

## **Conclusion**

We should not draw any general conclusion on nation-building in Kazakhstan from a survey of a small number of people. But some observations can be made about how people think about the nationalities policy by comparing each group's opinions.

### ***Differences among and within the groups***

As expected, the opinions expressed by Kazakh nationalists and Russian nationalists contradict each other on almost all issues. This is clearly shown in the analysis above. In addition, Russian nationalists tend to estimate the state's support for Kazakhs, their language, and their culture to a greater extent than Kazakh nationalists do. For example, in question 1, Russian nationalists expressed concern about the establishment of a monoethnic Kazakh state, while their Kazakh counterparts said that they believed that the state merely gave some privileges to Kazakhs. Similarly, if Kazakh nationalists regarded the state's support for the Kazakh language and culture as insufficient, Russian nationalists saw the state as actively working on these issues, thus putting Russians at a disadvantage.

As for the possibility of building a civic nation, both Kazakh and Russian nationalists expressed agreement that this was impossible. They cited different reasons for their agreement. Both groups agreed that lack of a common idea and democratic institutions were obstructions to civic nation-building. Kazakh nationalists also blamed Russia's intervention, a separatist mood, indifference to the country's future, and contempt toward the Kazakh culture by non-Kazakhs. Russian nationalists, for their part, expressed the belief that Kazakhs' claim for privileges and discrimination against non-Kazakhs were factors that made civic nation-building difficult.

There are other cases where respondents answered similarly but with quite different implications. Some non-Kazakhs agreed with Kazakh nationalists that a monoethnic Kazakh state might be established in Kazakhstan, mainly by a steady decrease in the non-Kazakh share of the population. But if Kazakh nationalists welcomed such a tendency, others were obviously worried about it.

The opinions of Kazakh intellectuals were diverse: some expressed views resembling those of the Kazakh nationalists, while others often agreed with the Russian intellectuals. The difference between the Kazakh nationalists and some Kazakh intellectuals whose opinions are close to the nationalists is that the latter are more optimistic about the possibility of civic nation-building and deny the possibility of establishing a monoethnic Kazakh state. The diversity of views among Kazakh intellectuals may be partly explained by the larger number of respondents in this group. It is often said that many representatives of the Kazakh cultural elite are linguistically Russified and thus share a similar mentality with the Russians. As far as our survey is concerned, however, those Kazakhs who often

agreed with the Russian intellectuals on the nationalities question were not necessarily Russified Kazakhs.

Differences in opinion among Kazakhs are also related to political orientation — between those who actively support the president and his regime and those who are in the opposition. Naturally, the first group supports the government policy, and though it is not necessarily satisfied with the results, it believes appropriate goals have been established. The opposition, on the contrary, believes that what the state works on in the sphere of the nationalities question is of a declarative character or serves to aggravate ethnic relations; this group criticizes the regime for playing the ethnic card in order to legitimate its power. It should be noted, however, that not everyone who expresses critical views on the state nationalities policy supports the opposition.

In this regard, it should be noted that Kazakhstan's nation-building is a policy directed from above that does not involve mobilization of the masses. Political parties and movements, including those based on nationality, do not play an important role in Kazakhstan's politics. Nor do they enjoy a strong support among citizens. At any rate, the parliament enjoys limited popularity. The multiparty system is a mere formality, with a majority of parliamentary seats held by members of pro-presidential parties and “nonpartisans” who often support the president.

If we compare opinions of the Russian nationalists and those of the Russian intellectuals, there are no fundamental differences regarding nationalities policy. Yet one can detect certain differences. Russian intellectuals often express the opinion that there is no clear nationalities policy (or they believe it to be of a declarative character), while nationalists insist that the state actively supports the Kazakh language and culture. Russian intellectuals show a certain understanding for Kazakhs' cultural and other needs. As compare to intellectuals, Russian nationalists express more concern regarding discrimination against Russians.

Intellectuals among ethnic minorities and Russian intellectuals share similar views. But minorities show more understanding for Kazakhs as regard to state symbols and the renaming of streets and cities; they are also more optimistic about interethnic accord than Russian intellectuals. Yet, like Russian nationalists, they tend to see the state's support for the Kazakh language and culture more genuine than others do. This may be explained by their minority status, which makes them responsive to language and cultural issues, or by their social status as leaders of an ethnic cultural center, which makes them concerned about their own language and culture.

### *Possible area of compromise*

It is noteworthy that there are issues upon which all groups agree. Almost all respondents, irrespective of ethnic or other background, believe that Kazakhs have a dominant position

in the state structures. And many of them consider that it is the result of a deliberate policy. Although they disagree on whether it can be justified, the survey shows an interesting agreement on this issue and the reason for it.

Quite a few respondents, regardless of their background, name the president as a main contributor to the maintenance of interethnic accord. This is more obvious among the Kazakh nationalists and the intellectuals of ethnic minorities.

Meanwhile, there are a variety of opinions within each group as regards state symbols. To the question of whether they know the symbols of sovereign Kazakhstan or not (see question 10 of the attached questionnaire), quite a few respondents answer that they do not know the national anthem very well. As for the national emblem and flag, they are better known, but their origins are often not familiar to respondents, which perhaps explain very different answers to question 11.

Respondents, regardless of which group they belong to, also disagree as to language processes. This may be explained by the difficulty to create objective criteria to measure such processes, and also by the fact that one's estimation is dependent on his environment (for example, where and with whom he works) and one's expectation about the languages. An enthusiastic activist for the development of the Kazakh language may think that Russian still prevails and Kazakh should develop much faster, while a person who does not speak Kazakh may see the same situation that Kazakh is being employed in a broader sphere to the detriment of Russian.

Kazakhs and non-Kazakhs are not necessarily against each other on all questions. Certain compromise may be achieved as to state symbols, the return of Kazakhs from abroad, and support for the Kazakh language and culture. Many non-Kazakh elites would agree to give support for the Kazakh language on condition that the command of the Kazakh language should not be used to justify discrimination in employment, and Kazakh develops not at the expense of Russian. Meanwhile, Kazakhs are often against Russian's becoming a second state language not because they wish to exclude the Russian language from Kazakhstan, but because they are afraid that by doing so the development of the Kazakh language, which had been disregarded in Soviet times, might be slowed down. One possibility is to keep Kazakh the only state language while giving Russian an official status.

It seems that the current regime, however, does not genuinely work in the spheres where compromise would be achieved. Rather, monopolization of the state structures by Kazakhs, with which non-Kazakhs hardly agree, is clearly progressing. True or not, many believe that it is a deliberate state policy. If this tendency continues and if no concrete measures will not taken, it may lead to ethnic tension in the future.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned problems, it is noteworthy that the respondents, including nationalists, do not attack a particular ethnic group. As for non-Kazakhs, they draw a line between Kazakhs and Kazakh politicians/bureaucrats who they believe conduct a discriminatory policy against them. Although we cannot tell whether such an attitude is shared by ordinary people, it is important that elites do not stir the people

to attacking one other along ethnic lines. It is also interesting that several respondents agree that the people of Kazakhstan are primarily deserving of credit for maintaining interethnic accord, despite the fact that “the people of Kazakhstan” was not an option given in the questionnaire.

**List of interviewees** (in alphabetical order)

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Abylkhozhin, Zhulduzbek: Professor, Institute of History and Ethnology  
Aimbetov, Aldan: Editor in Chief, *Kazakhskaiia pravda*  
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Akatai, Sabetkazy: Chairman, National Party Alash  
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Auezov, Murat: Executive Director, Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan  
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Dunaev, Vladimir: Senior Lecturer, Institute of Philosophy and Political Science  
Gunashev, Amanchi: Plenipotentiary, Republic of Ichkeriia [Chechnya] in Kazakhstan  
Ismailov, Madel: Chairman, Labor Movement of Kazakhstan  
Kadyrbekov, Bakhtiiar: President, Dostlik Association of Civic Organizations of Uzbeks of  
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Karabekov, Erzhan: Correspondent, Radio Liberty  
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International Relations Department, University Kainar  
Kim, German: Vice-President, the Association of Koreans of Kazakhstan, Head of the  
Department of Korean Studies, Kazakh National State University  
Kozhakhmet, Khasen: Chairman, Civil Movement Azat  
Ksandopulo, Georgii: Chairman, Association of Greek Culture Centers of Kazakhstan and  
Kyrgyzstan  
Kurganskaia, Valentina: Director, Center for Humanities Studies  
Kushim, Dos: Leader, Detar Center  
Kutykadam, Seidakhmet: Chairman, Republican Social Movement Orleu  
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Mazhitov, Marat: Deputy Chief Editor, *Akikant* political journal  
Mikhailov, Viktor: Chairman, Republican Slavic Movement Lad  
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- Nadirov, Nadir: President, Iakbun Civic Union of Associations of Kurds
- Navruzov, Mussib: Chairman, Azerbaijan Culture Center Turan
- Peruashev, Azat: First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Civic Party
- Pitaenko, Leonid: Chairman, Byelorussian Culture Center
- Pugaev, Aleksei: Editor, *Human Rights in Kazakhstan and the World* [a bulletin of  
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- Sviridov, Andrei: Freelance researcher of Kazakhstan's mass media
- Svoik, Petr: Deputy Chairman, Democratic Party Azamat
- Tsybin, Boris: Chairman, Russkii soiuz of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Zemlianov, Valer'ian: Deputy of Mazhilis [Lower Chamber of Parliament] of the Republic  
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- Zhovtis, Evgenii: President, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule  
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Note: Four wished to remain anonymous. The interviewees' names are Latinized from Cyrillic script according to the U.S. Library of Congress transliteration system. For non-Russian names, the Russian spelling (provided by interviewees themselves or shown in their publications) was used, although they do not fully express original pronunciation. The profiles given here are at the time of the interview. Interviewees' middle names and academic titles are not listed above because we do not have full information for all respondents. We apologize to those who gave us academic titles and wished that they be mentioned.

### Sample of the questionnaire (translated from Russian)

1. What kind of policy, in your opinion, is conducted in Kazakhstan with respect to interethnic relations in the state-building process?

A state is being established as a common home for all ethnic groups without any privileges or discrimination on the basis of ethnic background. At the same time, however, each ethnic group has the chance to preserve its own ethnic characteristics and consciousness.

A multiethnic state is being established taking into consideration such factors as culture, customs, traditions, and the mentality of Kazakhs, with certain privileges for the Kazakh people.

A monoethnic Kazakh state is being established with subsequent cultural assimilation of other nationalities.

A monoethnic Kazakh state is being established that presupposes the subsequent ousting of other nationalities.

All nationalities are being merged into the new, unified nation that is being formed.

I do not see clear policy with respect to nation-state building.

Other:

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2. What kind of state policy, in your opinion, is necessary for Kazakhstan with respect to interethnic relations in the state-building process?

To establish a state as a common home for all ethnic groups, without any privileges or discrimination on the basis of ethnic background. At the same time, each ethnic group should have the chance to preserve its own ethnic characteristics and consciousness.

To establish a multiethnic state taking into consideration such factors as culture, custom, traditions, and the mentality of Kazakhs, with certain privileges for the Kazakh people.

To establish a monoethnic Kazakh state with subsequent cultural assimilation of other nationalities.

To establish a monoethnic Kazakh state that presupposes subsequent ousting of other nationalities.

To merge all nationalities into a new, unified nation.

Other:

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3. Do you think that in Kazakhstan it is possible to build a civic nation, the members of which will feel themselves to be citizens of the country regardless of their ethnic background?

Yes.

No.

Difficult to answer.

3 (a). If yes, why? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

Many Kazakhstanis, regardless of nationality, have a common mentality, and they all consider one another compatriots.

A majority of Kazakhstanis understands that Kazakhstan is and will be a multiethnic state, and that all should live under equal conditions.

People understand that all Kazakhstanis share a common fate.

Nationalists (Kazakh, Russian, or other) do not enjoy support of the population in Kazakhstan.

Other:

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3 (b). If not, why? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

There is no common idea capable of consolidating society regardless of its members' ethnic background.

Kazakhstan lacks democratic institutions through which interethnic relations can be regulated.

There is no agreement as regards the country's territorial integrity, and there is a separatist mood (for example, some maintain that Kazakhstan's northern regions belong historically to Russia).

Russia serves as guarantor of the Russian population in Kazakhstan and thereby has a negative influence on interethnic relations.

Many are inclined to emigrate abroad and do not think about the country's future.

Some Kazakhs think that their rights should predominate, as they are an indigenous people.

Some non-Kazakhs think that they are discriminated against, and, therefore, they do not consider themselves to be full-fledged citizens of Kazakhstan.

Some non-Kazakhs do not respect the Kazakh language, culture, and customs, which has a negative influence on interethnic relations.

Other:

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4. Do you think that it is possible to establish a monoethnic Kazakh state in Kazakhstan?

Yes.

No.

Difficult to answer.

4 (a). If yes, why? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

Objective processes ensure a steady decrease in the non-Kazakh share of the population.

The composition of the population by nationality will change with the help of the government, to the advantage of Kazakhs.

State support of the Kazakh language and its introduction into all spheres of government activities will lead to the domination of the Kazakh people.

Other:

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4 (b). If not, why? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

Kazakhstan is a multiethnic state, and it is practically impossible to assimilate or oust non-Kazakhs, who comprise half of the entire population.

Objective processes, despite the state's efforts, will be conducive to the creation of a multiethnic state.

The Kazakh language and culture have not been established to the degree at which it would prevail in society.

Other:

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5. What, in your opinion, does the state work on within the framework of the realization of the state nationalities question? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

Regulation of the language problem.

Raising the ethnic consciousness of Kazakhs.

Reviving the ethnic culture of Kazakhs.

Regulating migration processes.

Regulating personnel questions in government structures.

For all practical purposes, the state does not work on anything.

Other:

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6. The constitution defines Kazakh as the state language (Section 1, Article 7); at the same time, it states that "Russian is officially employed on an equal level with Kazakh in state organizations and in organs of local administrative self-rule" (Section 2, Article 7). In this respect, do you believe that

No other language but Kazakh should be the state language?

Russian should become a (second) state language?

Russian should not become a state language, but it should acquire official status (as an official language or language of interethnic communication)?

Other?

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7. What is your view on the dynamics of language processes in Kazakhstan?

The Kazakh language grows in importance without causing harm to the Russian language.

The Kazakh language grows in importance while the Russian language declines.

The Russian language continues its dominance, as the significance of Kazakh remains unchanged.

The Russian language continues its dominance, and the significance of the Kazakh language is declining.

Other:

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8. What is your opinion about the development of the Kazakh language and its support by the state?

The Kazakh language is being actively developed, and it is being employed in a broader sphere thanks to state support.

The Kazakh language is, in fact, not being developed, in spite of state support.

State support for the Kazakh language is of a declarative character.

Other

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9. In the cultural sphere, what kind of policy, in your opinion, is being conducted?

Conditions are being created for the development of the cultures of all peoples residing in Kazakhstan.

Conditions are being created only for the development of the culture of the Kazakh people.

Efforts are being made to build an all-Kazakhstan multiethnic culture.

The state is, for all practical purposes, conducting no policy in support of culture.

Other:

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10. Do you know the symbols of sovereign Kazakhstan (anthem, emblem, flag)?

	National anthem	National emblem	National flag
Yes, completely.			
Yes, but insufficiently.			
Somewhat.			
Rather vaguely.			
Don't know.			

11. Do Kazakhstan's symbols (the anthem, emblem, flag, etc.) reflect the Kazakh people's history and traditions?

Yes, fully.

Yes, but not sufficiently.

Somewhat.

Rather weakly.

They do not reflect their history and traditions.

Difficult to answer.

11(a). If, in your opinion, Kazakhstan's symbols do not reflect the history and traditions of the Kazakh people, substantiate your opinion.

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12. Do you believe that state symbols should reflect the history and traditions of the Kazakh people as an indigenous ethnic group?

Yes, because Kazakhs constitute the state's indigenous ethnic group.

No, because the symbols should reflect the multinational populations of Kazakhstan.

No, because symbols in a multinational state ought to be abstract and not reflect the ethnic characteristics of one or another nation.

Other:

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13. What is your opinion of the renaming of cities and streets since independence?

Positive.

Negative.

Indifferent.

Difficult to answer.

13(a). If your evaluation is positive, then why? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

It is a necessary process for the reestablishment of historical justice.

It is a necessary process for elevating the level of national consciousness among Kazakhs.

It is a necessary process for inculcating Kazakhstan patriotism among the entire population, regardless of nationality.

Other:

13(b). If your evaluation is negative, then why? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

History should not be rewritten.

It facilitates alienation among representatives of non-Kazakh nationality.

It is a waste of money by bureaucrats in order to pretend that they are working.

It is not always justified with respect to the merits of the persons for whom streets are named. (If you are of this opinion, could you please offer concrete examples.)

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It does not help to increase the level of ethnic self-consciousness among Kazakhs. (Please explain, if possible.)

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Other:

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14. Are there cases in which history is reviewed and historical values are reevaluated?

Yes, one frequently encounters such cases.

Yes, but they do not occur on a mass level.

They are extremely insignificant.

There are practically no such cases.

There are no such cases.

14(a). If yes, how would you explain such cases.

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15. With which of the following opinions regarding Kazakh repatriates (oralmans) do you agree? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

The return of ethnic Kazakhs from abroad represents the reestablishment of historical justice and is absolutely justified.

Their return is necessary for increasing the share of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan.

Their return is conditioned by political goals and does not represent genuine assistance to oralmans.

The return of ethnic Kazakhs is premature, since at the present time there are insufficient resources for their housing and employment in Kazakhstan.

The return of ethnic Kazakhs is unfair, because the state should first resolve the problems of its citizens regardless of nationality.

The return of ethnic Kazakhs is problematic, because some Kazakhs who come from other countries have a different mentality, and they find it difficult to adapt in Kazakhstan.

Other:

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16. With which of the following opinions regarding emigration of the population would you agree?

The population flight is driven mainly by economic problems.

The population flight is driven mainly by the desire to return to the historical homeland.

The population flight is driven mainly by discrimination against the non-Kazakh population.

Other:

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17. With which of the following opinions regarding the state's migration policy are you in agreement?

There is a desire to halt population flight, and much is being done to achieve this.

The state would like to halt population flight but is incapable of doing this.

The state, while not in favor of population flight, conducts a policy that facilitates it.

The state has no desire to halt population flight.

The state deliberately conducts a policy facilitating population flight.

Other:

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18. Do you believe that representatives of Kazakh people have a dominant position in the state structures?

Yes.

No.

Difficult to answer.

18(a). If yes, then with which of the following opinions do you agree?

The preponderance of representatives of Kazakh people in state structures is justified and entirely fair.

It is a manifestation of unfairness with regard to representatives of other nationalities.

Other:

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18(b). If yes, then how would you evaluate the reasons for such a phenomenon?

(Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

It is a deliberate state policy for increasing the share of Kazakhs in state structures.

It is a phenomenon independent of state policy, and it may be explained by the strength of traditions among Kazakhs, who are compelled to employ, lobby for, and support their relatives and fellow-countrymen.

Non-Kazakhs do not seek to work in government structures.

Leaders within state structures prefer to refrain from hiring non-Kazakhs, as they fear that they may soon leave Kazakhstan.

Other:

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19. How would you evaluate the state's conduct in the area of maintaining interethnic accord and preventing interethnic conflict?

Positively.

Satisfactorily.

Negatively.

I cannot evaluate it, as there is no real work being done to prevent interethnic conflict.

19(a). If positively, then who, in your opinion, is primarily deserving of credit for maintaining interethnic accord and avoiding interethnic conflict in Kazakhstan? (Please mark according to importance, using 1 to indicate the greatest benefit, 2 the next highest benefit, and so forth.)

The president.

The government.

The parliament.

The Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan.

Other:

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19(b). If you have a negative opinion of the state's role in maintaining interethnic accord, then why?

Despite the fact that appropriate goals may be established, they are not fulfilled by bureaucrats.

The state's actions are limited to sloganeering and declarations; in reality, little is done.

The state's actions aggravate the situation; peace exists despite, rather than because of, the actions of the state.

Other:

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20. What, in your opinion, does the state need to do in order to provide greater guarantees of interethnic accord? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

There is no need to change anything; everything is fine as it is.

There are problems, but one shouldn't change anything now; any changes would disturb the existing balance and make the situation worse.

Constitutional and legislative changes are necessary.

New state institutions that regulate interethnic relations are necessary.

Quotas in organs of government should be introduced for representatives of various nationalities.

Territorial autonomy ought to be created.

Other:

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21. Whose interests, in your view, are expressed by the state's nationalities policy? (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

The interests of the whole people of Kazakhstan.

The interests, first of all, of Kazakhs, but with consideration of the interests of other ethnic groups.

The interests of Kazakhs without consideration of the interests of other ethnic groups.

The interests of bureaucrats within the state apparatus, regardless of ethnic differences.

The interests of Kazakhs, without regard to the interests of other ethnic groups.

The interests of the Kazakh majority of the bureaucratic apparatus.

The interests of the president and those closest to him.

Other:

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22. Could the nationalities policy conducted by the state lead to interethnic tension?

Yes.

No.

Difficult to answer.

22(a). If yes, then name the factors that could facilitate such tension (Please mark all answers with which you agree.)

Language policy (in particular, accelerating the introduction of the Kazakh language in office communications).

Renaming streets and cities.

Reviewing and reevaluating history.

Changes in the system of education in schools and institutions of higher education.

Migration policy.

Personnel policy in government structures.

Other:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_2000/2001

Nationality

Kazakh

Russian

German

Uzbek

Tatar

Uighur

Belarus

Korean

Other (fill in)\_\_\_\_\_

Social position/profession

Civil servant

Member of parliament

Leader of a political party

Leader of a ethnic-cultural center

Researcher/analyst

Representative of the mass media

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