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Facultad Experimental de Ciencias
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Ethno-religious identity as a factor of tolerance among the students of Almaty

Nurgul Tutinova

Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi, 050038, Republic
of Kazakhstan, Almaty, 71
nurgultutinova@ac.ir

Zharkyn Tussupbekov

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, 010008, 2 Satpayev Str.,
Nur-sultan, Republic of Kazakhstan

Bekzhan Meyrbaev

Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi 71, 050038,
Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Al-Farabi Avenue, 71
bekzhan.m@mail.ru

Kirill Kartashov

Al-Farabi Avenue, 050038, Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, 71 Al-
Farabi Avenue

Gulshat Otariyeva

BAISHEV UNIVERSITY, 030000, REPUBLIC of
Kazakhstan Aktobe,
302A-Zhubanov Brothers Str.,
gul.1977@list.ru

Abstract

The article deals with the peculiarities of national and religious self-identification of the Kazakh Almaty student youth as part of the titular nation via general scientific methods of knowledge with the use of sociological approach, research methods, and analysis. As a result, Ethnoreligious self-consciousness of the majority of young people is alien to any expressed nationalist aspirations. In conclusion, increasing the ability of the state to influence the situation in the country in a desirable way requires rapid involvement (in the system mode) of regulatory mechanisms.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Identification, Religious, Confession, Values.

Identidad Etnoreligiosa como factor de tolerancia entre los estudiantes de Almaty

Resumen

El artículo aborda las peculiaridades de la autoidentificación nacional y religiosa de los jóvenes estudiantes kazajos de Almaty como parte de la nación titular a través de métodos científicos generales de conocimiento con el uso de un enfoque sociológico, métodos de investigación y análisis. Como resultado, la autoconciencia etnoreligiosa de la mayoría de los jóvenes es ajena a cualquier aspiración nacionalista expresada. En conclusión, aumentar la capacidad del estado para influir en la situación del país de una manera deseable requiere una participación rápida (en el modo de sistema) de los mecanismos reguladores.

Palabras clave: Etnicidad, Identificación, Religioso, Confesión, Valores.

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth is an indicator of social reality. Young people are what their society has grown up to be. Youth is a period of life in which ideals, views, tastes, and values are formed. Youth is always a product of history and a certain culture, at the same time it is an active force of all changes and innovations. The study of the role and importance of ethnicity, as well as the place of religion among young people, has not lost its relevance, and recently acquired special importance in the light of security threats from extremist organizations and destructive currents, both in the world as a whole and in the country. This article

examines the ethno-religious identity of Kazakh youth. Kazakhstan is a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Republic which has its own Because the youth is the future of our country. In this study, the author of this article wanted to deduce how much ethnic and religious identity are combined among students. What is the attitude of interethnic and interfaith relations today among students of the Republic of Kazakhstan? Who identify themselves, what are their views on the culture, traditions, and religion of their ethnic affiliation in General (MAILYBAEV ET AL, 2018).

Since the beginning of the 90-ies of the XX century in the conditions of gaining political sovereignty and socio-economic transformation of the post-Soviet States, including Kazakhstan, the influence of the religious factor on ethnic processes acquires a new impetus. There is an active process of religious Renaissance, the main dominant of which is the change of mass and individual consciousness of ethnic groups: people begin to realize their religious affiliation.

Religious revival is directly related to ethnic identity, religion as a social phenomenon and one of the important elements of sub-ethnic culture, which has eternal moral values, has become a point of support for hundreds of thousands of people. Once in a state of ideological anomie, the mass consciousness of the post-Soviet era pushed from the obligatory before atheism and swung in the direction of religious faith (NOVIKOVA, 2011). Religion is the defining element of culture,

indirectly related to the ethno-historical traditions and spiritual heritage of the people.

The mixture of peoples and languages, their religions and cultures since ancient times in Kazakhstan's cities, led to the development of ethnic consciousness of the Kazakhs of human and cultural tolerance, openness, a sense of increased integration, religious tolerance preserved to this day. Tolerant relations have developed in the country between Islam and Orthodoxy, as well as other religions.

In the last decade, there has been an increase in the spread of ethno-religious identities among Kazakh youth. Given that the degree of ethnic and religious pluralism in Kazakhstan is one of the highest in the world, such conditions can lead to a variety of consequences — both to the mutual acculturation of ethnic groups of young people, and, conversely, to their isolation from each other and the strengthening of conflict relations between them. The situation is complicated by the fact that counterproductive trends are increasing in the globalizing world. We are talking about the influence of such Megatrends as the progressive politicization of Islam and the missionary activity of Christian communities, which acquire the character of humanitarian intervention.

The search for the phenomenon of ethno-religious identity is important for the modern Kazakh society, as finding the specifics of the national religion of ancestors and its dissolution in the modern

ethno-religion are essentially the key to spiritual and cultural development, the restoration of national and religious values. Naturally, it is the spiritual and cultural level and the presence of ethno-religious identity that are the factors that can protect Kazakhstan's society from economic, political, religious, spiritual disaster and protect it from inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts, as well as, to a certain extent, to protect it from religious extremism and terrorism as its extreme manifestations (ORYNBKOV, 1994).

For Kazakhstan's multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society, achieving unity and harmony is possible only if believers, regardless of their affiliation to any areas of religion, build their tolerant attitude and mutual understanding to each other, through which any differences and contradictions in views will be resolved peacefully, through negotiations and dialogue. The dialogue should not help to separate the positions of the participants, but to consolidate their points of view. This involves the search for and finding that common positive that exists in the concepts, customs, rituals, and traditions of each religion, which would contribute to the coordination and convergence of the actions of opponents.

The spiritual specificity of the modern world order is significantly different from those laws that have developed in the previous stages of history. It is no secret that the natural desire for native roots, ethnic and religious identification take sometimes sharp and negative forms, accompanied by intolerance towards

representatives of other ethnic groups (especially those living in the neighborhood), the carriers of other cultures. The actualization of national and religious consciousness, new political realities, modernization processes in society were powerful factors of influence on the most active part of society – youth. Again, studies show that the most favorable environment for the spread of nationalism and religious extremism remains young people under the age of 25 and 30 years.

It is well known that in order to begin structural analysis of a phenomenon or event, relatively stable elements must be found. In the social system of any level, such are norms, values, standards of behavior. According to T. Parsons, the main problems of any existing state system are related to functional necessity, i.e. adaptation (to the environment), goal-orientation (mainly political activity), integration (coordination of actions between all participants in the implementation of goals) (BAKUSHINSKII, 1996).

Taking into account the complexity and inconsistency of the formation of religious identity in Kazakhstan, given its long absence in the years of Soviet power, it should be noted that the formation of the religious population, especially among young people, deserves close study. In this regard, the need for sociological research on the problems of ethnoreligious identification of young people as a special social group, which represents the potential of social development and a strategic resource of the state, is particularly noticeable (SADYKOV, 1998).

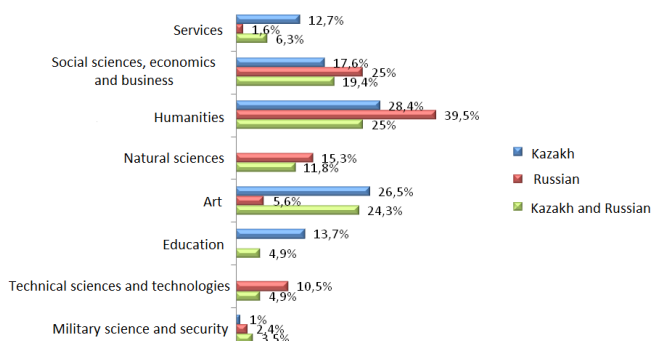
2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was carried out on the basis of general scientific methods of knowledge with the use of sociological approach, research methods and analysis, as well as sociological survey data, which in turn was conducted in several universities of Almaty Kazakh national University.al-Farabi, Kazakh national Academy of arts named after MCHEDLOVA (2012), Almaty branch of St. Petersburg Humanitarian University of trade unions among the Kazakh Almaty students of different profiles of training specialties aged 17 to 32 years. A total of 376 students were surveyed. Preparation and carrying out of sociological research, its removal of the analysis took about two months of time. The author of the work took a direct part in the development of the program and tools of the sociological survey and its implementation directly by herself. The legal framework in the sphere of regulation of interethnic and interfaith relations and publications of periodicals served as an essential basis for the research work (ALKHATEEB, 2019).

The complex symbiosis of settled and nomadic cultures, which flourished among the ancient Turks, influenced the historical evolution of religious tolerance of the Turkic peoples who inhabited the territory of Kazakhstan. The Turks included various ethnic groups that went through mutual cultural borrowing. In particular, the formation of the Great silk road played a significant role in this. Well-known scientist and researcher in the field of studying the problems of Kazakh

Philosophy M. S. ORYNBEKOV (2005) in his last monograph, which is called genesis of religiosity in Kazakhstan wrote:

The era of the early middle ages is marked by the simultaneous coexistence of different faiths on the territory of Kazakhstan. Small religious space, concentrated in southern Kazakhstan and Semirechye, was essentially a detailed picture of the main confessions of the universe, which had a beneficial effect on the spiritual life of the steppe society, historically subject to the beneficial influence of moral and moral attitudes. Perhaps it was from this time that religious tolerance became a characteristic feature of the steppe people, which has survived to the present day (FROMM, 1995: 10).

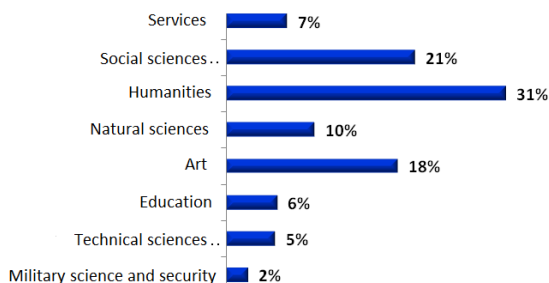


What language do you use to communicate in everyday life?

According to Russian sociological surveys among students of Almaty city, it can be seen that from the section of several specialties in their daily lives, students of the specialty Social Sciences, Economics, and business in the native Kazakh language speak 17.6%,

in Russian 25%, and in Kazakh and Russian 19.4%. And second dominant specialty is the Humanities here as can be seen in everyday life in the Kazakh language spoken 28,4%, in Russian 39,5%, in Kazakh and Russian 25% young people speak these languages (BERDYAEV, 1990).

As you can see on the chart in the daily life in the Russian language talk less of the specialty Services 1.6 percent, art 5.6 percent, Technical Sciences and technologies of 10.5%, military and security of 2.4%. Also, students of the specialty Technical Sciences and technologies and Natural Sciences do not speak the Kazakh language at all. In everyday life, the smallest proportion speaks the native Kazakh language is the specialty Military sciences and security only 1% of students. And so on this diagram you can see that the student youth in their daily lives for communication uses the native Kazakh language and Russian language in parallel. And this is one indicator of our youth tolerant attitude to the language of another ethnic group living in the Republic of Kazakhstan.



What specialty do you study for?

What is your language of study?

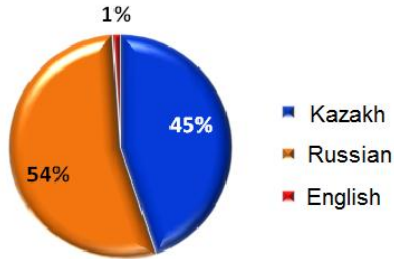


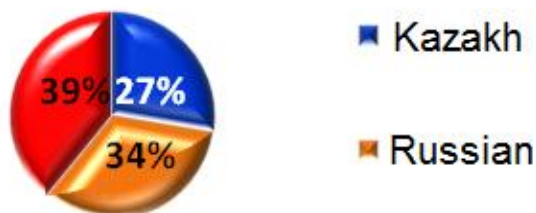
Figure 2. As we can see that students of eight specialties of Almaty higher educational institutions were interviewed

Figure 3. Vocational training in universities of Kazakhstan, as we see in this diagram is carried out mainly in two languages: Kazakh and Russian, and 1 % in English in some specialties. The Russian language began to become widespread in the territory of modern Kazakhstan in the 20th century, after the establishment of Soviet power and the resettlement and deportation of various ethnic groups and the policy of Russification, as a result of which the Russian language has actually become the language of international communication today. With the Russian language of instruction receive education 54%, with the Kazakh language 45% English get 1% of the students. Russian language in Kazakhstan, along with the state

language, retains the full range of functions. Education in Kazakhstan is provided in the state language and Russian; the rights of citizens on the basis of language are not allowed to be infringed (NAZARBAYEV, 2011).

What language do you use to communicate in everyday life?

Figure 4. According to the conducted sociological surveys among Almaty youth, it can be seen that in everyday life, Kazakh youth in the circle of their family, friends, in their environment speak only 27% in Kazakh, Russian 34% and bilingual 39%.



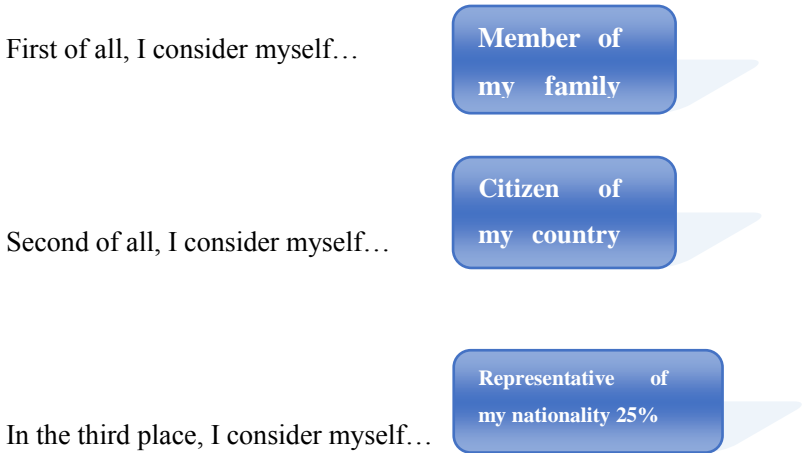


Figure 5. Who do You consider yourself in the first/second/third place?

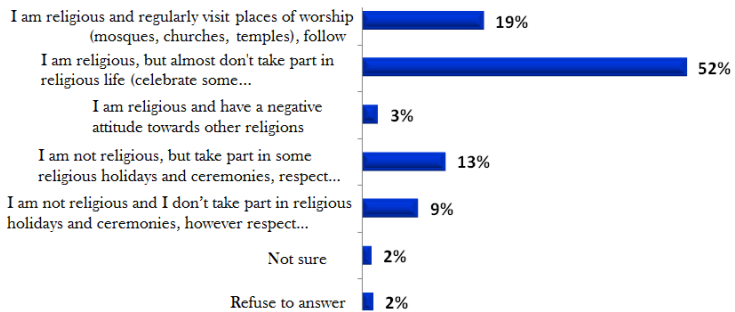


Figure 7. What is Your attitude to religion?

At the beginning of this study, we decided to find out the General attitude of respondents to religion. Thus, 19% of the students considered themselves believers, almost half of the surveyed young believers but practically do not participate in religious life (52%). Of them with negative views on other religions was 3%. Were asked questions such as, I am not a believer, but are participating in certain religious festivals and rites, respect of religion is 13%, Not religious, but respectful of religion 9%, difficult to answer is 2%, and in particular there were failures from issues.

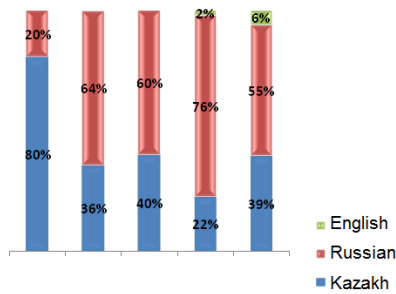


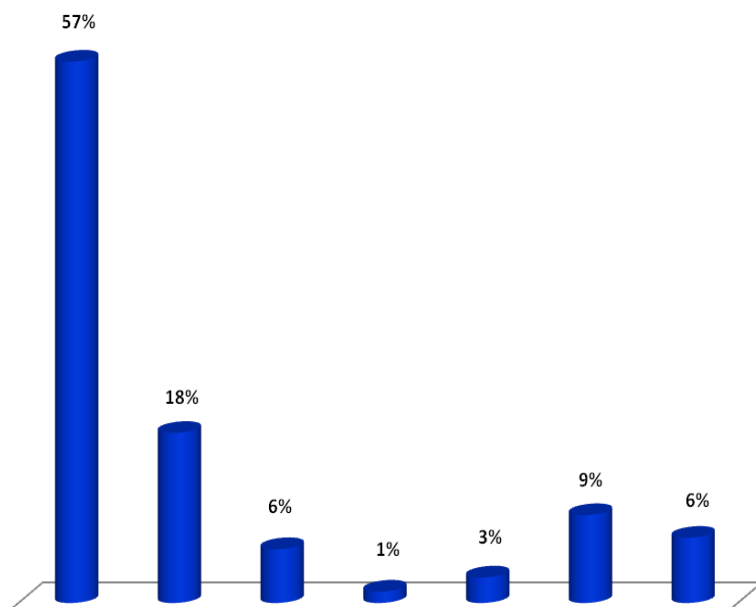
Figure 8. What is your attitude toward religion (language of study scale)?

At the beginning of this study, we decided to find out the attitude of respondents to religion. So half of the surveyed youth 80% of the Kazakh nation and 20% of other ethnic groups attributed themselves to the believers. And noted that religion is considered an

important aspect of their lives. The second variant I am a believer, but practically do not participate in religious events - 36% (Kazakh language of instruction) and 64% (other ethnic groups). And there were such answers to the question I am a believer, and I have a negative attitude to other religions - 40% (Kazakh language) and 60% (other ethnic groups). I am not a believer, but I participate in some religious events - 22% (Kazakh language) and 76 % (other ethnic groups). Non-believers and non-participants in some religious activities indicated themselves 39% (Kazakh language of instruction), other ethnic groups 55% and (with English language of instruction).

Often this connection is so unambiguous that it comes to the identification of ethnic and religious affiliation. All Turkic ethnic groups of Kazakhstan, for example, relate themselves to Islam, all Slavs – to Orthodoxy. Even if the ethnic groups do not relate themselves in this way, this is what the Kazakh society believes; and this obvious identification in the public consciousness acquires the character of truth and duty. At the same time, everyone refers to loyalty, the faith of ancestors, faith by birth, etc. it would seem that such a situation in the sphere of religion can only be welcomed. It supports stability in society, in religious terms, does religious behavior of ethnic groups is predictable, facilitates the leaders of denominations, the leadership of the congregation.

How did you come to your religion?



Parents have identified since childhood – 57%

Came consciously by the advice – 18%

Life circumstances influenced – 6 %

Came consciously by the advice of friends – 1%

Other – 3%

Not sure – 9%

Refuse to answer – 6%

As a rule, the religious socialization of children begins in the family. When asked how long ago respondents defined their attitude to

religious faith, respondents answered in the same way as you can see in this diagram. People from religious families, as a rule, profess the same religion as their parents: Kazakhs in the absolute majority — Islam, Russian - Orthodox Christianity, representatives of other nationalities - Islam and Orthodoxy. The sample consists mainly of Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs. Accordingly, in the mass of the interviewed believers the priority religion is Islam.

3. CONCLUSION

The issue of ethno-religious identity in the face of new security challenges is one of the most responsive to political changes in the country and the world. Taking into account this circumstance actualizes the need to form an information basis for understanding the reasons that stimulate the spread of ethno-religious identities among young people, especially in that segment of its socio-demographic characteristics which are shifted in the direction of social marginality. This is necessary for the creation by means of the state youth policy of conditions in which ethnic and religious identification will not interfere with citizenship, and will serve as its organic complement. If the consolidation of young people into civil society is not the goal of the state youth policy, Kazakhstan risks becoming a zone of permanent conflict of ethnic and religious identities, which, unfortunately, does not always take place in the form of tolerant discussions.

At present, the Kazakh ethnic group, even within itself, is not a single community and is divided both along non-ethnic lines (for example, economic, defining the gap between the poor and the rich) and intra-ethnic, affecting the features that are essential for the definition of each ethnic group (for example, cultural and symbolic). Possible directions of evolution of the ethno-national consciousness of Kazakh youth from the standpoint of today seem uncertain. Increasing the ability of the state to influence the situation in the country in a desirable way requires rapid involvement (in the system mode) of regulatory mechanisms to ensure the compatibility of the evolution of ethnic and national consciousness of young people with the modal direction of nation-building to prevent undesirable deviations (deviations).

The ethno-religious concept, which was based on the principles of unity, mutual understanding, and tolerance, took a course to educate a secular person who knows his national culture and religion, is committed to the ideals of peace, tolerance and is capable of constructive dialogue. In that distant and difficult time, representatives of different faiths and ethnic groups linked the common fate and history, together built the foundation of our common homeland, stressed our President NAZARBAYEV (2011), opening the 15-year anniversary session of the APK. Thanks to the implementation of this course today, Kazakhstan has achieved progress in terms of overcoming the destabilization of the situation, to avoid the

politicization of inter-religious relations, directing occurred a single case of conflict in a peaceful way.

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