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## HOW ARE CONFLICTS COVERED IN SOCIAL MEDIA? THE CASE STUDY OF KAZAKHSTAN'S TELEGRAM CHANNELS «ORDA» AND «KAZINFORM»

The study examined the role of Telegram channels as an independent tool in disseminating information and covering conflicting topics. An analysis of the content of certain Telegram channels accomplished, in particular, independently and in the state. The scientific work is aimed at identifying the features of the content in the selected channels, the position that correspondents adhere to, language features and style.

The main idea of the article is to studying how the messenger covers conflict situations. The purpose of the study is to identify the specifics of information about conflicts on the Kazakh Telegram channels of the independent "ORDA" and the state-owned "Kazinform".

With the increasing demand for social networks, this research becomes relevant and important to identify how much information on these channels affects public opinion and informs the audience. Telegram has become available in Kazakhstan since its first launch in 2017 and has gained trust among users.

In order to analyze the coverage of conflicts on the social network using the example of these Telegram channels, a qualitative method was used. Thematic analysis used to identify repetitive formats, frames, and language features.

The findings of the study concern the characteristics of Telegram channels as an independent media tool and their role in conflict coverage.

The results of the work distinguish the methods of covering and writing about conflicting topics. Analyzing content it was found that independent channels broadcast diverse points of view, while state-owned channels often avoided conflict-related topics and covered events from a positive perspective.

The study offers valuable information on approaches to writing and reporting on controversial topics, thereby providing practical value for the academic community and practicing journalists.

The results of the study are of practical importance for interested groups of people, in particular, for journalists, media experts, political scientists and social activists.

**Key words:** conflict, social network, content, Telegram, media, messenger.

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### Әлеуметтік желілерде қақтығыс тақырыбы қалай жарияланады? Қазақстандық «ORDA» және «Kazinform» Telegram арналары мысалында

Бұл зерттеу Telegram арналардың ақпаратты таратудағы және қақтығыс тақырыптарын қамтудағы тәуелсіз құрал ретіндегі рөлін айқындайды. Арнайы таңдалған Telegram арналардың, атап айтқанда, мемлекеттік және тәуелсіз арналардың мазмұнына талдау жүргізілді. Ғылыми жұмыс таңдалған арналардағы контенттің ерекшеліктерін, тілшілердің ұстанатын позициясын, тілдік ерекшеліктерді, стилін анықтауға бағытталған.

Мақаланың негізгі идеясы заманауи Қазақстандағы медиакөңістіктегі Telegram рөлін анықтау, соның ішінде қақтығыстар тақырыбын қалай көтеретінін зерделеу. Зерттеудің мақсаты – тәуелсіз ORDA және мемлекеттік Kazinform қазақстандық Telegram арналарындағы қақтығыстар туралы ақпараттың ерекшеліктерін анықтау.

Әлеуметтік медиаға сұраныс артқан тұста бұл арналардағы ақпарат қоғамдық пікір мен аудиторияны ақпараттандыруға қаншалықты әсер ететінін білу үшін бұл зерттеу өзекті әрі маңызды.

Айта кетейік, Telegram Қазақстанда алғаш іске қосылғаннан бері, яғни 2017 жылы қолжетімді болды. Ол әрбір пайдаланушы деректерінің қауіпсіздігіне жауап беретін функциялардың арқасында қолданушылар арасында сенімге ие болды.

Аталған Telegram арналар мысалында әлеуметтік желідегі қақтығыс тақырыбын талдау мақсатында сапалық әдіс қолданылды. Тақырыптық талдау қайталанатын форматтар, фреймдер,

Зерттеу нәтижелері Telegram арналарының тәуелсіз медиа құралы ретіндегі сипаттамаларына және олардың қақтығысқа қатысты тақырыптарды қамтудағы рөліне негізделген. Жұмыстың нәтижелері конфликт тақырыптарын қамту және жазу әдістерінің айырмашылығын анықтады. Арналардың ашылуынан бастап 2024 жылдың наурызына дейінгі контентті саралай келе, тәуелсіз арналар әртүрлі көзқарастар тудыратын контентті жасайтыны анықталды, ал мемлекеттік арналар көбінесе қақтығыстарға қатысты тақырыптардан аулақ болып, оқиғаларды жағымды, позитивті етіп көрсетеді.

Зерттеу конфликт оқиғаларын қамтыған тақырыптарды жазу және хабарлау тәсілдері туралы құнды ақпаратты ұсынады және ақпарат таратудағы жауапкершіліктің маңыздылығын көрсетеді. Осылайша академиялық процесс пен тәжірибелі журналистер үшін жұмыс практикалық тұрғыда құнды деуге болады.

Зерттеудің нәтижелері әртүрлі осы салаға қызығушылығы бар тұлғалар үшін, атап айтқанда, журналистер, медиа сарапшылар, саясаттанушылар және қоғам белсенділері үшін практикалық маңызы бар.

**Түйін сөздер:** қақтығыс, әлеуметтік желі, контент, Telegram, медиа, мессенджер.

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### **Как освещаются конфликты в социальных медиа? На примере казахстанских Telegram-каналов «ORDA» и «Kazinform»**

В данном исследовании была рассмотрена роль Telegram-каналов в качестве независимого инструмента в распространении информации и освещении конфликтных тем. Был проведен анализ контента определенных Telegram-каналов, в частности государственного и независимого. Научная работа направлена на выявление особенностей контента в выбранных каналах, позиции, которой придерживаются корреспонденты, языковых особенностей, стиля.

Основная идея статьи состоит в том, чтобы определить роль Telegram в медиапространстве в современном Казахстане, в том числе изучить, как мессенджер поднимает тему конфликтов.

Цель исследования – выявление специфики информации о конфликтах на казахстанских Telegram-каналах: независимом ORDA и государственном Kazinform.

С увеличением спроса на социальные сети это исследование становится актуальным и важным для того, чтобы выявить, насколько информация на этих каналах влияет на общественное мнение и информирование аудитории.

Стоит отметить, что Telegram стал доступен и в Казахстане с момента его первого запуска, то есть в 2017 году. Доверие у пользователей он завоевал благодаря функциям, которые отвечают за сохранность данных каждого пользователя.

Для анализа освещения конфликтов в социальной сети на примере указанных Telegram-каналов был использован качественный метод. Тематический анализ использовался для определения повторяющихся форматов, фреймов, языковых особенностей.

Выводы исследования касаются характеристики Telegram-каналов в качестве самостоятельного инструмента СМИ, и роли в освещении конфликтных тем.

Результаты работы выявили различия в методах освещения и написания конфликтных тем. Проанализировав контент в период со времени основания каналов до марта 2024 года, выяснилось, что независимые каналы транслируют разнообразные точки зрения, в то время как государственные каналы часто избегают тем, связанных с конфликтами, и освещают события с позитивной точки зрения.

Исследование предлагает ценную информацию о подходах к написанию и освещению тем конфликтных ситуаций и подчеркивает значимость ответственного подхода, тем самым предоставляя практическую ценность для академического сообщества и практикующих журналистов.

Результаты исследования имеют практическое значение для заинтересованных групп людей в различных областях, в частности, для журналистов, медиаэкспертов, политологов и общественных активистов.

**Ключевые слова:** конфликт, социальная сеть, контент, Telegram, медиа, мессенджер.

## Introduction

As a multinational country, Kazakhstan promotes coexistence and interaction between different ethnic groups. Sometimes this can lead to conflicts due to differences in culture, language, religion and other socio-cultural aspects.

Social networks now serve as the main means of news consumption, and the growing number of Internet users creates a demand for instant information consumption offered by platforms such as Telegram. Because now many people have neither the time nor the desire to register on a special site, visit other sites and read news. Telegram channels are much freer from censorship, which means that it allows content here to be quickly distributed and consumed in a way that creates different views. At the same time, Telegram channels not only provide quality content, but also ensure the privacy of users' information. For this reason, netizens have highly rated it.

During the January events in Kazakhstan, when access to the Internet was limited, people actively used Telegram channels to communicate and disseminate information. Despite partial restrictions, access to these channels was maintained through the use of VPNs and proxy servers. At such critical moments, Telegram's role in disseminating information increased significantly, turning it into one of the key channels of communication in the country. During periods of conflict, especially those affecting public interests, the prompt provision of reliable information takes on special significance. This article examines how conflicts are represented in Telegram channels and analyzes the role of this social network in the rapid dissemination of information about such events.

Telegram, created in 2013 by Pavel and Nikolay Durov, immediately focused on the security and privacy of users. Since its creation, Telegram has become one of the most popular messengers in the world, and by 2024, its monthly audience reached 900 million users. And in the six largest CIS countries, the messenger's audience exceeds 4.8 billion users. Telegram has been available since its official launch in 2013. The social network, which appeared in the form of a messenger, quickly became popular among users due to its capabilities. In Kazakhstan, it is possible to delete messages yourself. Despite temporary or partial blocking in various countries, Telegram continues to work.

## Materials and methods

According to Ranking.kz, in 2024 Telegram took first place among app downloads in Kazakhstan. According to kaz.tgstat.com, the top three Telegram channels in Kazakhstan by number of subscribers as of April 27, 2024 were as follows:

- Telegram channel of deputy Daulet Mukayev (dauletten) – 347,031 subscribers.

Channel of Daulet Mukayev, a well-known blogger and now deputy. Most of the latest news and important data concerning Kazakhstan are published here.

- Telegram channel of the Tengrinews news agency. Offers events, news, analytics in Kazakhstan and around the world.

- Telegram channel of the author Elita Muz – 222,936 subscribers.

Author's channel related to creativity.

In addition, as of April 27, 2024, the top three Kazakhstani Telegram channels by the number of links, i.e. distribution, included:

- Telegram channel of the Sputnik Kazakhstan news agency – 49,734 subscribers.

- Telegram channel of the ORDA news agency – 156,282 subscribers.

- Author's Telegram channel in the "Entertainment Story" category – 35,396 subscribers.

The main issue raised in this study is to focus on the methods and techniques used by Telegram channels when showing conflicts in Kazakhstan. The study aims to assess the features of the style and content of the channels. In addition, how freely they can disseminate information, and adhere to objectivity in assessing the conflict.

The purpose of the study was to analyze news about conflicts in Telegram channels of Kazakhstan, thereby determining how they influence the formation of public opinion in the country.

### Objectives of the study:

- Conduct a content analysis of conflicts discussed in Telegram channels from their inception to March 25, 2024, using keywords such as "riots," "conflicts," and "protests."

- Identify and distinguish between the specifics and differences in the methodologies for collecting and disseminating information.

- Determine the stylistic tone and form of content in state and independent channels. To do this, we focused on the words, statements, and emotional elements used in the messages.

The object of the study is the content (news) published in the ORDA and Kazinform Telegram channels.

The importance of this study is reflected in the growing role of digital media, especially Telegram

channels, in covering social and ethnic conflicts in Kazakhstan. At a time when the number of nationalities in Kazakhstan has increased and the manner and habits of consuming information are changing, understanding how such an important topic as conflict can be discussed on social media and how to promote it without harming internal stability has become a fundamental issue on today's agenda.

### Scientific methodology

The research methodology involves conducting a content analysis of Kazakhstani Telegram channels. In order to make the research result as neutral as possible, two channels were selected: the independent ORDA channel and the state channel Kazinform. Carefully analyzing news reports and notes from the creation of the channel to the specified date of the study identify the main topics, methods and features of presenting information about the conflict. The main research methods were the analysis of the content format and the study of the source of information and the emotional tone in the news feed in the context of social conflicts in Kazakhstan, as well as Telegram channels in the transmission and reception of these conflicts.

As a result, it turned out that the coverage of conflict situations by Kazakhstani Telegram channels is reflected differently. In particular, ORDA, which positions itself as an independent publication, tries to cover all aspects of the conflicts, while state media ignore such topics and instead focus more on the positive aspects of these situations, even in complex conflict scenarios. The main topics of conflicts are inequality, discrimination, human rights violations, political and economic aspects. In addition, Telegram channels use different content formats in the form of text, photos and videos to provide complete and comprehensive information.

This study makes a significant contribution to understanding the key role of Kazakhstani Telegram channels in the country's information world, especially with regard to conflicts. The following Telegram channels were selected for content analysis:

**ORDA:** Telegram channel of the Kazakhstani news agency ORDA.kz.

Founded in 2020, it positions itself as a new independent news agency. Telegram channel of the media has been operating since September 7, 2020.

**Kazinform:** The history of the state news agency Kazinform began in 1920. Its Telegram channel has been active since September 6, 2017.

As for the research methodology, in addition to thematic and case analysis, the article conducted a comparative analysis of two Telegram channels. By analyzing independent and state channels, we can objectively determine the ways of covering conflicts in the media.

Using qualitative and quantitative analysis, the study identified the main trends and ways of publishing conflicts in two Telegram channels. Thematic analysis of specific examples in news texts allows for a deeper understanding of conflict information. Thematic analysis of messages helps identify dominant themes discussed in both channels and determines the specifics of their coverage. This comprehensive approach allows for an understanding of how different media cover conflict topics and helps to identify differences in approaches used by independent state news sources.

### Literature review

Today, the social and behavioral science communities are interested in the analysis of social networks and their methodology. This can be evidenced by important publications exploring the topic of conflicts in the media (Wasserman S., Faust K., 2012). Wasserman and Faust explain the reason for this interest by the media's emphasis on analyzing the relationships between social actors, as well as their patterns and consequences.

A full understanding of how social networks disseminate information about conflict events such as the Arab Spring requires considering the political environment that these networks influence (Wolfsfeld, 2013). The authors argue that understanding the role of media in collective action requires considering the surrounding political landscape. They suggest that the significant increase in the use of new media may be a consequence of the increased activity of protest actions.

However, in situations such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, social media have become key tools of propaganda and information warfare. Anat Ben-David, in her study of social media in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, finds that online propaganda campaigns related to the conflict predate the emergence of mass media. These campaigns peaked in popularity in the early 2000s and operated primarily through websites and search engines (Ben-David, 2014). However, the emergence of social media has led to a change in election campaign tactics. Both sides of the conflict, organizations and the government, have begun to actively use social media to shape public opinion,



popularize media, and attack opponents. The escalation of the conflict and violence has highlighted the crucial role of social media as a strategic tool in information warfare (Ben-David, 2014). In addition, social media serve as a platform for various political actors, from reformists to authoritarian regimes. At the same time, it is important to recognize their commercial nature and impact on the public sphere (Youmans, 2012).

However, despite the positive impact of using social media to disseminate information, there is a dilemma regarding its role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Mutahi, 2017). Although media play a crucial role in times of social conflict and political upheaval, their perception can vary significantly depending on the source and context of the information (Ahmed, 2018). Although digital technologies can provide the necessary infrastructure for protests, they cannot motivate citizens to take to the streets or overthrow the government (Gerasimenka, 2020).

As for Telegram, which operates alongside traditional media, the authors highlight its advantages over other social networks. The functionality of the Telegram messenger plays an important role, especially its ability to send messages from Telegram channels as regular messages. Unlike social networks such as Facebook, Telegram allows users to customize their news feed. Algorithms do not hide messages or show read posts. Another notable feature of the social network is the absence of open advertising and the presence of a convenient search engine in addition to searching for files and links. For analysts and political communication specialists, this is certainly an advantage (Lyakhovenko, 2022).

Many scientific works have studied the various Telegram services and how they can be used in everyday life. Nobari and other scholars compare Telegram with some other social networks (Nobari, 2021). As a result, it offers a way to detect viral messages and shows the process of communication in Telegram channels. Chen Lou et al. studied the use of Telegram as a messaging network that allows users to access information through mobile devices or online interfaces (Lou, 2021). Telegram channels can be seen as a one-way communication platform. The unique feature of Telegram channels is that the number of subscribers is not limited, and Telegram channels can be public and private (Lai, 2021).

Bastani G., Nasrolli A., Saadipur E. (2021) claim that trust in the source in Telegram channels makes many people visit the channel and read the news, even though false information may be spread (Bastani, 2021). Gerasimenki (2020) in

her study on the conflict in Belarus known as the “Telegram Revolution” examines how protests in Belarus affect recovery, various political factors and digital communication strategies. The study delves into the movements, socio-political factors and digital communication strategies that influenced the protests in Belarus. The author tries to provide a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties behind the protest movement, while noting that the use of Telegram was only one aspect of this socio-political phenomenon (Gerasimenko, 2020).

#### **Analysis criteria:**

We assessed Telegram channels and their content based on the following criteria:

- Quality and type of content.
- Methods of conveying information.
- Tone and emotional expression of the message (positive, negative, neutral).
- Level of objectivity and neutrality.
- Sources of information.

#### **Telegram channel of the ORDA.kz news agency**

As of March 25, 2024, the ORDA.kz Telegram channel has 146,224 subscribers.

735 posts were found under the “Disorder” tag, 198 of which are related to Kazakhstan. 994 posts were found under the “Conflicts” tag, 209 of which are about Kazakhstan. In addition, 970 posts with the “protests” tag identified, 225 of which related to protests in Kazakhstan. The content formats on the channel mainly include text, photos, videos, and individual audio recordings in Russian.

The channel maintains neutrality in the delivery of information. Messages are short and to the point, often with links to the main site for more detailed information. Audience engagement achieved with emoticons and emoji, and the comments section opened or closed at the discretion of the channel administrator. Although the channel strives to be impartial, authors are free to express their own opinions and views on events. For example, in the January 5, 2022 post “Peaceful protest or attempted coup: what conclusions did a Kazakh political scientist draw about Kantara,” the author referred to Marat Shibusov’s report and emphasized its importance for understanding events in Kazakhstan.

**Conflict coverage: thematic content analysis**

#### *Social conflicts:*

Discrimination against people with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and other social issues.

Example: New director of a veterans’ home expresses his position on HIV-related discrimination.

#### *Economic conflicts:*

The difference in salaries between teachers in

private and public colleges.

Example: Private college teachers accuse the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of discrimination and inequality in salary payments.

*Urban infrastructure and planning:*

Demolition of a cottage community in Almaty and resistance from residents.

Example: The planned demolition of a cottage community in the Alatau district has caused discontent among residents.

*Political conflicts and protests:*

Media coverage of the January event

Example: ORDA.kz correspondent reports news about the situation and location of the incident in the country.

*Restrictions on journalists' rights:*

Arrests of journalists and restrictions on covering conflicts. Example: ORDA.kz journalist was detained during a rally near the Almaty Arena.

Each topic reflects various aspects of social, economic and political conflicts affecting public life and civil relations in Kazakhstan.

*Social conflicts:*

In the post "I will not allow this" the new director of the Shanyrak veterans' home addresses the issue of discrimination against people with HIV. The article describes a situation where a resident with HIV faced discrimination and reveals social problems. Zafar Appazov, the new director of the Shanyrak veterans' home, shares his opinion on the situation of people with HIV in the institution. ORDA.kz correspondent interviewed the newly appointed director Zafar Appazov and found out how he treats people with HIV and how he solves the problem of providing an apartment to a resident who is facing eviction. In addition, ORDA.kz reported that Andrey Smolyar, who has a disability and lives with HIV, contacted the editorial office to disclose his conflict with the administration of the former veterans' home.

*Economic conflicts:*

The thematic analysis also included issues of discrimination and inequality in the payment of wages. For example, we looked at cases of discrimination in the payment of wages between teachers of public and private colleges. In a note with the headline "Teachers of private colleges accuse the Ministry of Education," the channel addressed the accusations of non-payment of wages and wrote:

"Teachers of public private colleges expressed concern about wage discrimination by the Ministry of Education: their salaries are 75% lower than those of their colleagues in public colleges. The planned 25% increase in salaries for public sector

employees in January 2023 will increase inequality." Economic conflicts were also revealed, such as a dispute between Almaty residents and the city administration:

"More than half of the university campus in the Alatau district is planned to be demolished based on the city's master plan, which has not yet been approved. The akim claims that the Madeniet district does not meet technical requirements. Residents appealed to Yerbolat Dosayev, as a result of which the master plan was revised. They rejected the 2014 master plan and, in accordance with the detailed construction plan (DCP) of 2019, the victims submitted a new plan for the construction of red lines, roads and commercial buildings on the roofs of their houses in early 2022, which they perceive as discrimination. Despite written complaints, their requests remained unanswered," the note says.

*Political conflicts and protests:*

During the January events, information from the scene was shared in real time on the Telegram channel.

The channel fully covered information about political conflicts and protests, especially during the January unrest. For example, in the article "Explosions were heard at the intersection of Dostyk Avenue and Satbayev Street in Almaty," ORDA.kz reported on smoke coming from the street. Law enforcement officers demonstrated the use of flash-bang grenades. "At the same time, SOBR fighters surrounded the nearby city administration building."

Signs of increasing tension appeared on January 3 at 1:46 p.m. The message mentioned that mobile communications were disconnected in Almaty and the square was blocked. In addition, reports were published from the Mangistau region about the sudden seizure of the city administration building. Despite the arrest, journalists continued to cover the events in detail. The rapid dissemination of information among journalists was facilitated by the publication of updates on the relevant channels. Restrictions on journalists' rights:

There have also been reports of violations of journalists' rights, including detention and interrogation. The editorial board calls on the authorities to take responsibility and highlights the restrictions on journalists' freedom.

"Detained journalist Bek Baitas has been contacted. Bek Baitas recorded his detention for about 20 hours, during which, despite presenting a press card, he was forcibly arrested and placed in a police van," the publication reports.

Sometimes, the relevant authorities recognize the measures taken to detain such journalists. For

example, “Almaty police confirmed that ORDA.kz journalist Bek Baitas was detained during a rally near the Almaty Arena.” Since then, despite the fact that he has been released and is in the Almalinsky OVD, it remains impossible to contact him, as he does not answer calls,” the note says. This model reflects the recurring problems journalists face when covering conflicts. Some news updates are marked as urgent and are created in response to changing statistics and the situation. The channel provides a detailed overview of how conflicts are covered, offering a variety of perspectives and timely information on events.

#### **Telegram channel of the Kazinform news agency**

The state agency Kazinform, founded in 1920, became JSC NC Kazinform in 2002. Its Telegram channel, operating since 2017, serves as a platform for distributing news.

As of March 25, 2024, the channel has 16,385 subscribers. 226 posts were found under the tag “conflict”, 184 posts under the tag “riots”, 26 of which are related to Kazakhstan. 84 posts with the tag “Protests”, 14 of which are protests in Kazakhstan. Content formats mainly include text, photos and videos in Russian.

*Tone and emotionality: neutral, positive.*

Sections: world events, exclusive, night review, daily answers from Kazinform, numbers, opinion.

The channel presents information briefly, often with links to sites for more detailed information. Audience comments are minimal, and the authors mainly focus on government activities. They refuse to express personal opinions.

*Conflict Coverage: A Thematic Analysis*

General Conflict Coverage:

It can be said that the channel is not interested in full coverage of conflict situations, mainly presenting news in a descriptive form and relying on official sources. Independent media usually present different points of view and encourage reader engagement, and also aim to quickly inform the audience about controversial events. During the analysis, it was found that this outlet’s position is the opposite.

*Examining the January Events*

During the January events, news reports were mostly positive and did not contain detailed information. Some news items are presented as reports on government actions, which harms the perception of objectivity, since these are biased news items.

The channel’s news summaries published in January were mostly positive in tone and sometimes

did not contain detailed information about what was happening.

Interestingly, despite the tense situation, the news generally maintains a positive tone. For example, in a 2022 post, the channel gives a brief overview:

“Information about the situation in the region: an anti-terrorist operation is being carried out in Almaty, residents are urged to stay home. The latest news from the Zhambyl region and Petropavlovsk. Public order has been restored in Kostanay. People who gathered in Aktau Square are dispersing,” the channel’s journalists say.

However, news in the form of such reports often relies on information from government agencies or state media, which can create a biased view of events.

For example, in this post:

“An investigation has been launched against six companies engaged in the wholesale trade of liquefied gas,” the channel reports.

The text referenced by the Khabar24 TV channel discusses accusations of price collusion between companies operating in the market.

“The Agency for the Protection and Development of Competition is expected to publish a preliminary conclusion within 20 days. If found guilty, large fines could be imposed on companies such as KazMunayGas, Petrosun, AktobeMunayGas, Kazgermunai, Kazakhoil Aktobe and KazGOZ. A link to state television Khabar24 shows that only official sources are trusted.

*Conflict Resolution*

A recognized international publication with correspondents from all over the world, Kazinform mainly describes events or quotes official sources in the news it publishes. Some reports may not comply with journalistic principles. For example, publishing an unaltered government statement that does not fully comply with the news format, etc.

Even in times of crisis, Kazinform tends to prioritize positive events and highlight the good aspects of the news without focusing on the negative. As an example, consider the following excerpt from a news item dated January 6, 2022, about a meeting held in Astana (former Nur-Sultan):

“On January 6, 2022, a meeting of the Republican Operational Headquarters for Combating Terrorism (hereinafter referred to as the RCH) was held in Nur-Sultan, a comprehensive meeting of the Chairman of the National Security Committee, Major General E. Sagimbayev. The authorities took urgent measures to stabilize the situation and eliminate the terrorist threat. We call on all citizens to understand the need

for these restrictive measures and strictly follow the instructions of the government and law enforcement agencies.”

The following excerpt from the news item emphasizes important positive elements:

“During the mass riots in Almaty, an attack on the Central Museum occurred. At first, 6-7 people entered the building, later their number increased to 200. Despite the panic, the museum’s management and staff successfully defended the building. They addressed the attackers so as not to damage valuable artifacts and tried to calm them down. The museum will be guarded for several days,” the channel reported.

During the conflict in the cities where protests took place in January, journalists did not comment on the events in any way.

It is worth noting that all the news was in the same format. Usually, this is a descriptive format or news based on official statements by government agencies. This format is more like reports than traditional news articles. For example, one of the notes describes in detail the detention periods of members of organized crime groups. Most of the news is similar: they describe the work of government agencies, and do not inform the public.

“The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan conducted three special operations to detain members of the KUT “Wild Arman”. The initial stage was aimed at neutralizing the main criminal element led by “Noiz”, the so-called “right hand” of Zhumageliev. On April 19, 12 members of the organized crime group were arrested. Later, during the second stage, the controlling channel of financing “KARAS” was liquidated... On July 12, the third stage of the special operation was completed,” the publication reports.

Another important point to note: “Kazinform” is officially presented as an international media outlet and has its own correspondents in various countries. Special reporters go to the scene of the incident and transmit information from the scene. For example:

“They cast a shadow on the image of France: how residents perceive the unrest in the country. Our reporter visited Nanterre, the “epicenter” of last week’s unrest. Currently, you can see burned cars, cafes and a local youth center, streets on the street,” the publication’s correspondent in France reports. However, it should be noted that the publication’s journalists show insufficient interest in covering the conflict situation in their country. During the analysis, during the clashes in the cities where protests took place in January, there were no reports written by the publication’s correspondent from

the scene. Such cities include Almaty, Shymkent, Aktau, Zhanaozen, Semey, Ural, Taldykorgan and others.

The analysis shows that Kazakhstani Telegram channels actively cover conflicts, offering diverse and comprehensive approaches to various issues. The rapid dissemination of information via Telegram allows users to promptly respond to events and receive information in real time. Channels often provide a variety of opinions and analyses, creating a multi-layered landscape of opinions on ongoing conflicts.

### Discussion

The main topics covered in Telegram channels include inequality, discrimination, human rights violations, as well as political and economic aspects. The diversity of content formats, such as text, photos, and videos, contributes to communication that is more effective.

An assessment of how conflicts are covered in state media shows that broadcasting in this format often limits the diversity of opinions. While independent media strive to present different points of view to attract a wider audience and advertisers, state media, limited by budget funding and editorial policies, are not always able to fully research and analyze events, relying mainly on official sources.

It also turned out that independent channels, such as the ORDA Telegram channel, are ahead of state-owned ones in terms of reach and number of subscribers (Table 1). According to Kaz.tgstat.com, the ORDA channel reaches more than 30 thousand people and has a high referral index, which confirms its advantage over state media.

State media relying on official sources may therefore ignore diverse opinions and analytical perspectives, which compromises the quality of information and limits critical thinking. It is essential that state media prioritize objectivity and diversity in their coverage of conflict situations. This approach enhances media literacy and promotes a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena in society.

The analysis of conflict publications in Telegram channels in Kazakhstan shows the importance of social media in shaping public opinion and communication in a multi-ethnic environment. Effective use of social media can facilitate dialogue, de-escalation, and conflict resolution. Understanding the ways in which conflict situations are recorded can help develop strategies to improve interethnic harmony and ensure long-term stability in Kazakhstan.



**Table 1** – Coverage and Citation Index

|           | Coverage: 1 post average | Citation Index |
|-----------|--------------------------|----------------|
| ORDA      | 31.3k                    | 943            |
| Kazinform | 1.9k                     | 183            |

## Results

The study highlights the role of Telegram channels in mass communication and their influence on raising conflict topics in Kazakhstan. The analysis showed the uniqueness of independent, state-owned channels in analyzing this topic. It also proves that Telegram has become a popular tool for the rapid dissemination of information, especially at a time when public interest in conflicts has increased. De-

spite periodic restrictions in other countries, Telegram remains an influential social network in Kazakhstan.

A study of channels such as ORDA and Kazinform revealed the following data: independent channels try to cover the topic of the conflict in a comprehensive manner, while state channels often emphasize positive aspects and avoid controversial topics. The results of the study showed that Telegram plays an important role in disseminating information about conflicts in Kazakhstan. Because these social tools and channels allow for quick coverage and commentary on conflicts, thereby raising public awareness on the topic. However, it should be noted that the rapid dissemination of information creates the risk of unverified or biased information, which can lead to the spread of false information or further escalation of tensions.

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## Electronic resources:

- Catalog of Telegram channels and chats <https://kaz.tgstat.com/ratings/channels?sort=members>
- The official Telegram channel of information and analytical portal ORDA Kazakhstan. (2022, 01.05). Text of the post. Telegram. [https://t.me/orda\\_kz/72791](https://t.me/orda_kz/72791)
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The official channel of MIA Kazinform (2022, 01.06). Text of the post. Telegram. [https://t.me/kazinform\\_news/24550](https://t.me/kazinform_news/24550)

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*Келін түсті: 8 сәуір 2024 жыл  
Қабылданды: 17 шілде 2024 жыл*