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KAZAKH IDENTITY: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

Abstract

Kazakhstan's socio-political development unfolds under sustained global integration, which simultaneously expands opportunities for cooperation and tests the resilience of national identity. A critical challenge for the state is to preserve political stability and social cohesion while fostering openness to international exchanges and innovations. This article examines how globalization reconfigures identity in Kazakhstan through discursive, institutional, and socio-cultural mechanisms. Using critical discourse analysis of policy documents, elite speeches, media narratives, and educational materials (2010-2025), supplemented by a comparative perspective and secondary survey evidence, the study shows that civic identification has gradually strengthened, yet ethnocultural belonging remains highly salient. We conceptualize this duality as strategic hybridity: a state-societal strategy that combines civic integration with the preservation of ethnocultural continuity. Kazakhstan's multicultural framework demonstrates that diversity, when grounded in civic values, can serve as a resource for resilience rather than fragmentation. The findings also highlight the growing role of youth, rural-urban differences, and the digital ecosystem as decisive arenas in shaping identity. By integrating global norms with national traditions, Kazakhstan illustrates how universal values – democracy, justice, scientific progress – can be assimilated without eroding cultural distinctiveness. The article refines constructivist approaches by identifying the institutional conditions under which global norms are localized, and it outlines policy implications for education, media, digital platforms, and diaspora engagement as crucial domains for sustaining stability and inclusive development.

Keywords: national identity, civic identity, identity politics under globalization, interethnic relations, digital media and platforms, engagement, youth, transnational mobility.

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ҚАЗАҚТЫҢ БІРЕГЕЙЛІГІ: ЖАҢАНДАНУ КОНТЕКСТІНДЕГІ СЫН-ҚАТЕРЛЕР МЕН ПЕРСПЕКТИВАЛАР

Аңдатпа

Қазақстанның әлеуметтік-саяси дамуы жаһандық интеграция жағдайында жүріп жатыр. Бұл үрдіс ынтымақтастық үшін жаңа мүмкіндіктер ашумен қатар, ұлттық бірегейліктің беріктігін де сынайды. Мемлекет үшін негізгі міндет – саяси тұрақтылық пен қоғамдық келісімді сақтай отырып, халықаралық алмасуларға және инновацияларға ашық болу. Мақалада жаһандану ықпалындағы қазақстандық бірегейліктің өзгерісі дискурстық, институционалдық және әлеуметтік-мәдени тетіктер арқылы талданады. 2010-2025 жылдардағы саяси құжаттарға, элита сөздеріне, медиа-нарративтерге және білім беру материалдарына жүргізілген сыни дискурс-талдау, салыстырмалы тұрғы мен екінші деректерді талдау нәтижесінде зерттеу азаматтық сәйкестіктің күшейгенін, бірақ этномәдени

тиістіліктің әлі де маңызды орын алатынын көрсетеді. Бұл құбылыс «стратегиялық гибридтілік» ұғымымен түсіндіріледі, яғни азаматтық интеграцияны этномәдени сабақтастықпен үйлестіретін мемлекет пен қоғам стратегиясы. Қазақстан тәжірибесі азаматтық құндылықтарға негізделген әралуандылықтың бөлшектенудің емес, тұрақтылықтың ресурсы бола алатынын дәлелдейді. Зерттеу нәтижелері жастардың рөлі, қала мен ауыл арасындағы айырмашылықтар, сондай-ақ цифрлық экожүйенің бірегейлікті қалыптастырудағы маңызын да айқындайды. Глобалдық нормаларды ұлттық дәстүрлермен ұштастыру демократия, әділеттілік, ғылыми прогресс сияқты әмбебап құндылықтарды мәдени ерекшелікті жоғалтпай қабылдауға мүмкіндік береді. Мақалада конструктивистік тәсілдер нақтыланып, білім беру, медиа, цифрлық платформалар және диаспорамен өзара әрекет салалары тұрақтылық пен инклюзивті дамуды қамтамасыз етудің басты бағыттары ретінде ұсынылады.

Түйін сөздер: ұлттық бірегейлік, азаматтық бірегейлік, жаһандану жағдайындағы бірегейлік саясаты, этносаралық қатынастар, цифрлық медиа және платформалар, қатысу, жастар, трансұлттық ұтқырлық.

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КАЗАХСКАЯ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ: ВЫЗОВЫ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИИ

Аннотация

Социально-политическое развитие Казахстана происходит в условиях устойчивой глобальной интеграции, которая одновременно открывает новые возможности для сотрудничества и испытывает на прочность национальную идентичность. Ключевой вызов для государства заключается в сохранении политической стабильности и общественного согласия при одновременном развитии открытости к международным обменам и инновациям. В статье анализируется трансформация идентичности в Казахстане под воздействием глобализации через дискурсивные, институциональные и социокультурные механизмы. Используя критический дискурс-анализ политических документов, выступлений элиты, медийных нарративов и образовательных материалов (2010-2025), а также сравнительный подход и вторичный анализ социологических данных, исследование показывает, что гражданская идентификация постепенно усиливается, хотя этнокультурная принадлежность сохраняет высокую значимость. Это двойственное явление концептуализируется как «стратегическая гибридность» – государственно-общественная стратегия, сочетающая гражданскую интеграцию с сохранением этнокультурной преемственности. Казахстанский опыт демонстрирует, что многообразие, основанное на гражданских ценностях, может быть ресурсом устойчивости, а не фрагментации. Результаты исследования также выявляют возрастающую роль молодежи, различий между городом и селом, а также цифровой экосистемы в формировании идентичности. Интеграция глобальных норм с национальными традициями показывает, что универсальные ценности – демократия, справедливость, научный прогресс – могут быть усвоены без утраты культурной самобытности. В статье уточняются конструктивистские подходы через выявление институциональных условий локализации глобальных норм и предлагаются практические рекомендации для сферы образования, медиа, цифровых платформ и взаимодействия с диаспорой как ключевых направлений поддержания стабильности и инклюзивного развития.

Ключевые слова: национальная идентичность, гражданская идентичность, политика идентичности в условиях глобализации, межэтнические отношения, цифровые медиа и платформы, вовлеченность, молодежь, транснациональная мобильность

INTRODUCTION

Globalization affects the economy, politics, communications, and culture; above all, it reshapes how identities are constructed and negotiated across borders. The acceleration of crosscultural contact, global media flows, and mobility produces new possibilities for interaction but also pressures the continuity of meanings that historically anchored belonging. Classical pillars of identity – place, language, religion, tradition – now coexist with fluid, digitally mediated forms of selfdefinition. Constructivist political science treats identity as contingent and relational rather than fixed; in a globalizing context, this contingency intensifies [1].

A few decades ago, the discourse within communities was largely limited to certain geographical regions. However, globalization has gone beyond these spatial and temporal constraints, giving rise to an international discourse that requires specialized linguistic and intercultural competencies. Living in a globalized world requires interaction with multicultural and multilingual communities, where pluralism serves as a cornerstone for effective communication and intercultural understanding. The growing diversity of languages and cultures further highlights the interdisciplinary nature of intercultural communication research, which now permeates various fields of knowledge. Whether it is recognized or not, globalization is fundamentally transforming human interactions, reinforcing the need to strengthen mutual understanding between cultures.

Historically, identity was largely shaped within stable and homogenous environments—bound to place, tradition, religion, ethnicity, and shared cultural memory. In contrast, today's identity is forged under conditions of constant exposure to diverse cultural influences. The spread of digital technologies, global media, international migration, and transnational communication has created unprecedented opportunities for cultural interaction, but also introduced tensions and contradictions in how identity is experienced and maintained.

This study advances the literature in two ways. *First*, it brings the politics of institutional design to the center of debates often dominated by cultural-historical analyses in the Kazakhstani context. Building on work that links globalization to both cosmopolitanism and reactive identity formation [2, 3], we specify how state-led nationbuilding and global normative diffusion interact under conditions of a multiethnic polity.

Kazakh scholars have approached national identity largely from cultural-philosophical and historical standpoints. A.Nysanbaev (2019) argues that national identity should evolve with modernization, emphasizing the need for philosophical self-reflection within the framework of global transformation [4]. D. Kudaibergenova's research provides an in-depth analysis of how Soviet-era narratives and cultural policies have influenced the construction of Kazakh national identity. Her work examines the role of literature and historical memory in shaping national consciousness during and after the Soviet period [5]. Additionally, A. Burkhanov's study explores Kazakhstan's national identity-building policies, highlighting the interplay between Soviet legacies, state efforts, and societal reactions. His research offers insights into how the Kazakh government has navigated the challenges of fostering a cohesive national identity in a multiethnic society [6].

Second, we identify empirical gaps in the Kazakhstani scholarship: many contributions richly describe cultural heritage or Soviet legacies but leave underexplored (a) the mechanisms through which policy, education, and digital platforms mediate identity, (b) how civic and ethnocultural identities coevolve rather than substitute one another, and (c) how urban–rural cleavages and youth cohorts modulate global exposure [5, 6]. Our article addresses these gaps by tracing discursive and institutional pathways of identity change from 2010 to 2025 and by situating Kazakhstan comparatively among postSoviet states [7,8].

Castells emphasizes networked constructions of identity in global contexts [1]; Held et al. foreground globalization's institutional effects [2]. Inglehart and Norris explain populist backlash as a cultural reaction to cosmopolitanism [3]. For the postSoviet space, studies highlight how state projects, Soviet legacies, and societal responses intertwine in nationbuilding [5, 6]. Recent theory clarifies that nationbuilding interacts with foreign policy and geopolitical alignments [7], and that populist communication can recode nationhood under hybrid regimes [8]. Ozkirimli and Abdelal &

Herrera call for moving beyond methodological nationalism toward institutionalized narratives and transnational subjectivities [9, 10]. Against this backdrop, we show how Kazakhstan's strategic hybridity localizes global scripts without dissolving ethnocultural cores. This perspective challenges the conventional assumption that national identity must remain tied to a fixed ethno-territorial template and proposes a more adaptive, globally conscious framework – one this study engages with to contextualize identity formation in Kazakhstan within broader discursive shifts.

These recent contributions reaffirm that national identity, in the current era, is less a reflection of historical continuity than a site of political negotiation, strategic performance, and transnational interaction – a multidimensional dynamic this research seeks to analyze through a politically grounded, methodologically pluralist approach.

We test the following hypothesis: H1 (dual effect) Globalization simultaneously accelerates hybridization of identity and activates protective ethnocultural boundarywork; outcomes take the form of layered (civic + ethnonational) identifications rather than linear replacement. We also assess two ancillary expectations: H2 (urban–youth effect) cosmopolitan civic markers (bilingualism, digital literacy, global competitiveness) rise faster among urban youth and professionals; H3 (platform mediation) digital media and educational institutions act as central mediators of identity change.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework of this study is grounded in an interdisciplinary qualitative approach that integrates tools from political science, cultural studies, and critical theory. Given the complex and multifaceted nature of identity transformation under globalization, a strictly empirical or quantitative model would be insufficient to capture the depth of sociopolitical meanings, symbolic representations, and ideological undercurrents involved. Therefore, the study employs a combination of discourse analysis, comparative political analysis, and interpretive methodology rooted in constructivist epistemology.

One of the primary methods used in this research is critical discourse analysis (CDA). This method is essential for examining how identity is constructed, negotiated, and politicized in various texts – including political speeches, media narratives, government policies, and scholarly debates. Discourse is understood not merely as a reflection of political reality, but as an active force in shaping identity-based claims, ideological frameworks, and patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

Discourse analysis is particularly well-suited to this study because the articulation of identity in the context of globalization often occurs in symbolic, rhetorical, and ideological forms. This approach allows for the deconstruction of the language used to legitimize or contest global and local identity narratives in different political contexts.

To capture the variation in how globalization influences identity across political systems, this study adopts a comparative perspective. It examines case studies from different regions – for example, the European Union's post-national identity discourse versus resurgent nationalism in post-Soviet states – to highlight both convergence and divergence in identity politics under globalization.

This method allows the research to situate the phenomenon within broader political structures and demonstrate how institutional arrangements, historical experiences, and geopolitical contexts shape identity differently. Comparative analysis also helps avoid overgeneralization by grounding the argument in specific political realities.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research follows the constructivist paradigm, which treats identity not as a fixed attribute but as a social and political construct that evolves in response to changing contexts. Interpretive methods are employed to explore how actors perceive and respond to globalization, focusing on meaning-making processes rather than causal determinism.

This approach is optimal because identity, in this study, is approached not as a measurable variable but as a dynamic process of self-definition embedded in historical narratives, symbolic boundaries, and political struggles. Interpretive analysis allows for a nuanced understanding of the motives, perceptions, and ideological framings that inform identity-related discourse and action.

These methods are especially appropriate in political science, where identity-related issues intersect with sovereignty, legitimacy, and representation. By grounding the research in a robust methodological strategy, the study is equipped to produce meaningful, context-sensitive insights into one of the most pressing challenges of the global era: the reconfiguration of identity in a transforming political order.

One of the key strategies for ensuring national security in such a young state as Kazakhstan in the new millennium is the development of a cohesive state ideology. Strengthening national identity serves as a unifying framework that integrates various ethnic and cultural communities into the multiethnic society of Kazakhstan. Creating a favorable socio-political environment for all ethnic groups not only promotes social cohesion, but also mitigates external migration, thereby contributing to the economic stability and development of the country. Moreover, the long-term sustainability of a state is closely linked to the extent to which its citizens develop a deep spiritual and civic bond with Kazakhstan as their homeland. A nation's ability to survive and thrive increases when people perceive the country as an integral part of their identity. In this context, national identity plays a key role in the formation of a stable and cohesive society.

RESULTS

R1. Layered identification and strategic hybridity (supports H1)

Across presidential addresses, national programs, and curricular frameworks, identity is articulated along two synchronized tracks: - a civic track that stresses constitutional equality, social cohesion, interethnic concord, and a shared Kazakhstani civic nationality; and - an ethnocultural track that elevates Kazakh language revival, heritage canons, and historical memory as moral anchors of the polity.

Rather than substituting one for the other, texts position these tracks as mutually reinforcing: civic unity is narrated as impossible without cultural rootedness, while ethnocultural revival is framed as modernizing and outwardlooking. This discursive pairing exemplifies strategic hybridity – a repertoire that absorbs globally legible norms (competitiveness, innovation, digitalization) into nationally resonant symbolism. Media editorials echo this duality by juxtaposing stories of global success (education abroad, tech entrepreneurship) with features on local traditions and language prestige.

R2. Corroborating survey signals of civic identification (supports H1)

Secondary indicators report a rising prominence of civic identification among Kazakhstan's residents. A notable published figure places self-identification as Kazakhstani at ≈59.9% versus ≈36.1-38.5% for primarily ethnic self-ascription [11]. While measured in earlier periods and with varying instruments, these values indicate that civic identity is a durable reference point, especially in urban milieus. Newer studies on youth value orientations also register openness to global norms alongside enduring attachment to heritage.

R3. Urban–youth gradients (supports H2)

Curricular and media discourse disproportionately portray urban youth and professionals as carriers of cosmopolitan markers: functional bilingualism or trilingualism, digital literacy, international benchmarking, and a rhetoric of global competitiveness. Scholarship programs and international academic ties are depicted as engines of social mobility and modernization. Conversely, materials that address rural audiences emphasize cultural continuity, the social role of the Kazakh language, and local community cohesion. The contrast does not amount to a dichotomy; rather, it suggests gradients of emphasis consistent with uneven global exposure.

R4. Education as identity infrastructure (supports H3)

Across curricula and policy guidelines, schools and universities are tasked with integrating civic education (rights, responsibilities, pluralism) and heritage education (language, literature, history). Syllabi increasingly reference competencies tied to global interfaces—critical thinking, ICT, English-medium instruction—alongside national content. This dual mandate institutionalizes hybridity: students learn to codeswitch between global repertoires and local canons without treating them as mutually exclusive.

R5. Digital platforms and media ecosystems (supports H3)

Policy documents and media strategies frame digitalization as both a development priority and an identity arena. Government portals, public broadcasters, and social media campaigns amplify narratives of unity, modernization, and cultural pride. At the same time, digital spaces expose publics to transnational discourses, intensifying boundarywork (clarifying what is “ours” vs. “theirs”) and occasionally generating contention. The net effect in our corpus is normalization of hybridity: participation in global platforms coexists with revalorization of national symbols.

R6. Diaspora as softpower multiplier (extends H3)

References to diaspora forums, cultural centers, and outreach platforms depict expatriate communities as bridges that circulate cultural content, mentorship, and investment. The discursive framing assigns the diaspora a dual role: preserving heritage abroad and reimporting global competencies into domestic institutions. This extends identity beyond territory into transnational networks, consistent with constructivist accounts of deterritorialized belonging [10].

Summary of hypothesis tests

- H1 (dual effect): supported. Evidence converges on layered identities that combine civic unity with ethnocultural continuity; survey signals and media narratives align with this structure [11].
- H2 (urban–youth effect): supported. Urban youth/professional profiles carry cosmopolitan markers more consistently, while rural discourse emphasizes continuity; both repertoires coexist.
- H3 (platform mediation): supported. Education systems and digital ecosystems act as the main mediators, institutionalizing hybridity and shaping boundarywork.

Substantive significance

The copresence of civic and ethnocultural registers reduces the risk of zerosum polarization between “globalists” and “traditionalists.” By embedding global competencies in national symbols, institutions lower the costs of participation in global networks for identityconscious publics. Conversely, the model carries risks: (a) unequal access to quality education and digital infrastructure may stratify identity experiences; (b) overreliance on symbolic unity without material inclusion may erode trust; and (c) algorithmic media can amplify fringe boundary narratives. These risks motivate the policy discussion that follows.

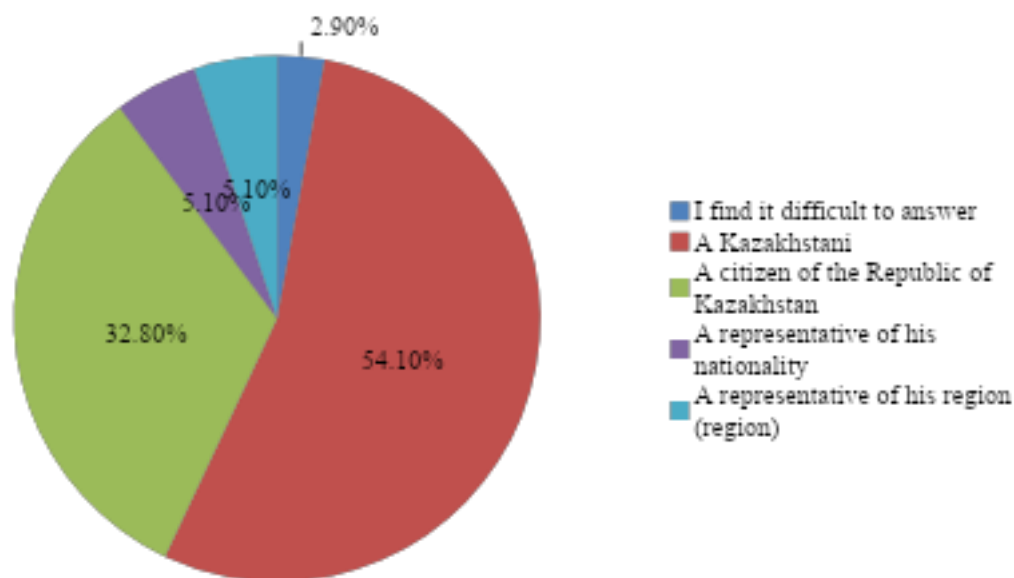


Fig. 1. – What is important to you, who do you feel like in the first place?

Source: compiled by the author

Globalization produces ambivalent effects on national identity. On the one hand, it facilitates cultural enrichment, exchange of ideas, and the modernization of social practices. On the other, it challenges traditional norms, weakens intergenerational continuity, and intensifies debates about authenticity. For Kazakhstan, this duality is especially relevant: society is required to combine openness to global trends with the preservation of cultural distinctiveness and historical memory. A complete rejection of globalization would isolate the country from international development, while uncritical acceptance would risk cultural erosion. Therefore, the sustainable trajectory lies in a balanced approach that integrates universal innovations with the safeguarding of national traditions and values [12, 13, 14].

Researchers analyzing globalization have different views on this issue. Some argue that the ongoing global processes will eventually lead to the homogenization of all ethno-cultures into a single whole. Others, however, argue that these very processes are increasing the resilience of different cultures by strengthening their sense of identity and individuality. A key factor in this dynamic is a nation's ability to adapt its ethnocultural traditions to the world stage. The selective integration of foreign cultural elements can lead to constructive modernization, while an uncritical adoption of external influences may risk eroding indigenous traditions. Post-Soviet states, including Kazakhstan, face a critical cultural dilemma: two possible trajectories emerge for national cultural development [15, p.20].

The first path follows the continued expansion of Western, particularly American, cultural and economic paradigms, characterized by unrestrained liberal monetarism. If this trend persists unchecked, it may lead to the gradual erosion of national cultures, despite rhetorical assertions of cultural progress. The second path advocates for reform strategies rooted in deep national values, whereby progressive Western cultural and intellectual advancements are integrated into the existing national framework [16, p. 395].

A meaningful engagement with foreign cultures is best achieved through a comparative perspective – understanding one culture through the lens of another. This intercultural dialogue fosters a dynamic exchange that transcends cultural isolation, enabling mutual enrichment while preserving the integrity of each tradition. In this dialogical process, cultures do not dissolve into one another; rather, they reinforce their ethno-cultural immunity by engaging in a continuous exchange of meanings, traditions, and values.

Thus, the challenge for Kazakhstan and other post-Soviet nations is not simply to resist external influences but to navigate globalization strategically. By fostering cultural resilience and facilitating meaningful intercultural dialogue, nations can safeguard their unique heritage while benefiting from the advancements of the modern world.

A critical perspective on multiculturalism is offered by German cultural critic F. Radtke, who predicted its inevitable failure in Germany due to its erosive impact on national identity. According to Radtke, multiculturalism does not foster true integration but instead exacerbates existing socio-economic and political tensions by reframing them as ethnic and religious conflicts. This process, which he describes as the «ethnification» of social conflicts, ultimately renders these issues more intractable [17, p. 229]. Kazakh society is inherently polyethnic, fostering intercultural dialogue while simultaneously confronting the risk of cultural erosion. In the context of globalization, this dual dynamic creates a paradox: while cultural exchange enriches national identity, it also contributes to the gradual loss of ethnicity, tradition, and language. This process gives rise to what can be described as a «borderline identity» – a state in which individuals exist between cultural influences, shaped more by external forces than by their own historical heritage. Professor A.R. Masalimova [13, p.10], in her research, highlights the phenomenon of marginality in the contemporary globalized world, emphasizing that individuals who exist on the cultural periphery often experience a profound loss of self, including a weakening of their ethnic identity. As globalization accelerates cultural exchanges and integrations, certain individuals find themselves disconnected from their ancestral traditions, struggling to maintain a coherent sense of ethnic belonging.

The identity crisis is one of the most prevalent spiritual dilemmas of contemporary individuals navigating the complexities of cultural pluralism and relativism. Standing at the crossroads of multiple cultural influences, individuals often struggle to define themselves within an increasingly fragmented world. This crisis is akin to looking into a shattered mirror - each fragment reflecting a different, incomplete aspect of the self, yet none offering a unified or coherent identity. In the context of globalization, the rapid exchange of cultural values and norms challenges traditional notions of identity, often leading to a sense of disorientation. The coexistence of diverse cultural perspectives can create an environment where individuals no longer feel anchored to a singular heritage or worldview, resulting in psychological and social alienation. The loss of a stable cultural reference point exacerbates the feeling of being caught between worlds, belonging fully to neither.

For Kazakh society, which is characterized by its polyethnic composition and historical ties to both Eastern and Western traditions, this crisis presents a significant challenge. As global influences continue to shape national consciousness, the risk of cultural disintegration grows. Addressing this crisis requires a deliberate effort to reconcile tradition with modernity, ensuring that individuals can engage with the broader global community while maintaining a strong connection to their cultural roots. Only through this balance can the integrity of national identity be preserved amid the transformative forces of globalization.

These findings suggest that globalization does not uniformly erase traditional identities but rather fosters layered identity constructions: civic and cosmopolitan identities emerge alongside rather than in place of ethnic belonging. Politically, this dual-track identity formation presents both opportunities and risks: while it facilitates global integration and civic cohesion in cities, it also deepens the cultural gap between rural and urban populations, which may have implications for national policy and electoral alignment.

DISCUSSION

Our results corroborate constructivist expectations that identities are assembled through discourse and institutions, not merely inherited [9, 10]. They nuance claims about globalization's cultural homogenization by showing how localization and boundarywork produce resilient hybridity. The rise of civic identification alongside durable ethnocultural belonging aligns with the "dualtrack" dynamic observed in other hybrid regimes that seek legitimacy by coupling modernization with heritage. Comparatively, Kazakhstan's trajectory diverges from Baltic rapid Westernization and from more insular models in Central Asia; it resembles a multivector approach that strategically combines external engagement with internal cohesion.

One clear observation in the context of globalization is that a significant portion of people consciously seek to preserve their ethnocultural values despite the increasing influence of global integration. The desire to maintain cultural heritage reflects a deep-rooted need for identity and continuity in an era of rapid change. In such circumstances, it becomes absolutely necessary to be strictly aware of the various ways that translation traces and uses today. To a greater extent than all the others, the texts that have been translated symbolize the real nature of relations between cultures, and on an international scale [19, p.3]. It is well known that in order to preserve the integrity and unity of the Kazakh ethnic group during the period of globalization, not only material, but also spiritual values are important.

In analyzing globalization, three primary perspectives emerge: economic, political, and cultural. Each of these dimensions contributes to the transformation of national identities and societal structures in different ways.

From an economic standpoint, globalization is driven by capital expansion policies and market liberalization. The pursuit of economic profit often leads to the erosion of ethnic, cultural, and political boundaries. This is exemplified by modern India, where the traditional caste system—an entrenched social order for thousands of years—is being gradually undermined by the pressures of a market economy, particularly in urban areas. The forces of capitalism reshape societal structures, reducing the influence of historical social hierarchies and fostering greater economic mobility.

According to A. Akhiezer, one of the defining characteristics of globalization is its tendency to diminish the role of the nation-state, shifting power toward transnational economic systems. He argues that globalization seeks to create a unified global market in which national governments play a peripheral role. As economic interdependence deepens, nation-states face increasing challenges in maintaining economic sovereignty and protecting cultural and social institutions from external influences [20, p.225]. The cultural dimension of globalization is characterized by the transition of humanity into the information age. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, mass media, and global communication networks has transformed cultural interactions, accelerating the dissemination of information across borders. This process fosters cross-cultural exchange but also raises concerns about the dominance of globalized media and the erosion of traditional cultural values. The increasing interconnectivity of societies has led to the emergence of a shared global consciousness, where cultural identities are continuously reshaped by technological progress and international influences [21, p.325]. Carefully observing its many manifestations, it quickly becomes obvious that the term «globalization» and its use intersect with many different phenomena, which sometimes reach the point where they turn out to be incompatible. Globalization in the geopolitical sphere is often synonymous with «conflict» and «interdependence». From a more sociocultural point of view, it has also been synonymous with «cultural hegemony» over the past few years. The development of Kazakh translation has been and continues to be associated, in particular, with the terms «integration». As for the concept of globalization as such, it is all too well known that it cannot be reduced to any of these general terms, nor to any of its causes and consequences. For it is obvious that among its own characteristics, one should not forget about its contradictory nature, which is perhaps its main distinguishing feature. As in ancient times, translation remains today, at a time of what is now called globalization, and more than ever before, an integration tool for some, an identification tool for others.

Kazakhstan's approach to national identity transformation under globalization exhibits both parallels and divergences when compared to other post-Soviet nations.

The transformation of national identity in Kazakhstan amid globalization mirrors, to some extent, patterns observed in other post-Soviet republics, yet it retains unique political, cultural, and strategic dimensions. In states such as Ukraine and Georgia, globalization has often acted as a force for democratization and civil society strengthening, encouraging the emergence of more cohesive civic-national identities. For instance, Ukraine's pursuit of EU integration—especially following the 2014 Euromaidan events—has been accompanied by deliberate cultural and linguistic reforms aimed at consolidating a Ukrainian civic identity that stands in contrast to Soviet and Russian influences [22].

In contrast, Kazakhstan has adopted a more balanced approach, promoting a "Kazakhstani" civic identity that encompasses ethnic diversity while maintaining strategic partnerships with global powers. This strategy reflects a pragmatic adaptation to globalization, aiming to modernize without alienating traditional cultural elements [23]. The country has opted for a multivector identity policy that merges elements of ethnonationalism with broader civic and regional dimensions. This approach enables it to maintain internal ethnic harmony while also engaging with global political and economic systems. While this differs from the Baltic model—which emphasized rapid Westernization and derussification – Kazakhstan's position as a multiethnic state and a strategic Eurasian actor necessitates a more nuanced, less binary identity formation strategy.

Moreover, when compared to Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan, where state identity projects have leaned toward insularity and ideological nationalism, Kazakhstan's hybrid approach – embracing international education, digital globalism, and economic liberalization – highlights a willingness to adopt aspects of globalization that reinforce, rather than threaten, its state legitimacy and soft power.

While globalization is often critiqued for eroding traditional identities, it can also serve as a catalyst for positive transformation:

While nationalist critiques often present globalization as a vehicle for cultural erosion or Western hegemony, an alternative school of thought – grounded in liberal constructivism—suggests

that globalization can serve as a platform for identity reconstruction and civic renewal. Kazakhstan, through initiatives such as the Bolashak International Scholarship Program, has cultivated a generation of globally educated professionals who retain strong national affiliations while contributing to institutional innovation and policy reform.

Globalization has facilitated the coexistence of diverse cultural traditions within Kazakhstan, enriching the national identity through pluralism and intercultural dialogue [24].

Exposure to global cultural currents has empowered Kazakhstani youth to engage with international norms and values, contributing to a dynamic and evolving national identity [25].

Practical policy implications (addressing reviewer request for applied focus)

Education. - Curriculum integration: Maintain the dual track by embedding civic competencies (rights, deliberation, pluralism) explicitly in history and literature sequences; employ projectbased modules that link local heritage sites to global themes (e.g., Silk Road and contemporary logistics, biocultural conservation). - Language policy: Operationalize functional trilingualism with clear domain specialization (Kazakh for cultural/historical subjects and public service; Russian for interregional communication; English for STEM and international collaboration), avoiding symbolic overload and ensuring assessment alignment. - Teacher capacity: Invest in teacher microcredentials for bilingual pedagogy, digital didactics, and civic facilitation; blend national content with inquirybased learning to cultivate reflective patriotism rather than rote symbolism.

Media and digital ecosystems. - Public service media: Commission crossplatform storytelling that pairs innovation narratives (startups, science) with heritage segments, reinforcing the message that modernity and identity are complements, not rivals. - Platform literacy: Scale digital citizenship modules (factchecking, algorithm awareness, respectful debate) in secondary and tertiary education to mitigate echochamber polarization and strengthen civic cohesion. - Heritagetech: Support digitization of archives, interactive museums, and vernacular language content creation to increase the visibility and usability of national culture online.

Diaspora engagement. - Network activation: Map expertise across diaspora hubs and run mentorship pipelines that connect students and earlycareer professionals at home with global peers; incentivize shortterm return fellowships. - Cultural portability: Fund cultural centers and mobile cultural kits (digital exhibitions, open educational resources) to harmonize heritage transmission abroad and at home. - Feedback channels: Institutionalize consultative forums where diaspora perspectives inform education and innovation policy, transforming identity from symbol to capability.

CONCLUSION

Globalization in Kazakhstan does not dissolve identity; it recomposes it. Our evidence indicates a stable pattern of layered identification where civic belonging coexists with, and is often articulated through, ethnocultural continuity. Education systems, media and digital platforms, and diaspora networks serve as mediators that translate global repertoires into nationally resonant forms. We term this configuration strategic hybridity: a pragmatic settlement between global integration and cultural rootedness that has helped sustain social cohesion in a multiethnic polity.

The model's success, however, depends on reducing disparities in access to quality education and connectivity, avoiding overreliance on symbolism, and cultivating digital citizenship. Policy pathways include domainspecific trilingualism, inquirybased civicheritage curricula, heritagetech initiatives, and structured diaspora mentorship loops. Comparative analysis suggests that Kazakhstan's multivector identity strategy differs from both rapid Westernization and isolating nationalism, offering a distinct route for hybrid regimes navigating global pressures.

For scholarship, the contribution lies in specifying the institutional mechanics through which globalization's dual effects are localized. For policy, the implication is clear: identity is not merely to be preserved but to be made usable—as a capability for cooperation, innovation, and pluralistic citizenship. Future work should deepen microlevel observation and expand disaggregated measurement to track the durability and inclusiveness of hybridity across cohorts and regions.

Recommendations for Safeguarding National Identity in the Context of Globalization:

– It is essential to develop a political framework that fosters a sense of inclusive civic belonging, particularly in ethnically diverse and multilingual regions. This may involve constitutional reforms, symbolic politics (e.g., national holidays and monuments), and education policies that articulate a shared civic identity without erasing ethnic particularities.

– Given Kazakhstan's multiethnic composition, it is imperative to implement systematic programs of deliberative democracy that bring together ethnic communities, linguistic minorities, and civil society actors in structured forums to foster empathy, consensus-building, and pluralistic national identity.

– To make national culture both sustainable and appealing, the government and private sector should fund cultural start-ups, including music labels, publishing houses, cultural tourism platforms, and independent media. These initiatives ensure that cultural preservation is not merely symbolic but also economically viable.

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