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MEDIA COVERAGE OF SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN ONLINE MEDIA: CASE STUDY OF AZATTYQ.ORG

This research examines the realm of interethnic conflicts and their repercussions on social cohesion and stability within polyethnic societies. It places a significant emphasis on the crucial role that mass media, particularly the online platform Azattyq.org, plays in shaping public understanding, perception, and potential responses to such conflicts.

The primary objective of the study is to ensure accuracy and proper framing in the coverage of interethnic conflicts in Kazakhstan by analyzing media, specifically focusing on Azattyq.org. The research aims to identify key directions of analysis, including the structure, narratives, and perspectives employed by the media.

The significance of this work lies in examining the role of online media, particularly Azattyq.org, in disseminating information about interethnic conflicts. Despite being a vital channel for information dissemination, there is an evident gap in the comprehensive coverage of many ethnic issues. Taking into account that citizens often rely on media reports to shape their understanding of interethnic dynamics, scrutinizing their methods, especially in Kazakhstan's diverse and multicultural context, becomes imperative.

Qualitative methods are employed, using Azattyq.org as a case study to analyze the coverage of interethnic conflicts in the media. Thematic analysis is utilized to identify recurring patterns, frames, and discourses related to interethnic conflicts.

Key findings reveal that Azattyq.org often maintains an objective tone, incorporates expert opinions and contextualizes events politically in its coverage of interethnic events. Detailed descriptions of specific interethnic conflicts from 2006 to 2019 shed light on the complexities and nuances of these tensions in Kazakhstan.

Conclusions drawn from the research underscore the importance of responsible journalism in mitigating xenophobia and nationalism. The study contributes to the field by providing a nuanced understanding of how interethnic conflicts are reflected in online media, particularly in Azattyq.org. Practically, the results are valuable for practices, guiding journalists and media organizations toward responsible coverage of interethnic conflicts. By revealing the intricacies of narrative construction and contextualization within political frameworks, the research offers recommendations for fostering a more conscious and tolerant public dialogue, contributing to social harmony and understanding.

Key words: conflict, interethnic conflicts, interethnic environment, kazakhization, demonstration, media.

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Әлеуметтік қақтығыстардың онлайн БАҚ-тағы көрінісі: Azattyq.org мысалында

Бұл зерттеу этносаралық қақтығыстар мен олардың көпэтносты қоғамның әлеуметтік бірлігі мен тұрақтылығына ықпал етуіне бағытталған. Қоғам осындай қақтығыстарды қалай түсінеді, қабылдайды әрі мұндай қақтығыстар туралы оқу қандай әрекетке әкелуі мүмкін? Осы аспектілерді қалыптастыруда БАҚ атқаратын негізгі рөлге баса назар аударылады.

Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты – БАҚ-ты талдау арқылы Қазақстандағы этносаралық қақтығыстарды көрсетудегі дұрыс форматты, форманы анықтау және қамтамасыз ету жолдарын айқындау. Зерттеу Azattyq.org онлайн басылымы мысалында БАҚ пайдаланатын құрылымды, баяндауды және көзқарастарды қоса алғанда, талдаудың негізгі бағыттарын анықтауға бағытталған.

Бұл жұмыстың өзектілігі – қазақстандық БАҚ-тың, атап айтқанда Azattyq.org онлайн басылымының этникаралық қақтығыстар туралы ақпаратты таратудағы рөлін қарастыру.

БАҚ ақпарат таратудың маңызды арнасы болғанымен, көптеген этникалық мәселені жан-жақты көрсетуде олқылық бар екені анық. Азаматтар этносаралық динамика туралы түсінігін қалыптастыру үшін көбінесе БАҚ ақпаратына сүйенетінін ескере отырып, олардың әдістерін, әсіресе, Қазақстанның әртүрлі және көпмәдениетті жағдайында мұқият зерделеу қажет.

Бұл зерттеуде этникалық қақтығыстардың БАҚ-та қалай көрініс тауып жүргенін зерттеу мақсатында Azattyq.org басылымы кейс ретінде алынып, зерттеудің сапалы әдісі қолданылады. Этносаралық қақтығыстарға қатысты қайталанатын материал үлгілерін, фреймдерді және дискурстарды анықтау үшін тақырыптық талдау әдісі пайдаланылды.

Негізгі қорытындыларды келтірсек, Azattyq.org сайтының этносаралық қақтығыстар туралы материалдарында объективті тон сақталған, көбіне сарапшы пікірлерін және саяси контекстуализацияны жиі қолданатыны анықталды. 2006-2019 жылдар аралығындағы нақты этносаралық қақтығыстар жан-жақты сипатталып, Қазақстандағы осы шиеленістердің қыр-сырын, нәзік тұстарын ашып көрсетеді.

Зерттеу нәтижелері ксенофобия мен ұлтшылдықты азайту үшін журналистиканың жауапкершілігі мен маңыздылығын көрсетеді. БАҚ бұрмалануының ықтимал салдарын атап көрсете отырып, қазақтандыру процесінің патриотизмге, мәдениетке және тілге әсері талқыланады. Зерттеу этносаралық қақтығыстардың қазақстандық БАҚ-та, әсіресе, Azattyq.org онлайн басылымында қалай жазылатыны туралы нақты түсінік беру арқылы тиісті білім саласына үлес қосады.

Нәтижелердің практикалық маңыздылығы журналистер мен медиа ұйымдарды этносаралық қақтығыстарға қатысты тақырыптарды жауапкершілікпен жаза отырып, осы ұсыныстарды медиа практикада қолданылуында жатыр. Саяси шеңбердегі оқиғаларды баяндау мен контекстуализациялаудың нюанстарын айта отырып, зерттеу әлеуметтік келісім мен түсіністікке ықпал етіп, неғұрлым саналы және толерантты әлеуметтік диалог құру үшін құнды ұсыныстар жасайды.

Түйін сөздер: қақтығыс, этникааралық қақтығыстар, ұлтаралық орта, қазақтандыру, демонстрация, БАҚ, медиа

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Освещение социальных конфликтов в онлайн СМИ: на примере Azattyq.org

Настоящее исследование посвящено межэтническим конфликтам, их воздействию на социальную сплоченность и стабильность полиэтнических обществ. Фокус сосредотачивается на важной роли, которую играют средства массовой информации в формировании общественного восприятия, понимания и возможной реакции на подобные конфликты.

Основная цель исследования заключается в анализе межэтнического дискурса СМИ Казахстана, оценке точности и корректности освещения данной темы в отечественных медиа.

Исследование включает в себя изучение основных тематических концептов, структуры нарративных текстов и методов освещения темы в онлайн-издании Azattyq.org.

Авторы отмечают очевидный пробел во всестороннем освещении этнических проблем в Казахстане. Учитывая, что СМИ являются важнейшим каналом распространения информации, основой формирования собственного понимания межэтнической динамики каждым членом аудитории – необходимо внимательно подходить к контенту и стилистике текстов медиа, особенно в разнообразном и мультикультурном окружении.

В исследовании используется качественный метод для изучения практики освещения межэтнических конфликтов в СМИ на примере Azattyq.org., а также метод тематического анализа – для выявления повторяющихся моделей, фреймов и дискурсов, связанных с межэтническими конфликтами.

Основные результаты показывают, что Azattyq.org часто использует объективный тон, экспертные мнения и политическую контекстуализацию. Детально описаны конкретные межэтнические конфликты с 2006 по 2019 год, раскрываются сложности и тонкости столкновений в Казахстане.

Выводы, сделанные на основе исследования, подчеркивают важность ответственной журналистики в смягчении ксенофобии и национализма; определены аспекты влияния процесса казахизации на патриотизм, культуру и язык; описаны потенциальные последствия искажения информации в медиа.

Исследование вносит вклад в соответствующую область знаний, предоставляя глубокое понимание того, как межэтнические конфликты отражаются в казахстанских медиа, конкретно в Azattyq.org.

Практическая значимость результатов заключается в их применимости в медийной практике, в качестве стимулирования журналистов и медиаорганизаций к ответственному освещению межэтнических конфликтов. Раскрывая нюансы конструирования повествования и контекстуализации инцидентов в политических рамках, исследование предоставляет ценные рекомендации для создания более осознанного и толерантного общественного диалога, способствуя тем самым социальному согласию и пониманию.

Ключевые слова: конфликт, межэтнические конфликты, межэтническая среда, казахизация, демонстрация, СМИ, медиа.

Introduction

Ethnicity is rightly regarded as one of the phenomenon of interest for science and society now. The notion of “ethnicity” has been updated in the last century, and mass media have become an important factor in the actualization of it. As practice shows, the media undoubtedly influences the interethnic interaction of both large and small groups of the population, the intensity and forms of this interaction, can take a tolerant or conflict tone. In turn, a tolerant orientation in coverage of the problem of ethnicity is one of the important issues of any multiethnic democratic society.

The exploration of conflict, whether on an individual or group level, intertwines with social identity theory, which asserts that individuals naturally align their self-concept with social groups. These groups, encompassing factors like gender, race/ethnicity, or political affiliations, become crucial lenses through which individuals perceive and interact with the world (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

Conflict can be examined on both individual and group levels, where the group might encompass individuals, an organization, or an entire nation. Although conflicts are typically of considerable importance to the parties involved, garnering the attention of the news media usually demands additional factors. The dispute must possess a level of newsworthiness that resonates with the specific audience of the news media (Brooks, Kennedy, Daryl & Don, 1999).

In the broader context of conflicts, the significance attributed to them often extends beyond the immediate parties involved.

The media often helps determine what the public perceives the issue to be about its causes and consequences, whether it is important, and how to think about it (Gamson, 1989). This selectivity, driven by factors beyond the conflict itself, highlights the intricate relationship between media coverage and societal understanding.

The lens through which media captures conflicts extends to social movements. Despite various struc-

tural, organizational, and institutional factors influencing media coverage, scholars argue that certain outlets may discourage social protest movements, favoring only the most compelling aspects (Almeida and Lichbach, 2003:249). This selection process molds public opinion, influencing what is deemed important and how audiences perceive the causes and consequences of social issues.

The ramifications of media coverage are significant when considering both domestic and international conflicts. The way conflicts are portrayed can either contribute to positive, constructive outcomes or exacerbate destructive consequences. Given the multifaceted impacts of conflicts on personal, economic, and social levels, the call for constructive news coverage becomes imperative. Communities, whether local, national, or international, stand to benefit more from media narratives that facilitate effective conflict resolution with minimal negative consequences, fostering a nuanced understanding of the complex issues at hand.

The media exerts a massive influence on the formation of a tolerant or conflicted ethnic consciousness of the public. As a result, on the regulation of interethnic relations. Therefore, very negative interethnic attitudes are artificially formed through media, and mass ethnic prejudices are spreading. Hence, xenophobia and interethnic tension in society increase.

The Kazakhstani mass media are an important outlet for the dissemination of ethnic policies, but many ethnic-related problems are not fully covered. In many cases, the citizens of our country are not direct witnesses of interethnic confrontations. They are informed by the data provided to them by the media. The relevance of this work is to identify the peculiarities in the methods of covering social conflicts by the Kazakhstani version of electronic media Azattyq.org. The ethnic bias of the media or distortion of facts and other characteristics will be revealed.

The research aims to identify and provide exact and correct forms in coverage of interethnic conflicts.

The main research question is how mass media cover interethnic conflicts and what implications it may have. The research has four main objectives:

- to find out and analyze news articles distributing information about ethnic conflicts;
- to show and identify problems and distinctions in the methods of obtaining;
- to analyze the peculiarities: positive and negative models of coverage of interethnic relations through a content analysis of the press;
- to discuss mass media's role in conflict mitigation or escalation.

Interethnic conflicts have gained significant attention in recent decades due to their profound social, political, and economic implications. The media serves as a powerful platform for disseminating information and shaping public opinion regarding interethnic conflicts. Understanding how interethnic conflicts are portrayed in the media is essential for comprehending the dynamics of intergroup relations within the country. This article aims to provide insights into the interpretation of interethnic conflicts in the online media and its potential consequences for social cohesion.

Interethnic conflicts have been a recurring global challenge, and the media's role in covering these conflicts has far-reaching implications. Thus, the article focuses on the media coverage of interethnic conflicts in Kazakhstan, with specific attention to Azattyq.org, a prominent media outlet known for its independent reporting. Understanding how interethnic conflicts are covered by Azattyq.org is crucial for comprehending the narratives and perspectives disseminated to the public.

The object of this research is the news articles from the website Azattyq.org. The subject of the study is the content of text arrays.

Materials and methods

This research utilizes a qualitative case study approach to examine the media coverage of interethnic conflicts on Azattyq.org. A thematic analysis approach is utilized to identify recurring patterns, frames and discourses related to interethnic conflicts. The data was analyzed for common themes and interpretations, their implications were explored.

A comprehensive collection of news articles, opinion pieces, and multimedia content related to interethnic conflicts gathered from Azattyq.org's archives. Thematic analysis and discourse analysis techniques are applied to identify dominant frames, narratives and perspectives employed by the media outlet.

In the course of the comparative method, the scientific works of researchers on the subject of interethnic conflicts are considered. In this case, a problem of interethnic conflicts was presented from different points of view. According to the Google Scholar resource on the topic of interethnic conflicts, more than 15 thousand works were found from the period 2000 to 2021. The results of articles related to Kazakhstan show 13 thousands works, many of them are written by Russian, CIS countries, and Kazakhstani authors.

Scopus.com provides more than 7 thousand results related to ethnic conflicts. For instance, one of the latest types of research was the paper of Kashkinbayev A. "Evaluation of the role of media and language policy in the stabilization of interethnic relations at the present stage: The example of a multinational Kazakhstan" reveals the dynamics of the language situation in the regions of the country. The role of the language factor in the structure of ethnic identity of the largest ethnic groups in Kazakhstan (Kashkinbayev, 2019).

Scientific methodology

This study employs a qualitative case study to analyze the coverage of interethnic conflict in Kazakhstan within online media, with a specific focus on Azattyq.org. The qualitative approach allows for a detailed exploration of framing and perspectives.

The primary focus is content from Azattyq.org – news articles, opinion pieces, and multimedia – known for independent journalism shaping public opinion in Kazakhstan. The study conducts comprehensive content analysis, examining text arrays for recurring patterns, frames, and discourses related to interethnic conflicts. It explores language choices, sources and narrative construction. Systematic gathering of Azattyq.org's content on interethnic conflicts, within a specific timeframe, aims to offer nuanced insights into how these conflicts are framed.

Utilizing discourse analysis, the study explores language choices and rhetoric in Azattyq.org's coverage, assessing their impact on public perceptions of intergroup relations.

To contextualize findings, the study reviews existing scientific works on interethnic conflicts, offering a broader understanding from diverse perspectives. Adhering to ethical standards, the study ensures respect for journalistic integrity, privacy and critically examines potential biases in media coverage.

Acknowledging limitations: the study recognizes potential subjectivity in content interpretation

and reliance on Azattyq.org materials. Findings are confined to the selected timeframe, potentially missing some nuances in media coverage.

Literature review

The challenge with the inconsistent portrayal of international conflicts in the media lies in its significant impact on both public sentiment and foreign policy decisions. Scholars engage in extensive discussions regarding the primary influencers on foreign policy. Certain studies indicate that government officials leverage their position as news sources to advance foreign policy objectives through the media coverage (Peake, 2001). Additionally, views of the media can be deferential to the governmental once (Entman, 2004: 4).

Numerous insightful works have been penned on the subject of global conflicts. For instance, in the acclaimed work Samuel P. Huntington, the author adeptly delineates the origins and progression of conflict as a phenomenon.

Huntington argues that in the post-Cold War world, the primary sources of conflict will be cultural and civilization, rather than ideological or economic. He identifies major civilizations (Western, Islamic, Confucian, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and possibly African) as the key actors shaping global politics (Huntington, 1993: 46).

The clash between civilizations will be driven by cultural and religious identity, and these identities will become the primary sources of conflict. Huntington suggests that people's cultural and religious affiliations will have a greater impact on their behavior than their political or economic interests (Huntington, 1993:41).

In response to the prevalence of ethnic conflicts escalating into violent confrontations and wars, governments are increasingly exploring peaceful and efficient solutions. Over the past decade, the field of "Peace and Conflict Studies" within political science has gained widespread relevance. Mary Frances Lebamoff and Zoran Ilievski in their article on conflict regulation in Macedonia, thoroughly examine various types of ethnic conflicts and the means to regulate them. Conflict regulation, as defined by the authors, encompasses practices or methods facilitating the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The article identifies three primary types of ethnic conflicts that can be managed through regulation. The first is "group-state conflict," involving tension between a minority and state institutions. The other types include "inter-group conflict" between the host nation

and a minority and conflicts among multiple minorities. While these conflicts may share some commonalities, the authors stress the importance of addressing each one separately. Lebamoff and Ilievski posit that every ethnic conflict arises from clashes in values or culture and struggles for resources and power. Factors contributing to ethnic conflicts, such as those observed in Macedonia, create conditions where the government has limited influence over the conflict dynamics (Mozingo, 2015: 9).

The majority of the studies on interethnic issues cited thus far have been from the perspective of describing social conflict in Kazakhstan rather than detailing analyses of news articles.

D. Tussupova analyzes many conflicts in terms of political perspectives and focuses on the issues of language and nationalism in different media outlets. The role of the language factor in the structure of the ethnic identity of the largest ethnic groups in Kazakhstan (Tussupova, 2014). Certain experts propose that the revival of the notion of "nation" played a pivotal role in shaping national identity within the former Soviet republics. This connection between the concept of a nation and the boundaries of the state became intertwined, according to these analysts (Muminova, 2002).

Results and discussion

Azattyq.org: Historical Context of Interethnic Conflicts in Kazakhstan

This section provides an overview of Azattyq.org, including its establishment, ownership structure, and reputation for independent journalism. Understanding the context and independence of Azattyq.org is essential for evaluating its coverage of interethnic conflicts.

This part provides a brief overview of the historical background of interethnic conflicts in Kazakhstan, including key events and factors that have influenced intergroup relations in the country. Understanding this context is crucial for interpreting the media's portrayal of interethnic conflicts and discerning potential biases or sensitivities.

Ethnic clashes in Kazakhstan

The media is increasingly used as a political tool to influence ethno-political processes. It can be noticed the ethnic bias of the media or distortion of facts and other characteristics towards coverage. The first post-war interethnic clashes and conflicts occurred between the deported people. Many interethnic conflicts classified local law enforcement

agencies as the commission of criminal offenses by a large group of people of mass hooliganism and were not widely covered by the media.

Kazakhstan experienced several mass uprisings in 2006 and 2007 that pitted ethnic Kazakhs against other ethnic groups. Although none of the conflicts were officially characterized as interethnic. Two of the incidents were in ethnic terms – one was a conflict between Kurds and Kazakhs, and the other was a conflict between Kazakhs and Uyghurs. Mass riots begin according to the same story. In many cases, several domestic crimes cause clashes between different nationalities, and the authorities traditionally deny interethnic tensions. Distinctions between conflicts relate to the parties involved: Kazakhs faced Kurds, Uzbeks, and Chechens, and conflicts mainly occurred in the southern and western regions of the republic.

Below we present a chronology of interethnic conflicts in Kazakhstan from 2006 to 2020, encompassing detailed descriptions of the conflicts, their locations, and the aftermath, including information on casualties.

Demonstrations in Aktau

On August 20-22, 2006 meetings without the authorization of employees of “Mangistau Munai-gas” OJSC were held in Aktau on the central Yntymak square. The protesters demanded an increase in their remuneration.

In the beginning, there were 10-15 people, but the next day their number was growing: from 400 to 1000 people demonstrated in the square. Gradually, class slogans were replaced by nationalist slogans against Caucasians living in that region. No data about victims available.

Consequences: several cafes and shops belonging to Lezgins, Chechens, and Azerbaijanis were destroyed.

Mass brawl in the village Tengiz

On October 20, 2006, according to some eyewitnesses, the conflict began after a fight between Turkish workers and a firefighter of Kazakh nationality. Another version claims that the conflict broke out in the dining room, where Turkish oil workers rudely treated an employee of Kazakh nationality. More than 500 people participated in that fight. An angry crowd smashed Turkish special equipment, burned household trailers, cars, and offices.

According to official data, 339 Turkish citizens were injured in the carnage, 136 of them were seriously injured. Foreign media reported that 40 people were killed in the conflict.

Consequences: after the conflict, about 4,000 workers from India, Turkey, and the Philippines were evacuated from the Tengiz field. Work was stopped.

The conflict in Shelek

On November 18-19, 2006, the conflict broke out in the village of Shelek in Almaty region. Youngsters quarreled in the cafe and several guys of Uighur nationality beat a Kazakh boy. After the fight, drunken hooligans began shouting extremist slogans: “The country is yours, and the land is ours.” The news spread throughout the village, and clashes between Kazakh and Uighur youth began to arise spontaneously (there were more Uyghurs than Kazakhs living in the village at that time). The next day, the most numerous clashes took place – more than 300 people participated in the brawl. It was possible to normalize the situation after reinforced police units arrived in the village and a curfew was imposed. There is no information about the victims.

Consequences: local authorities insisted that a series of banal domestic fights took place in Shelek, and not an interethnic conflict.

Confrontation in the Almaty region

On March 18-21, 2007, a series of clashes between Kazakhs and Chechens in the villages of Malovodnoye and Kazatkom of the Enbekshikazakh district of the Almaty region caused a fight in the billiard room. The owner, a native of the Caucasus, was injured. The victim escaped with fractures of the leg and foot. The victim’s brother decided to take revenge for a relative.

After that an angry crowd went to smash the billiard room, as well as the Chechens’ outlets in the market. The conflict was stopped only after the intervention of internal troops and reinforced police squads in the villages. Nine people were killed: two Kazakhs and seven Chechens.

Consequences: three residents of the village of Malovodnoye were in the dock. Two of them received suspended sentences.

Confrontation in the village of Mayatas

On October 28 to November 1, 2007, the father of a four-year-old Kazakh boy told the authorities that his son was raped by a sixteen-year-old Kurd. After that attacks on ethnic Kurds began in the village of Mayatas in the South Kazakhstan (now Turkestan) region, which lasted for three days.

Four houses were burned in Mayatas. Ethnic Kurds left their homes and moved to the regional cen-

ter. After the incident, a wave of arson spread to other villages of the region with a population of Kurds, as well as to the neighboring Zhambyl region.

Consequences: a sixteen-year-old teenager was charged with rape. 18 suspects were detained for their participation in the pogroms, and criminal cases were opened against seven of them.

Clashes in the village of Buryl

On February 15, 2015, the corpse of a five-year-old boy, with 11 stab wounds was found in a private house. Suspicion of murder fell on an eighteen-year-old ethnic Turk. Unrest began in the village of Buryl, Zhambyl region. To localize the conflict, the alarmed troops belonging to the Regional Command District "South" were introduced into the settlement.

No data is available about victims.

Consequences: the murderer was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

New Year's conflict in Karaganda

When: December 31, 2018 – January 8, 2019

On New Year's holiday in the cafe "Ancient Rome" there was a fight between a group of tipsy visitors and employees who tried to calm down violent guests. Representatives of different nationalities (Kazakhs, Azerbaijanis, Armenians) participated in the brawl, several of them were stabbed, and one was killed. Because the deceased turned out to be Kazakh, and the owners were Armenians, then sentiments towards them began in the city, resulting in crowded rallies that lasted for several days. One man was dead, three wounded.

Consequences: three suspects were taken into custody. They are accused of committing a "grave crime". Another participant of the events has been put on the international wanted list.

Riots in Kordai

On February 7, 2020, the domestic conflict escalated into mass riots in the Kordai district of the Zhambyl region, in the village of Masanchi, where the majority of Dungans live, and then spread to neighboring villages. Later, the villages of Aukhatty and Bular Batyr were also covered by conflicts.

The participants of the fight resisted the arriving police forces with the use of metal objects, stones, and firearms. Rioters destroyed and set fire to houses and cars. The next day it became known that because of the pogroms, eight people were killed, forty more were injured. 47 people were detained on suspicion of organizing riots.

Consequences: President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev made a televised address. He expressed his condolences to the families of the victims and the injured, also instructed to punish the perpetrators severely. A government commission has been set up on his behalf.

Ethnic conflicts in media

The Kazakhstani mass media are an important outlet for the dissemination of ethnic policies, but many ethnic-related problems are not fully covered. According to Grishin (from the interview to Caravan.kz): "Journalists very often, even with a minimum of real knowledge on the subject, present diffused thoughts about what is going on in one or another sphere of our country,"

"There are considerably fewer live commentaries and transmissions in our journalism." The kazakhization process has generated some positive outcomes, such as greater patriotism, a revival of Kazakh culture and customs, restoration of historical memory, and expanded use of the Kazakh language. However, there have been negative consequences as well. The media sometimes distort or downplay the historical contributions of non-Kazakh ethnicities, and they have been quick to repeat negative propaganda generated by hard-line Kazakh nationalist groups (Surucu, 2002).

Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan's government has endorsed numerous programs and initiatives to promote the widespread usage of the Kazakh language (Aksholakova, Ismailova, 2013:93). Language policy, a key component of kazakhization, has fueled ethnic tensions, and government efforts at conflict prevention are often too little or too late. (Oka, 2016: 359) Karymsakova, the author of a study of Kazakh press coverage of ethnic minorities in Kazakhstan, concluded that little use of the Kazakh language by non-Kazakh citizens is the main factor separating the Kazakh- and non-Kazakh speaking populations in the country. In author's e-mail interview with Rakhilya Karymsakova, November 8, 2009 she writes to Tussupova that she believes that the press could positively influence nationalism and xenophobia in Kazakhstani society if outlets would "explain, explain, explain (да, слово повторяется), discuss, argue, teach the journalist, even sue" (Tussupova, 2014).

The discussion that follows examines media coverage of an ethnically based incident in Kazakhstan to see whether media coverage varied according to the language of publication.

Narrative Construction

This section delves into the narrative construction of interethnic conflicts in Azattyq.org's coverage. It explores the storytelling techniques, sources of information, and human-interest elements used to engage readers and shape their emotional responses. The article also analyzes the language choices and imagery employed in the narratives to assess their potential impact on intergroup relations.

During the analyses of the articles, it turned out that many news articles use an objective tone, expert opinion, and disclosure of the details of the event. Journalists associate the reasons for many interethnic events with political moments and issues.

For example, in an article by Ayazhan Zhenysovna from 2007 about the conflicts in Mayatas: "The investigation of the incident with Mayatas will be completed, and the case will be transferred to the court", – the author quotes the words of an expert Human rights activist Andrei Grishin. He predicts that at the moment the Mayatas case may have two beneficial aspects for the local executive authorities: "Such inter-ethnic conflicts are most likely a reflection of the redistribution of private property. After all, certain ethnic groups control certain enterprises and specific types of business in our country. Therefore, taking advantage of such conflicts, stakeholders are likely to attack their business", writes Azattyq.org.

Journalists conduct investigations and conclude that official findings (such as the guilt or innocence of a murder suspect) are "incorrect," and they, the journalists, have discovered the "correct" answers. Critics argue that those who uphold the principles of objectivity then seek sources that will validate the journalists' opinions (Ryan, 2001:9). Storker (1995) concluded that such a journalist is deceiving herself by thinking that finding a willing source to express her opinion will erase the fact that she formed her opinion based on evidence. Furthermore, she would mislead the audience into thinking that she acquired her story while maintaining objectivity (Storker, 1995:).

The analysis of Azattyq.org's coverage of interethnic conflicts in Kazakhstan reveals several key findings. Azattyq.org consistently adopts an objective tone in reporting, focusing on factual details and expert opinions, fostering informed public discourse. The media platform often associates interethnic conflicts with political and economic factors,

emphasizing the interconnectedness of sociopolitical dynamics.

Investigative journalism is a prominent feature, challenging official findings and providing alternative perspectives. This critical stance demonstrates a commitment to uncovering nuances and correcting potential inaccuracies in official narratives. Azattyq.org's approach contributes to a comprehensive understanding of interethnic events.

The implications for social cohesion are positive, as responsible journalism promotes a nuanced understanding of interethnic complexities. However, challenges persist in the broader media landscape, as highlighted in the literature review. Ongoing research is crucial to exploring diverse media perspectives on interethnic conflicts in Kazakhstan beyond Azattyq.org.

Conclusion

The media coverage of interethnic conflicts plays a pivotal role in shaping public understanding and responses. This scientific article has examined the coverage of interethnic conflicts on Azattyq.org, focusing on the framing, narratives, and perspectives employed. The findings contribute to the understanding of media dynamics in Kazakhstan and highlight the importance of balanced, inclusive, and responsible reporting to foster social cohesion and intergroup harmony. Further research is needed to explore the broader media landscape and its implications, as understanding the intricacies of media dynamics is essential for developing strategies that promote informed dialogue and mitigate potential sources of tension in Kazakhstan's diverse sociocultural context. Examining how various media outlets, beyond Azattyq.org, contribute to shaping public perceptions of interethnic conflicts will provide a more comprehensive view of the overall media influence. This expanded inquiry can shed light on the potential differences in framing and narratives across different media platforms, guiding efforts to establish guidelines for responsible reporting that fosters unity and mutual understanding among diverse ethnic groups. Additionally, a nuanced examination of the evolving media landscape can inform policymakers of the need for media literacy initiatives and interventions that address potential biases, contributing to a more harmonious and inclusive society.

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Electronic Resources:

- <https://www.azattyq.org/a/1176904.html>
- <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/the-kazakh-authorities-do-not-recognize-ethnic-conflicts-/31001861.html>
- <https://www.azattyq.org/a/kazakhstan-press-review-ethnic-clashes-nazarbayev-grandson/30435696.html>
- <https://www.azattyq.org/a/1176904.html>
- <https://www.azattyq.org/a/24497515.html>
- <https://www.azattyq.org/a/27976977.html>
- <https://www.azattyq.org/a/kazakhstan-kordai-clash/30428384.html>
- <https://www.azattyq.org/a/kazakhstan-interview-with-tolganay-umbetalieva-about-conflict-in-sortobe-and-masan-chi/30426556.html>
- <https://cabar.asia/ru/eksperty-v-kazahstane-zakryvayut-glaza-na-mezhetnicheskie-konflikty>
- <https://www.caravan.kz/articles/o-voprosakh-zhurnalistskoj-ehitiki-372829/>