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## Formation of civil and patriotic education of youth in Kazakhstan

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### Abstract

To instill patriotism in youth is one of the actual problems of poly-ethnic and multi-confessional Kazakhstan; accordingly, this article deals with civil duty and patriotic education of Kazakhstan's youth. Presenting comparative analysis of overseas and domestic experience of patriotic education, this paper aims to define the extent of civil and patriotic sentiment of youth in Kazakhstan. The research into this topic is based on the survey conducted by Department for Youth Policy under the Ministry of Science and Education along with Centre for Analysis and Prognosis 'C.A.P.' among 1000 people, aged 14-29, from 14 regions of Kazakhstan to define the extent of patriotic feeling and civil activity of youth in Kazakhstan.

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### 1. Introduction

Today, Kazakhstan strives to join the world's most developed and competitive countries. Global competitiveness pertains not only to the economics or politics, also to high intellectual quality of countries as well as increasing civil activity and patriotic consciousness of youth. It is a common practice of any country to pay a particular attention to youth which is the driving force and determining factor in national strategic development. The XXI century focuses on the decisive role of education, science, innovation, the quality of human capital and civil activity of youth. Youth of Kazakhstan represents a big social-demographic group. It comprises 29% of the population, i.e. a third of the country's population is young people. Civil activity and patriotism of youth have a great impact on the intellectual development of the country. The youth, being a driving force of the society, should wholeheartedly serve and express strong feelings of patriotism for homeland which is a main prerequisite for Kazakhstan to achieve its ambitious goals in strategic development. In his annual Address to the people of Kazakhstan delivered in 2010 'New Kazakhstan in a New World', President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev highlighted 'patriotism, political freedom, and civil activity as major factors in the formation of new Kazakhstan' [1]. Long-term development strategy program 'Kazakhstan-2030' points out that, 'we must develop a strong sentiment of patriotism in all citizens of Kazakhstan' [2]. In this respect, in his last annual Address 'Social-economic modernization as a main direction of development of Kazakhstan' President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev

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emphasized the importance of values such as patriotism, morality, humanity, interethnic concord, tolerance and necessity of infusing all these values in young people [3]. To develop a sense of patriotism in youth, one of the main values is now a cornerstone for stability and prosperity of the country. Under current conditions, aspirations seeking statehood based on patriotism will lead to modernization and intellectual development of society.

## 2. The concept of patriotism and civil consciousness

So what is ‘patriotism’ and who is ‘a patriot’? To answer this question is quite difficult. More contemporary definition of ‘patriotism’ associates a person’s intellect with his emotional reactions to his place of birth, upbringing, childhood and adolescent memories, and his becoming a person. Further more precise definitions of ‘patriotism’ and ‘patriot’ are provided:

1. The main of them is to respect the place of birth and permanent residence; love and care of this territory; honoring its local traditions; eternal loyalty to this land.

2. Showing respect for ancestors, love and tolerance to the fellow-countrymen, willingness to help them, weaning them away from the bad. The highest degree of this characteristic is benevolence to all compatriots who are the citizens of this country, i.e. the awareness of social body called as ‘nation of citizenship’.

3. Performing certain daily activities which benefit the country, embellishing and developing homeland, helping fellow citizens and compatriots, and providing mutual assistance to them [4].

If patriotism is expressed as one’s concerns about his country’s past and present, civil consciousness is related to a person’s association with a certain nation and its political activity. The term ‘civil consciousness’ is polysemantic: 1) antithesis of anti-policy attitude, active and conscious involvement in political affairs; 2) psychological sense of being a citizen and full member of political community; 3) ability and willingness to act as a full citizen; 4) the highest virtue of free and full member of political community; 5) commitment to political community, mostly to the state, willingness to sacrifice for nation. These and other related concepts of ‘civil consciousness’ complement and underpin each other; this is why it takes wider meaning, identifying internal connection and affinity of ‘political activity’, ‘political activism’, ‘political participation’.

## 3. Kazakhstan’s and overseas experience of patriotic education

**The USA.** Public surveys persistently conducted in the USA show that about three-quarters of Americans feel a sense of pride in their country. Approximately half of American families decorate their houses with the national flag, 15-20% of drivers fix the American flag on their cars. Nine out of ten feel a sense of pride when they hear the state anthem (according to information provided by *Washington Profile*). There is no any certain state program of developing patriotic education in the United States. In this respect, a significant role in the government is attributed to institutions of civil society. Patriotism, pride in the country is instilled in US citizens from an early age by the parents, schools, universities, and the whole society. Another way is active promotion of state symbols via Mass media. Most Americans know and sing the national anthem at ceremonies. The presence of the American flag in all institutions and many private homes is casual for US citizens. Products with national symbols are very popular throughout the country. The US film industry, Hollywood, is also used to maintain the ‘patriotic spirit’ of the nation. Scouting organizations are used for patriotic upbringing purposes as well: Boy Scouts of America, which has about 3.8 million members; section of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. Youth organizations also play an important role in patriotic education: The Association of Young Americans; Young Americans for Freedom. In the USA the Day of the Patriot is celebrated on September, 11 [5].

**Japan.** After defeat in World War II, in 1947, “Fundamental Law on Education” was enacted in Japan. It carefully avoided any reference to ‘patriotism’. In 2002, the Government of Japan developed a curriculum defining ‘Deep feelings of love for the country’ as a main purpose of a six-year training program in high schools. In 2003, the Government’s Resolution “On Freedom of Speech and Patriotism in Japan” introduced evaluation system of patriotism in schools. All students starting at age 11 were assumed to be graded for their knowledge of “patriotism”. Their grades were included on their report card. In 2006, lower house of Japan’s Parliament adopted a package of bills stressing on revision of Fundamental Law on Education. The new law on education binds teachers to have ‘sense of patriotism and national dignity’ and instill it in primary school students. [5].

**China.** In recent times, Mass media and Internet in China have paid a particular attention to patriotic issues, political publications delivering patriotic messages to youth. Actions taken by the Communist Party of China, the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC) are quite notable; in particular, CYLC is the core of All-China Youth Federation (ACYF), federative body of Chinese youth organizations. As a result, young people are well aware of the fact that the Western democracy contradicts cultural values of China, and the main problem for the country to solve is physical survival of its nation and economic reforms rather than freedom of speech. So, the Chinese youth started to take considerable interest in China's becoming a great power. Applying for membership of the Communist Party of China is also popularized as it provides great advantages at employment [5].

**Europe.** For historical reasons, most of the European countries use non-intrusive method of developing patriotic education. For instance, various historical contests held in schools demonstrate that history and patriotism are inextricably intertwined. Some countries launch state programs promoting official language and national culture. For example, France practices a state program which supports its national cinematography. In Germany, there are several types of state-regulated services for youth apart from military service. Most popular services among them are 'Voluntary Social Year' and 'Voluntary Ecological Year'. These programs are designed to involve school graduates in social and ecological activities (correspondingly) within a year; meanwhile, volunteers get paid for their participation. After 'social year' experience, young people take advantages at entering high schools. Involvement of youth in such programs is assumed to help them to cultivate civil consciousness and patriotism, and feel out the social atmosphere of the country. The other alternative civilian service (Zivildienst) in Germany involves young men of conscription age more than for the military service (150 thousand people). As a rule, this service covers the fields of social work, health, and environmental protection. Zivildienst lasts for 2 months longer than the military service, i.e. it lasts 12 months. [5].

**The Republic of Kazakhstan.** The experiment of civil activity development in the Republic of Kazakhstan is described below. Youth parliament – 'Youth Maslikhat' comprising 16 deputies, representatives of youth organizations is formed in each region of the country. All deputies prepare package of proposals on a certain law which directly or indirectly touches upon interests of the youth. Further, Maslikhat members advance their proposals for consideration of Mazhilis. Thereby, youth may take active part in solving their problems. Educational and non-educational organizations introduce a range of ceremonial procedures aimed at developing respect for state symbols. A school curriculum contains a discipline 'Civic Studies'. A number of propaganda campaigns for healthy lifestyle and sex education are conducted to prevent youth from different bad habits and realize the role of family. Excursions to out-patient department for drug addicts and detention centers, visits to orphanages and boarding schools may be vivid preventive measures in this regard. Military-patriotic upbringing is ensured by developing paramilitary sports, meetings at military units and with veterans of war, and excursions to Fame Halls. Mass media are also actively involved in promoting patriotic and humanistic education covering important social events and developments. At least 30% of Mass media broadcast are planned to focus on patriotic issues. State program on patriotic education has developed a proper procedure for public holidays. To enhance social value of events, standard scenarios of celebrating the following public holidays have been implemented: Republic Day, Independence Day, Constitution Day, Kazakhstan People's Unity Day and the others.

#### 4. Characteristics of patriotic education of youth in Kazakhstan

Patriotism in Kazakhstan aims to educate a person who considers the Republic of Kazakhstan as a single homeland and feels himself as its integral member, having a deep sense of civic duty and honor. The content of patriotism in Kazakhstan is based on interethnic accord and tolerance which are consistent with friendly, peace-loving mentality of the nation and the political situation formed in the country. Integrity and stability are particularly critical issues in the state policy of Kazakhstan where approximately 130 ethnic groups live in concord.

Patriotism is an important tool in regulating interethnic relations in poly-ethnic country like Kazakhstan. **First of all**, it educates other ethnic groups to respect the land of their birth places, **secondly**, it encourages them to treat each other with respect; **thirdly**, it urges ethnic groups to respect the Kazakhs as a key nation; **the fourth**, on the contrary, it calls the Kazakh people to equally treat the representatives of other nationalities and live in a friendly atmosphere without any discrimination.

Instilling patriotic sense in youth requires a comprehensive approach towards patriotic education in high schools, i.e. youth should get patriotic education along with academic knowledge.

**‘Comprehensive patriotic education’ implies:**

- training well-qualified specialists;
- deepening the love for homeland and people;
- awakening of civil and political consciousness;
- educating young people to protect national interests more than own interests;
- showing respect for unity and harmony of nations, and ethnic groups.

The role of a state is significantly essential in patriotic education of youth. It develops patriotic education through its broad ideology. As noted by the President, ‘educating youth in the spirit of patriotism must be the cornerstone of state ideology’. Family, environment, educational institutions, and Mass media as well play a significant role in this regard.

Patriotic education of youth in Kazakhstan is being developed within the framework of ‘Youth Policy Program for 2005-2007’ approved by Decree No.734 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated July 18, 2005. Socially significant patriotic projects initiated by youth organizations are being sponsored by the government.

The role of social movements, associations and creative unions for children and youth is notable due to their activities, since they mainly aim to develop self-knowledge and self-improvement of the individual.

Within the education process the system of patriotic education envisages the formation of social movements, associations and creative unions for children and youth. The number of children’s associations in Kazakhstan is increasing year by year. Today, there are more than 1,434 of them functioning throughout the country; the largest and the most famous ones are: ‘Zhuldyz’ (Akmola region), ‘Bolashak’, ‘Ulan’, ‘Ainalayin’ (Karagandy region), ‘Shugyla’ (Aktobe region, ‘Murager’ (Kostanai region), ‘Dostar’ (Zhambyl region), ‘Zhayyk zhastary’ (West Kazakhstan region), ‘Zhassyl Respublika’ (South Kazakhstan region) and the others [5].

The idea of Head of State Nursultan Nazarbayev to unite young citizens of Kazakhstan resulted in the foundation of Unified Organization of Children and Young People ‘Zhas Ulan’ in July 6, 2011, whose aim was to develop common methods of educating future generation in the spirit of patriotism, as well as supporting youth organizations. ‘Zhas Ulan’ program makes it possible for all school children in Kazakhstan to take part in its activities.

## 5. Defining the extent of civil and patriotic consciousness of youth in Kazakhstan

In 2010, Department for Youth Policy under the Ministry of Science and Education along with Centre of Analysis and Prognosis ‘C.A.P.’ conducted a survey among people, aged 14-29, from 14 regions of Kazakhstan, including Almaty and Astana to define the extent of patriotic feeling and civil activity of youth in Kazakhstan. The respondents were from different cities, representatives of different vocations, and religions as well as nationalities. They have been asked how they perceive the meaning of ‘patriotism’ and ‘civic pride’ and define the extent of patriotic feeling and civil activity of youth. 80% positively answered the question ‘*Do you think if it is necessary to develop civil consciousness and patriotic feeling of youth?*’ Most of the respondents (60.1% -64.4%) consider civic and patriotic feeling as their main responsibility for their country, 30% assumed ‘patriotism’ as a sense of pride in their homeland, its statesmen, and sportsmen; for 2.8% it aroused hatred and aversion; 6.7% were undecided, and 3.8% reacted with indifference. 80.1% positively responded to the question ‘*Do you consider yourself a patriot, and what traits should a real patriot have?*’, however, 19.9% didn’t think so. 30% said that patriot should feel a sense of pride in his/her homeland and people; 23.8% perceived patriotism ‘trying one’s best to develop and improve the country; 16.5% saw patriotism as fulfilling civil duties, 25.5% mentioned all of the aforesaid, and 5.5% said that a true patriot shouldn’t extol his homeland. The next question was addressed to define the extent of the civil consciousness, ‘*Your feelings about being the citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan*’. 97.9% considered themselves citizens of the RK, whereas the rest 2.1% didn’t. 70% negatively answered the question ‘*Would you like to leave Kazakhstan and move to another country?*’, meanwhile, 22% admitted their intention of relocation; 6.4% willing to leave the country (mostly urban citizens). The question ‘*If it were possible to change your citizenship, would you do so?*’ was given a negative answer by 83.3%, and 7.9% would apply for Russian citizenship; 1.3% would have German citizenship; 0.4% intended to be citizens of Great Britain, while 3.7% would like to have citizenship of

other countries [6]. Overall, young people are rather optimistic and balanced in identifying themselves as citizens of the country. Survey results showed a comparatively high level of civil and patriotic sense of youth in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, the absence of comprehensive national ideology is a barrier to develop patriotic feelings of youth. Civil activity and feeling of patriotism of youth play an important role in intellectual development of the country in this regard.

*Main elements of educating patriotic feelings in youth of Kazakhstan are:*

- to educate the citizens to feel pride in their country, have supreme sense of patriotism, and fulfill their constitutional and civil commitments to protect the interests of the country;
- to promote the role of family in society; to propagandize family values, traditions, and the role of parents; to focus on upbringing in education system;
- to form human and moral traits such as honesty, fairness, mercy, grace, gentlehood, solicitude, common sense, and willingness to serve to the country;
- to raise legal consciousness of youth through analytical skills, political competence, assessment of the situation, counter-manipulation, and encourage them to apply the obtained knowledge for their needs;
- to form political culture and political uniqueness of youth involving them in national development of the country [7].

## 6. Conclusion

Civil activity and patriotic education of youth are essential challenges in intellectual strategic development of the country. The following plan is expected to form and develop civil and patriotic education of youth in Kazakhstan:

1. Information assistance for civil education: integrative courses, training modules, various pedagogy-oriented practice programs i.e. educational programs to advance patriotism.
2. Development of the criteria for civil education and diagnostic tools for tracking dynamics of the key civil awareness of a future citizen.
3. Develop and substantiate the civil education model in high and secondary schools taking into account regional specifics.
4. Creating a patriotic website about national symbols.
5. To engage and apply young people's creative and innovative skills, as the country needs to form common national idea.

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