identification is associated with identification on the serious and fundamental issue of preserving the native language for the majority of citizens of the country.

Respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Kazakhs” quite clearly expressed their attitude to this discussion topic. They say knowledge of the state language is very important (70.4%). Also, a significant part of the group expressed the opinion that knowledge of the Kazakh language is, although not always the main task, a relatively important topic (24.8%). The question turned out to be quite well-known and understandable for the present group of the population since there were practically no answers to the misunderstanding of the question.

Respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Russians” also clearly expressed their attitude to the issue of the situation with the state language. The majority of respondents believe that knowledge of the state language is a relatively important topic (56.9%), but only a very small part of the group recognizes it as a very serious task for themselves (9.8%). In turn, the options that this is a completely unimportant task and not such a serious topic received equal support among the surveyed part of the youth, bringing together a large percentage of agreements (23.6%). Just like for “Kazakhs,” in the present population group, the question is clear and unambiguous, which shows the absence of opinions on a subject misunderstanding.

The distribution of opinions among representatives of other nationalities also showed the seriousness of the issue of knowledge of the state language. Unlike Kazakhs and Russians, the present group did not show one clear opinion and expressed different preferences. Neither the options on what are absolutely important (24.7%), relatively important (26.9%), nor sometimes important to know the Kazakh language (23.5%) received an absolute majority of support.

Assessing all the results obtained concerning this question, we can highlight a special point that no one expressed a lack of understanding of the question and did not choose the option “I don’t know.” This suggests that every young person in Kazakhstan has developed their own position and a clear understanding of the situation with the Kazakh language. Kazakhs and Russians, in comparison with other ethnic groups, showed that they generally recognize the relevance and importance of the topic of knowledge of the Kazakh language.

Table 7
The Reasons for Considering the Knowledge of the State Language (Kazakh) as Unimportant

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
In Kazakhstan, the state language has no prospects for development	14,3%	6,7%	13,1%
The scope of application of the state language is limited	9,8%	3,3%	1,6%
The status of the state language leaves much to be desired	23,0%	3,3%	0,0%
It is possible to live in Kazakhstan without knowing the state language	20,6%	23,3%	44,3%
The government and officials do not sufficiently support the development of the state language	13,2%	13,3%	8,2%
Many Kazakhs themselves do not know the state language well, which also affects my opinion	13,9%	3,3%	9,8%
Knowledge of Russian and English is more profitable and promising	5,2%	46,7%	23,0%

Clarifying the sixth question made it possible to identify in detail the reasons that influenced the opinion of respondents that it is not important to know the Kazakh language. This survey was conducted only among respondents who indicated in the previous question that there is no need to know the state language. The results made it possible to build a hierarchy of the most significant factors that contributed to this opinion of the respondents. As a result, it became clear that among the respondents who identified themselves as “Kazakhs,” there was no unity of opinion regarding the most serious and one reason that influenced their opinion. None of the options became absolutely dominant among the present group. Also, the results do not allow us to say that it is possible to build a certain hierarchy of problems and conditions that influenced their opinion. However, among the most serious problems were highlighted: the status of the state language leaves much to be desired (23%), it is possible to live in Kazakhstan without knowing the state language (20.6%), and the state language has no prospects for development (14.3%). It is interesting that the option that it is necessary to improve the status of the Kazakh language was supported only by the Kazakhs themselves, while other respondents believed that there were no particular problems with the status and scope of application and spread of the Kazakh language in the country. The least important problems and reasons for the lack of need to know the state language became: “knowledge of Russian and English is more profitable and promising” and “the scope of application of the state language is limited.”

On the contrary, the results obtained in the group that identified themselves as “Russians” allowed us to conclude that in the present group, there is a clear hierarchy of problems and reasons that influenced their opinion. The most serious reason, which was supported by almost half of all respondents, was the option that “knowledge of Russian and English is more profitable and promising” (46.7%). Also, a high percentage was the opinion that “it is possible to live in the country without knowing the state language” (23.3%) and that the Government and officials “do not sufficiently support the development of the state language” (13.3%). It is interesting that these two answer options were also supported almost identically by the Kazakhs. A special difference from the opinion of the Kazakhs is that the results show that the group rather considers it important to survey English and Russian and, accordingly, does not consider it important to survey the Kazakh language, not for reasons of internal problems, but due to the objectivity of external reasons around Kazakhstan and Kazakh language.

A completely different result was obtained after surveying the opinions of a group that identified itself not as Kazakhs or Russians, but as “another nationality.” According to them, it is possible not to know the state language in Kazakhstan due to the fact that one can live in the country without knowing the state language (44.3%), knowledge of Russian and English is more profitable and promising (23%), and also that the state the language has no prospects for development (13.1%). Thus, the group indirectly recognizes the ability and possibility of surveying and using the state language; however, it notes that objective economic and social reasons, the lack of need for this.

We can conclude in this matter that the Kazakhs would most like to increase the status of the state language and expand the scope of its application, also recognizing its non-competitiveness in comparison with English and Russian languages. However, Russians and other nationalities expressed the opposite opinion, noting the sufficient status and state. Support for the development of the state language. According to their position, the objective reality of the inability of the Kazakh language to perform functions at the level of Russian and English and the dominance of the Russian language in many spheres of the country’s life lead to a situation where there is no need to know the state language.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance and modern role of information, which is one of the factors in the identification process among the population. Therefore, the fourth question of the study is about the impact of media on the formation of civic identity. In order

for the answer to this question, participants were first asked about the sources that they use to get information. Table 8 shows the answers according to nationality.

Table 8
Sources of Information

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
Kazakhstani	87,7%	63,5%	85,1%
Russian	3,3%	23,1%	1,1%
Foreign	6,2%	3,8%	12,6%
Other	2,8%	9,6%	1,1%

This question is important from the point of view of comparison and correlation with other respondents' answers. As we realize the complexity of the term information, information communication channels, and information resources, we limited ourselves to the influence of information sources by type of their origin—Kazakh, Russian, or foreign. We also limited ourselves to the question of understanding the role of information in obtaining data on ongoing events only in Kazakhstan.

As a result of surveying the opinion of a group of young people who subjectively identified themselves as Kazakhs, it became clear that the group gives almost absolute preference to Kazakh information resources (87.7%). Only a small percentage (6.2%) form their opinion about the events taking place in the country on the basis of information received from foreign sources. Young people who subjectively assessed themselves as “Russian” also showed high trust in Kazakh information resources (63.5%). However, as expected, it was noted that Russian information channels are also popular among representatives of Russian nationality (23.1%). Oddly enough, a group of young people of a different nationality showed similar results with the Kazakhs. They also expressed overwhelming support for Kazakhstan's news channels (85.1%). The expected difference from all other groups was the support of foreign information resources (12.6%).

Table 9
Information Channels that Participants Use

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
Internet	75,7%	59,6%	63,2%
Television	6,7%	5,8%	2,3%
Newspapers, radio	0,5%	0,0%	0,0%
Social networks and instant messengers	52,5%	78,8%	57,5%
Other	0,7%	0,0%	0,0%

The eighth question in the survey has become a cornerstone for understanding the modern role of information and information channels for informing Kazakhstani youth. This is especially important from the point of view of understanding the special role of information, the Internet, and social networks, which have a significant role in the self-identification of young people. The responses received confirmed the current trend of significant influence of the Internet and social networks among young people. For a more detailed understanding of the most popular information sources and the formation of their hierarchy among young people, they were divided into several types, such as digital media available on the Internet, traditional home television, traditional print media, newspapers, home or mobile radio; social networks, instant messengers and others. Respondents were given the opportunity to select several options

to form a hierarchy of the most popular information channels. In general, the results confirmed the global trend and process that young people are the engine of digitalization and the growing influence of digital media, electronic social networks, and instant messengers.

Respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Kazakhs” identified the Internet (75.7%) and electronic social networks and instant messengers (52.5%) as the main information channels for information obtaining. The youth being surveyed who subjectively identified themselves as “Russians” also identified electronic social networks, instant messengers (78.8%), and the Internet (59.6%) as the main information channels for obtaining information. A similar result was also shown by a group of young people who identified themselves as representatives of “another ethnic group.” They also confirmed that they prefer modern mobile means of obtaining information, such as the Internet (63.2%) and, social networks, instant messengers (57.5%) as sources of information.

The survey results confirmed that despite ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences, the youth of Kazakhstan are united by their common preference for using the Internet, social networks, and instant messengers as the main sources of information and communication. These modern information sources, as expected, have become popular among the youth surveyed, in comparison with traditional home television, print media, and radio.

Table 10

Social Networks or Instant Messengers Used by the Participants

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
Facebook	12,2%	5,8%	31,0%
Twitter	10,3%	21,2%	14,9%
Instagram	76,5%	40,4%	78,2%
WhatsApp	43,2%	36,5%	33,3%
Telegram	37,6%	63,5%	26,4%
VK, Odnoklassniki	3,9%	21,2%	16,1%
Youtube	27,8%	42,3%	21,8%
Other	4,3%	0,0%	1,1%

The ninth and tenth questions became clarifying questions for building a hierarchy of the most popular social networks and instant messengers among young people. Respondents could choose several options, including giving their own answers. All respondents were divided according to nationality and ethnicity. The most famous social networks and instant messengers, known not only in Kazakhstan but throughout the world, were suggested as possible answers. Respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Kazakhs” noted social networks such as Instagram as the most popular (76.5%), WhatsApp (43.2%), Telegram (37.6%), and YouTube (27.8%). The least popular for the present group were Vkontakte.ru, Odnoklassniki.ru, and Twitter. The surveyed youth who subjectively identified themselves as “Russians” identified the following as the most popular social networks and Internet sites: Telegram (63.5%), YouTube (42.3%), Instagram (40.4%), and WhatsApp (36.5%). Only the social network Facebook was rated the least popular compared to other options. A large group of respondents who identified themselves as “other ethnic group” showed different preferences among the different options offered. For the present group, the most popular social networks and Internet programs were Instagram (78.2%), WhatsApp (33.3%), Facebook (31%), Telegram (26.4%), and YouTube (21.8%). The least popular for this group were Twitter and Vkontakte.ru, Odnoklassniki.ru.

In general, despite the general popularity of almost all social networks among the youth surveyed, some differences in preferences can be seen among different ethnic groups. Thus, the entertainment program and social network Instagram, which is popular among Kazakhs and other ethnic groups, is not as popular and widespread among Russians. Conversely, the most popular social network among Russians, Telegram, did not receive the same percentage of support among Kazakhs and other ethnic groups. Also, the social network Facebook has shown its particular attractiveness among ethnic groups other than Kazakhs and Russians, which may be due to the peculiarities of the work of the network, which allows you to find your fellow tribesmen and relatives. The sixth question of the research was, “How has the Russia-Ukraine conflict affected participants’ attitudes toward Kazakhstan?” Table 11 shows the effects of this conflict on participants’ attitudes.

Table 11
The Effect of Russian-Ukrainian Conflict on Participants’ Attitude Towards Kazakhstan

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
Positively	19,2%	19,2%	10,3%
Rather positive	16,3%	7,7%	14,9%
Negative	9,4%	3,8%	2,3%
No, neutral attitude	30,3%	23,1%	33,3%
Rather negative	12,8%	44,2%	37,9%
Struggle with the answer	12,0%	1,9%	1,1%

The tenth question has become a key in terms of fixing the current self-identification of the Kazakhstan youth. This recording of the opinions and moods of young people will allow us to assess the dynamics of change in the framework of subsequent scientific research by the authors of this sociological survey. The attitude of respondents to this conflict is important from the point of view of surveying its dynamics and recording the situation at the current moment, with measuring changes in the framework of subsequent scientific research planned by the authors of the survey. In our opinion, one of the possibilities for recording the current identification of young people may be to survey opinions regarding foreign policy and the actions of the leadership of Kazakhstan. The most relevant and discussed process inside and outside Kazakhstan at the moment is the situation in Ukraine. This conflict is widely covered in many media outlets, and the public group being studied is also aware of this conflict. Under these conditions, in order to assess the current state of civic identification of the country’s youth, it was necessary to understand the attitudes and opinions of young people toward this situation.

It is important to emphasize that this question was not intended to assess foreign policy or government decisions regarding support for Ukraine or Russia in this conflict. The survey did not aim to determine the culprit or victim of the conflict but tried to record the subjective attitude and position of respondents to the actions of Kazakhstan in this conflict. It was important to obtain initial data for further correlation with other indicators of the role of the media and social networks on the identification and opinion of the surveyed youth.

Thus, the respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Kazakhs” assessed the actions and decisions of the Kazakh government in the war in Ukraine definitely positively (19.2%) and rather positively (16.3%). In turn, a small number of respondents noted definitely negatively (9.4%) and rather negatively (12.8%). An expectedly large percentage received the option of a neutral attitude, and many did not express any position on this conflict (30.3%). It is important to note that in this group, a particularly high percentage received the “difficult to answer” option (12%), compared to other youth groups surveyed.

In turn, respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Russians” at some points showed similar opinions to the Kazakhs but also showed their own special preferences. Thus, the options “definitely positive” (19.2%) and “rather positive” (7.7%) received similar percentages, which is what the Kazakhs chose. However, a big difference was manifested in the negative (3.8%) and rather negative (44.2%) assessment of the actions of the government of Kazakhstan regarding the war in Ukraine. This fundamentally distinguishes this group from other groups of respondents surveyed. It is obvious that those surveyed want more active actions by Kazakhstan to support one of the parties direct involvement in the conflict, or to be involved in hostilities in Ukraine directly. The expected neutral position and lack of interest in the war in Ukraine was significantly lower than among the surveyed “Kazakhs” (23.1%). The virtual absence of respondents who found it difficult to answer (1.9%) shows extreme polarization, the active position of the “Russian” respondents, as well as high awareness of the war in Ukraine.

“Other ethnic groups” also showed an almost similar opinion to that of the “Russian” respondents. According to their position, they unequivocally positively (10.3%) and rather positively (14.9%) assessed the decisions of the Kazakh government in the war in Ukraine. In turn, a similar number of respondents in comparison with the “Russians” noted a definitely negative (2.3%) and rather negative (37.9%) opinion, which also indicates a desire for a more active and involved position of the Kazakh government in the war in Ukraine. The option of a neutral attitude and the absence of a specific position on this conflict (33.3%) became similar to the position of the “Kazakhs,” which indicates the presence of a large number of young people from this group who do not have a clear position regarding support for one or another side of the conflict. The extremely low percentage of those who chose the “difficult to answer” option (1.1%) shows that despite neutrality, almost all respondents from this group are aware of the events in Ukraine.

In this context, in order to establish peace and harmony among the people, as a historically significant issue, the definition of a common value system for all citizens and the formation of a solid foundation of citizenship become relevant. Thus, the survey participants were asked to assess the importance of their belonging to the Kazakh nation in accordance with the seventh question of this research, which was “What are the views of participants on being a citizen of Kazakhstan?” Table 12 shows the importance of feeling that themselves belong to the Kazakh nation.

Table 12

The Importance of Feeling that Participants Belong to the Kazakh Nation

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
Very important	57,8%	7,7%	31,0%
More important than not important	25,5%	19,2%	16,1%
Probably doesn't matter	4,6%	1,9%	12,6%
It doesn't matter to me	6,6%	46,2%	29,9%
I didn't think about this problem at all.	5,4%	25,0%	10,3%

The eleventh question is the cornerstone for understanding the civic identification of the country's youth regarding belonging and perception of themselves as part of the Kazakh nation. The civil concept of “Kazakh nation” is new and quite debatable; however, it reflects modern trends in the unification of all citizens of the country, regardless of their origin and ethnicity. Despite the inherently neutral concept of “Kazakh nation,” it did not become a unifying concept for a large part of the country's citizens, as the survey results proved. The key and perhaps the only constructivist concept capable of uniting all the youth of the country under the common

name “Kazakh nation” fulfills its role and significance at the moment only in limited forms and percentages.

As expected, only young people who subjectively identified themselves as “Kazakhs” showed a high percentage of agreement that they are part of and belong to the “Kazakh nation.” The majority (57.8%) confirmed that it is very important for them to feel that they belong to the Kazakh nation. In turn, a significant portion also noted that it is more important for them to feel that they belong to a nation than vice versa (25.5%). It is noteworthy that only a small percentage chose other options, stating that it was not important to them or that they had not thought about it at all. Also, only a small percentage received the option that they are undecided and do not have their own point of view on this issue, which indicates the importance of this identification in this group of young people.

The result among “Russians” became difficult to assess due to the fact that a significant number of respondents chose the option “it doesn’t matter to me,” which indicates obvious processes of a crisis of civic identity among this group (46.2%). This is confirmed by the high percentage of those who have the position that they “have not thought about this topic at all” (25%). On the contrary, the option of strong support and desire to be part of the Kazakh civil nation (7.7%) indicates the need for the government to take measures to change the situation. An essentially neutral concept does not fulfill its unifying civic role in this group of young people, which was also shown by the survey results.

The results of the survey among “other ethnic groups” showed an ambiguous situation of lack of unity of opinion among respondents of this group, which indicates the lack of consensus. The responses did not show a clear result regarding support or a lack of desire to identify them as part of the Kazakh nation. Firm identification of oneself as part of the Kazakh nation (31%), as well as a “rather positive attitude towards this identification” (16.1%), is adjacent to a significant portion of those who, on the contrary, consider this “not important” for themselves (12.6 %) and, moreover, does not attach importance to this civil concept (29.9%).

In line with the seventh question of the research, respondents were asked how they felt about being a citizen of Kazakhstan. Table 13 shows the answers of the participants.

Table 13
The Feelings about Being a Citizen of Kazakhstan

	Kazakhs	Russians	Other nationalities
I’m proud of it	52,7%	5,8%	13,8%
Okay - I love my homeland	33,4%	57,7%	39,1%
I don’t care what country you live in	9,2%	26,9%	34,5%
Badly	1,6%	0,0%	1,1%
I find it difficult to answer	3,0%	9,6%	11,5%

Clarifying the twelfth question about the attitude of respondents to the fact that they are citizens of Kazakhstan highlighted the significant emotional component of the subject of the survey. A subjective assessment of the opinion of the youth surveyed showed a special emotional side of civic identification, which was reflected in interesting results among the different ethnic groups surveyed. Respondents who subjectively assessed themselves as “Kazakhs” expectedly noted that they were proud of their Kazakh citizenship (52.7%). This is a much higher percentage compared to other youth groups surveyed. In contrast, respondents who subjectively identified themselves as “Russian” and “other nationality” showed less pride in relation to Kazakhstani citizenship 5.8% and 13.8%, respectively.

Also, a large percentage of Kazakhs, like other nationalities, positively assess their citizenship through the concept of homeland and place of residence (33.4%) and (39.1%), respectively. This supports the theory that civic identity should not be equated with citizenship

but includes cultural markers of birth, origin, as well as place of residence (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2010). It is interesting that for respondents who identified themselves as “Russians,” the concept of homeland comes first in comparison with all other groups surveyed (57.7%).

On the contrary, significantly less than other ethnic groups, Kazakhs chose a neutral attitude towards their citizenship (9.2%). At the same time, a neutral attitude towards citizenship and the lack of particular importance of living on the territory of Kazakhstan turned out to be more significant for “Russians” (26.9%) and “other nationalities” (34.5%). This may indicate that for them, the objective factors of economic and social conditions and the comfort of living in the country are more important than the emotional components.

Another difference in opinions and positions among respondents was reflected in the difficulty of answering the question. Only Kazakhs showed the minimum percentage of answers about the difficulty to this question, showing a clear opinion and confident position. In contrast, other groups showed a higher percentage of difficulty when asked about their emotional attitude towards the fact that they are citizens of the country and live on the territory of Kazakhstan.

The answer option that respondents have a “bad” attitude towards the fact that they live in Kazakhstan and are citizens of this country united all respondents. This answer option unites this group of the country’s population and shows the general mood of citizens that they cannot call the very fact of citizenship bad and the reality that they now live in Kazakhstan and have citizenship of this country.

Thus, we can say that civil identification is built not only around the objective factors of citizenship, residence, and registration but also around the concept of homeland and common home. For the youth being surveyed, civic identification is the presence of citizenship, a direct association with the homeland, birth on the territory of the country, as well as an objective choice of the existing economic and social level of development, political situation, and reality in the country. This allows us to conclude that civic identification is not only an objective choice but also an emotional feeling of young people.

Discussion

The aim of this research is to assess the state of civic identity among Kazakhstani youth within the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine by using a sociological survey. In Kazakhstan, issues of the formation of civil identity have been studied for quite a long time, being the subject of research in the social sciences and humanities (Assyltayeva et al., 2012; Davletshin, 2022; Tolen & Assyltaeva, 2017). In general, some studies in Kazakhstani literature have been devoted to surveying the topic of development indicators and the process of formation of civil identity in Kazakhstan. Scientists presented a value portrait of Kazakhstanis, taking into account the specifics of social groups and regions, according to which civic identification prevailed over other types of identities (Ismukhanova, 2020). The role of various institutions in the formation of a sense of citizenship was considered (Ozdemir, 2021; Sadvakasova & Dosmagambetova, 2015), the influence of globalization and neo-traditionalism on the identity of Kazakhstani youth (Karipbayev, 2021), the factors of formation of civil identity and those influencing its dynamics have been established (Borisenko, 2021). However, they all conducted research before the mentioned global and internal processes of the country, which directly influenced the conditions, factors, and elements of self-identification of citizens.

It is important to note that this scientific research on the issue of civil identification of Kazakhstanis is taking place for the first time and has no analogues. It takes into account the influence of such important events in the region and in the country itself as the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the riots that occurred in January 2022 throughout Kazakhstan, especially in the city of Almaty.

The formation of civil identity in the context of interstate conflicts has become the subject of research by many scientists. Using the example of the Second World War, the influence of the media on the formation of historical memory and national identity was examined (Kulyk, 2011). Some scholars argue that during conflicts, the meaning and boundaries of national identity are subject to rethinking by the people of their country. A survey conducted on the formation of the civil identity of Syrians in conditions of war showed that the majority of survey participants associate their belonging to the future Syria with broader ideas of citizenship, political rights, and participation rather than identifying themselves with their ethnic community and religion (Bachleitner, 2022).

Various studies regarding the impact of interstate conflicts, including the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, on the state of civil identity of society are in the scientific literature. A chronological review of the scientific literature shows an increase in Ukrainians' sense of citizenship since the outbreak of the conflict.

Some scholars have concluded that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine led to the growth of the national identity of Ukrainians, filling civic attachment to the homeland with ethno-cultural content (Kulyk, 2022). The significant increase in the proportion of people who consider Ukraine their homeland occurred despite the fact that ethnic identity and linguistic practices have changed little at the aggregate level (Pop-Eleches & Robertson, 2018). It is argued that the very meaning of belonging to the Ukrainian nation has changed, which manifested itself, first of all, in increasing alienation from Russia and the wider embrace of Ukrainian nationalism (Kulyk, 2016). At the same time, according to some scientists, the ethnic identity of the residents of Donetsk and Lugansk influenced the formation of political views; however, it was revealed that the separatist mood was largely caused by local problems rather than the Russian language and pro-Russian foreign policy issues (Giuliano, 2018).

One of the important factors in the formation of civic identity was the value of Ukraine's independence, which contributed to national consolidation during the war. The unification and cohesion of the people took place on the basis of mutual support, emotional connection and strengthening of horizontal ties. Additional indicators included belief in the victory of the state and citizens' expectations regarding the future of the state (Deineko, 2023).

One cannot but agree that challenges to the territorial integrity of the state shape attitudes towards the state and collective identity. Surveys conducted in 2017-2018 showed that civic identity during this period was focused on the Ukrainian state structure. Thus, contrary to the official state rhetoric, which at the time presented an increasingly narrow ethnolinguistic definition of the Ukrainian nation-state, Ukrainian society promoted a more inclusive state identity from below (Sasse & Lackner, 2019).

The analysis allows us to conclude that in most cases, in the context of interstate conflicts, the civil identity of the society of the participating countries prevails over the ethnic identity. Important indicators are common faith in the victory of the state, the future of the country, and mutual support. In times of emergency, such as in times of war, the nationality to which individuals belong affects their approach to events, and they are affected by the situation in their country. In particular, the fact that Kazakhs were not affected by the war as much as Russians and that Russians' attitudes towards Kazakhstan were quite negative were remarkable results.

Conclusion

Thus, in the studied social group of youth, important trends and characteristics emerged that proved that in Kazakhstan, there is no clear and full-fledged civic form of identification. Definitely, a significant part of the young people surveyed, but not the overwhelming or absolute majority, showed identification based on citizenship, residence in a common territory,

and political community. Ethnic, linguistic, and religious elements continue to play a significant role as identifiers of citizenship, community, and unity for a significant part of the country's youth. It can definitely be said that significant changes are taking place in Kazakhstani society regarding the issue of belonging to the “Kazakh people,” including those caused by recent and current events within the country and in neighboring countries, which inevitably force young people to think about belonging to Kazakhstan in the context of conflicts, wars, instability, where ethnic, religious, linguistic factors become key imperatives, indicators of belonging to a country and society.

It was revealed that Kazakhstan’s indirect involvement in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict inevitably caused a certain reaction among many citizens of the country. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has become an indicator of the identification of the country’s citizens, revealing some hidden and explicit values of the citizens of Kazakhstan. As a result of a sociological survey among young people, the influence of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on the attitude of Kazakhstani citizens towards their state was revealed. Attention was paid to identifying the subjective attitude and position of respondents to the actions of Kazakhstan in this conflict.

Currently, the concept of “citizen of Kazakhstan” requires clarification, which will undoubtedly contribute to the formation of a new scientific approach in the process of surveying the true nation of Kazakhstan with a high level of civic identity. The relevance of this issue is also explained by the fact that modern Kazakh society is characterized by a large number of small forms of identity. It is worth noting that in this context, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict became one of their manifestations. Civic identity is one of the conditions for maintaining interethnic harmony: it acts both as a warning factor in interethnic conflicts and as an element that stimulates dialogue solutions to emerging contradictions and promotes the integration of society.

In addition, an important issue is the further survey of the essence of civic identity, which would give a new approach to the definition of this concept. This may well turn out to be an important area for future and promising scientific research.

The concept of “Kazakh nation” has not yet become a unifying factor for a large part of the country’s citizens, as proven by the survey results. The key and constructivist concept of the “Kazakh nation” is currently capable of uniting all the country’s youth only to a limited and partial extent. The subjective assessment of the opinion of the youth surveyed, for the most part, demonstrated the emotional side of civic identification, which was reflected in the interesting results among the different ethnic groups surveyed. Further research is needed to confirm this new result. This is a good starting point for discussion and further research.

The study’s result raises important issues that are relevant worldwide and go beyond Kazakhstan. It highlights the difficulty young people confront in developing a distinct and all-encompassing civic identity, reflecting a more general problem that many nations face globally. The enduring significance of ethnic, linguistic, and religious affinities as fundamental indicators of identity is indicative of a worldwide tendency in which these variables persist in molding conceptions of community and citizenship. Furthermore, the effects of foreign conflicts—like the one involving Russia and Ukraine—showcase how world events can affect national perceptions of statehood. This phenomenon is not specific to Kazakhstan; rather, it is a reflection of the wider interconnection of the world at large, as geopolitical conflicts impact both individual and collective identities. Since different types of identification can either strengthen interethnic conflicts or promote social cohesiveness, it is important to have a sophisticated understanding of civic identity. This study is limited to a survey that was applied to a large group of people. Qualitative data can provide a deeper understanding about civic identity and the effects of conflict on it. Moreover, the pursuit of a cohesive national identity continues to pose a substantial obstacle, suggesting more intricate difficulties in promoting harmony amidst variety. This study offers a sobering reminder of the complicated forces at

work in civilizations all over the world, calling for more investigation and discussion on the challenges of identity creation in a global community that is becoming more interconnected by the day.

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