



Youth Information
Service of Kazakhstan

THE IMPACT OF DISINFORMATION ON THE SOCIETY OF KAZAKHSTAN

according
to the sociological
study data

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The analytical report was prepared by the Youth Information Service of Kazakhstan on the basis of a sociological study data to review the issue of the effect of disinformation and propaganda on modern society in Kazakhstan. The study was conducted using "Mixed methods research" methodology. The study was focused on the preferences of different groups of the population in information consumption, perception of information from different sources, trust and distrust to various sources of information, bloggers, as well as attitudes of citizens of Kazakhstan regarding disinformation and propaganda. The work is intended for a wide range of readers.

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INDEX

INTRODUCTION	4
SECTION 1. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRY AND REGION	9
1.1. Preferences in choosing sources of information	9
1.2. Trust to the information sources	20
1.3. Level of trust to bloggers	26
1.4. Preferred language of information	31
Conclusions for the section	34
SECTION 2. PROPAGANDA AND DISINFORMATION IN THE JUDGEMENTS OF CITIZENS OF KAZAKHSTAN	39
2.1. Components of manipulation by information: propaganda and disinformation	39
2.2. Perception of propaganda in Kazakhstan	42
2.3. Misinformation in the judgements of citizens of Kazakhstan	50
2.4. Perception of the activities of the Central Reference Laboratory as an example of the perception of misinformation in the judgements of citizens of Kazakhstan	64
Conclusions for the section	73
SECTION 3. PERCEPTION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY AND GLOBALLY BY THE CITIZENS OF KAZAKHSTAN	77
3.1. The most resonant events in the judgements of the citizens of Kazakhstan	77
3.2. Foreign policy attitudes of the citizens of Kazakhstan	86
Conclusions for the section	90
SECTION 4. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF MEDIA CONSUMPTION (based on focus groups and analysis of media and social networks)	93
CONCLUSION	115
RECOMMENDATIONS	118
APPLICATION 1.	120
Sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants	

INTRODUCTION

Media and information literacy, implying critical comprehension of information and competent use of media, is one of the most important skills for an individual in modern society¹. First of all, we are talking about the Internet, along with traditional mass media, such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines².

What allows to claim that media and information literacy have become one of the most important skills of humanity? First of all, this is the expanding role of the media, which occupies a central place in the cultural and political life of society. According to the researchers, our perception of the world is formed by the mass media³, among which social networks have taken a major place.

Here, a person receives an array of not only useful, but also false and disorienting

information that the media can freely distribute and even impose in modern increasingly complex information environment.

Of course, it should be noted that for a number of global and local actors, cyberspace and information and communication technologies have become tools for the realization of their economic, political, propaganda and cultural goals. And the media space itself is increasingly becoming an environment where they struggle for dominance in the real world, which suggests that mass media are increasingly being used for the purpose of manipulation.

It should be specifically noted that the lack of the native media ecosystem in the state and critical thinking skills in society entails the inability of the average citizen to question the words that others have said, which in turn may

¹ Jeong, S., Cho, H & Hwang, Y. (2012). Media literacy interventions: A meta-analytic review. In: *Journal of Communication*, 62, 454–472.

² Rockman, I. F. (2004). *Integrating information literacy into the higher education curriculum: practical models for transformation*. San Francisco: John Wiley.

³ Duncan, Barry et al. (1989). *Media Literacy Resource Guide*. Ontario Ministry of Education and the Association for Media Literacy, Queen's Printer for Ontario.

entail the risk that decisions in an individual's life will be made either by other persons, or in accordance with formalized rules, or under the influence of "group pressure" and other group strategies. In addition, it should be taken into account that people often tend to look for ready-to-use models and ignore information if it contradicts their beliefs.

As Alvin Toffler points out, "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who can't learn, unlearn, and relearn".

The author of the concept of "information literacy" is Paul Zurkowski (USA), who first introduced it in 1974. Zurkowski emphasized that access to information and its dissemination are factors of economic advantage, and pointed out the need to adopt a national educational program to ensure universal information literacy by 1984.

Currently, a number of concepts have been developed worldwide that distinguish media literacy as a discipline. And if initially there were 18 such concepts, later they were reduced to five key concepts. Currently, the Media Literacy Center (USA) have created a comprehensive model called Questions/TIPS. In its most general form, this concept of media and information literacy is based on the development of critical thinking skills, comprehension and interpretation of the information received.

Therefore we can conclude that media- and information literacy is a prerequisite for social development in an ever-increasing information environment. Moreover, researchers introduced the concept of an "information rich person", i.e. a person capable of efficiently and effectively use

various types of information, as well as learn and improve throughout the whole life. Whereas the "information poor person" is incapable of this.

In order for society to raise "information-rich people" capable of continuing education in the field of media culture, learning skills should be "introduced into the context of classes purposefully, in a comprehensive strategic way."⁴

As for the situation in Kazakhstan, domestic researchers point out that there are no independent tools in the country to resist disinformation and propaganda. Residents of our country, as well as those of other Central Asian states, are defenseless from an unprecedented amount of false information, half-truths, manipulations and fake news from both local and foreign sources, including war propaganda⁵, when even experienced journalists trained in fact-checking tools find it difficult to immediately figure out whether it is a fact or manipulation⁶.

The domestic media space of the country is characterized by a large number of fake news from external space, which is due to a number of factors: hybrid wars in the region, propaganda of certain neighboring states, as well as the lack or concealment of official information on a number of topics within the country.

The situation is worsened by the fact that the strong positions of the Russian media in Kazakhstan, especially for information and news TV channels, which have been constantly showing signs of propaganda and militarism since February 24⁷. As Kazakh researchers emphasize, these media have a significant influence in Kazakhstan: "Part of society lives with their heads in Russian media structures."⁸

⁴ Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2003). Learning for the 21st century: A report and mile guide for 21st century skills. http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/downloads/P21_Report.pdf [проверено 22.10.2009].

⁵ Vulnerability of Central Asian countries to propaganda of war and hatred. 12.12.2022. <https://cabar.asia/ru/uyazvi-most-stran-tsentralnoj-azii-k-propagande-vojny-i-nenavisti>.

⁶ The low level of media literacy of the population of Central Asian countries. 28.03.2022. <https://cabar.asia/ru/nizkij-uroven-mediagramotnosti-naseleniya-stran-tsentralnoj-azii>.

⁷ The Russian media have switched to the mode of rabid propaganda – Kazakh experts. 19.09.2022. <https://rus.azattyq-ruhy.kz/society/40973-smi-rossii-pereshli-v-rezhim-ogolteloi-propagandy-kazakhstanskije-eksperty>.

⁸ "Propaganda is a hook": Dosym Satpayev – on the influence of the Russian media. 16.09.2022. <https://rus.azattyq-ruhy.kz/society/40889-propaganda-eto-kriuchok-dosym-satpaev-o-vliianii-rossiiskikh-smi>.

At the same time, Kazakhstani citizens "do not even realize that they are victims of propaganda"⁹, we are talking about the effect of "deliberative distortion", when people believe that it is pointless to discuss politics with others because they are brainwashed, as well as about the "third person effect", when people are convinced that others, but not themselves, are under the influence of the media. These positions lead to the fact that of lack of exchange of arguments at all¹⁰.

At the same time, there is an understanding of the need to develop media literacy in Kazakhstan: the discipline is being institutionalized in the education system, teachers and trainers are being trained in this area. In particular, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan have included media literacy as a "Global Competencies" subject of choice for eighth-year students since 2021-2022. Educational resources on media literacy for university teachers have been developed in the state language and adapted to the local context. Kazakhstan's first textbook on media literacy for schoolchildren of 9-11 years (12), developed under the Internews project by the MediaNet International Journalism Center with the support of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) was approved by the state expert commission and recommended for use in educational institutions.

Also, two "media literacy centers" have been established, media literacy classes are held, an innovative training seminar MediaCAMP Edyuton is held annually¹¹ in Kazakhstan.

This study allows us to understand **the impact of disinformation and propaganda on the citizens of Kazakhstan.**

At the same time, propaganda, which the Cambridge Dictionary defines as "information that **illuminates only one side of the dispute**, with the intention of influencing people's opinions,"¹² can be positive and negative. In particular, it is considered in a positive aspect when it comes to the implementation of educational and informational functions in society and its focus on social harmony. In the negative form, on the contrary, propaganda is aimed at imposing certain beliefs in the society in order to incite social or national hostility, escalate social conflicts, exacerbate confrontation. This makes it possible for the propagandist to rally society around himself, imposing the perception of his opponent (potential or real) with an "enemy image" – extremely simplified, schematized and mythologized, based on ethnic, political, ideological and other stereotypes¹³.

In turn, when we are talking about **fake news and disinformation**, we are talking about **fake material** that is not based on any verifiable materials, evidence, facts. Misinformation is provided intentionally, with the aim of purposefully misleading.

Thus, in a sense, propaganda and disinformation have many common aspects, and in some cases they coincide. At the same time, not all "fake news" are propaganda, since they can be, for example, financial in nature. But when political "fake news" are created in order to

⁹ Yu. Korosteleva. 11.10.2020 How Kazakhstan can fight against Russian propaganda <https://vlast.kz/politika/52046-nasi-grazdane-daze-ne-osoznaut-cto-oni-zertvy-propagandy.html>.

¹⁰ Deliberating alone: deliberative bias and giving up on political talk. 11.07.2022. <https://academic.oup.com/hcr/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/hcr/hqac016/6639804?redirectedFrom=fulltext>, Davidson P. The Third-Person Effect in Communication <https://academic.oup.com/poq/article-abstract/47/1/1/1906961>.

¹¹ How media literacy is developing in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. 28.10.2021. <https://ru.internews.kz/2021/10/kak-razvivaetsya-mediagramotnost-v-kazahstane-tadzhikistane-i-uzbekistane/>; Азбука медиаграмотности. 01.11.2021. <https://kazpravda.kz/n/azbuka-mediagramotnosti/>; <https://the-steppe.com/razvitie/vvedenie-mediagramotnosti-v-shkolah-mon-rasskazali-podrobnosti>.

¹² Balsa Bojovic, National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. The flow of information have entered a new era <https://perconcordiam.com/ru/%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%8C%D0%B1%D0%B0%D1%81-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%B9/>.

¹³ The communicative space of war: propaganda and public sentiment: An educational and methodological guide. – St. Petersburg, 2017. – 72 p.

influence political views, people's feelings, when they are aimed at influencing the elections, then they can be considered propaganda.

The study objectives were: to establish the sources of information and disinformation of Kazakhstanis, to identify areas, topics, sources of the greatest disinformation of Kazakhstanis, to identify differences in the extent and susceptibility of disinformation depending on age, gender, level of education, geography of residence, to assess the attitudes to fake information (using "biolab" as an example), to identify peculiarities in the consumption of information and disinformation by the younger generation of Kazakhstanis (14-18 years old, 19-29 years old).

Quantitative and qualitative tests have carried out within the framework of the study. As part of the quantitative test, a population survey was conducted, in which 1,000 respondents aged 14 and higher took part¹⁴ in 16 regional centers and 32 villages throughout Kazakhstan. The survey was held in Kazakh and Russian.

47% men and 53% of women took part in the survey, the urban to rural ratio was 66% : 33%. The data were weighted by such parameters as gender and age. The selection bias at the 95% confidence level was $\pm 3.1\%$.

Within the framework of qualitative tests, 6 focus groups were held with journalists, media specialists, civil officers and teachers. This study was conducted over the period from July 1 to August 31, 2022.

The study demonstrates that citizens of Kazakhstan are exposed to threats of disinformation and propaganda to a rather high extent.

So, although citizens mostly admit the possibility that the media may broadcast unreliable information, at the same time they are not critical of this and believe that if the media provide false or manipulative information, they either rarely do it or do not do it at all. In

addition, every second resident of Kazakhstan had no experience of rechecking information received from the media and social networks.

As for propaganda, every fifth person in Kazakhstan is not familiar with this concept.

According to the study, **young people aged 14 to 18 are primarily at risk**, as they believe more than others that they rarely encounter misinformation in the media, and are convinced that the media cannot broadcast false information. In addition, it was representatives of this age group who were most often not aware of the concept of propaganda and were much less likely than others to see the likelihood of its appearance in the field of politics. In addition, citizens with a lower level of education are more exposed to the risks of misinformation. This fact was revealed during similar studies in other countries.

Citizens of Kazakhstan receive information about life in the country primarily through central and regional domestic media (79% and 36%, respectively). At the same time, every sixth, or 18% of the country's citizens, use the Russian media to obtain information about the political situation in their own country.

Almost half of the country's population does not believe either domestic or foreign media regarding the situation in the domestic policy of the country, which clearly demonstrates the existing problems with public trust, which forms a single social tissue and, in fact, is the basis for social stability. An important role in this process could also be played by external disinformation, the purpose of which is often to bring down an individual's coordinate system so that distrust of everyone and the belief that there is no truth becomes a vital position¹⁵. At the same time, we cannot disagree with researchers who argue that if there is social inclusion in society, when every citizen, regardless of characteristics, is sure that something depends on him in the country, that he is heard, disinformation and propaganda can no longer be so effective.

¹⁴ The age of the study participants begins from 14 years, since, according to the legislation of Kazakhstan, the young citizen are those aged 14-29 years. While one of the objectives of the study was to study the attitudes of the young citizen of Kazakhstan to the disinformation.

¹⁵ Disinformation, propaganda and all intermediate tools: how to recognize and protect yourself. 03.08.2022. <https://rubryka.com/ru/article/ksenia-iliuk/>.

According to the citizens of Kazakhstan, both disinformation and propaganda were most often spread on the following topics: the war (special operation) in Ukraine, COVID-19 vaccination, the January events in Kazakhstan.

At the same time, if the citizens of Kazakhstan saw the **risk of propaganda** more in the Kazakh and Russian media (44% and 41%, respectively) and several times less in American and Chinese sources of information (12% and 13%, respectively), **the actual disinformation and manipulation of information** are more often noted in Chinese (46%) mass media. The top three States whose sources, according to citizens of the country, are also flooded with misinformation, included the United States (39%) and Ukraine (38%).

It is worth mentioning the differences in the perception of information in the regional context. The study showed that among those living in the northern and central regions of Kazakhstan, almost a third of the population are guided by Russian media, their interpretation of events taking place in Kazakhstan and globally.

At the same time, the population of the capital is diversifying the sources of information to the greatest extent in order to form their own vision of the situation. In the age context, young people, unlike senior population, significantly more often turn to different types of sources and to the media of different countries to get a more complex picture. Nevertheless, we are talking about a relatively small group of young people, which does not allow us to point out a trend. While in the educational context, the source of information is primarily diversified by people with higher education.

The study confirmed the hypothesis that *citizens of Kazakhstan who receive information from only one source are more susceptible to misinformation than those who use several sources.*

Thus, according to the data obtained, among those who least believed in the truthfulness of

the information disseminated by the Russian media about the nature of the activities of the Central Reference Laboratory (or, as indicated in the media, the "biological laboratory"), the higher ratio is among the population of Astana, who more often than citizens of other regions, diversify sources of information.

Citizens with a higher educational level, who use a variety of sources of information, also expressed their confidence in this information to a lesser extent.

On the contrary, among the senior-aged population, who were the least to diversify the sources of information, the most negative attitude towards the creation of a laboratory was seen in Almaty, most likely due to the information disseminated by the Russian media about the nature of its activities.

The main challenge of this situation – the significant engagement of the Kazakh audience in the field of Russian propaganda and disinformation – is the growing polarization in Kazakh society, where almost equal shares of the population hold opposite points of view about whether Russian media can be trusted or not¹⁶.

Thus, the Kazakh society is exposed to a high risk of disinformation and propaganda, and first of all it concerns the population of older age groups and the population of the territories bordering with Russia. The reaction to these threats should be the development of media literacy, primarily among the growing population of the country and the youngest group, improving the quality and competitiveness of Kazakh media, which could provide comprehensive and high-quality information on all issues that cause the greatest response in the Kazakh society. Only these ways will increase the level of trust in society and resist the growing challenges in the modern information space of Kazakhstan.

¹⁶ Which countries' media use disinformation? Russian media: the level of trust is 42%, the level of distrust is 36% (Table 45).

section 1.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRY AND REGION

1.1. Preferences in choosing sources of information

The study shows that the largest part of the population receives information about life in the country most often via social networks (58%) and Internet (47%). Only 27% of Kazakhstanis noted that they often receive domestic news via television, and another 10% – from acquaintances or colleagues. Traditional media such as newspapers (7%) and radio (3%) are less important as a source of information about the situation in the country (see *Diagram 1*).

From which sources do you most often get information about life/news in the COUNTRY?

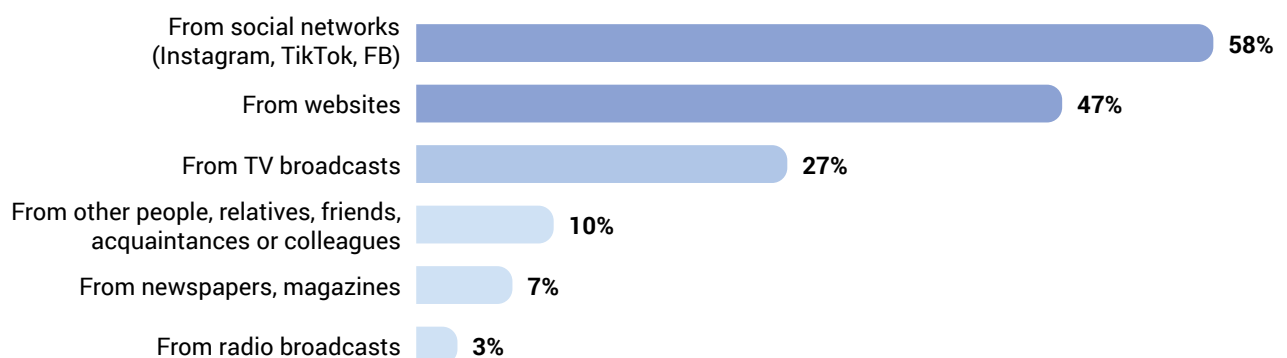


Diagram 1

Websites as the main source of information about the news in the country are more often used by urban dwellers – 51%, rural residents – 39%. Nevertheless, as for television and social networks, the difference in consumption is not so dramatic (see **Table 1**).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"From which sources do you most often receive information about life/news inside the COUNTRY?"
according to the behavior

	City	Village
From other people, relatives, friends, acquaintances or colleagues	9%	12%
From TV broadcasts	26%	29%
From radio broadcasts	4%	1%
From newspapers, magazines	7%	6%
From websites	51%	39%
From social networks (Instagram, TikTok, FB)	59%	55%

Table 1

Differences in the preferred sources of information have a clear age-related difference.

Thus, young people receive more news about life in the country via social networks, and individuals aged 30-45 years more often choose websites, while the older population and retired citizen prefer traditional media sources such as television and newspapers.

It should be specifically noted that young Kazakhstanis use acquaintances and friends as a source of information about events taking place in the country more often than people of other ages. This fact again demonstrates the commitment of young individuals to new formats of media consumption and more developed social connections (see **Table 2**).

The pattern of distribution of data in the educational context is quite interesting. More often, citizens with higher education receive information about events taking place in the country *through social networks and websites*. Among those who more commonly use television as a source of information, there are slightly more citizens with secondary vocational education. Those with incomplete education (up to 9 years) are more likely to focus on *information from acquaintances and friends* than other categories of citizens, i.e. they are more likely to rely on the unverified sources (see **Table 3**).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"From which sources do you most often receive information about life/news inside the COUNTRY?"
according to the age

	How old are you?				
	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
From other people, relatives, friends, acquaintances or colleagues	19%	6%	7%	14%	9%
From TV broadcasts	16%	15%	25%	41%	64%
From radio broadcasts	5%	2%	3%	5%	7%
From newspapers, magazines	3%	4%	4%	12%	20%
From websites	42%	46%	52%	47%	32%
From social networks (Instagram, TikTok, FB)	70%	71%	55%	45%	32%

Table 2

Distribution of answers to the question:
"From which sources do you most often receive information about life/news inside the COUNTRY?"
in the educational context

	Please specify your education				
	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
From other people, relatives, friends, acquaintances or colleagues	17%	15%	11%	8%	8%
From TV broadcasts	25%	26%	33%	25%	16%
From radio broadcasts	6%	2%	4%	3%	3%
From newspapers, magazines	4%	2%	8%	8%	5%
From websites	42%	46%	44%	50%	56%
From social networks (Instagram, TikTok, FB)	48%	57%	51%	63%	66%

Table 3

In the regional context, it can be seen that information about the life of the country on the web is primarily received by citizens living in Astana (74%) and Almaty (60%), as well as in the western region (58%). Social networks are the most popular sources of information for the capital city dwellers (76%). While residents from the eastern and western regions of Kazakhstan (38% and 34%, respectively) more often watch TV more to receive information about the news in the country.

Conversations with the acquaintances as a source of news are the most significant for respondents from the eastern, northern and central regions of Kazakhstan (19%, 17% and 15%, respectively) (see Table 4).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"From which sources do you most often receive information about life/news inside the COUNTRY?"
across the regions

	From other people, relatives, friends, acquaintances or colleagues	From TV broadcasts	From radio broadcasts	From newspapers, magazines	From websites	From social networks (Instagram, TikTok, FB)
Western region	13%	34%	6%	11%	58%	67%
Eastern region	19%	26%	1%	5%	37%	62%
Southern region	6%	27%	3%	8%	38%	46%
Central region	15%	28%	5%	6%	50%	68%
Northern region	17%	38%	2%	3%	38%	67%
Almaty	3%	22%	3%	5%	60%	55%
Shymkent	9%	16%	4%	4%	43%	41%
Astana	5%	18%	3%	0%	74%	76%

Table 4

As for information or news about the life of their city or locality, Kazakhstanis are more likely to use social networks (55%) and web sites (36%), but they also use informal connections (27%). Only 17% of Kazakhstanis use TV to search for the news of their city or village. Newspapers and radio are in last place, 8% and 4% respectively (*see Diagram 2*).

From which sources do you most often receive information about life/news IN YOUR CITY (settlement, village, , district, region)?

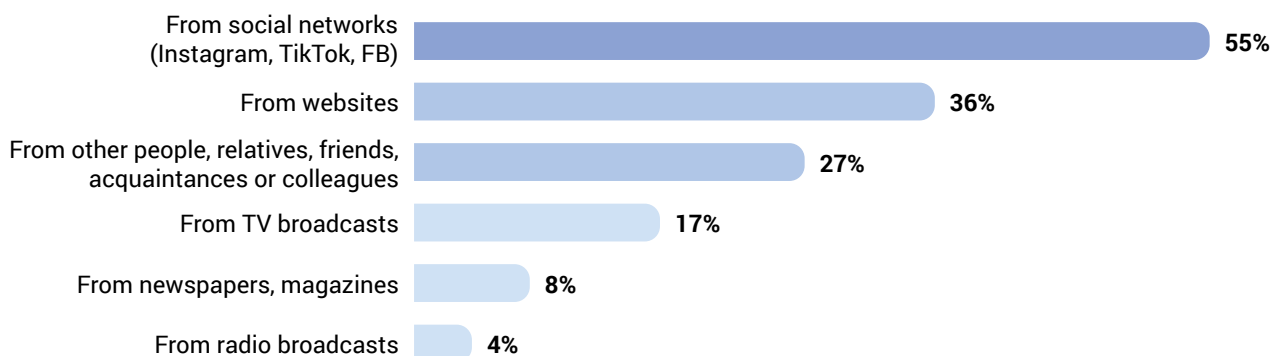


Diagram 2

Rural residents are more prone to use informal relations in search for news on their locality (38% of rural residents and 21% of urban dwellers), which indicates stronger social relations in rural areas. While urban dwellers are twice as likely as rural residents, indicate websites the main source of information about what is happening in their city (43% of urban dwellers, 24% of villagers), as well as television (21% and 11%, respectively) (see **Table 5**).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"From which sources do you most often receive information about life/news IN YOUR CITY
(settlement, village, , district, region)?"
across the territory of residence

	City	Village
From other people, relatives, friends, acquaintances or colleagues	21%	38%
From TV broadcasts	21%	11%
From radio broadcasts	5%	2%
From newspapers, magazines	8%	9%
From websites	43%	24%
From social networks (Instagram, TikTok, FB)	57%	52%

Table 5

Older and senior-aged people, demonstrate their commitment to traditional media to obtain news on their locality, such as television and paper media, while young individuals use social networks (see **Table 6**).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"From which sources do you most often receive information about life/news IN YOUR CITY
(settlement, village, , district, region)?"
according to the age

	How old are you?				
	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
From other people, relatives, friends, acquaintances or colleagues	33%	19%	27%	31%	30%
From TV broadcasts	8%	11%	15%	28%	41%
From radio broadcasts	8%	3%	3%	3%	11%
From newspapers, magazines	2%	7%	7%	11%	30%
From websites	38%	38%	37%	35%	23%
From social networks (Instagram, TikTok, FB)	64%	65%	55%	47%	23%

Table 6

The importance of informal data sources, such as conversations with acquaintances, friends and relatives, is higher in the context of obtaining information about life in their locality (27%) than in relation to obtaining information about life in the country as a whole (10%).

In the regional context, citizens living in the eastern region of Kazakhstan (39%), as well as in the southern region and in Shymkent (34% and 32%, respectively) most commonly use such channels for obtaining information about life in their city or village. It should be noted that through their acquaintances, friends and relatives, Kazakhstanis hear news about life in their locality more often than via television, newspapers or radio.

Informal contacts are the least significant for obtaining information among the population of Almaty and Astana, as well as western region. Thus, among the residents of Astana and Almaty, websites are most popular (74% and 54%), which are relatively less important for the population of other regions. Also, social networks are a more significant source of information about life in their locality for the population of these regions, together with the northern region (*see Table 7*).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"From which sources do you most often receive information about life/news IN YOUR CITY (settlement, village, , district, region)?"
across the regions

	From other people, relatives, friends, acquaintances or colleagues	From TV broadcasts	From radio broadcasts	From newspapers, magazines	From websites	From social networks (Instagram, TikTok, FB)
Western region	21%	23%	6%	17%	42%	68%
Eastern region	39%	17%	0%	8%	28%	58%
Southern region	34%	15%	4%	9%	25%	40%
Central region	30%	18%	3%	7%	34%	69%
Northern region	29%	13%	4%	9%	34%	71%
Almaty	7%	22%	6%	4%	54%	60%
Shymkent	32%	14%	0%	0%	36%	34%
Astana	15%	18%	7%	2%	74%	68%

Table 7

Instagram social network is the most popular in terms of *search for news* among Kazakhstanis (66%). In second place with a significant gap is held by YouTube and WhatsApp (38% each). The third is Telegram, which is used by every fifth individual as a resource to obtain news (21%). Google+ and Facebook are also among the five most popular resources (19% and 18%, respectively).

One out of ten also receives information from the TikTok (11%) and VK (8%). The least popular in terms of news for Kazakhstanis are "Odnoklassniki", "My World", Twitter, LinkedIn, Viber (see **Diagram 3**).

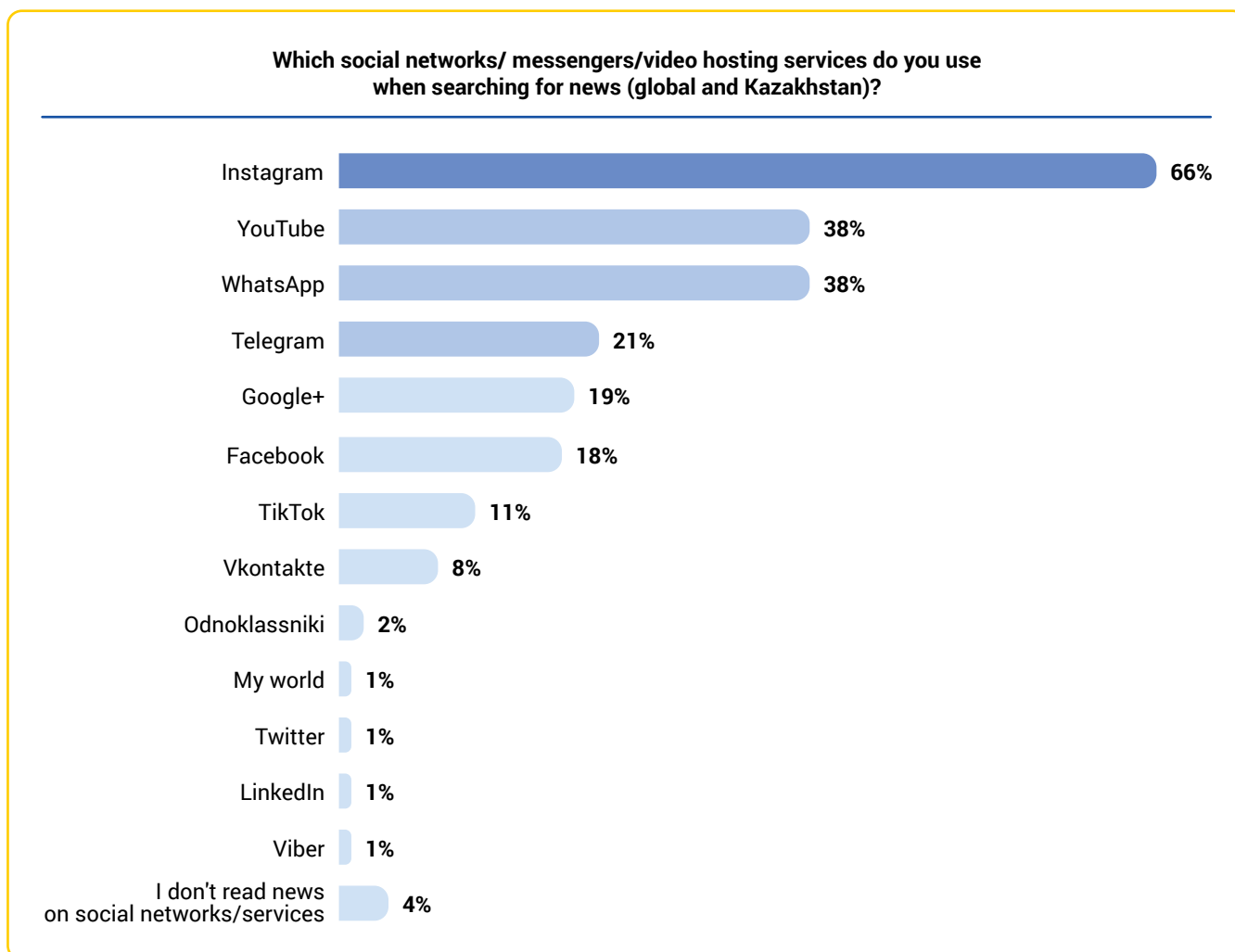


Diagram 3

The distribution of answers to the question on which social networks citizens use to receive news clearly demonstrates that each social network in Kazakhstan has its own age-specific audience.

Thus, the most politicized social network Facebook is most often used by citizens aged 30 to 58 years, that is, middle-aged and elderly individuals. More entertaining and commercialized Instagram content is equally adopted by very young Kazakhstanis (from 14 to 18 years old) and the middle-aged population (30-45 years old).

TikTok and Google+ are more often chosen by the youngest citizens of the country (14-18 years – 27% and 27%, respectively), while YouTube is more often viewed as the main news platform by the population aged 46 to 58 years (46%). Telegram is more in demand by young people, both lower and upper age subgroups (14-18 years – 30%; 19-29 years – 27%).

One in five individuals of retirement age indicated that they did not consider social networks as a source of news (see **Table 8**).

**Distribution of answers to the question:
"Which social networks/ messengers/video hosting services do you use
when searching for news (global and Kazakhstan)?"
according to the age**

How old are you?

	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Vk.com (Vkontakte, ВКонтакте)	6%	11%	9%	5%	5%
WhatsApp	32%	37%	38%	42%	42%
Instagram	74%	73%	72%	54%	23%
YouTube	37%	37%	35%	46%	28%
Telegram	30%	27%	19%	14%	5%
Google+	27%	20%	18%	16%	19%
Facebook	13%	16%	21%	20%	9%
TikTok	27%	12%	10%	7%	5%
I don't read news on social networks/services	1%	1%	3%	8%	21%

Table 8

In the educational context, it can be seen that citizens with higher education use a wider range of social networks to receive information on news – global and local.

The most obvious difference is in relation to the Facebook social network, which is significantly more often chosen by citizens with higher educational level than the population with secondary education. Conversely, TikTok is more often chosen by citizens with secondary education than those with higher education (see **Table 9**).

In the regional aspect, the most significant differences include the fact that residents of the western region of Kazakhstan more often than residents of other regions of the country use Facebook to receive news (26%), (Facebook is considered to be among the most politicized social networks in Kazakhstan). The most popular social network in Kazakhstan – Instagram – is more often used by residents of Almaty (76%), central and western regions of the country (73% and 74%, respectively) to read news.

On the contrary, respondents from the northern and eastern regions more commonly indicated that they do not use social networks to search for news (9% and 7%, respectively) (see **Table 10**).

The rating of mass media that Kazakhstanis choose to receive information on the socio-political situation in the country includes not only republican and regional media (79% and 36%, respectively).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Which social networks/ messengers/video hosting services do you use
when searching for news (global and Kazakhstan)?"
according to the level of education

Please specify your education

	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Vk.com (Vkontakte, ВКонтакте)	10%	7%	10%	6%	9%
WhatsApp	42%	34%	38%	40%	35%
Instagram	63%	50%	64%	74%	58%
YouTube	42%	35%	39%	37%	41%
Telegram	15%	21%	20%	21%	25%
Google+	17%	21%	13%	22%	29%
Facebook	8%	14%	11%	23%	30%
LinkedIn	0%	1%	0%	1%	3%
TikTok	25%	19%	12%	8%	9%
I don't read news on social networks/services	8%	9%	6%	1%	3%

Table 9

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Which social networks/ messengers/video hosting services do you use
when searching for news (global and Kazakhstan)?"
according to the territory of residence

	Instagram	Facebook	I don't read news on social networks/services
Western region	74%	26%	3%
Eastern region	61%	21%	7%
Southern region	60%	19%	4%
Central region	73%	13%	3%
Northern region	67%	9%	9%
Almaty	76%	12%	6%
Shymkent	59%	14%	0%
Astana	60%	16%	3%

Table 10

One in six respondents, or 18% of the country's population, also use Russian media to search for information about the political situation in the country.

The media of other countries are considered much less often in this context. In particular, only 4% of the country's citizens use American or European media to obtain information about the socio-political situation in Kazakhstan (see *Diagram 4*).

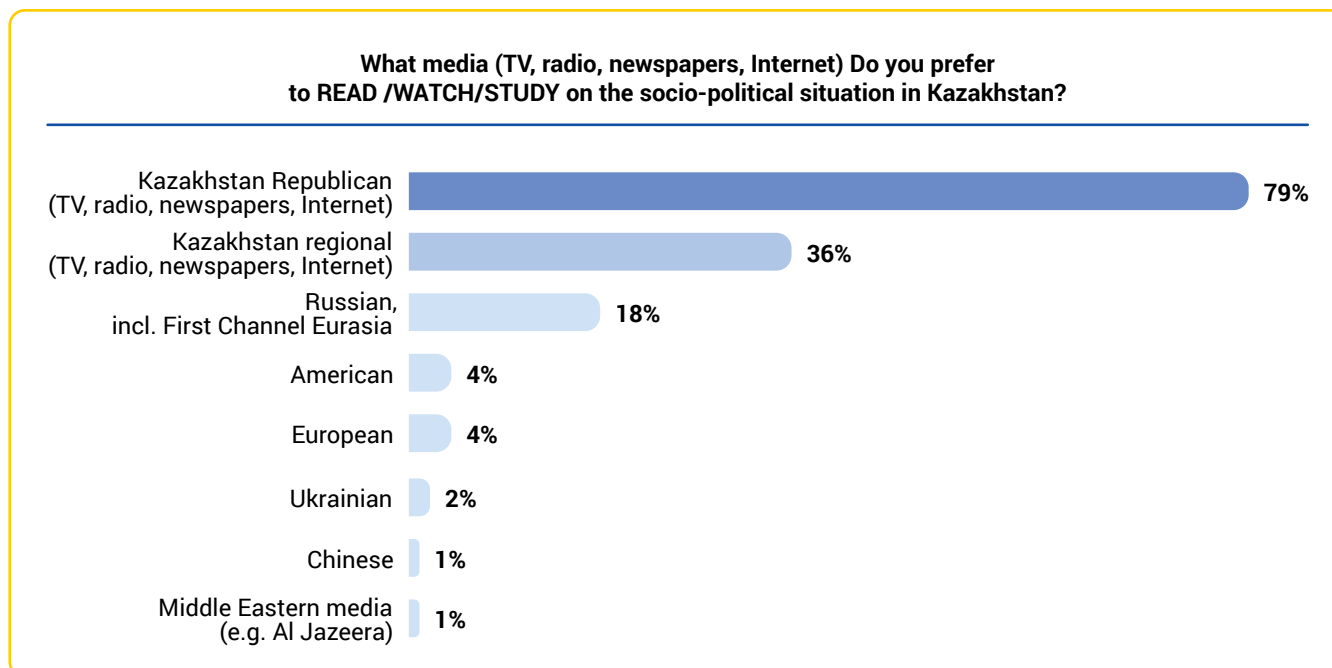


Diagram 4

Thus, **the study demonstrates that the influence of Russian media in Kazakhstan is high.**

Senior-aged citizen more often use domestic mass media to obtain information on the socio-political situation in the country, those aged 46 to 58 years prefer Russian media, while every tenth young person aged 14 to 18 years use American ones (see *Table 11*).

In the regional context, it is clear that the first place for citizens of all regions of Kazakhstan is held by the domestic republican and regional media.

The differences include the fact that *residents of the capital* diversify their sources of information, studying the socio-political situation in Kazakhstan through both European, Chinese, and Russian sources, and do this much more often than the population of other regions of the country.

Russian sources of information are used as a source of information about the socio-political situation in Kazakhstan more commonly by citizens living in the central and eastern regions of the country (29% and 28%, respectively). Russian mass media also have a significant audience in the city of Astana and the western region of Kazakhstan (29% and 23%, respectively) (see *Table 12*).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"What media (TV, radio, newspapers, Internet) do you prefer
to READ/WATCH/STUDY the socio-political situation in Kazakhstan?"
according to the age

How old are you?

	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Kazakhstan Republican	79%	81%	78%	76%	86%
Kazakhstan regional	32%	33%	36%	40%	47%
Russian, incl. First Channel Eurasia	14%	14%	18%	26%	16%
Ukrainian	3%	1%	2%	4%	0%
Chinese	4%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Middle Eastern media (e.g. Al Jazeera)	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%
European	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%
American	10%	5%	2%	3%	0%

Table 11

Distribution of answers to the question:
"What media (TV, radio, newspapers, Internet) do you prefer
to READ/WATCH/STUDY the socio-political situation in Kazakhstan?"
according to the region of residence

	Kazakhstan Republican	Kazakhstan regional	Russian, incl. First Channel Eurasia	Ukrainian	Chinese	Middle Eastern media (e.g. Al Jazeera)	European	American
Western region	87%	37%	23%	1%	2%	1%	3%	3%
Eastern region	84%	33%	19%	4%	0%	0%	3%	5%
Southern region	74%	36%	10%	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%
Central region	77%	55%	29%	3%	0%	1%	6%	3%
Northern region	76%	43%	28%	4%	0%	0%	6%	8%
Almaty	79%	22%	15%	4%	0%	1%	0%	3%
Shymkent	79%	16%	13%	4%	0%	0%	4%	4%
Astana	83%	40%	29%	3%	5%	2%	17%	7%

Table 12

1.2. Trust to the information sources

Citizens of Kazakhstan trust the domestic mass media more when they are searching for news **about the domestic policy** of Kazakhstan. At the same time, it should be noted that the pooled level of complete and partial trust does not exceed 52%, i.e., the other half of the country's citizens do not trust the domestic media on the news about the domestic politics of the country.

As for the level of trust to the media of other countries in relation to the issue under consideration, it does not exceed 19%.

Most often, Kazakhstanis tend NOT to trust the Ukrainian and Russian media regarding their coverage of Kazakhstan's domestic policy (38% and 34%, respectively) (see Table 13).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Information from which sources do you trust when you are looking for news about the domestic policy of Kazakhstan?"
in the context of pooled answers by categories "I trust" and "I do not trust"

Do not trust (more commonly I don't trust; I don't trust at all)		I trust (trust completely, trust partially)	
Ukrainian	38%	Kazakhstan Republican	52%
Russian, incl. First Channel Eurasia	34%	Kazakhstan regional	49%
Middle Eastern	29%	European	19%
Chinese	28%	Russian, incl. First Channel Eurasia	18%
American	27%	American	17%
European	24%	Chinese	14%
Kazakhstan Republican	19%	Ukrainian	13%
Kazakhstan regional	19%	Middle Eastern	10%

Table 13

At the same time, **only 22% of Kazakhstanis noted that they do not watch or read Russian media at all** (see Diagram 5).

In general, the data obtained suggest that a significant part of citizens do not believe in the ability of the media of any countries, including domestic ones, to objectively cover the domestic political situation. It can be assumed that citizens associate this with the lack of information or engagement of the media, with the privacy of information and difficulties in journalistic activity, or with the promotion of the specific interests of the foreign media. In any case, approximately half of the population of Kazakhstan does not trust media regarding objective coverage of domestic politics in the country.

What sources of information do you trust when you are looking for news about Kazakhstan's DOMESTIC policy?

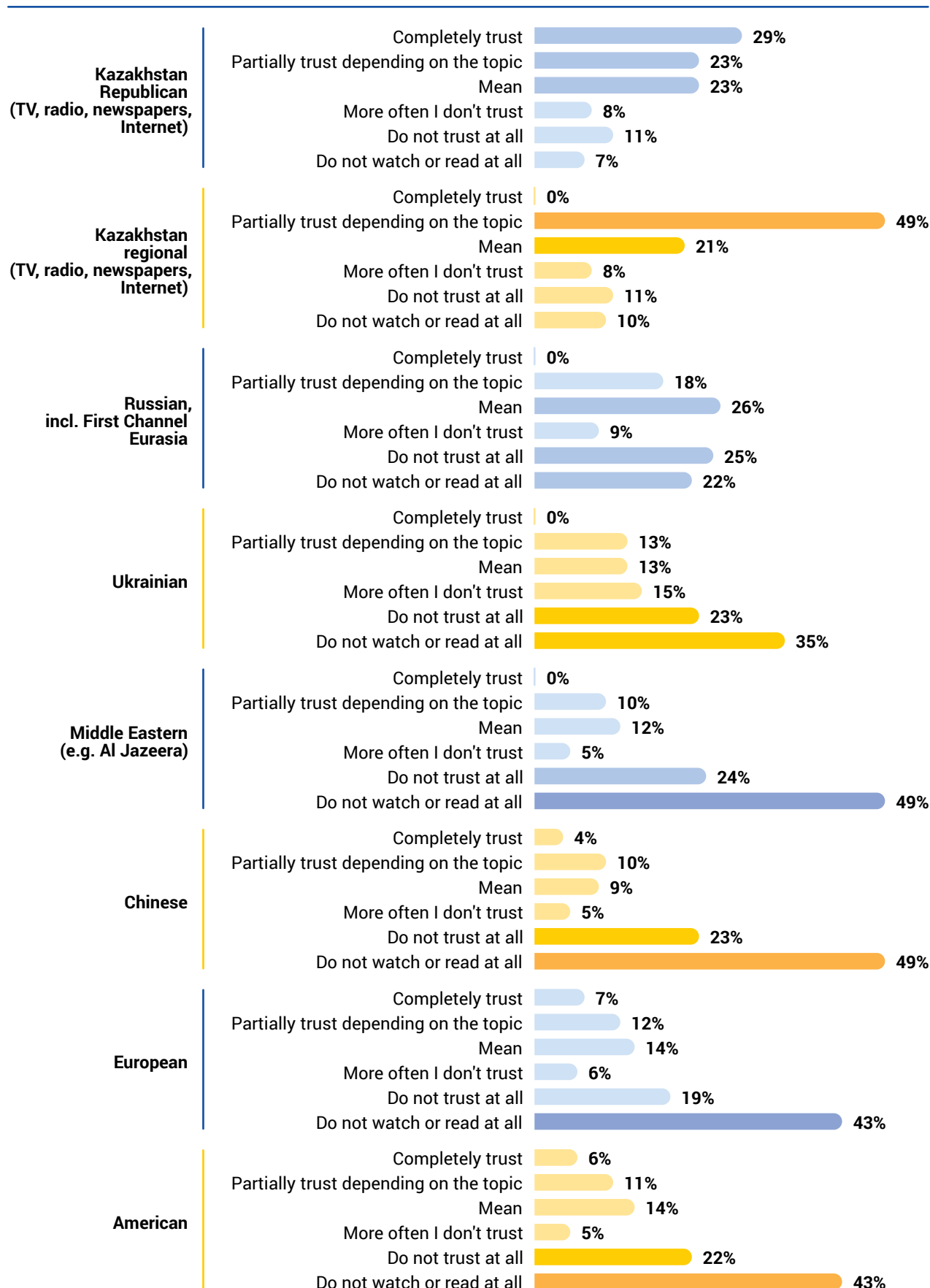


Diagram 5

In the territorial context, the most significant differences on this issue are that rural residents more often declare their full trust in the Kazakh republican media covering domestic politics (31%), while urban dwellers more often indicate a partial level of trust (25%).

There are also differences in the perception of the American and Chinese media regarding the credibility of the information they provide about Kazakhstan's domestic policy. Urban residents trust them a little more ("they partially trust depending on specific issues", 13% of urban dwellers and 6% of rural residents trust the American media, 12% and 5%, respectively, trust Chinese media).

In turn, rural residents slightly more often than urban residents do not believe the Chinese media, which write about the domestic policy of Kazakhstan ("I do not trust completely" – 27% of rural residents and 21% of urban dwellers) (see Table 14).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Which sources of information do you TRUST when looking for news about Kazakhstan's domestic policy?
(for example, regarding the January events, the referendum, rise of prices)"
according to the area of residence

		City	Village
Kazakhstan Republican (TV, radio, newspapers, Internet)	Completely trust	28%	31%
	Partially trust depending on the issue	25%	18%
Chinese	Completely trust	5%	4%
	Partially trust depending on the issue	12%	5%
	Mean	8%	10%
	More often I don't trust	5%	4%
	Do not trust at all	21%	27%
	Do not watch or read at all	49%	51%
American	Completely trust	6%	6%
	Partially trust depending on the issue	13%	6%
	Mean	12%	16%
	More often I don't trust	5%	4%
	Do not trust at all	20%	24%
	Do not watch or read at all	43%	44%

Table 14

In the educational context, it can be seen that citizens with incomplete secondary education do not read or watch both Kazakh and foreign media in order to obtain information about the domestic policy of Kazakhstan more often than other categories of citizens.

In the age context, the positions of the retirement age population are most clearly marked. They indicate confidence in the Kazakh media and distrust of the Russian, Ukrainian, Chinese, European and American media regarding coverage of Kazakhstan's domestic policy more commonly vs. other citizen.

Another difference associated with the age is that young people aged 14 to 18 years more often indicated their confidence in the Russian media regarding how they present information about the domestic policy of Kazakhstan (15%) (see Table 15).

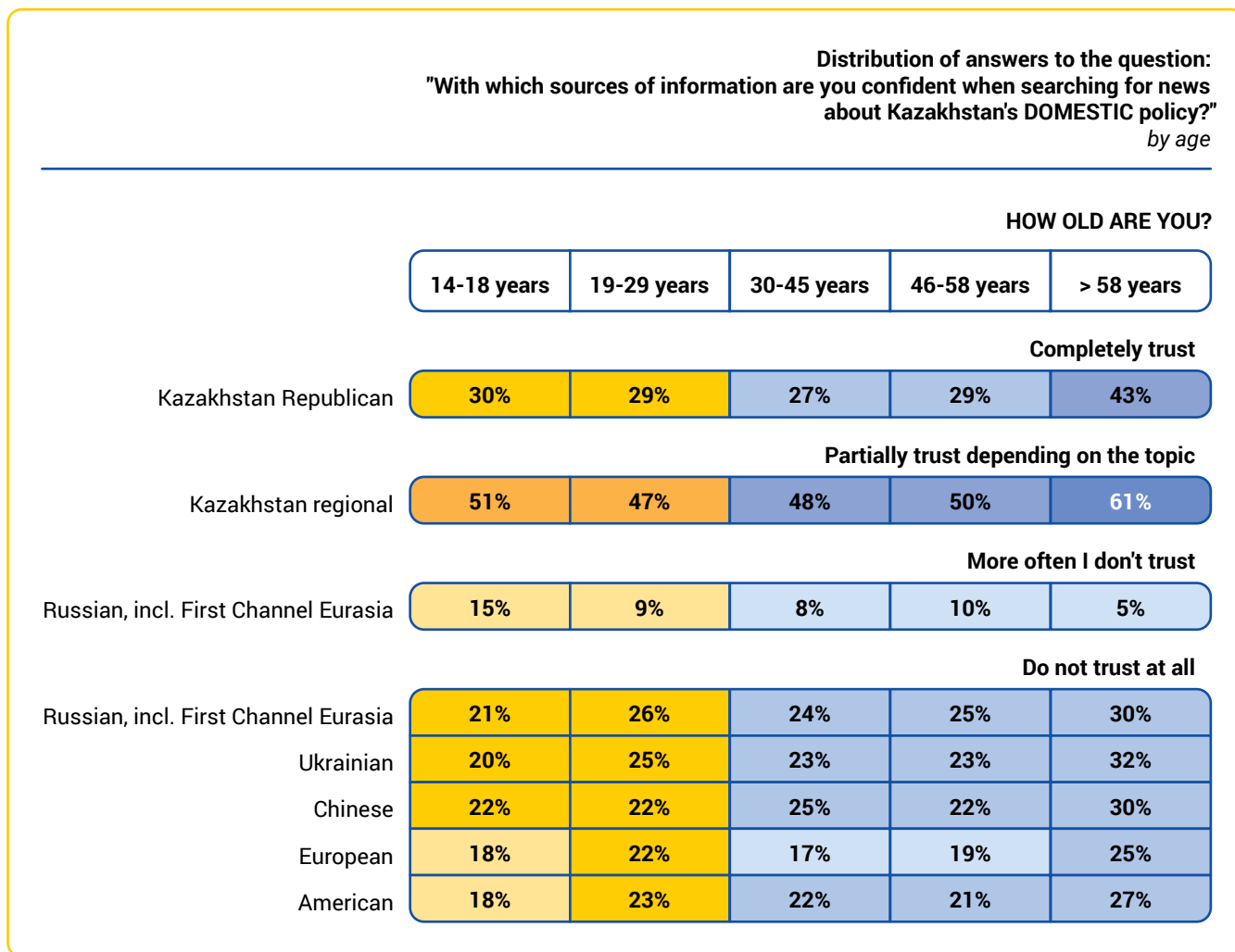


Table 15

Regarding Kazakhstan's **foreign policy**, citizens tend to be least confident with the information from Russian (40%), Ukrainian (37%) and Chinese (34%) media.

On the contrary, the republican and regional domestic media are most trusted. It should be noted that **the citizens of Kazakhstan trust the Kazakh media more in relation to the elucidation of the foreign policy than domestic (68% trust the Kazakh republican media in the topics of the foreign policy, 52% – domestic) (see Table 16).**

According to the area of residence, urban dwellers, when asked about information from which sources they trust when looking for

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Information from which sources do you trust when you are looking for news
about the FOREIGN policy of Kazakhstan?"
in the context of pooled answers by categories "I trust" and "I do not trust"

Do not trust (more commonly I don't trust; I don't trust at all)		I trust (trust completely, trust partially)	
Russian media, including First Channel Eurasia	40	Kazakhstan Republican media	68
Ukrainian media	37	Kazakhstan regional media	63
Chinese media	34	Russian media, including First Channel Eurasia	35
American media	33	Ukrainian media	27
European media	33	Central Asian, Turkish	26
Middle Eastern media (e.g. Al Jazeera)	30	European media	26
Central Asian, Turkish	28	American media	24
Kazakhstan regional media	24	Middle Eastern media (e.g. Al Jazeera)	21
Kazakhstan Republican media	22	Chinese media	19

Table 16

news about Kazakhstan's foreign policy, more often indicated that they partially trust the media of all countries, while rural residents more often answered that they do not watch or read the media of all these countries at all. It is reasonable to assume that the foreign policy of Kazakhstan and its presentation in the media of different countries are more monitored by urban residents.

In the educational context, citizens with incomplete secondary education more often indicated that they do not watch or read the media of any countries in relation to receiving information about Kazakhstan's foreign policy at all. The same trend was also noted in relation to information about the internal policy of Kazakhstan.

Young Kazakhstanis (14 to 18 years old), as well as the senior population, differ from other groups in the perception of information about Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the media.

Thus, citizens of retirement age more often indicated that they trusted the domestic media more, they did not trust Ukrainian, American, Chinese, Russian, Middle Eastern, Central Asian sources of information.

Young citizens of the country aged from 14 to 18 years slightly more often than other categories of citizens noted that they fully trust the American and Ukrainian media (14% and 14%, respectively), and also more often indicated partial distrust of the Russian mass media regarding how they present information about Kazakhstan's foreign policy (*see Table 17*).

**What sources of information do you trust when looking for news about Kazakhstan's FOREIGN policy?
(For example, Kazakhstan's attitude to the war in Ukraine, the Eurasian Customs Union)**

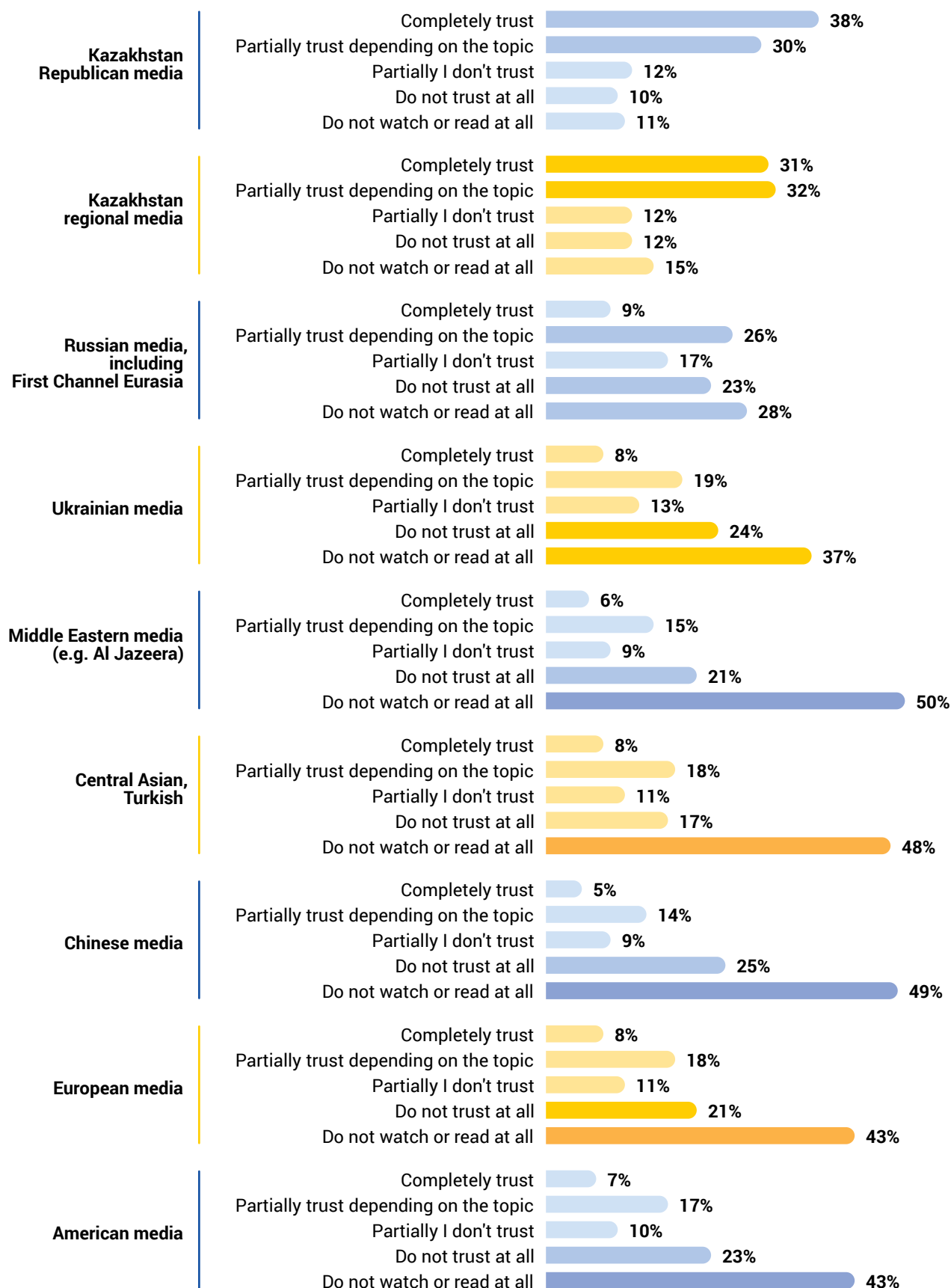


Diagram 6

Distribution of answers to the question:
 "With which sources of information are you confident when searching for news
 about Kazakhstan's FOREIGN policy?"
 by age

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
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Kazakhstan Republican media

Completely trust	42%	38%	35%	41%	50%
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Russian media, including First Channel Eurasia

Completely trust	14%	7%	7%	9%	11%
Partially I don't trust	22%	20%	16%	13%	11%
Do not trust at all	21%	24%	23%	22%	32%

Ukrainian media

Completely trust	14%	8%	8%	8%	2%
Do not trust at all	19%	23%	23%	24%	45%

Middle Eastern media (e.g. Al Jazeera)

Do not trust at all	22%	24%	17%	21%	32%
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Central Asian, Turkish

Do not trust at all	14%	19%	16%	18%	27%
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Chinese media

Do not trust at all	26%	25%	22%	26%	34%
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American media

Completely trust	14%	6%	6%	7%	2%
Do not trust at all	17%	27%	21%	23%	34%

Table 17

1.3. Level of trust to bloggers

37% of Kazakhstanis do not trust bloggers. The main topics on which bloggers' views still enjoy the trust of the population are fashion and cooking (20%), relationships and family, parenting (18%), as well as social problems and corruption (18%).

To the least extent, citizens of Kazakhstan trust bloggers covering topics of domestic policy (12%), business (11%), ecology (8%), topics associated with loans and mortgage (8%), COVID treatment (8%), as well as the country's foreign policy (7%).

What can be the reason for the low level of trust to bloggers? First, there is a point of view in Kazakh society about the engaged nature of the activities of some bloggers¹⁷, in addition, bloggers are often blamed for unprofessionalism¹⁸, that they can publish unverified information to attract attention, contribute to the spread of disinformation¹⁹. Also, people indicate that in some cases bloggers can argue their opinions and objections from the emotional point of view²⁰. At the same time, their influence through emotions often turns out to be the only opportunity to convey the opinion of the public regarding the public issue of concern to the authorities²¹.

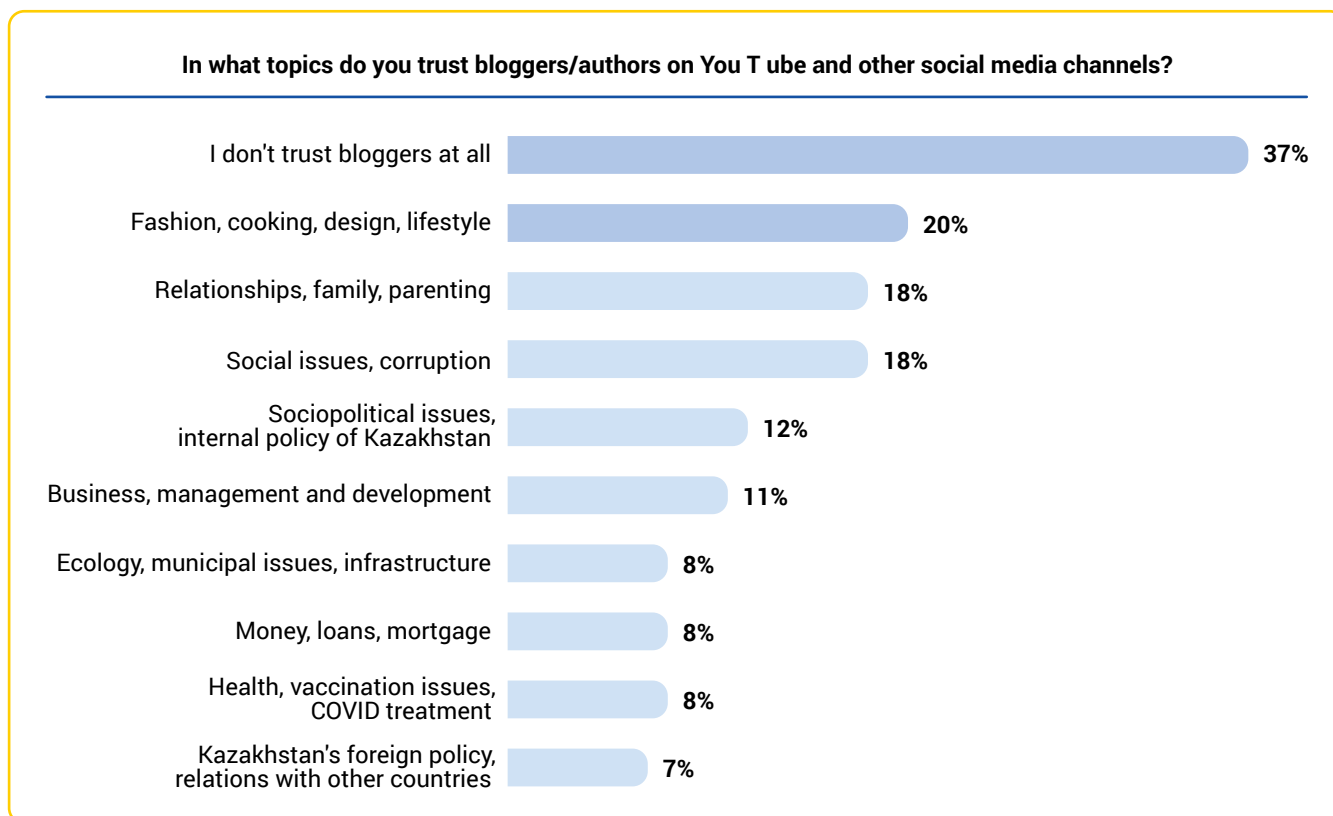


Diagram 7

¹⁷ The cult of bloggers in Kazakhstan is a consequence of the shortage of bright personalities. <https://www.exclusive.kz/expertiza/obshhestvo/123871/>.

¹⁸ Political blogging in Kazakhstan: orders or incompetence? – experts. 2.07.2018. <https://365info.kz/2018/07/politicheskoe-blogerstvo-zakazy-ili-nekompetentnost-eksperty>.

¹⁹ The phenomenon of Kazakhstan's Facebook, 15.07.2021 <https://www.exclusive.kz/expertiza/obshhestvo/125273/>.

²⁰ How the blogosphere reacted to the information about mandatory registration of citizens, 09.01.2017 https://www.kt.kz/rus/analytics/kak_blogosfera_otreagirovala_na_informaciju_ob_objazatelnoj_registracii_grazhdan_1153633187.html.

²¹ What are the pros and cons of Kazakhstan's blogosphere? 04.11.2022 <https://cabar.asia/ru/kakovy-pozitivnye-i-negativnye-storony-u-blogosfery-v-kazahstane>.

Bloggers in Kazakhstan are more trusted by young people, especially those aged 14 to 18; in contrast, senior citizens do not believe them at all. At the same time, it is citizens of retirement age who believe bloggers covering socio-political topics more than other categories of the population (see **Table 18**).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"In what topics do you trust bloggers/authors on YouTube and other social media channels?"
according to the age

	How old are you?				
	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Sociopolitical issues, internal policy of Kazakhstan	8%	12%	11%	13%	18%
Kazakhstan's foreign policy, relations with other countries	8%	7%	5%	9%	8%
Social issues, corruption	16%	20%	20%	15%	15%
Relationships, family, parenting	23%	22%	18%	14%	8%
Money, loans, mortgage	8%	10%	8%	7%	8%
Business, management and development	19%	14%	9%	7%	3%
Health, vaccination issues, COVID treatment	9%	7%	9%	7%	5%
Fashion, cooking, design, lifestyle	30%	23%	21%	15%	8%
Ecology, municipal issues, infrastructure	18%	5%	10%	6%	5%
I don't trust bloggers at all	25%	28%	40%	47%	54%

Table 18

An interesting fact is that, contrary to existing stereotypes, the information provided by bloggers is more trusted by citizens with a higher level of education, including information about the domestic and foreign policies of Kazakhstan (**Table 19**).

In the regional context, it can be seen that the population of Astana, more than the population of other regions of Kazakhstan, believes bloggers covering, among other topics, issues of domestic (24%) and foreign (14%) policy of Kazakhstan. The exceptions are the topics of relationships, family, parenting. Bloggers covering these topics are more trusted by residents of Shymkent (31%).

The population of the southern region of Kazakhstan (56%), as well as Almaty (43%), states that they do not trust bloggers at all. Among the bloggers covering socio-political issues, local, Kazakhstani authors occupy the first place for the citizens of Kazakhstan in terms of trustworthy and significance (35%). The second place, with almost 4-fold gap, is held by Russian bloggers (9%). Bloggers from other countries are virtually not represented in the list of trustworthy authors on socio-political issues for citizens of Kazakhstan (see **Diagram 8**).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"In what topics do you trust bloggers/authors on You Tube and other social media channels?"
according to the education

Please specify your education

	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Sociopolitical issues, internal policy of Kazakhstan	4%	17%	7%	14%	16%
Kazakhstan's foreign policy, relations with other countries	9%	7%	6%	7%	11%
Social issues, corruption	13%	18%	15%	21%	20%
Relationships, family, parenting	17%	20%	15%	21%	19%
Money, loans, mortgage	7%	6%	8%	9%	12%
Business, management and development	9%	15%	10%	11%	7%
Health, vaccination issues, COVID treatment	15%	5%	7%	8%	9%
Fashion, cooking, design, lifestyle	22%	21%	19%	21%	27%
Ecology, municipal issues, infrastructure	15%	11%	7%	7%	12%
I don't trust bloggers at all	37%	32%	43%	35%	32%

Table 19

Which bloggers' opinions are trustful for you on socio-political issues?

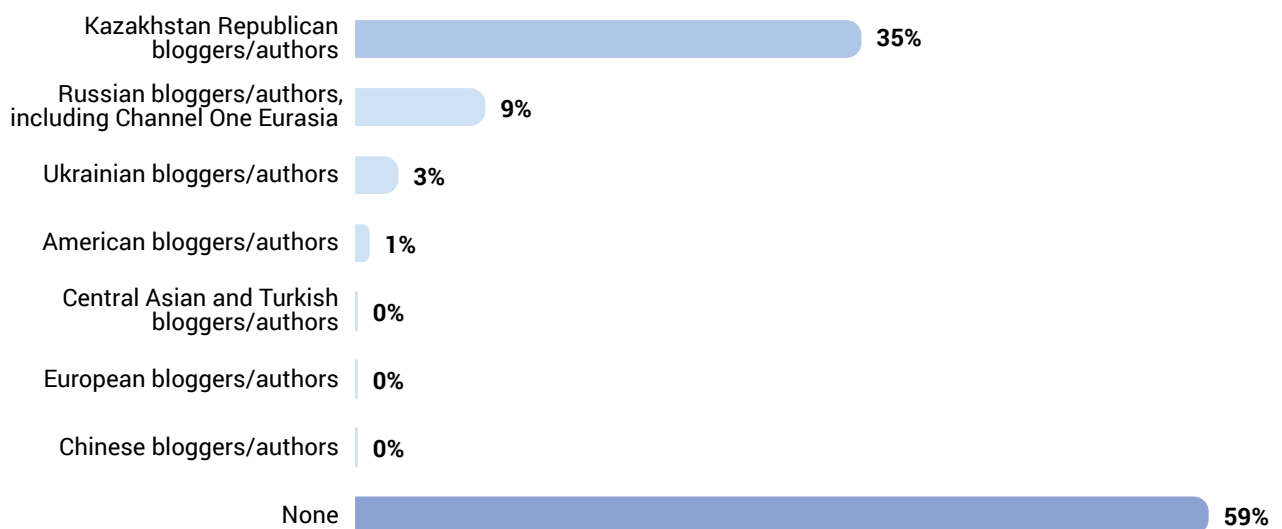


Diagram 8

59% of citizens of Kazakhstan indicated that they generally do not trust bloggers covering socio-political issues.

Kazakhstani bloggers have the greatest authority among young people aged 19-29, while for 18% of the surveyed individuals aged 14-18, Russian bloggers are considered more trustworthy, which is on average twice higher than for other citizens of Kazakhstan. Also, the youngest Kazakhstanis more often indicated Ukrainian bloggers in the list of authoritative authors on socio-political issues – 7%.

Senior aged individuals constitute the majority (68%) of those who indicated that they do not trust any bloggers covering socio-political topics (*see Table 20*). The survey showed that individuals of the retirement age belong to a group of citizens who do not trust bloggers at all.

In general, **in the age context, it can be seen that the younger the citizens of the country, the more trust they show to certain bloggers, which is explained by the fact that young people in general are more easily influenced and more inclined to trust information from the Internet.**

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Which bloggers' opinions on socio-political issues are trustworthy for you?"
according to the age

	How old are you?				
	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Kazakhstan Republican bloggers/authors	36%	40%	35%	32%	27%
Russian bloggers/authors, including Channel One Eurasia	18%	8%	8%	7%	7%
Ukrainian bloggers/authors	7%	0%	2%	3%	5%
None	52%	55%	61%	62%	68%

Table 20

In the regional context, the opinions of *Kazakhstani*, *Russian*, and *Ukrainian* bloggers are more trustworthy for Astana residents (53%, 26% and 10%, respectively).

On the contrary, respondents from the southern and northern regions, as well as residents of Almaty, indicated that the opinions of bloggers from any country are more often not trustworthy for them (70%, 64% and 63%, respectively).

It should be noted that the opinions of Kazakhstani bloggers are the least significant for citizens from the eastern region (27%), however they occupy the second place in terms of the perception of Russian bloggers as trustworthy, along with the citizens from of the central region (16% and 16%, respectively).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Which bloggers' opinions on socio-political issues are trustworthy for you?"
in the regional context

	Kazakhstan Republican bloggers/ authors	Russian bloggers/ authors, including Channel One Eurasia	Ukrainian bloggers/ authors	Chinese bloggers/ authors	Central Asian and Turkish bloggers/ authors	European bloggers/ authors	American bloggers/ authors	None
Western region	43%	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	55%
Eastern region	35%	11%	7%	0%	1%	0%	3%	55%
Southern region	27%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	70%
Central region	39%	16%	4%	0%	0%	0%	1%	50%
Northern region	27%	16%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	64%
Almaty	35%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	63%
Shymkent	41%	14%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%
Astana	53%	26%	10%	2%	2%	2%	0%	43%

Table 21

1.4. Preferred language of information

Respondents more commonly listen to the radio, read newspapers, watch TV, in Kazakh, that is, they use the Kazakh language more to get information from traditional sources. Kazakh is also significantly more commonly used to communicate with others (40% use Kazakh to communicate with other people, 23% use Russian).

While Russian is significantly more commonly used for browsing websites on the Internet (28% – Kazakh, 39% – Russian), as well as in social networks (30% in Kazakh, 38% – Russian) (see **Table 22**).

Most likely, this is due to the fact that Kazakh content on the web is not yet as developed as Russian. In particular, at the Media Forum held in 2022, information was announced about the growth of the Kazakh-speaking audience, in particular, in Telegram, where the annual increase is from 8 to 13%. Nevertheless, as the journalists themselves stated, there is no competition in the segment, on the

contrary, there is a lack of information and analytical resources, political content, and very few industrial expertise. Currently there is more information of an entertainment nature. However, trends are changing, and the demand for analytical resources is growing²².

Distribution of answers to the question:
"What language do you prefer?.." *pooled data*

	Only in Kazakh; more in Kazakh than in Russian	Only in Russian; more in Russian than in Kazakh
For communication with others	40%	23%
For watching TV	37%	28%
For listening to the radio	33%	18%
For reading newspapers/magazines	35%	20%
Browse websites on the Internet	28%	39%
Use social networks	30%	38%

Table 22

In the residential context, rural residents more often than urban dwellers noted that they prefer to receive information and communicate with others *only in Kazakh*. In turn, urban residents checked the option "*More in Russian than in Kazakh*" a slightly more commonly.

In the age context, it can be seen that the youngest Kazakhstanis (14-18 years old) are more likely than older population to communicate with others (42%), watch TV (34%) and listen to the radio (31%) *only in Kazakh*. Nevertheless, they browse Internet resources *more in Russian than in Kazakh*. This situation is also due to the fact that there is more content in Russian on the web than in Kazakh. Young people aged 14 to 18 were also more likely than other categories of citizens to indicate that they do not watch TV (15%).

On the contrary, the senior population more often than others communicate with others (25%), watch TV (27%), read newspapers (23%), browse Internet sites (34%) *only in Russian*. At the same time the group of senior-aged Kazakhstanis who use only Kazakh or use it more often than Russian to communicate with others (41% – *only in Kazakh*) or watch TV (18% *more in Kazakh than in Russian*).

It should be specifically noted that among those who do not browse websites on the Internet, the majority of citizens aged 58 years and older (16%).

²² Social networks dictate media trends. <https://liter.kz/mediatrendy-diktuiut-sotsialnye-seti-1671082826/>.

What language do you prefer...?

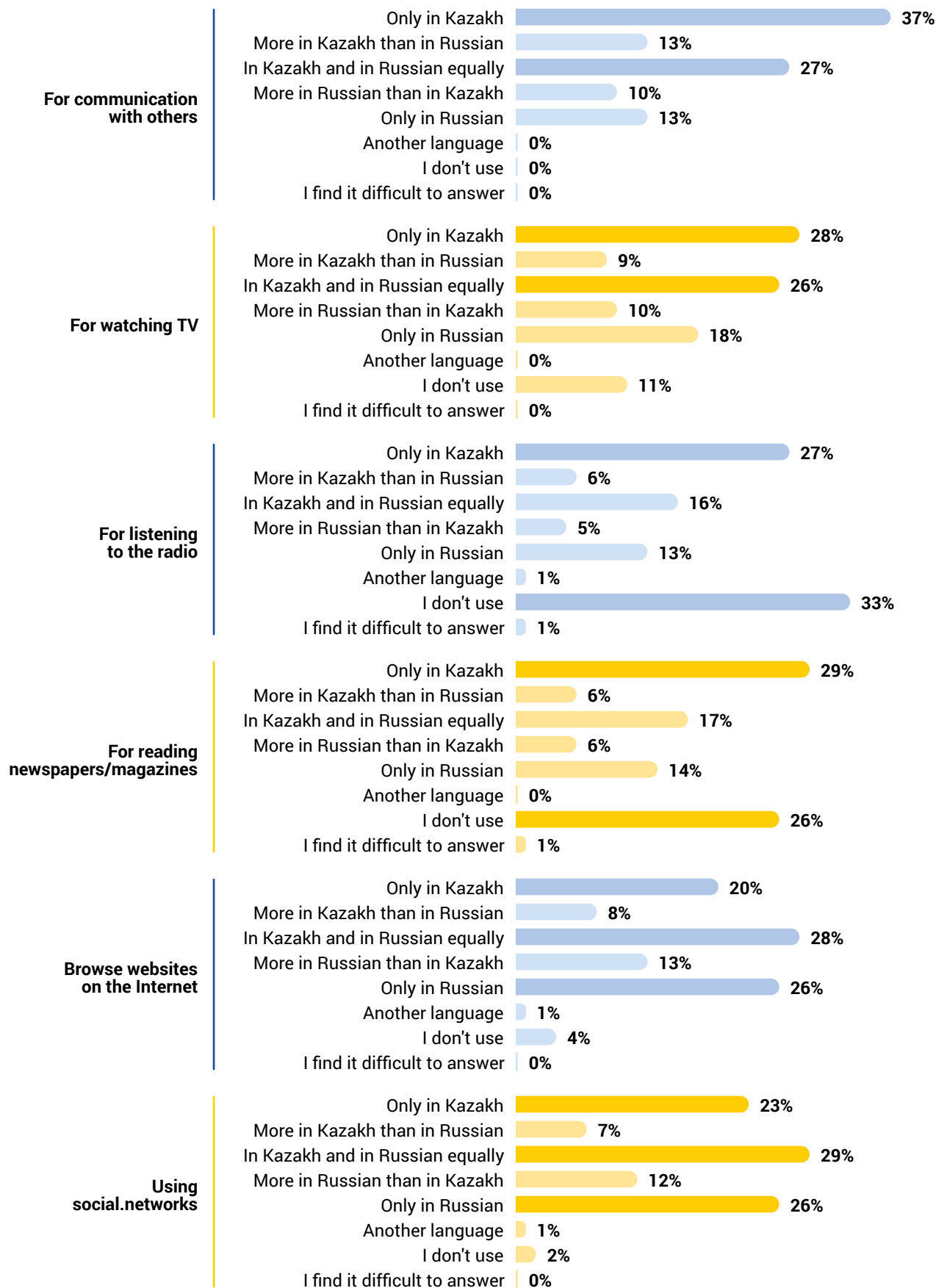


Diagram 9

In the regional context, it can be seen that residents of the southern and western regions of Kazakhstan are more likely to use only Kazakh language in the areas of communication and information consumption than respondents from other regions of the country.

In turn, citizens living in the eastern, northern and central regions of the country more often use only Russian.

In the regional context, it is also clear that the residents of Astana, the eastern and central regions of Kazakhstan use traditional sources of information to the least extent.

The number of those who do not use websites and social networks is significantly lower. Among them the higher number is from the eastern region of Kazakhstan (see **Table 23**).

CONCLUSIONS FOR THE SECTION

Preferences in choosing sources of information

- Social networks (58%) and websites (47%) are increasingly becoming the dominant sources of news **about life in the country** for citizens of Kazakhstan. Whereas traditional media receive less attention from the population. Only 27% of Kazakhstanis noted that they often obtain news about life in the country through television, 10% of citizens obtain news about life in Kazakhstan from acquaintances or colleagues. Traditional media such as newspapers (7%) and radio (3%) are less important as a source of information about the situation in the country.

- The difference in the choice of different categories of media according to the age is quite obvious. Thus, young people receive more news via social networks, and individuals aged 30-45 years more often choose websites, while the older population and retired citizens prefer traditional media sources such as television and newspapers. It should be specifically noted that the youngest Kazakhstanis (from 14 to 18 years old) use acquaintances and friends as a source of information about events in the country more often than the population of other ages (19% in general), which demonstrates more developed social relations among young people.

- The information about the life of the country on the web is primarily received by citizens living in Astana (74%) and Almaty (60%), as well as in the western region (58%). Social networks are the most popular sources of information for the capital city dwellers (76%). Residents from the eastern and western regions of Kazakhstan (38% and 34%, respectively) more often watch TV more to receive news in the country.

Distribution of answers to the question:
"What language do you prefer?..
in the regional context

	For communication with others		For watching TV			For listening to the radio	For reading newspapers/magazines
	Only in Kazakh	Only in Russian	Only in Kazakh	Only in Russian	I don't use	I don't use	I don't use
Western region	43.5%	7,5%	30,4%	14,9%	5,0%	21,1%	16,1%
Eastern region	29.1%	31,8%	21,8%	35,5%	10,9%	24,5%	20,0%
Southern region	57,5%	2,8%	44,4%	10,0%	3,4%	25,9%	14,7%
Central region	9,0%	27,0%	5,7%	27,0%	19,7%	60,7%	45,1%
Northern region	12,1%	29,3%	8,6%	25,9%	20,7%	60,3%	44,8%
Almaty	38,7%	8,5%	26,4%	8,5%	18,9%	24,5%	37,7%
Shymkent	22,4%	10,3%	27,6%	12,1%	1,7%	6,9%	6,9%
Astana	20,0%	16,9%	9,2%	26,2%	27,7%	64,6%	67,7%

	Browse websites on the Internet			Use social networks		
	Only in Kazakh	Only in Russian	I don't use	Only in Kazakh	Only in Russian	I don't use
Western region	24,2%	21,7%	1,2%	24,8%	18,6%	0,6%
Eastern region	14,5%	39,1%	1,8%	15,5%	35,5%	1,8%
Southern region	35,9%	16,9%	2,2%	40,0%	14,7%	1,6%
Central region	3,3%	37,7%	5,7%	4,9%	44,3%	1,6%
Northern region	1,7%	34,5%	17,2%	5,2%	48,3%	8,6%
Almaty	11,3%	25,5%	5,7%	17,0%	26,4%	4,7%
Shymkent	15,5%	22,4%	0,0%	15,5%	13,8%	0,0%
Astana	6,2%	35,4%	6,2%	7,7%	35,4%	3,1%

Table 23

- As for the information **about life in their locality**, people also most often turn to social networks (55%) and web sites (36%), and informal connections are in third place (27%). Only 17% of Kazakhstanis use TV to search for the news of their city or village. Newspapers and radio are in last place, 8% and 4% respectively.

- Rural residents are more oriented towards informal connections in obtaining news about their locality (38% of rural residents and 21% of urban residents), while citizens are almost twice as likely to learn about what is happening in their city through websites (43% and 24%, respectively) and television (21% and 11%, respectively).

- In the **regional context**, residents of the eastern (39%) and southern (34%) regions of Kazakhstan, as well as Shymkent (32%) most often use informal sources (through their acquaintances, friends and relatives) about life in their locality. It should be noted this source of information is superior in importance to such sources as television, newspapers and radio.

- Instagram social network is the most popular in terms of search for news among Kazakhstanis (66%). In second place with a significant gap is held by YouTube and WhatsApp (38% each). The third is Telegram, which is used by every fifth individual as a resource to obtain news (21%). Google+ and Facebook are also among the five most popular resources (19% and 18%, respectively). One out of ten also receives information from the TikTok (11%) and VK (8%).

- The least popular in terms of news for Kazakhstanis are "Odnoklassniki", "My World", Twitter, Linkeld In, Viber.

- Every social network in Kazakhstan has its own audience depending on the age. Thus, Facebook, which is considered the most politicized, is more preferred by citizens aged 30 to 58 years, in the educational context, more commonly by the population with higher education. Specifically, it can be noted here that studies conducted in different countries demonstrate that, first, Facebook is really the

leader in terms of the extent of politicization²³, and second, it is increasingly preferred by an older audience and people who are specialists in different fields.

- More entertaining and commercialized Instagram content is equally adopted by very young Kazakhstanis (from 14 to 18 years old) and the middle-aged population (30-45 years old). TikTok and Google+ are more often chosen by the youngest citizens of the country (14-18 years – 27% and 27%, respectively), while YouTube is more often viewed as the main news platform by the population aged 46 to 58 years (46%).

- Telegram is more in demand by young people, both lower and upper age subgroups (14-18 years – 30%; 19-29 years – 27%).

- One in five individuals of retirement age indicated that they did not consider social networks as a source of news.

- The rating of mass media that Kazakhstanis choose to receive information on the socio-political situation in the country includes not only republican and regional media (79% and 36%, respectively). One in six respondents, or 18% of the country's population, also use Russian media to search for information about the political situation in the country.

- The media of other countries are considered much less often in this context. In particular, only 4% of the country's citizens use American or European media to obtain information about the socio-political situation in Kazakhstan. Thus, the influence of Russian media in Kazakhstan is very high in comparison with other countries.

- Russian sources of information are used as a source of information about the socio-political situation in Kazakhstan more commonly by citizens living in the central and eastern regions of the country (29% and 28%, respectively). Russian mass media are also used by the citizen from Astana and the western region of Kazakhstan to receive information about the sociopolitical situation in Kazakhstan (29% and 23%, respectively).

²³ The final chord: III phase of the study of the politicization of social networks on the web. <https://vestnik.astu.org/temp/f29bebf0e30a28c199406a80923fcbf.pdf>.

Trust to the information sources

- About half of the population of Kazakhstan do not trust in the effectiveness of mass media, in particular, in the objectivity of coverage of **domestic politics** in the country.

- Thus, citizens of Kazakhstan, when searching for news about the domestic policy, trust the domestic media more, nevertheless, the level of trust (complete and partial) does not exceed 52%. Thus, the other half of the country's citizens do not trust the domestic mass media regarding the presentation of news about the domestic policy. As for the level of trust to the media of other countries in relation to the issue under consideration, it does not exceed 19%.

- Most often, Kazakhstanis tend NOT to trust the Ukrainian and Russian media regarding their coverage of Kazakhstan's domestic policy (38% and 34%, respectively).

- Young people aged 14 to 18 years more commonly indicated that they often do not trust the Russian media with regard to how they present information about the domestic policy of Kazakhstan (15%).

- Regarding the **foreign policy** of Kazakhstan, the citizens of the country most trust the domestic media, both republican and regional. It should be noted that the citizens of Kazakhstan trust the Kazakh media more in relation to the elucidation of the foreign policy than domestic (68% trust the Kazakh republican media in the topics of the foreign policy, 52% – domestic).

- On the contrary, the citizens of Kazakhstan to a lesser extent trust information about Kazakhstan's foreign policy from Russian (40%), Ukrainian (37%) and Chinese (34%) media.

- **In the age context**, among the answers to the question which sources of information citizens trust more when looking for news about Kazakhstan's foreign policy, the answers of senior and youngest (14 to 18 years) differed the most from the average. Thus, citizens of retirement age more often indicated that they trusted the domestic media more and did not trust others.

- Young citizens of the country aged from 14 to 18 years slightly more often than other categories of citizens noted that they fully trust the American and Ukrainian media (14% and 14%, respectively), and also more often indicated partial distrust of the Russian mass media

regarding how they present information about Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

Level of trust to bloggers

- 37% of Kazakhstanis do not trust bloggers. At the same time, among the topics on which bloggers' assessments are trusted are fashion and cooking (20%), relationships and family, parenting (18%), as well as social issues, problems of society and corruption (18%).

- To the least extent, citizens of Kazakhstan trust bloggers covering topics of domestic policy (12%), business (11%), ecology (8%), topics associated with loans and mortgage (8%), COVID treatment (8%), as well as the country's foreign policy (7%).

- Bloggers in Kazakhstan are more trusted by young people, especially the youngest citizens of the country (aged 14 to 18 years). On the contrary, most of all citizens of senior age do not believe such information at all.

- Those who do not trust bloggers at all, lives in the southern region of Kazakhstan (56%), as well as in Almaty (43%).

- Among the bloggers covering socio-political issues, local, Kazakhstani authors occupy the first place for the citizens of Kazakhstan in terms of trustworthy and significance (35%). The second place, with almost 4-fold gap, is held by Russian bloggers (9%). Bloggers from other countries are virtually not represented in the list of trustworthy authors on socio-political issues for citizens of Kazakhstan

- **59% of citizens of Kazakhstan indicated that they generally do not trust bloggers covering socio-political issues.**

- Young people aged 19-29 years consider opinion of Kazakhstani bloggers most trustful. Whereas 18% of young people of the younger age group (from 14 to 18 years), consider Russian bloggers more trustful, on average twice as often as other citizens of Kazakhstan. Also, the youngest Kazakhstanis more often indicated Ukrainian bloggers in the list of authoritative authors on socio-political issues – 7%.

- Therefore, in the age context, it can be seen that the younger the citizens of the country, the more trust they show to certain bloggers, which is explained by the fact that young people in

general are more easily influenced and more inclined to trust information, including that on the web.

- In the regional context, the opinions of Kazakhstani, Russian, and Ukrainian bloggers are more trustworthy for Astana residents (53%, 26% and 10%, respectively). On the contrary, respondents from the southern and northern regions, as well as residents of Almaty, indicated that the opinions of bloggers from any country are more often not trustworthy for them (70%, 64% and 63%, respectively).

Preferred language of information

- Kazakhstanis more commonly listen to the radio, read newspapers, watch TV, in Kazakh, that is, they use the Kazakh language more to get information from traditional sources of information. Kazakh is also significantly more commonly used to communicate with others (40% use Kazakh to communicate with other people, 23% use Russian).

- While Russian is significantly more commonly used for browsing websites on the Internet (28% – Kazakh, 39% – Russian), as

well as in social networks (30% in Kazakh, 38% – Russian)

- Rural residents more often than urban dwellers noted that they prefer to receive information and communicate with others only in Kazakh. In turn, urban residents checked the option "More in Russian than in Kazakh" a slightly more commonly.

- The youngest Kazakhstanis (14-18 years old) are more likely than older population to communicate with others (42%), watch TV (34%) and listen to the radio (31%) only in Kazakh. Nevertheless, they browse Internet resources more in Russian than in Kazakh.

- Among the population over 58 years there are two distinct groups: those who communicate and use the media only in Russian, and those who use only the Kazakh language for these purposes.

- **In the regional context**, among those who use only Kazakh language in the fields of communication and information consumption, there are more citizens from the southern and western regions of Kazakhstan. In turn, citizens living in the eastern, northern and central regions of the country more often use only Russian.

section 2.

PROPAGANDA AND DISINFORMATION IN THE JUDGEMENTS OF CITIZENS OF KAZAKHSTAN

2.1. Components of manipulation by information: propaganda and disinformation

People often use the words "disinformation" and "propaganda" as synonyms, but this is not the case, because the term "propaganda" has no **negative** connotation in its interpretation, that is, propaganda can also be positive, for example, promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The philosophy of propaganda is designated as a phenomenon of mass persuasion or symbolic influence²⁴. The positivity or negativity of propaganda is determined depending on who produces it and for what purpose. Researchers emphasize that propaganda is used by every government, whether it is a Western democratic government or a developing country.

Irene Khan, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of speech, in particular, emphasizes: "Governments exist to sell this news. They have

to promote themselves somehow. But what is prohibited by international law is the propaganda of war. One cannot use propaganda to promote war, use information to deceive civilians, spread false information that could harm civilians or incite hatred, provoke attacks on civilians. It is forbidden at any time²⁵." The use of propaganda during the conflict is equivalent to splashing gasoline over an open flame. Propaganda fuels the conflict and contributes to its escalation, hindering the necessary disarmament, security and cooperation²⁶.

Another point of view is the opinion that the purpose of propaganda is to form a barrier between the audience and reality by creating a false sense of order, stability and security. In this sense, propaganda can be called a mechanism

²⁴ Cunningham S.B. The Status of the Propaganda Theorist: A Rejoinder // Informal logic. 1994. – Vol. XVI. – №2.

²⁵ <https://news.un.org/ru/interview/2022/10/1433667>.

²⁶ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/6/219726.pdf>.

of defense against reality. Propaganda in this sense serves as a channel to direct aggression of citizens to external forces by creating a demarcation line between "friend" and "foes", relying on the transformation of various subjects on the other side of this line into objects of aggression. This transformation is based on the logic of dehumanization: various actors lose their subjective voice and are objectified by public discourse to support the political functions of the state, while in citizen, an emotional state that reduces the ability to critical thinking is formed. Agreement or disagreement with propaganda explanations becomes a key marker of "friend or foe" classification.

The demand for propaganda increases during crises, which is explained by the fundamental nature of the need for security. Thus, the "offer" of propaganda from the state is based not only on the authorities' own tasks, but also on the "demand" for security from the audience, which is trying to resolve the growing contradictions that generate persistent stress. The "demand" for propaganda also explains the reason why people try to avoid any sources of information that may question and refute propaganda explanations²⁷.

Why propaganda is dangerous? First of all, it affects the freedom of the media, destroys the essence of the journalist profession, making media workers hostages, most often of the government authorities, thereby striking the independence of the media.

If propaganda dominates the country, it becomes an instrument to establish an authoritarian regime, distorting not only the pluralism of the media, but also other foundations of democracy. In addition, it affects public confidence in the free press, in the values and purpose of the profession.

In addition, the danger of propaganda becomes a convenient excuse for state authorities, which can restrict or even ban all

hostile messages, real and possible, from abroad. This threat gives rise to a wider interference of the state authorities in the affairs of the media, such as licensing, cross-border broadcasting²⁸.

The researchers emphasize that despite the fact that the word "propaganda" itself has fallen out of use today, the technologies of its influence, on the contrary, have become more diverse, and are used more actively. Today, a person is influenced taking into account his belonging to a certain social group, which makes it possible to more clearly determine his/her characteristics and reactions, making the impact much more effective. In the most general form, there are two types of such effects: "happiness propaganda" and "fear propaganda"²⁹.

In turn, **disinformation** is aimed at purposeful misleading. As the researchers point out, disinformation is initially used to create a hostile image in the masses, in order to obtain some kind of control and benefit, to push the opponent to the desired actions or inaction.

Thus, **disinformation is always negative and is spread systematically. The factor of consistency in disinformation is of paramount importance.** When the media provide erroneous, inaccurate information once, the term "misinformation" is used.

Misinformation in fact, being false, misleading or taken out of context, is distributed most often without the intention to mislead. For example, a politician specifically created fake content (which is disinformation), which a random user saw on the network, believed and shared it with others (this is misinformation)³⁰. This may be due to the belief that its dissemination will "help", and distributors may be ordinary people who can share information without first checking its accuracy, or simply they may sincerely believe in its reliability. As psychologists point out, the spread of rumors simulates control over the situation under conditions which cannot be influenced by a

²⁷ Asmolov G. How and why propaganda works in the XXI century. 17.06.2022 <https://republic.ru/posts/104142>.

²⁸ Propaganda and freedom of the media. A memo of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, 2015. <https://www.nrada.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/219726.pdf>.

²⁹ Propaganda today vs. propaganda yesterday, 2021. <https://www.aup.com.ua/propaganda-segodnya-v-otlichie-ot-propa/>.

³⁰ Lee V. fact checker's dictionary. 07.04.2019 <https://factcheck.kz/glavnoe/slovar-faktchekera/>.

person. At the same time, the more shocking the news looks, the higher is the probability of its dissemination, which cannot be said about truthful information.

According to the previous data, deprived individuals who do not have political or social influence, emotionally unstable individuals, as well as those with a low sense of control are prone to spreading rumors. Thus, conspiracy theories are a search for the guilty person, to whom one can shift responsibility for negative events³¹. Whereas people with a high level of cognitive abilities and basic scientific knowledge do it less often.

Considering the components of information disorder, we should also point out **malinformation** – truthful information disseminated in order to promote false statements³².

Both disinformation, sometimes called "false" or "fake news," and propaganda pose numerous threats to democratic societies. They are aimed at manipulating people and distortion of public opinion, including an open and frank exchange of ideas³³. It should be specifically

indicated that if people are intuitively less prone to believe propaganda, then fake news are regarded as truth more, commonly because they are reposted by ordinary people³⁴.

Disinformation, which increases tension in society, in fact, has a direct impact on the formation of reality, attitude to certain events, personalities and even countries, which is often irreversible. And if propaganda, regardless of whether it is positive or negative, is always aimed on "inception" of something, faith in something, the purpose of disinformation, on the contrary, is to bring down a person's coordinate system, drive him/her into a state of cognitive dissonance, so that a person is transferred to the category of distrust everyone, to "realize" that there is no truth³⁵.

The main harm from fake news and disinformation is the destruction of the structure of public trust, an important element of which is independent media. These structures in some form are specific for any State; together with institutional violence, they hold the notorious bonds, the foundation of the social contract, and not necessarily in democratic states³⁶.

³¹ Sullivan, D., Landau, M.J., & Rothschild, Z.K. (2010). An existential function of enemyship: Evidence that people attribute influence to personal and political enemies to compensate for threats to control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(3). P. 434–449.

³² How do journalists deal with information disorder // International Journalistic Network (ijn.net.org).

³³ Free media against propaganda. <https://www.osce.org/ru/fom/321671>.

³⁴ G. Pocheptsov Fake news and propaganda in the formation of a modern information space, 2020. <https://www.aup.com.ua/feyki-i-propaganda-v-sozdanii-sovreme/>.

³⁵ Disinformation, propaganda and all intermediate tools: how to recognize and protect yourself. 03.08.2022. <https://rubryka.com/ru/article/ksenia-iliuk/>; How to deal with fake news: new approaches. http://ms.detector.media/trends/1411978127/kak_borotsya_s_feykami_novye_podkhody/.

³⁶ Gatov V. Fake news: правда о неправде. 18.04.2018. <https://ridl.io/ru/fake-news-pravda-o-nepravde/>.

2.2. Scopes and sources of propaganda, disinformation and fake news

73% of Kazakhstanis declare that they know what propaganda is. Only 27% of the country's citizens do not know the definition of propaganda. Of these, 19% indicated that they were not informed about the meaning of the concept of "propaganda", and another 8% found it difficult to answer the question of whether they knew this concept (see *Diagram 11*).

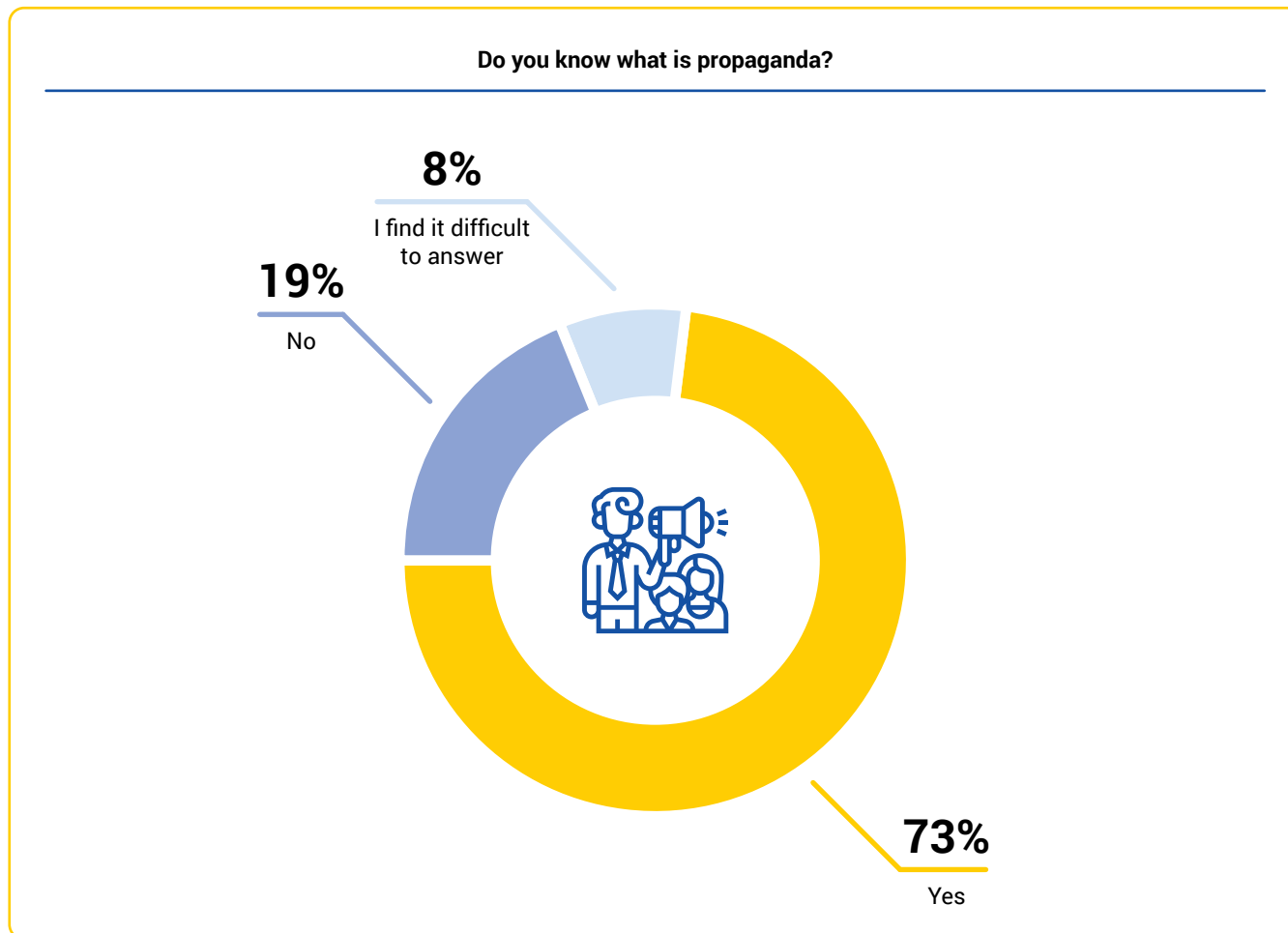


Diagram 11

Among those who are most aware of what propaganda means, there are more citizens of senior age.

On the contrary, among the representatives of the youngest age group (14-18 years) there are more those who do not know what this concept means (see *Table 24*).

In the educational context, it can be seen that the greatest awareness of the concept of "propaganda" is more typical for citizens with higher education and to a lesser extent for Kazakhstanis with a secondary education (see *Table 25*).

In the regional context, the population of the country's southern region is less aware of the concept of "propaganda" (27%) and, on the contrary, the residents of Astana (91%) are more aware of the concept of "propaganda" (see *Table 26*).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you know what propaganda is?"
according to the age

How old are you?

	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Yes	70%	76%	72%	72%	82%
No	22%	17%	19%	20%	16%
Not sure	8%	7%	9%	8%	2%

Table 24

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you know what propaganda is?"
according to the level of education

Please specify your education

	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Yes	65%	66%	62%	84%	84%
No	23%	26%	29%	8%	14%
Not sure	13%	8%	8%	8%	3%

Table 25

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you know what propaganda is?"
according to the region of residence

	Yes	No	Not sure
Western region	68%	21%	11%
Eastern region	76%	15%	9%
Southern region	64%	27%	9%
Central region	81%	9%	10%
Northern region	81%	14%	5%
Almaty	83%	15%	2%
Shymkent	72%	22%	5%
Astana	91%	5%	5%

Table 26

According to the citizens of Kazakhstan, the greatest risk of the appearance of propaganda exists primarily in the spheres of domestic (37%) and foreign (31%) policy, as well as in the social sphere (26%).

On the contrary, the areas in which the risk of propaganda is the least, according to the Kazakhstanis, are friendship and relationships (6%), as well as entertainment (5%).

What do you think are the areas where there is the GREATEST risk of propaganda and false information?

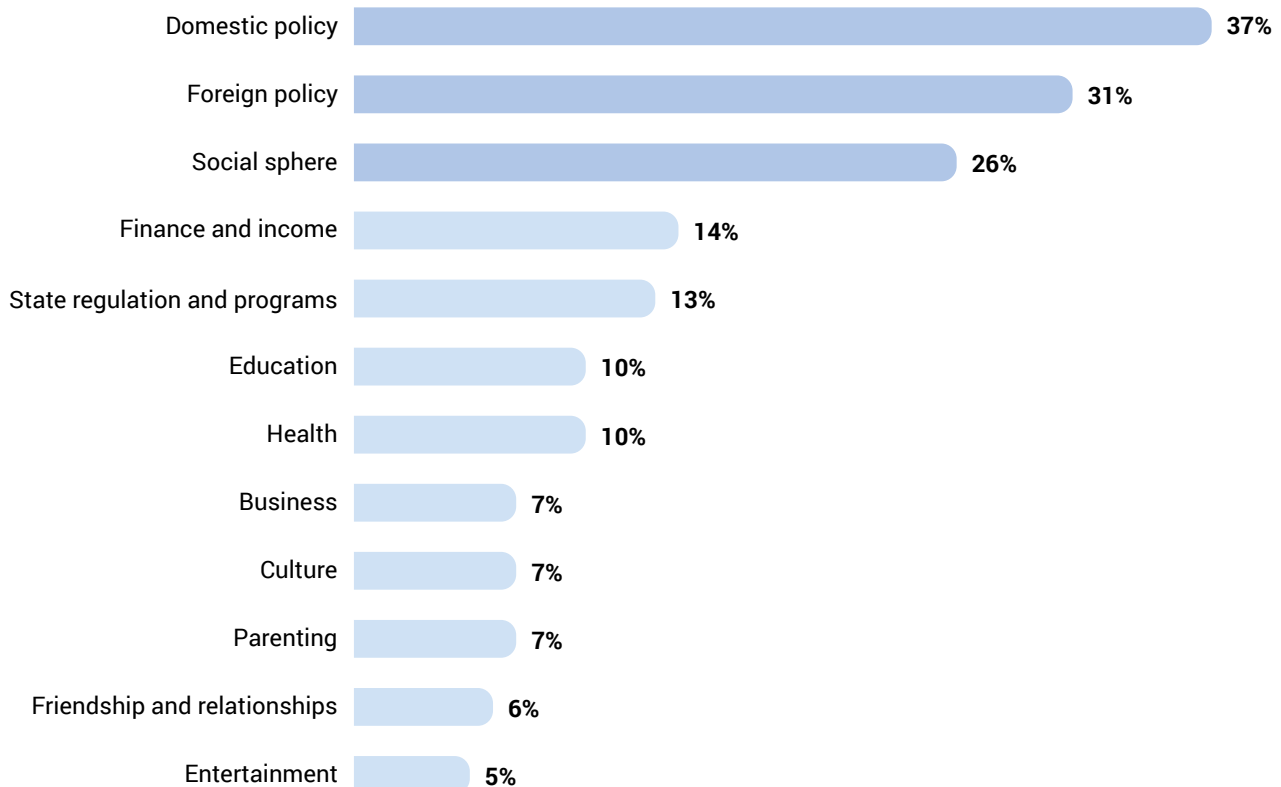


Diagram 12

The point of view that the greatest risk of propaganda exists in the sphere of domestic and foreign policy is more supported by urban dwellers (*see Table 27*); in the educational context – by citizens with higher education.

**Distribution of answers to the question:
"In which areas, according to your opinion, there is the greatest risk of the appearance of propaganda?"
according to the region of residence**

	City	Village
Foreign policy	34%	27%
Domestic policy	39%	34%

Table 27

In the age context, it is clear that the population of retirement age (44%) express more concerns about the risk of spreading propaganda in the field of foreign policy.

Among young citizen, those aged 14-18 years more commonly see the risk of propaganda in the fields of education (15%), friendship and relationships (13%), farming (12%) (*see Table 28*).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"In which areas, according to your opinion, there is the greatest risk of the appearance of propaganda?"
according to the age

	How old are you?				
	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Foreign policy	25%	33%	31%	31%	44%
Domestic policy	37%	37%	37%	38%	36%
State regulation and programs	15%	14%	13%	12%	8%
Social sphere	27%	28%	24%	26%	23%
Culture	7%	6%	6%	8%	5%
Education	15%	10%	10%	8%	10%
Health	8%	9%	11%	11%	13%
Finance and income	15%	13%	16%	13%	8%
Business	12%	5%	7%	8%	8%
Friendship and relationships	13%	6%	5%	6%	0%
Parenting	7%	8%	5%	7%	8%
Entertainment	5%	5%	4%	6%	0%

Table 28

In the regional context, the highest proportion among those who indicated the greatest risk of of propaganda in the spheres of foreign and domestic policy, are from Astana (60%). While among those who consider the risk of propaganda in the field of social policy, the higher proportion belongs to the citizens from the northern and western regions of Kazakhstan (37% and 33%).

Additionally, the population of the western and central Kazakhstan believes more than others that the greatest risk of propaganda exists in the field of health (17% and 17%, respectively).

Every fifth citizen of the western, central and northern regions of the country considers the greatest risk of propaganda in the financial sphere, (20%, 20% and 19%, respectively).

Next, the study participants were asked about **specific topics** in which, according to their opinion, there is the highest probability of the of propaganda.

According to the citizens of Kazakhstan, the greatest risk of propaganda exists primarily on such topics as war (special operation) in Ukraine (40%), COVID 19 vaccination (36%), January events in Kazakhstan (33%).

Propaganda, according to the citizens of the country, could also be spread in relation to the sugar shortage (21%), inflation in Kazakhstan (17%), political reforms of the current president (12%), exchange rate (10%), as well as the health of the first president of Kazakhstan (8%) and the Eurasian Economic Union (4%) (see **Diagram 13**).

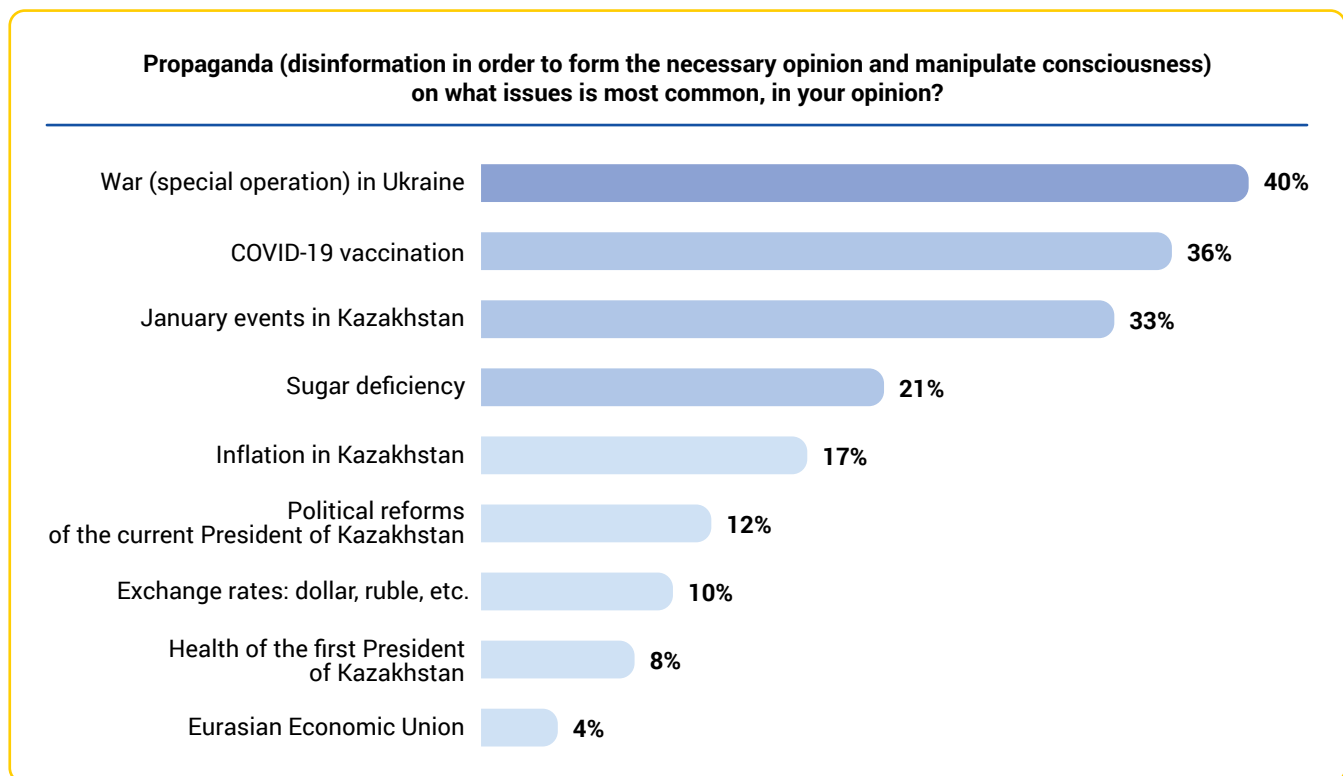


Diagram 13

In the educational context, citizens with higher education more often see propaganda in certain events that occurred in Kazakhstan.

In the regional context, differences are manifested in relation to the perception of two topics: the war in Ukraine and the January events in Kazakhstan. Thus, residents of the city of Astana (67%), northern, central and eastern regions (53%, 56% and 51%, respectively) believe that propaganda and disinformation are most common regarding the topic of the war in Ukraine.

Regarding the January events in Kazakhstan, residents of Almaty (47%) and the eastern region (45%) expect propaganda from the media (see **Table 29**).

Mass media of which countries, according to the citizens of Kazakhstan, have the greatest risk of spreading propaganda?

According to the data obtained, Kazakhstanis believe that such risk exists primarily in relation to Kazakh and Russian media and social networks (44% and 41%, respectively).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Propaganda on what issues is most common, according to your opinion?"
according to the region of residence

	War (special operation) in Ukraine	January events in Kazakhstan
Western region	41%	33%
Eastern region	51%	45%
Southern region	27%	31%
Central region	56%	25%
Northern region	53%	28%
Almaty	29%	47%
Shymkent	38%	26%
Astana	67%	23%

Table 29

What do you think are the sources with the GREATEST risk of propaganda?

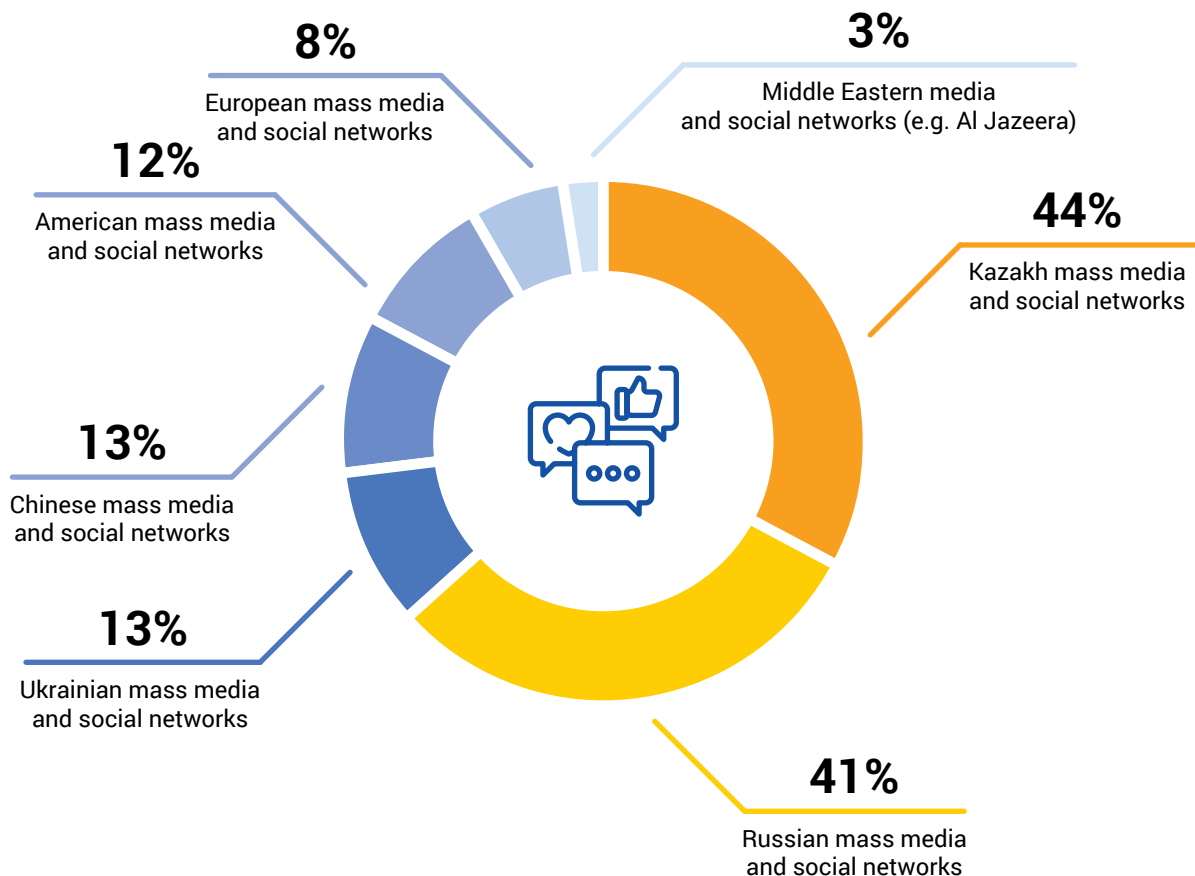


Diagram 14

These are followed by the media of the following countries: China, Ukraine, and USA, in which, according to Kazakhstanis, the risk of propaganda is several times lower (13%, 13% and 12%, respectively).

To the least extent, according to our citizens, such risks exists in the European and Middle Eastern media and social networks.

The point of view that the greatest risk of propaganda exists in the Kazakh and Russian media is significantly more often supported by urban dwellers (the greatest risks of propaganda in the Kazakh media: urban dwellers – 48%, rural residents – 35%; in the Russian media: 43% and 36%, respectively).

In turn, rural residents believe more that such risks are more characteristic of the American media (10% of urban dwellers and 16% of rural residents) (*see Table 30*).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"In which sources, according to your opinion, there is the GREATEST risk of the appearance of propaganda?"
according to the region of residence

	City	Village
Kazakh mass media and social networks	48%	35%
Russian mass media and social networks	43%	36%
Ukrainian mass media and social networks	13%	14%
Chinese mass media and social networks	12%	14%
Middle Eastern mass media and social networks	2%	5%
European mass media and social networks	7%	11%
American mass media and social networks	10%	16%

Table 30

In the age context, it can be seen that the opinion that young people are more prone to consider the greatest risk of spreading propaganda through Russian and Chinese media and social networks.

While citizens senior age are slightly more likely than others to adhere to a similar point of view regarding Ukrainian mass media and social networks.

The opinion that the greatest risk of propaganda exists in the Kazakh media is more characteristic for the middle-aged population (from 30 to 45 years; 47%) (*see Table 31*).

The opinion that the greatest risk of propaganda exists in the Russian media and social networks is slightly more commonly held by citizens with higher education.

Among those who hold a similar point of view regarding the Chinese media, there are more citizens with secondary education. (*see Table 32*).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"In which sources, according to your opinion, there is the GREATEST risk of the appearance of propaganda?"
according to the age

	How old are you?				
	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Kazakh mass media and social networks	41%	41%	47%	44%	40%
Russian mass media and social networks	46%	45%	37%	39%	37%
Ukrainian mass media and social networks	14%	8%	14%	15%	20%
Chinese mass media and social networks	16%	15%	11%	11%	11%
Middle Eastern mass media and social networks (e.g. Al Jazeera)	3%	1%	4%	3%	3%
European mass media and social networks	7%	7%	10%	7%	6%
American mass media and social networks	7%	12%	13%	12%	9%

Table 31

Distribution of answers to the question:
"In which sources, according to your opinion, there is the GREATEST risk of the appearance of propaganda?"
according to the education

	Please specify your education				
	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Kazakh mass media and social networks	42%	42%	47%	41%	48%
Russian mass media and social networks	47%	46%	33%	43%	51%
Ukrainian mass media and social networks	9%	14%	15%	13%	9%
Chinese mass media and social networks	20%	19%	13%	11%	6%
European mass media and social networks	7%	6%	7%	9%	8%
American mass media and social networks	16%	8%	12%	11%	15%

Table 32

Most likely, in the first case we are talking about estimates based on the analysis of the Russian media, while in the second – rather based on beliefs and assumptions.

In the regional context, it can be seen that the greatest risk of propaganda in the Kazakh media and social networks is most seen by residents of Almaty (57%) and the southern region of the country (51%). In Russian media – by the residents of all three largest cities of Kazakhstan: Astana, Almaty and Shymkent (70%, 50% and 47%, respectively), as well as in the eastern region of Kazakhstan (60%).

It should be specifically noted that the population of the western region of the country supposes the risk of propaganda in all foreign media to a higher extent (in Ukrainian – 21%, Chinese – 21%, European – 14%, Middle Eastern – 5%), but to the least extent admits such probability in relation to Kazakh media and social networks (Shymkent (29%) and the western region (33%).

The probability of propaganda in the American media is more often assumed by residents of central Kazakhstan (28%), Astana (17%) and Eastern Kazakhstan (16%).

2.3. Misinformation in the judgements of citizens of Kazakhstan

Most, or 73% of Kazakhstanis, according to their own self-assessment, easily navigate the existing flow of information; moreover, 38% of them do not believe that there is a lot of information, and they can always find what they need.

25% of the country's citizens say that there is too much information and they are experiencing difficulties in this regard.

Among those citizens who stated that they do not experience difficulties associated with an abundance of information and easily find the material they need, there are more respondents with incomplete secondary education (50%). While respondents with higher education do not deny an excessive amount of information, but note that they easily navigate in it (39%) (*see Table 33*).

In the regional context, among those who note that they can always find the necessary information, there majority are those who live in Almaty (52%) and Shymkent (43%). On the contrary, the major part among those who indicate that "there is too much information and it is difficult for me to navigate this" (42%) is formed by the capital residents.

As part of the study, citizens of Kazakhstan were also asked whether they had a feeling that they were being provided with false information in the media or were trying to be imposed with a certain point of view. According to the data obtained, 41% of citizens of Kazakhstan believe that if such facts take place they are uncommon (31% – rare, 10% – extremely rare). 18% indicated that they had never encountered cases of misinformation or manipulation in the media.

Thus, 59% of **the citizens of Kazakhstan, or the majority of the country's population, support the point of view that if the media give false or manipulative information, they do it rarely or do not do it at all.**

Starting from 2020, we receive a huge amount of different information from the media every day. Please indicate your current state position on this topic.

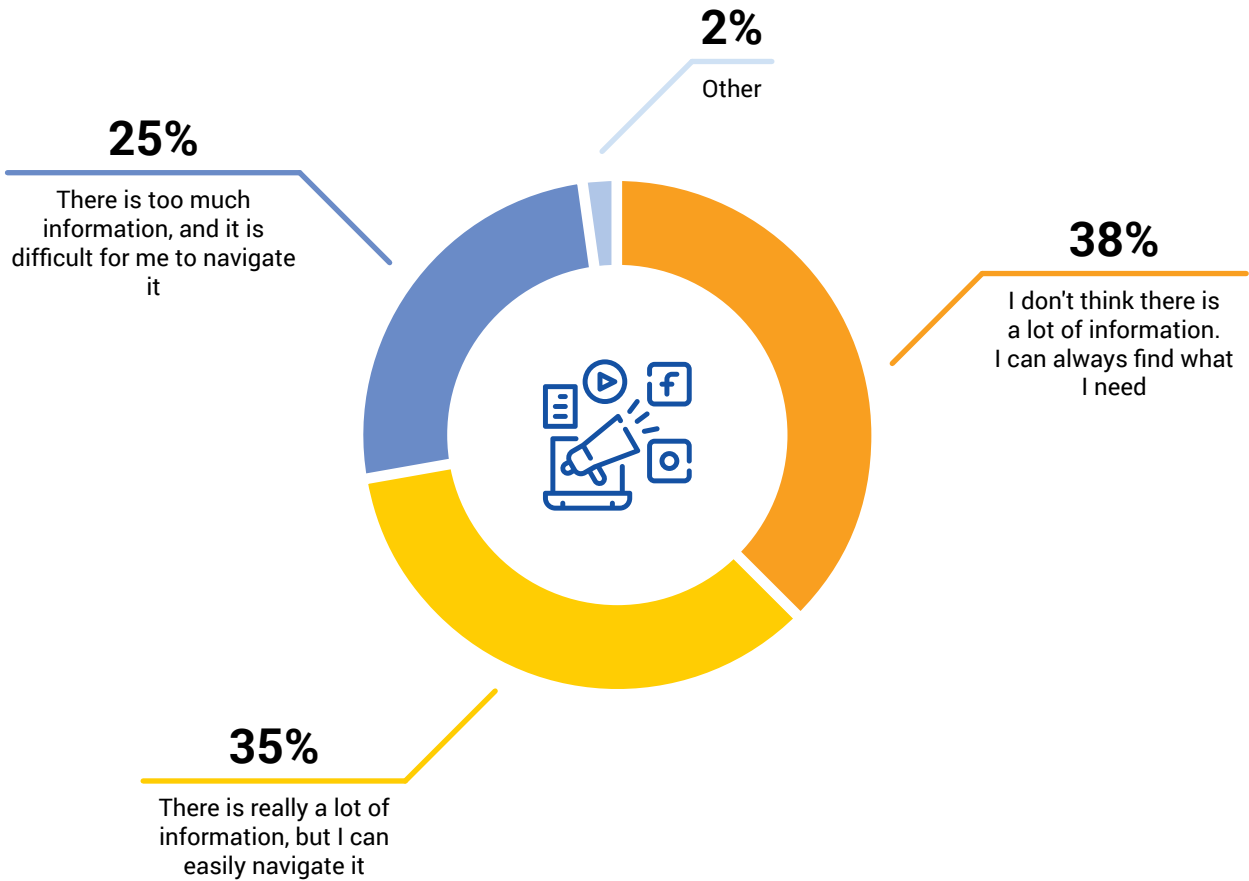


Diagram 15

Distribution of answers to the question: "Starting from 2020, we receive a huge amount of different information from the media every day. Please indicate your current state position on this topic." according to the education

Please specify your education

	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
There is too much information, and it is difficult for me to navigate it	25%	29%	26%	24%	25%
There is really a lot of information, but I can easily navigate it	23%	28%	34%	37%	39%
I don't think there is a lot of information. I can always find what I need	50%	41%	39%	36%	34%
Other	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%

Table 33

41% of Kazakhstanis hold the opposite point of view. Of these, 23% indicate that they often encounter false information, 9% – very often, and another 9% are sure that they always encounter false information or the imposition of a certain point of view through the mass media (see *Diagram 16*).

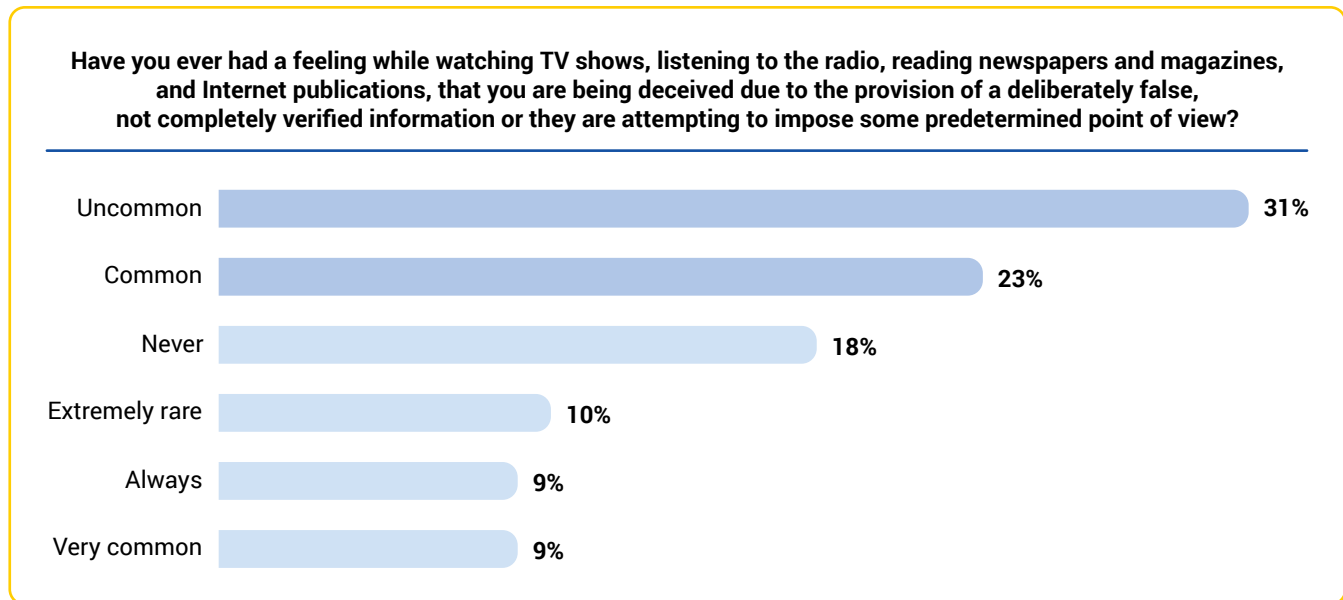


Diagram 16

In the age context, among those who believe that they rarely encounter misinformation in the media, there are more young people of the younger age (14-18 years old). On the contrary, senior individuals more often state that they face such facts very often (16%).

In the educational context, it can be seen that the most contradictory attitudes regarding disinformation are characteristic of the population with an incomplete secondary education. They more commonly than other citizens indicate that they encounter false information and attempts of manipulation in the media very often (19%), as well as extremely rarely (15%) and never (27%).

In turn, citizens with higher education more often than others indicated that they always (13%) and often (38%) face facts of disinformation (see *Table 34*).

In the regional context, it can be seen that the population of Southern Kazakhstan, as well as population of Almaty and Shymkent, take leading place among those who indicated that they had never or extremely rarely encountered misinformation, facts of false information or attempts to impose a certain point of view (45% of Almaty residents, 36% of the population of the southern region, 26% of Shymkent residents).

On the contrary, the population in the eastern region of Kazakhstan is on the first place among those who most often indicate that they always encounter these phenomena (17%), and Astana residents most of all chose the option "often" (42%).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Have you ever had a feeling while watching TV shows, listening to the radio, reading newspapers and magazines, and Internet publications, that you are being deceived due to the provision of a deliberately false, not completely verified information or they are attempting to impose some predetermined point of view?"
according to the education

Please specify your education

	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Always	8%	9%	8%	10%	13%
Very often	19%	6%	10%	8%	8%
Often	8%	22%	22%	22%	38%
Rare	23%	37%	34%	29%	32%
Extremely rare	15%	9%	9%	11%	4%
Never	27%	17%	17%	20%	6%

Table 34

At the same time, 60% of Kazakhstanis believe that the media can broadcast false information. One out of five individuals denies this kind of possibility, and another 20% found it difficult to answer the question of whether mass media can spread false information.

Do you think that the media (including social networks) may broadcast or actually broadcast FALSE information?

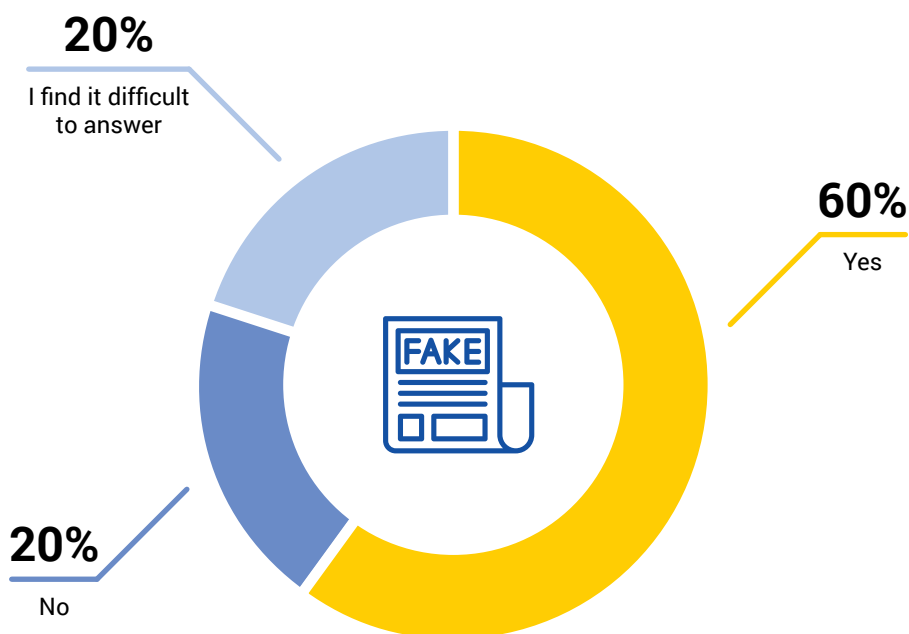


Diagram 17

The belief that the media may broadcast or do actually broadcast unreliable information is least supported by young people aged 14 to 18 years (24%), in the educational context – by the citizens with secondary education (on average 23%), in the regional context – by the residents of the southern region of Kazakhstan (37%) and Shymkent (21%) (see **Table 35-37**).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you think that the media (including social networks) may broadcast or actually broadcast FALSE information?"
according to the age

		How old are you?				
		14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Yes		49%	65%	61%	57%	68%
No		24%	19%	21%	19%	20%
Not sure		27%	16%	19%	24%	11%

Table 35

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you think that the media (including social networks) may broadcast or actually broadcast FALSE information?"
according to education

		Please specify your education				
		Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Yes		38%	60%	55%	66%	61%
No		19%	25%	26%	15%	15%
Not sure		44%	15%	19%	19%	24%

Table 36

The citizens were additionally asked why, according to their opinion, the media, including social networks, broadcast false information. Every third individual answered this question that the goal is manipulation – the intention to form a convenient opinion (32%). 23% of Kazakhstanis believe that the basis of such behavior of the media is to justify the actions of government agencies or their owners (23%), which, in fact, is also manipulation of public opinion.

18% of Kazakhstanis believe that cases when the media broadcast unreliable information are due to the lack of control, the fact that "they do not obey anyone." And another 7% do not believe that the media can spread unverified or false information.

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you think that the media (including social networks) may broadcast or actually broadcast FALSE information?"
according to the region of residence

	Yes	No	Not sure
Western region	55%	19%	27%
Eastern region	73%	9%	18%
Southern region	45%	37%	18%
Central region	71%	7%	21%
Northern region	78%	5%	17%
Almaty	65%	15%	20%
Shymkent	62%	21%	17%
Astana	74%	6%	20%

Table 37

Why (according to your opinion) do the media (including social networks) broadcast FALSE information?

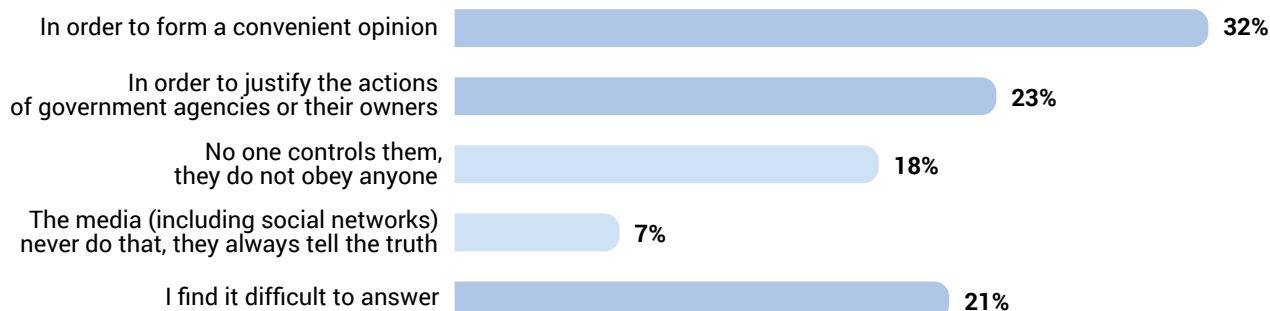


Diagram 18

Urban dwellers are the most among those who believe that the media provide unreliable information in order to form a convenient opinion (34%), while rural residents more often support the opinion that the media always tell the truth (11%) (see Table 38).

In the age context, it can be seen that citizens of retirement age to a higher extent support the point of view that the media broadcast unverified information because no one controls them, (30%); in the **regional context** – residents of the southern region of Kazakhstan (26%), as well as Shymkent (24%). (see Table 39).

Every second individual, or 48% of respondents among the citizens of Kazakhstan, declare that they have never rechecked the information received from the media and social networks. 32% indicated that they had to verify the accuracy of the information received from the mass media, but rarely. And only 19% or one out of five Kazakhstanis, constantly double-check the information they have received from the media and social networks (see Diagram 19).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Why (according to your opinion) do the media (including social networks) broadcast FALSE information?"
according to the area of residence

	City	Village
In order to justify the actions of government agencies or their owners	24%	23%
In order to form a convenient opinion	34%	27%
No one controls them, they do not obey anyone	19%	15%
The media (including social networks) never do that, they always tell the truth	5%	11%
Not sure	19%	24%

Table 38

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Why (according to your opinion) do the media (including social networks) broadcast FALSE information?"
according to the region of residence

	In order to justify the actions of government agencies or their owners	In order to form a convenient opinion	No one controls them, they do not obey anyone	The media (including social networks) never do that, they always tell the truth	Not sure
Western region	20,5%	29,8%	16,8%	3,7%	29,2%
Eastern region	23,6%	37,3%	5,5%	11,8%	21,8%
Southern region	15,0%	27,8%	25,6%	9,1%	22,5%
Central region	34,4%	33,6%	12,3%	4,1%	15,6%
Northern region	25,9%	41,4%	12,1%	6,9%	13,8%
Almaty	36,8%	31,1%	14,2%	3,8%	14,2%
Shymkent	22,4%	27,6%	24,1%	6,9%	19,0%
Astana	24,6%	38,5%	18,5%	3,1%	15,4%

Table 39

Do you usually double-check the information received from the media and social networks?

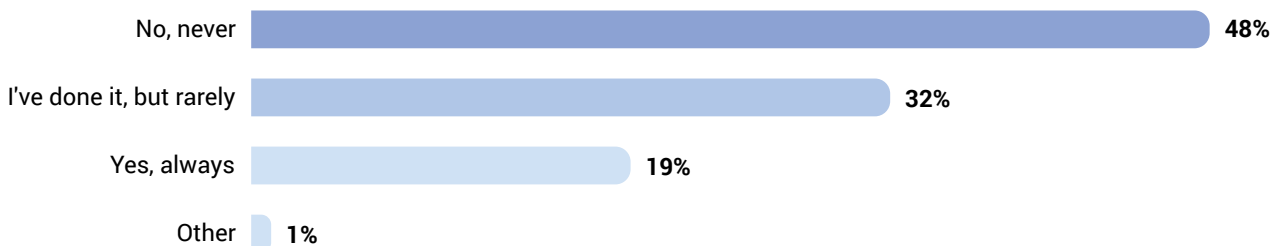


Diagram 19

Among those who at least occasionally double-check the information received from the media and social networks, there are more urban than rural residents (34% and 28%, respectively), in the age context – young adults (19-29 years - 38%).

On the contrary, among those who have never have done this, there are more rural residents (52%); in the age context – citizens older than 58 years (57%) (*see Tables 40-41*).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you usually double-check the information received from the media and social networks?"
according to the region of residence

	City	Village
Yes, always	20%	18%
I've done it, but rarely	34%	28%
No, never	46%	52%

Table 40

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you usually double-check the information received from the media and social networks?"
according to the age

	How old are you?				
	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Yes, always	20%	21%	18%	17%	23%
I've done it, but rarely	31%	38%	30%	31%	20%
No, never	50%	40%	51%	50%	57%

Table 41

The distribution of answers to this question in the context of education and income level is quite clear.

Thus, the study demonstrates that the higher is the educational level of citizens, the more often they double-check the obtained information. In particular, among those who have never rechecked the information from the media and social networks, 63% are citizens with incomplete secondary education and 35% with higher education (*see Table 42*).

The distribution of answers to this question depending on the income is of particular interest. Thus, citizens with a higher income level more often tend to question the accuracy of the information and double-check it. On the contrary, the two groups with the lowest incomes more commonly indicate that they have

never rechecked the information they received from the media and social networks (see Table 43).

In the regional context, among those who have never rechecked information obtained from the media and social networks, there are more individuals from the southern (60%) and northern (53%) regions of the country.

On the contrary, more than every third resident of the Western Region (or 33%, which is more than in other regions), as well as the residents of Astana and Almaty (25% and 24%, respectively), indicate that they always double-check information.

Disinformation, according to citizens of Kazakhstan, appears more often on the following topics: war (special operation) in Ukraine (40%), COVID-19 vaccination (35%), January events in Kazakhstan (34%).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you usually double-check the information received from the media and social networks?"
according to the education

Please specify your education

	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Yes, always	15%	21%	16%	19%	30%
I've done it, but rarely	23%	27%	30%	36%	34%
No, never	63%	50%	53%	44%	35%

Table 42

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Do you usually double-check the information received from the media and social networks?"
according to the level of income

How would you rate your income?

	I have enough money for everything in order not to deny anything	Buying most durable goods (refrigerator, TV, etc.) does not cause difficulties	I have enough money to purchase only the necessary products and clothes, pay for utilities, with no savings left	I have enough money only to buy food, but not enough to pay for utilities	I have not money to buy food, I constantly have to live in debt
Yes, always	23%	27%	18%	17%	14%
I've done it, but rarely	31%	42%	34%	25%	22%
No, never	46%	30%	48%	57%	62%
Other	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%

Table 43

Unreliable information, according to the citizens of the country, is also possible on the following topics: sugar deficiency (26%), inflation in Kazakhstan (16%), health of the first president of Kazakhstan (12%), exchange rate (10%), political reforms of the current president (8%), Eurasian Economic Union (4%) (see **Diagram 20**).

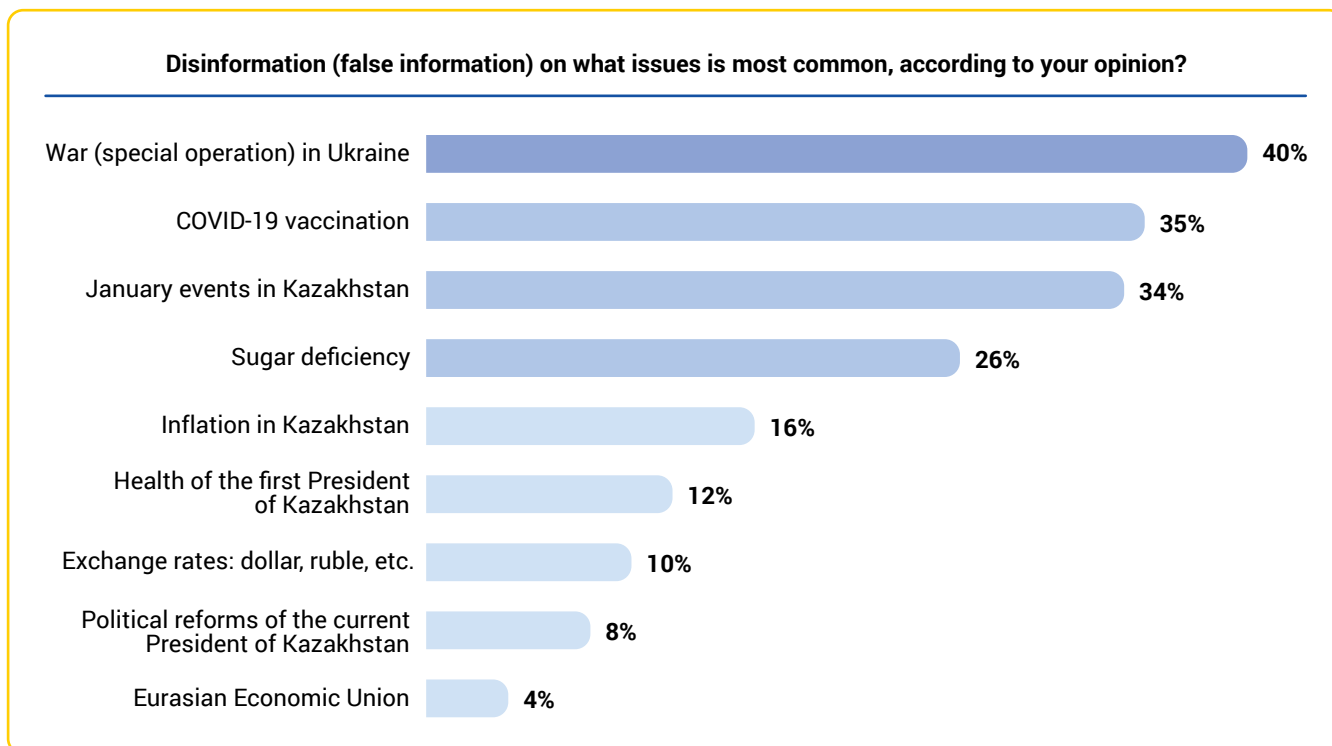


Diagram 20

Citizens of Kazakhstan **consider that disinformation** appears slightly more commonly **than propaganda** regarding such topics as sugar deficiency (disinformation – 26%, propaganda – 21%), health of the first president (disinformation – 12%, propaganda – 8%). On the contrary, they consider that there is **more propaganda** on the topic of the current president's political reforms (propaganda – 12%, disinformation – 8%).

Citizens with a higher income level are more likely than other categories of the population to see misinformation in some areas.

Quite interesting is the fact that if the citizens of Kazakhstan saw the risk of propaganda more in the Kazakh and Russian media (44% and 41%, respectively) and several times less in American and Chinese sources of information (12% and 13%, respectively), the actual disinformation and manipulation of information are more often noted in Chinese (46%) mass media. The top three States whose sources, according to citizens of the country, are also flooded with misinformation, included the United States (39%) and Ukraine (38%).

On the contrary, three countries that, according to the study participants, are least likely to use disinformation and manipulation by information include Turkey, Russia and Kyrgyzstan (confidence level: 48%, 42% and 37%, respectively) (see **Table 45 and Diagram 21**).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Disinformation (false information) on what issues is most common, according to your opinion?"
according to the income level

How would you rate your income?

	I have enough money for everything in order not to deny anything	Buying most durable goods (refrigerator, TV, etc.) does not cause difficulties	I have enough money to purchase only the necessary products and clothes, pay for utilities, with no savings left	I have enough money only to buy food, but not enough to pay for utilities	I have not money to buy food, I constantly have to live in debt
War (special operation) in Ukraine	43%	59%	38%	36%	22%
January events in Kazakhstan	29%	43%	38%	36%	21%
Inflation in Kazakhstan	15%	11%	15%	21%	22%
Exchange rates: dollar, ruble, etc	9%	16%	11%	10%	7%
Health of the first President of Kazakhstan	12%	16%	13%	11%	3%
Political reforms of the current President of Kazakhstan	7%	10%	9%	8%	4%
COVID-19 vaccination	34%	31%	38%	26%	40%
Eurasian Economic Union	4%	10%	2%	11%	7%
Sugar deficiency	21%	23%	25%	30%	23%

Table 44

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Which countries' media most often use disinformation, and manipulation through information?"
according to the pooled answers

The level of trust
 ("I trust completely",
 "I trust, but only partially", "I trust")

Turkey	48%
Russia	42%
Kyrgyzstan	37%
Uzbekistan	36%
Ukraine	35%
European countries	34%
USA	32%
China	26%

The level of distrust
 ("partially do not trust",
 "absolutely unreliable")

China	46%
USA	39%
Ukraine	38%
European countries	36%
Russia	36%
Uzbekistan	30%
Kyrgyzstan	28%
Turkey	21%

Table 45

Which countries' media use disinformation and manipulation through information more often than others?

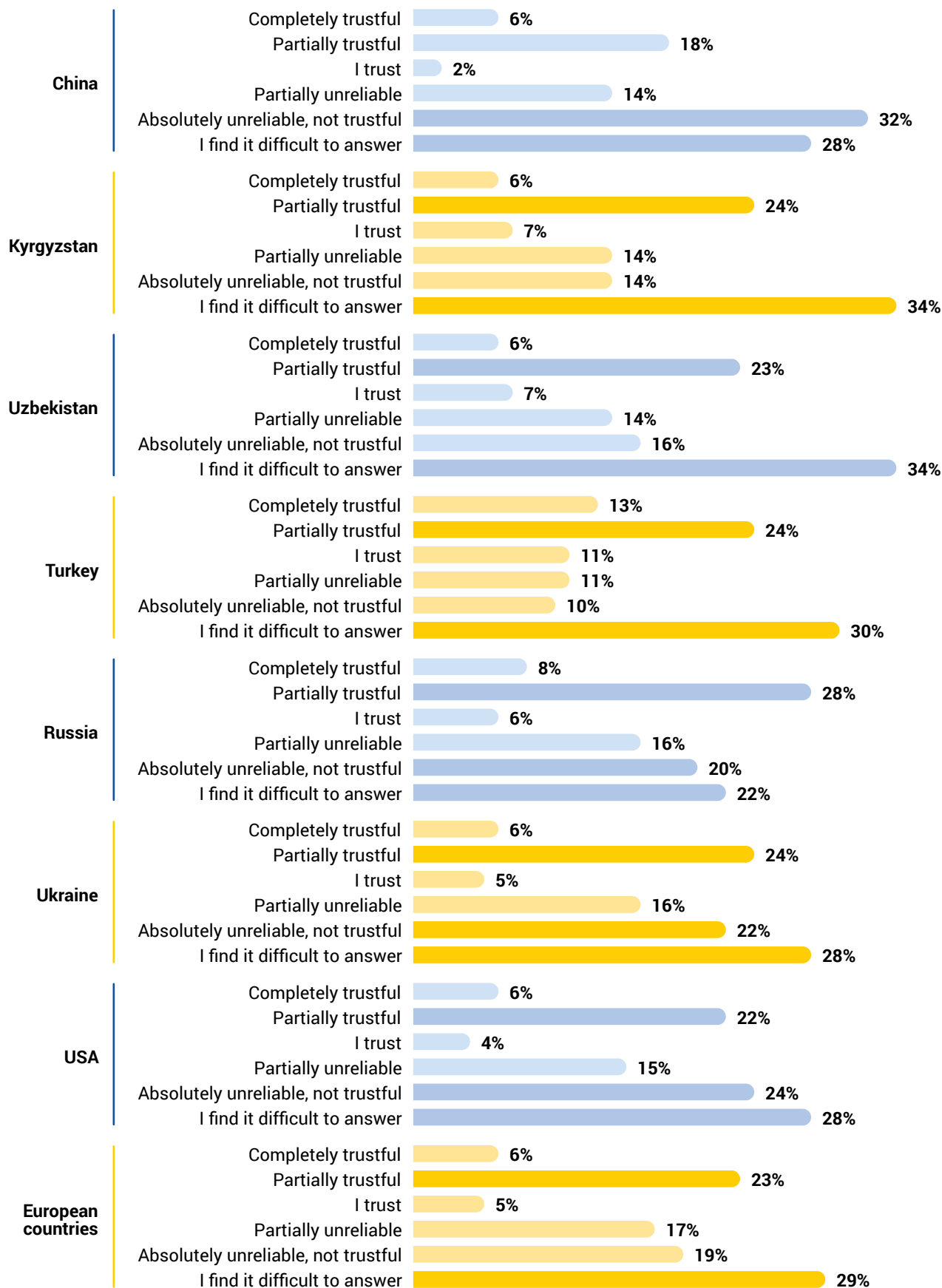


Diagram 21

In general, it is worth noting that the overall level of trust and distrust in information from different countries is comparable. This may indicate, among other things, that there is no single, dominant opinion among the citizens of Kazakhstan regarding the perception of countries in terms of their dissemination of misinformation or manipulation by information.

At the same time, Turkey is currently the country with the lowest level of doubt to the information presented its media and the highest level of trust.

In the age context, the greatest differences in the estimates of the presence of disinformation in the media of certain countries were seen among the youngest age subgroup and, on the other hand, the most senior study participants. Thus, if the former tend to trust the sources of information of certain countries more, then citizens aged > 58 years, on the contrary, more often indicated their complete distrust.

The only difference is the perception of the Russian media, in relation to which young people aged 14 to 18 were more likely to indicate that the information provided is "partially unreliable" (see **Table 46**).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Which countries' media most often use disinformation, and manipulation through information?"
according to the age

How old are you?

		14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Russia	Completely trustful	10%	7%	9%	8%	11%
	Partially trustful	26%	27%	29%	28%	27%
	I trust	9%	5%	5%	5%	9%
	Partially unreliable	17%	18%	16%	15%	11%
	Absolutely unreliable, not trustful	21%	22%	17%	23%	18%
	Not sure	17%	22%	24%	22%	23%
USA	Completely trustful	8%	7%	5%	6%	7%
	Partially trustful	32%	19%	23%	20%	18%
	I trust	6%	3%	5%	4%	2%
	Partially unreliable	16%	16%	14%	15%	14%
	Absolutely unreliable, not trustful	19%	24%	24%	28%	27%
	Not sure	19%	31%	30%	27%	32%

Table 46

In the regional context, it can be seen that the attitudes of citizens of Kazakhstan in different regions about which countries' media most often provide disinformation are also highly variable. Thus, the population of the Western region, more than others, believes that Chinese media cannot be trusted (42%), the population of the eastern region adheres to a similar position towards the Ukrainian media and the media of European States (28% and 28%).

In turn, residents of Astana, more than the population of other regions, stated that the information of Russian and American mass media is unreliable (39% and 31%, respectively).

Distribution of answers to the question: "Which countries' media most often use disinformation, and manipulation through information?" according to the region of residence

	China		Kyrgyzstan		Uzbekistan		Turkey	
	Trustful	Not trustful	Trustful	Not trustful	Trustful	Not trustful	Trustful	Not trustful
Western region	6%	42%	8%	17%	7%	17%	12%	11%
Eastern region	8%	15%	2%	9%	2%	10%	5%	11%
Southern region	3%	37%	7%	16%	6%	17%	16%	10%
Central region	4%	28%	11%	15%	9%	16%	16%	7%
Northern region	5%	24%	5%	14%	7%	10%	22%	5%
Almaty	9%	35%	4%	17%	2%	26%	4%	16%
Shymkent	16%	14%	5%	3%	12%	2%	9%	2%
Astana	6%	37%	8%	17%	6%	19%	22%	12%

	Russia		Ukraine		USA		European countries	
	Trustful	Not trustful	Trustful	Not trustful	Trustful	Not trustful	Trustful	Not trustful
Western region	8%	24%	8%	26%	8%	29%	10%	22%
Eastern region	7%	23%	2%	17%	3%	18%	5%	16%
Southern region	7%	17%	4%	19%	4%	23%	3%	19%
Central region	10%	18%	9%	25%	6%	31%	8%	21%
Northern region	14%	17%	9%	28%	10%	29%	10%	28%
Almaty	7%	17%	4%	22%	5%	23%	4%	16%
Shymkent	9%	16%	9%	14%	14%	10%	12%	10%
Astana	12%	39%	8%	25%	6%	31%	8%	19%

Table 47

2.4. Perception of the activities of the Central Reference Laboratory as an example of the perception of misinformation in the judgements of citizens of Kazakhstan

79% of Kazakhstanis have not heard about the creation of a "biological laboratory"³⁷ (Central Reference Laboratory) in Almaty, while 21%, or every fifth study participant, are aware of it.

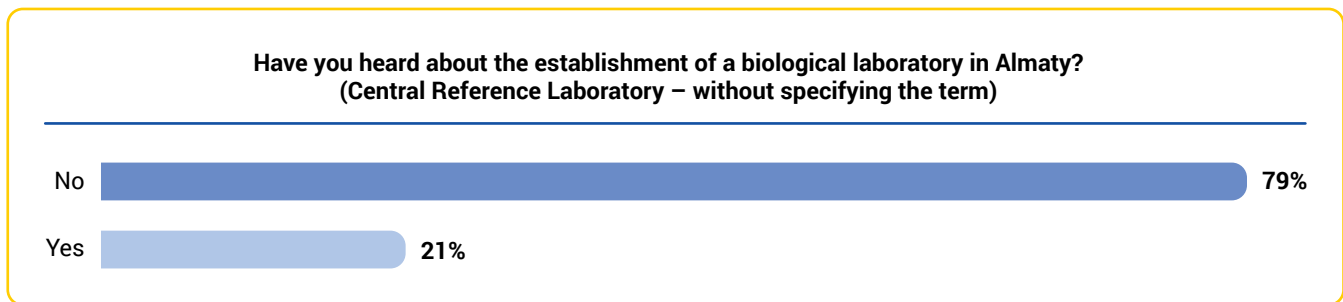


Diagram 22

Citizen of Almaty; urban residents (24%); population aged 58 years and older (36%); citizens with a higher education (33%); residents of Astana (40%) are to a higher extent informed on the establishment of a "biological laboratory".

On the contrary, rural residents (86%) are less aware of it; in the age context – young people (on average 84%); in the regional – the population of the southern and western regions of the country (88% and 85%, respectively) (see Table 48-51).

**Distribution of answers to the question:
"Have you heard about the establishment of a "biological laboratory" in Almaty?"
across the region of residence**

	City	Village
Yes	24%	14%
No	76%	86%

Table 48

³⁷ A term used in the media. The correct name is the Central Reference Laboratory.

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Have you heard about the establishment of a "biological laboratory" in Almaty?"
according to the age

		How old are you?				
		14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Yes		18%	14%	23%	23%	36%
No		82%	86%	77%	77%	64%

Table 49

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Have you heard about the establishment of a "biological laboratory" in Almaty?"
according to the education

		Please specify your education				
		Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Yes		21%	21%	17%	21%	33%
No		79%	79%	83%	79%	67%

Table 50

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Have you heard about the establishment of a "biological laboratory" in Almaty?"
across the regions

	Yes	No
Western region	15%	85%
Eastern region	27%	73%
Southern region	13%	88%
Central region	23%	77%
Northern region	28%	72%
Almaty	26%	74%
Shymkent	26%	74%
Astana	40%	60%

Table 51

Only 9% of 21% of those who were aware of the creation of a "biological laboratory" in Almaty indicated that they learned about it from official news in the media.

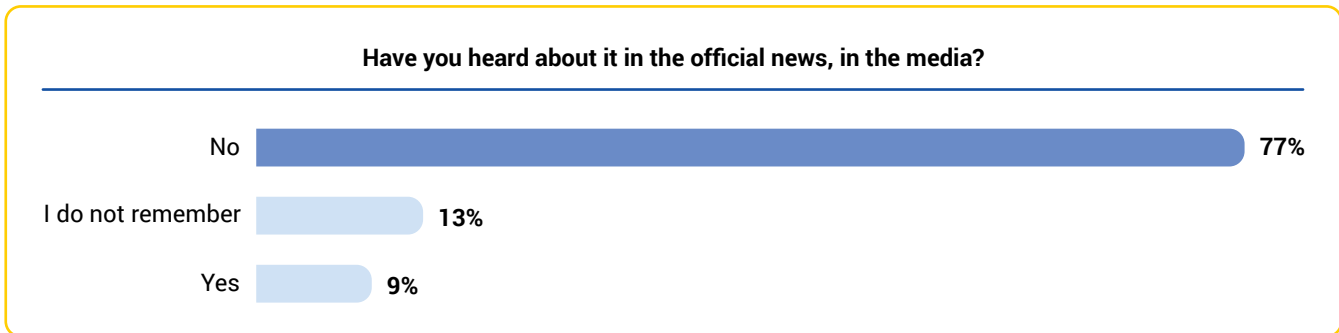


Diagram 23

Among those who learned about the creation of the "biological laboratory" via official news, the majority are citizens aged 58 years and older (25%), in the educational context – people with higher education (14%), in the regional – the population of Astana (19%), Almaty (15%) and central Kazakhstan region (16%) (see **Tables 52-54**).

**Distribution of answers to the question:
"Have you heard about it from the official news, in the media?"
according to the age**

How old are you?

	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Yes	6%	6%	10%	11%	25%
No	81%	80%	78%	75%	66%
I do not remember	13%	15%	13%	14%	9%

Table 52

**Distribution of answers to the question:
"Have you heard about it from the official news, in the media?"
according to the level of education**

Please specify your education

	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Yes	8%	9%	7%	10%	14%
No	73%	79%	82%	76%	65%
I do not remember	19%	12%	11%	14%	22%

Table 53

Distribution of answers to the question: "Have you heard about it from the official news, in the media?" according to the region of residence

	Yes	No	I do not remember
Western region	6%	78%	16%
Eastern region	8%	70%	22%
Southern region	4%	84%	12%
Central region	16%	78%	6%
Northern region	10%	83%	7%
Almaty	15%	67%	18%
Shymkent	12%	72%	16%
Astana	19%	72%	9%

Table 54

There is no solid opinion about the "biological laboratory" among the citizens of Kazakhstan. Thus, 93% found it difficult to answer the question on their opinion on the laboratory. Only a few indicated that they have a negative (4%) or a positive attitude (2%) – based on the fact that science needs to be developed in the country. Among the statements about the laboratory, there was also an opinion that the information about its creation is a lie (less than 1% of the study participants).

If "yes", what do you think about it?

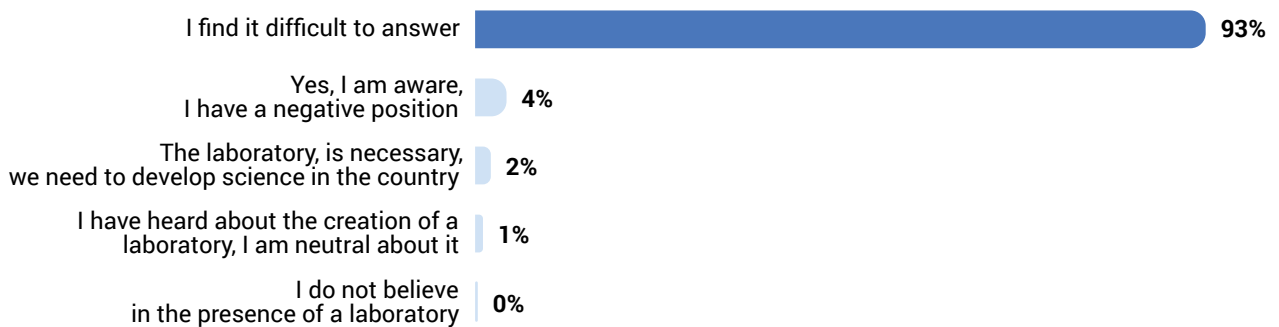


Diagram 24

Distribution of answers to this question demonstrates that the most contradictory feelings and perceptions of the laboratory's activities are characteristic of citizens aged over 58 years or retired individuals. They, more commonly than others indicate that they are negative (11%) or neutral (5%) to the creation of the laboratory, and also do not believe in its existence (5%) (see Table 55).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"If so, what do you think about it?"
according to the age

How old are you?

	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
I find it difficult to answer	95%	96%	91%	92%	80%
I have heard about the creation of a laboratory, I am neutral about it	2%	1%	0%	2%	5%
Yes, I am aware, I have a negative position	1%	2%	4%	4%	11%
I do not believe in the presence of a laboratory	0%	0%	1%	0%	5%
The laboratory, is necessary, we need to develop science in the country	3%	2%	3%	2%	0%

Table 55

In the educational context, it can be seen that among those who have a positive attitude to the creation of the laboratory, there are slightly more citizens with a complete higher education (8%).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"If so, what do you think about it?"
according to the education

Please specify your education

	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
I find it difficult to answer	92%	94%	94%	92%	87%
Yes, I am aware, I have a negative position	6%	3%	4%	3%	4%
The laboratory, is necessary, we need to develop science in the country	0%	3%	1%	2%	8%

Table 56

In the regional context, it can be seen that every tenth resident of the central region of the country perceives its activities negatively; 6% of the population of Astana, on the contrary, consider the activities of the Central Reference Laboratory with a positive attitude, based on the need to develop science in the country.

"The Russian media claim that this laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID. Only 10% of the citizens of Kazakhstan believe these statements, and most do not (61%). At the same time, a significant part of citizens (29%) found it difficult to answer the question of whether they believe in the truthfulness of this information.

Distribution of answers to the question:
"If so, what do you think about it?"
in the regional context

	I find it difficult to answer	I have heard about the creation of a laboratory, I am neutral about it	Yes, I am aware, I have a negative position	I do not believe in the presence of a laboratory	The laboratory, is necessary, we need to develop science in the country
Western region	96%	0%	1%	0%	4%
Eastern region	93%	1%	6%	1%	0%
Southern region	96%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Central region	84%	3%	10%	1%	3%
Northern region	95%	0%	3%	2%	0%
Almaty	90%	4%	3%	0%	4%
Shymkent	91%	0%	3%	0%	5%
Astana	88%	2%	5%	0%	6%

Table 57

The Russian media claim that this laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID. Do you believe it's true?



Diagram 25

The statement spread by the Russian media that the laboratory established in Almaty was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID is less often considered trustworthy by urban residents ("I don't believe" – 63% of citizens, 58% of rural residents), in the educational context – by citizens with higher education, in the regional context – by the population of Astana (77% do not believe).

On the contrary, slightly more citizens among those aged 58 and older ("Yes, I believe" – 14%); individuals with secondary education (14%); the population of the central and northern regions, as well as Almaty (18%, 16% and 14%, respectively). **believe in the authenticity of the disseminated information.**

Among those who do not know, find it **difficult to answer** about the truthfulness of the information disseminated by the Russian media about the activities of the biological laboratory in Almaty, the higher proportion is composed of rural residents (32%); young people of the younger age subgroup – 14 to 18 years

(32%); citizens with incomplete secondary education (40%); the population of the Eastern Kazakhstan and residents of Almaty (40% and 42%, respectively) (see Tables 58-61).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"The Russian media claim that this laboratory was used to create
biological weapons and/or COVID. Do you believe it's true?"
according to the type of settlement

	City	Village
Yes	10%	10%
No	63%	58%
Not sure	28%	32%

Table 58

Distribution of answers to the question:
"The Russian media claim that this laboratory was used to create
biological weapons and/or COVID. Do you believe it's true?"
according to the age

	How old are you?				
	14-18 years	19-29 years	30-45 years	46-58 years	> 58 years
Yes	8%	9%	10%	10%	14%
No	61%	61%	59%	63%	64%
Not sure	32%	30%	30%	27%	23%

Table 59

Distribution of answers to the question:
"The Russian media claim that this laboratory was used to create
biological weapons and/or COVID. Do you believe it's true?"
according to the education

	Please specify your education				
	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Secondary vocational	Higher	Complete higher education
Yes	10%	14%	11%	8%	5%
No	50%	56%	64%	61%	62%
Not sure	40%	31%	25%	31%	33%

Table 60

Distribution of answers to the question:
"The Russian media claim that this laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID. Do you believe it's true?"
according to the region of residence

	Yes	No	Not sure
Western region	11%	58%	31%
Eastern region	6%	55%	40%
Southern region	6%	68%	25%
Central region	18%	53%	30%
Northern region	16%	69%	16%
Almaty	14%	44%	42%
Shymkent	7%	66%	28%
Astana	3%	77%	20%

Table 61

Those 10% of citizens who believe that the laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID noted that they obtain information primarily from Kazakh media and social networks (56.3%), twice as rarely from Russian mass media and social networks (22.9%).

Among those who indicated that they received information from the Kazakh media and social networks, there are more residents of Astana, southern region and Shymkent.

Whereas among those who indicated that they received information of this kind from the Russian media, there is a higher proportion of individuals aged 46-58 years and of citizen from the eastern and central regions.

10% of citizens who believe that the laboratory in Kazakhstan was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID, were asked whether they began to trust this information less after the World Health Organization denied it.

Distribution of answers to the question:
"If you believe that this information (that this laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID) is reliable, from which sources do you usually get it?"
(answers of 10% of citizens who gave affirmative answer to the previous question: see Figure 25)

Kazakh mass media and social networks	56%
Russian media and social networks (including Channel One Eurasia)	23%
Chinese mass media and social networks	5%

Table 62

According to the data obtained, half of those who trusted this information began to trust it less, one out of five began to doubt its reliability or found it difficult to answer the question.

Nevertheless, one out of three individuals, on the contrary, began to trust more the information disseminated in the Russian media that the laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID, after the World Health Organization denied it.

Thus, after the refutation of misinformation about the laboratory's activities, most of the Kazakhstanis who believed in the version disseminated by the Russian media changed their understanding of the situation. However, a third of citizens, after the WHO clarification, still believe or even became confident in the information disseminated by the Russian mass media.

Distribution of answers to the question
"After the World Health Organization denied this information (that this laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID), do you trust such information more or less?"
(answers of 10% of citizens who answered affirmative to the previous question: see Diagram 19)

Yes, I trust to a more extent	32%
No, I trust to a less extent	48%
Not sure	20%

Table 63

Among those who began to believe more that the laboratory in Kazakhstan was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID, a slightly higher proportion belongs to the rural residents than urban dwellers, in the age context – to the citizens aged > 58 years and the youngest study participants (14 to 18 years).

On the contrary, after the refutation of this information by WHO, there are more urban dwellers, young individuals aged 18 to 29 years, as well as citizens aged 30 to 58 years began to doubt its reliability and became less confident in the information disseminated by the Russian media.

CONCLUSIONS FOR THE SECTION

Scopes and sources of propaganda, disinformation and fake news

- 73% of Kazakhstanis declare that they know what propaganda is. Only 27% of the country's citizens do not know the definition of propaganda. Of these, 19% indicated that they were not informed about the meaning of the concept of "propaganda", and another 8% found it difficult to answer the question of whether they knew this concept (see
 - Among those who are most aware of what propaganda means, there are more citizens of senior age. On the contrary, among the representatives of the youngest age group (14-18 years) there are more those who do not know what this concept means.
 - In the educational context, it can be seen that the greatest awareness of the concept of "propaganda" is more typical for citizens with higher education and to a lesser extent for Kazakhstanis with a secondary education.
 - In the regional context, the population of the country's southern region is less aware of the concept of "propaganda" (27%) and, on the contrary, the residents of Astana (91%) are more aware of the concept of "propaganda".
 - According to the citizens of Kazakhstan, the greatest risk of the appearance of propaganda and false information exists primarily in the spheres of domestic (37%) and foreign (31%) policy, as well as in the social sphere (26%).
 - The point of view that the greatest risk of propaganda exists in the sphere of domestic and foreign policy is more supported by urban dwellers, in the educational concept – by the individuals with higher education. While in the age context, it is clear that the senior population are more concerned on a risk of spreading false information in the field of foreign policy,(44%).
 - Among the **specific topics** with the highest risk of propaganda, according to the citizens of Kazakhstan, are war (special operation) in Ukraine (40%), COVID-19 vaccination (36%), the January events in Kazakhstan (33%).
 - Kazakhstanis believe that the greatest risk of propaganda exists in the Kazakh and Russian

media and social networks (44% and 41%, respectively). This point of view is significantly more often supported by urban dwellers.

- In the age context, it is obvious that the opinion that the greatest risk of propaganda exists in the Russian and Chinese media and social networks is more common among young people.

- In the regional context, it can be seen that the greatest risk of propaganda in the Kazakh media and social networks is seen by residents of Almaty (57%) and the southern region of the country (51%). In Russian media – by the residents of all three largest cities of Kazakhstan: Astana, Almaty and Shymkent (70%, 50% and 47%, respectively), as well as in the eastern region of Kazakhstan (60%).

- The probability of propaganda in the American media is more often assumed by residents of central Kazakhstan (28%), Astana (17%) and Eastern Kazakhstan (16%).

Misinformation in the judgements of citizens of Kazakhstan

- Most, or 73% of Kazakhstanis, according to their own self-assessment, easily navigate the existing flow of information; moreover, 38% of them do not believe that there is a lot of information, and they can always find what they need.

- Only 25% of the country's citizens say that there is too much information and they are experiencing difficulties in this regard.

- Among those citizens who stated that they do not experience difficulties associated with an abundance of information and easily find the material they need, there are more respondents with incomplete secondary education (50%). While respondents with higher education do not deny an excessive amount of information, but note that they easily navigate in it (39%).

- **In the regional context**, among those who note that they can always find the necessary information, there higher ratio is noted among citizen from Almaty (52%) and Shymkent (43%), on the contrary residents of the capital more commonly indicate that "there are too many information and it is difficult for me to navigate it" (42%).

- 59% of the citizens of Kazakhstan, or the majority of the country's population, support the point of view that if the media give false or manipulative information, they do it rarely or do not do it at all.

- 41% of Kazakhstanis hold the opposite point of view and believe that they encounter false information with some frequency.

- **In the age context**, among those who believe that they rarely encounter misinformation in the media, there are more young people of the younger age (14-18 years old). On the contrary, senior individuals more often state that they face such facts very often (16%).

- Citizens with higher education more often than others indicated that they always (13%) and often (38%) face facts of disinformation.

- In the regional context, it can be seen that the population of Southern Kazakhstan, as well as population of Almaty and Shymkent, take leading place among those who indicated that they had never or extremely rarely encountered misinformation, facts of false information or attempts to impose a certain point of view (45% of Almaty residents, 36% of the population of the southern region, 26% of Shymkent residents).

- At the same time, 60% of Kazakhstanis believe that the media can broadcast false information. One out of five individuals denies this kind of possibility, and another 20% found it difficult to answer the question of whether mass media can spread false information.

- The belief that the media may broadcast or do actually broadcast unreliable information is **least** supported by young people aged 14 to 18 years (24%), in the educational context – by the citizens with secondary education (on average 23%), in the regional context – by the residents of the southern region of Kazakhstan (37%) and Shymkent (21%) (see Table 35-37).

- Every second individual, or 48% of respondents among the citizens of Kazakhstan, declare that they have never rechecked the information received from the media and social networks. 32% indicated that they had to verify the accuracy of the information received from the mass media, but rarely. And only 19% or one out of five Kazakhstanis, constantly double-check the information they have received from the media and social networks.

- Citizens with higher education are more likely to double-check the obtained information.

In particular, among those who have never rechecked the information from the media and social networks, 63% are citizens with incomplete secondary education and 35% with higher education.

- **Disinformation**, according to citizens of Kazakhstan, appears more often on the following topics: war (special operation) in Ukraine (40%), COVID-19 vaccination (35%), January events in Kazakhstan (34%). According to the citizens of the country, unreliable information can also be provided in relation to sugar deficiency (26%), inflation in Kazakhstan (16%), health of the first president of Kazakhstan (12%).

- Citizens of Kazakhstan **consider that disinformation** appears slightly more commonly **than propaganda** regarding such topics as sugar deficiency (disinformation – 26%, propaganda – 21%), health of the first president (disinformation – 12%, propaganda – 8%). On the contrary, they consider that there is more propaganda on the topic of the current president's political reforms (propaganda – 12%, disinformation – 8%).

- Citizens with a higher income level are more likely than other categories of the population to see misinformation in some areas.

- Quite interesting is the fact that if the citizens of Kazakhstan saw the risk of propaganda more in the Kazakh and Russian media (44% and 41%, respectively) and several times less in American and Chinese sources of information (12% and 13%, respectively), the actual disinformation and manipulation of information are more often noted in Chinese (46%) mass media. The top three States whose sources, according to citizens of the country, are also flooded with misinformation, included the United States (39%) and Ukraine (38%).

- On the contrary, three countries that, according to the study participants, are least likely to use disinformation and manipulation by information include Turkey, Russia and Kyrgyzstan (confidence level: 48%, 42% and 37%, respectively).

- In general, it should be noted that the overall level of trust and distrust of information from different countries regarding disinformation and manipulation by information is comparable.

- At the same time, Turkey is the country with the lowest level of doubt to the information presented its media and the highest level of trust.

- In the regional context, it can be seen that the attitudes of citizens of Kazakhstan in different regions about which countries' media most often provide disinformation are highly variable. Thus, the population of the Western region, more than others, believes that Chinese media cannot be trusted (42%), the population of the eastern region adheres to a similar position towards the Ukrainian media and the media of European States (28% and 28%).

- In turn, residents of Astana, more than the population of other regions, stated that the information of Russian and American mass media is unreliable (39% and 31%, respectively).

Perception of the activities of the Biolaboratory as an example of the perception of misinformation in the judgements of citizens of Kazakhstan

- 79% of Kazakhstanis have not heard about the creation of a "biological laboratory" in Almaty, while 21%, or every fifth study participant, are aware of it.

- Citizen of Almaty; urban residents (24%); population aged 58 years and older (36%); citizens with a higher education (33%); residents of Astana (40%) are to a higher extent informed on the establishment of a "biological laboratory": .

- On the contrary, rural residents (86%) are less aware of it; in the age context – young people (on average 84%); in the regional – the population of the southern and western regions of the country (88% and 85%, respectively).

- Only 9% of 21% of those who were aware of the creation of a "biological laboratory" in Almaty indicated that they learned about it from official news in the media.

- Among those who learned about the creation of the "biological laboratory" via official news, the majority are citizens aged 58 years and older (25%), in the educational context – people with higher education (14%), in the regional – the population of Astana (19%), Almaty (15%) and central Kazakhstan region (16%).

- There is no solid opinion about the "biological laboratory" among the citizens of Kazakhstan. Thus, 93% found it difficult to answer the question on their opinion on the

laboratory. Only a few indicated that they have a negative (4%) or a positive attitude (2%) – based on the fact that science needs to be developed in the country. Among the statements about the laboratory, there was also an opinion that the information about its creation is a lie (less than 1% of the study participants).

- Distribution of answers to this question demonstrates that the most contradictory feelings and perceptions of the laboratory's activities are characteristic of citizens aged over 58 years or retired individuals. They, more commonly than others indicate that they are negative (11%) or neutral (5%) to the creation of the laboratory, and also do not believe in its existence (5%).

- In the educational context, it can be seen that among those who have a positive attitude to the creation of the laboratory, there are slightly more citizens with a complete higher education (8%).

- In the regional context, it was established that every tenth resident of the central region of the country perceives its activities negatively. And 6% of the population of Astana, on the contrary, show positive attitude to the activities of the laboratory, based on the fact that it is necessary to develop science in the country.

- Only 10% of the citizens of Kazakhstan believe the claims of the Russian media that this laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID, most of them do not believe it (61%). At the same time, a significant part of citizens (29%) found it difficult to answer the question of whether they believe in the truthfulness of this information.

- The statement spread by the Russian media that the laboratory established in Almaty was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID is less often considered trustworthy by urban residents ("I don't believe" – 63% of citizens, 58% of rural residents), in the educational context – by citizens with higher education, in the regional context – by the population of Astana (77% do not believe).

- On the contrary, slightly more citizens among those aged 58 and older ("Yes, I believe" – 14%); individuals with secondary education (14%); the population of the central and northern regions, as well as Almaty (18%, 16% and 14%, respectively). believe in the authenticity of the disseminated information.

- Among those who do not know, find it difficult to answer about the truthfulness of the information disseminated by the Russian media about the activities of the biological laboratory in Almaty, the higher proportion is composed of rural residents (32%); young people of the younger age subgroup – 14 to 18 years (32%); citizens with incomplete secondary education (40%); the population of the Eastern Kazakhstan and residents of Almaty (40% and 42%, respectively).

- Those 10% of citizens who indicated that they consider truthful information that the laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID noted that they obtain information primarily from Kazakh media and social networks (56.3%), twice as rarely from Russian mass media and social networks (22.9%).

- 10% of citizens who believe that the laboratory in Kazakhstan was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID, were asked whether they began to trust this information less after the World Health Organization denied it. According to the data obtained, half of those who trusted this information began to trust it

less, one in five began to doubt its reliability or found it difficult to answer the question about their trust in the information that the laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID. Nevertheless, one out of three individuals, on the contrary, began to trust more the information disseminated in the Russian media that the laboratory was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID, after the World Health Organization denied it.

- Thus, after the refutation of misinformation about the laboratory's activities, most of the Kazakhstanis who believed in the version disseminated by the Russian media changed their understanding of the situation. However, a third of citizens, after the WHO clarification, still believe or even became confident in the information disseminated by the Russian mass media. Among those who began to believe more that the laboratory in Kazakhstan was used to create biological weapons and/or COVID, a slightly higher proportion belongs to the rural residents than urban dwellers, in the age context – to the citizens aged > 58 years and the youngest study participants (14 to 18 years).

section 3.

PERCEPTION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY AND GLOBALLY BY THE CITIZENS OF KAZAKHSTAN

3.1. The most resonant events in the judgements of the citizens of Kazakhstan

These studies demonstrate that the January events were the most traumatic for the citizens of Kazakhstan, they are among the events that cause the strongest emotional reaction of the citizens of the country: condemnation (anger) and fear.

At the same time, if the anger of Kazakhstanis is caused by torture (40%) and shooting (36%) on protesters, then the fear is also caused by the protest of society itself, as indicated by every third citizen of the country (32%).

The situation of Muslims in Xinjiang, the presence of internment camps (29% of the country's citizens) were among the events causing anger and condemnation of Kazakhstanis.

The five events that were perceived most negatively by Kazakhstanis also include the participation of CSTO forces in the January events (23%), as well as the war (special operation) between Russia and Ukraine (23%).

If we consider the events that cause anxiety among the citizens of the country, that is, having a remote prospect of danger in the minds of the citizens, the following facts can be listed in order of priority: the protest of the Kazakh society in January (24%), the war between Russia and Ukraine (20%), as well as the inclusion of CSTO forces in the January events (15%) (see Table 64).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Specify what emotions do you feel in relation to the following events"
(data on the negative assessments)

Anger (I condemn)		Fear		Anxiety	
January events in Kazakhstan: torture of protesters	40%	January events in Kazakhstan: shooting of protesters	36%	January events in Kazakhstan: public protest	24%
January events in Kazakhstan: shooting of protesters	36%	January events in Kazakhstan: public protest	32%	War (special operation) between Russia and Ukraine	20%
The situation with Muslims in Xinjiang (internment camps)	29%	January events in Kazakhstan: torture of protesters	31%	Inclusion of CSTO forces into action during the January events	18%
Inclusion of CSTO forces into action during the January events	23%	War (special operation) between Russia and Ukraine	29%	January events in Kazakhstan: torture of protesters	15%
War (special operation) between Russia and Ukraine	23%	Inclusion of CSTO forces into action during the January events	21%	January events in Kazakhstan: shooting of protesters	14%
January events in Kazakhstan: public protest	21%	The situation with Muslims in Xinjiang (internment camps)	21%	The situation with Muslims in Xinjiang (internment camps)	14%
Deprivation of autonomy of Nukus (Karakalpakstan)	17%	Deprivation of autonomy of Nukus (Karakalpakstan)	12%	Deprivation of autonomy of Nukus (Karakalpakstan)	12%
The Hearing State and the reforms of President Tokayev	9%	The Hearing State and the reforms of President Tokayev	6%	The Hearing State and the reforms of President Tokayev	8%

Table 64

If the perception of the shooting and torture of protesters with anger and fear is quite understandable, especially given that the dissatisfaction of the citizens was caused by objective reasons: the deterioration of the socio-economic situation, the demand for political changes declared by the authorities, then the perception of the protest with fear and anxiety requires separate consideration.

Most likely, we are talking about the fact that the population of the country experienced shock and fear from the forms of protest that took place, from the moods of anarchy and permissiveness that prevailed at that moment, as well as from the subsequent steps by the authorities that led to the death of people. In general, the data obtained allow us to state that the January events not only cause the greatest anger and fear of the citizens of the country, but they have not yet been comprehended by them and also cause fear of repetition.

The event that Kazakhstanis assessed perceived comparatively neutrally is the deprivation of autonomy of Nukus (Karakalpakstan) (53%).

As for the events that arouse the interest and enthusiasm of Kazakhstani citizens, these are mainly the Hearing State and the reforms of President Tokayev (44%) (*see Diagram 26*).

Fear in connection with the January events is more often experienced by urban residents. Rural residents are a little more often feel anxiety in relation to these events (*see Table 65*).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Specify what emotions do you feel in relation to the following events"
according to the territory of residence

		City	Village
January events in Kazakhstan: public protest	Anger (I condemn)	22%	19%
	Fear	33%	28%
	Anxiety	23%	27%
	Neutral	12%	13%
	Interest	3%	3%
	Enthusiasm (I support)	7%	10%
January events in Kazakhstan: shooting of protesters	Anger (I condemn)	35%	38%
	Fear	38%	32%
	Anxiety	12%	17%
	Neutral	12%	11%
	Interest	1%	1%
	Enthusiasm (I support)	2%	2%

Table 65

Representatives of the oldest group (58 and older) more than others feel anger and condemnation in connection with the following events: the shooting and torture of protesters during the January events, the deprivation of autonomy of Nukus (Karakalpakstan).

At the same time, representatives of this age category are characterized by contradictory assessments of other events, which they perceive both positively ("support") and negatively ("condemn"). We are talking about such events as: the participation of CSTO forces in the January events; the war (special operation) between the Russian Federation and Ukraine; the hearing state and the reforms of President Tokayev. This age group includes the largest number of those who are neutral to the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang and the presence of re-education camps are also represented (41%).

Specify what emotions do the following events evoke in you?

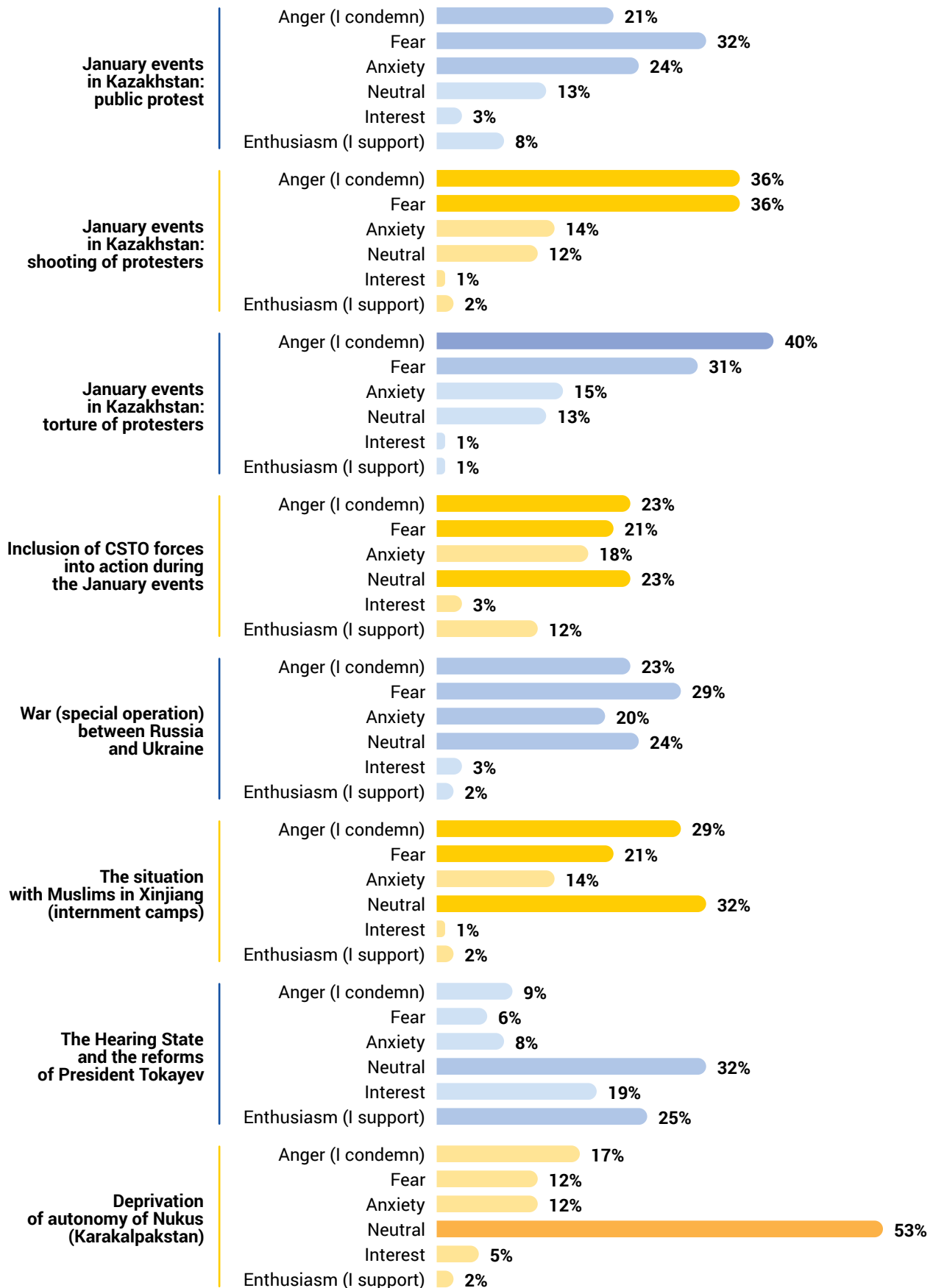


Diagram 26

Thus, it can be seen that the representatives of the oldest age category are the most heterogeneous and contradictory in relation to the perception of some events in Kazakhstan.

It is worth noting the peculiarities of the perception of the events under consideration by representatives of the younger subgroup (14 to 18 years old), who are more afraid than representatives of other age categories in connection with the shooting of protesters (January events) – 40%; and war (special operation) between the Russian Federation and Ukraine – 35%. And also, they more often than others perceive the following events neutrally: the inclusion of the CSTO forces in the January events (32%), the hearing state and the reforms of President Tokayev (40%).

In the educational context, people with higher education more often negatively perceived the January events, the war (special operation) between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang (re-education camps), the deprivation of autonomy of Nukus (Karakalpakstan). And, on the contrary, they showed a more positive perception of the concept of a hearing state and President Tokayev's reforms than other citizens.

Whereas citizens with primary secondary education neutrally perceived the January events in Kazakhstan, the participation of the CSTO forces in the January events, the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang (internment camps), the hearing state and the reforms of President Tokayev, as well as the deprivation of autonomy of Nukus (Karakalpakstan) - that is, all the events under consideration, except for the war (special operations) between the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

In turn, those who with a secondary vocational education more often than other categories indicated that they feel fear in relation to certain events.

Differences **in the context of well-being are also quite clearly seen**. Thus, citizen with higher income³⁸ often indicate that they feel anger and anxiety in relation to the January events, the war between Russia and Ukraine, as well as the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang (internment camps).

In turn, citizens who can be conditionally classified as poor, experiencing the greatest financial difficulties³⁹, more often than all other categories of citizens, feel fear in connection with all the events under consideration.

Let's consider the perception of the specified events by the population **in the regional context**.

The January events are most controversially perceived by the residents of Almaty. Among the population of the southern region and Almaty, the public protest in January caused more condemnation and fear than among the population of other

³⁸ Buying most durable goods (refrigerator, TV, etc.) does not cause difficulties.

³⁹ I have enough money only for the purchase of food, but not enough to pay for utilities; I have not enough money even to purchase food, I constantly have to live in debt.

regions, and every fifth resident of Almaty indicated that he/she perceives it neutrally (22%).

The population in the eastern and central regions of Kazakhstan more often than residents of other regions indicated their support for the protests (14% and 13%, respectively).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Specify what emotions do you feel in relation to the following events
across the regions

January events in Kazakhstan: public protest

	Anger (I condemn)	Fear	Anxiety	Neutral	Interest	Enthusiasm (I support)
Western region	24%	24%	34%	6%	3%	10%
Eastern region	7%	32%	25%	16%	7%	14%
Southern region	27%	38%	16%	12%	2%	6%
Central region	19%	25%	31%	10%	2%	13%
Northern region	9%	29%	43%	14%	3%	2%
Almaty	26%	37%	11%	22%	1%	3%
Shymkent	22%	28%	26%	16%	2%	7%
Astana	14%	28%	32%	12%	8%	6%

Table 66

The shooting and torture of protesters during the January events caused the greatest **indignation** among citizens of the central and eastern regions of Kazakhstan, as well as residents of Astana; and fear – among the population of the southern region, as well as residents of Shymkent and Almaty.

It should be noted that the January events cause the strongest emotional reactions among the citizens of Almaty, the epicenter of events. At the same time, among the residents of the megalopolis there is a stable group of those (at least 20%) who do not support the protesters and take an emphatically neutral position regarding their destinies.

Participation of CSTO forces in the January events caused fear primarily among the population of the southern region of Kazakhstan (34%), anxiety in the citizens of the Western region (23%) and the population of Shymkent (21%).

On the contrary, the decision of the country's leadership was supported primarily by residents of the central and northern regions of Kazakhstan (21% and 22%, respectively).

The war between Russia and Ukraine causes fear primarily among citizens of the southern region of Kazakhstan (43%), and anxiety among every third resident of Astana (32%).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Specify what emotions do you feel in relation to the following events
across the regions

January events in Kazakhstan: shooting of protesters

	Anger (I condemn)	Fear	Anxiety	Neutral	Interest	Enthusiasm (I support)
Western region	38%	35%	16%	8%	2%	2%
Eastern region	45%	35%	13%	8%	0%	0%
Southern region	34%	44%	11%	11%	0%	1%
Central region	46%	20%	17%	14%	1%	3%
Northern region	24%	35%	26%	10%	2%	3%
Almaty	30%	41%	8%	22%	0%	0%
Shymkent	22%	41%	16%	16%	0%	5%
Astana	42%	25%	19%	11%	2%	3%

Table 67

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Specify what emotions do you feel in relation to the following events
across the regions

January events in Kazakhstan: torture of protesters

	Anger (I condemn)	Fear	Anxiety	Neutral	Interest	Enthusiasm (I support)
Western region	40%	27%	22%	7%	3%	1%
Eastern region	53%	24%	12%	12%	0%	0%
Southern region	38%	40%	11%	10%	0%	1%
Central region	46%	25%	9%	20%	0%	1%
Northern region	40%	28%	19%	12%	0%	2%
Almaty	34%	34%	11%	21%	0%	0%
Shymkent	21%	29%	29%	21%	0%	0%
Astana	43%	20%	22%	14%	0%	2%

Table 68

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Specify what emotions do you feel in relation to the following events
across the regions

Inclusion of CSTO forces into action during the January events

	Anger (I condemn)	Fear	Anxiety	Neutral	Interest	Enthusiasm (I support)
Western region	25%	23%	23%	17%	4%	8%
Eastern region	24%	14%	16%	31%	4%	12%
Southern region	25%	34%	19%	14%	2%	6%
Central region	19%	12%	16%	25%	7%	21%
Northern region	17%	16%	16%	29%	0%	22%
Almaty	22%	11%	9%	39%	3%	16%
Shymkent	22%	14%	21%	35%	0%	9%
Astana	22%	8%	17%	28%	9%	17%

Table 69

The most controversial regarding war are the positions of citizens from the eastern region, among whom there is a relatively high proportion of individuals who are afraid of these events (29%), nevertheless, in a comparative context, there is the highest ratio of those who support the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine (7%).

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Specify what emotions do you feel in relation to the following events
across the regions

War (special operation) between Russia and Ukraine

	Anger (I condemn)	Fear	Anxiety	Neutral	Interest	Enthusiasm (I support)
Western region	24%	27%	24%	21%	4%	0%
Eastern region	26%	23%	23%	24%	1%	5%
Southern region	18%	43%	17%	19%	3%	1%
Central region	30%	19%	20%	25%	2%	4%
Northern region	21%	29%	21%	22%	0%	7%
Almaty	22%	24%	11%	40%	1%	3%
Shymkent	19%	21%	17%	28%	12%	3%
Astana	29%	6%	32%	25%	5%	3%

Table 70

The situation of Muslims in Xinjiang, establishment of the internment camps primarily causes indignation and anger among citizens of the eastern region and Astana (38% and 37%, respectively), fear and anxiety among citizens of the southern region and Shymkent (48% and 50%, respectively).

Every second resident of the central region of Kazakhstan and Almaty (50% and 46%, respectively) are neutral to the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang.

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Specify what emotions do you feel in relation to the following events
across the regions

Положение мусульман в Синьцзяне (лагеря перевоспитания)

	Anger (I condemn)	Fear	Anxiety	Neutral	Interest	Enthusiasm (I support)
Western region	31%	19%	18%	27%	4%	1%
Eastern region	38%	8%	16%	36%	1%	1%
Southern region	27%	35%	13%	24%	1%	1%
Central region	30%	8%	11%	50%	1%	1%
Northern region	33%	16%	14%	35%	0%	3%
Almaty	21%	17%	11%	46%	0%	5%
Shymkent	19%	24%	26%	24%	3%	3%
Astana	37%	15%	14%	31%	2%	2%

Table 71

The reforms of President Tokayev, including the concept of a "Hearing State", are least supported and cause negative attitudes (anger, fear, anxiety) most often among citizens of the southern region of the country (36%) and Shymkent (45%).

Reforms are considered interesting mostly by citizens of the western region of the country (40%), while they are supported primarily by the residents of Astana (39%) and Almaty (37%).

It also should be noted that population of the eastern (51%), central (43%) and central (40%) regions of the country, as well as Almaty (37%) hold neutral or indifferent position to the president's reforms.

In the gender context, it can be seen that the January events in Kazakhstan, the war (special operation) between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang (internment camps) cause fear among women much more often than men.

Distribution of answers to the question:
"Specify what emotions do you feel in relation to the following events
across the regions

Слышащее государство и реформы президента Токаева

	Anger (I condemn)	Fear	Anxiety	Neutral	Interest	Enthusiasm (I support)
Western region	8%	3%	6%	26%	40%	17%
Eastern region	9%	1%	7%	51%	20%	12%
Southern region	14%	12%	10%	23%	14%	28%
Central region	7%	1%	7%	43%	18%	24%
Northern region	2%	5%	5%	40%	17%	31%
Almaty	5%	3%	9%	37%	10%	37%
Shymkent	9%	24%	12%	22%	12%	21%
Astana	5%	2%	3%	34%	19%	39%

Table 72

3.2. Foreign policy attitudes of the citizens of Kazakhstan

The idea of uniting Kazakhstan with certain countries on certain issues is most often perceived ambiguously by the citizens of the country (I find it difficult to answer), regardless of the purpose of the cooperation.

The two areas for unification that have been supported are most often the association on economic and educational issues. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the number of those who support such actions did not exceed a third of the total number of study participants.

Thus, the idea of unification on economic issues is most positively perceived, and China holds the leading place with 32.3%, followed by Russia with a significant margin – 24% in the list of countries with which citizens consider unification effective.

The second most important area where cooperation looks attractive to about a fifth of the country's citizens, is education. Here, the countries with which the citizens of Kazakhstan would like to cooperate are European States– 22.3%, USA – 18.0%, and Turkey – 15.1%.

The two areas in which cooperation was supported by less than a fifth of the country's citizens are "external military conflicts", as well as cultural issues. Thus, 19.9% of citizens of Kazakhstan support the idea of cooperation with Russia and 15.6% – with Turkey in case of external military conflicts. As for cooperation for cultural reasons, Uzbekistan – 16.0%, Kyrgyzstan – 15.0%, and Turkey – 11.6% are among the most appreciated countries.

To the least extent, citizens support cooperation on such grounds as "internal military conflicts", as well as migration. Only 10% of Kazakhstanis admit the hypothetical possibility of cooperation of Kazakhstan with Turkey and Russia for protection in case of internal military conflicts.

Whereas with regard to cooperation in migration issues, only 7.7% of Kazakhstanis equally believe that Kazakhstan should unite with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Additionally, the greatest difficulties with understanding the possibilities and grounds for unification arise in relation to Ukraine (50%), followed by Kyrgyzstan with a significant gap (38%).

On the contrary, the citizens of Kazakhstan have a clearer vision of the issues on which unification would be possible in relation to Turkey (22% found it difficult to answer), as well as Russia (29% found it difficult to answer).

Thus, it is clear that the citizens of Kazakhstan more actively adopt the idea of unification on economic and educational issues and, on the contrary, do not support the cooperation in migration and to resolve domestic military conflicts.

More than a third of the country's population as a whole do not support the idea of cooperation of Kazakhstan with any country, regardless of the reason (*see Table 73 and Diagram 27*).

In the territorial context, the idea of unification with certain countries on various issues is generally more supported by urban dwellers, while rural residents, in turn, often find it difficult to answer the question with which countries Kazakhstan should cooperate.

In the age context, it is quite interesting that the idea of unification with certain countries, and primarily in the case of external military conflicts, is supported by young citizens of the country aged 14 to 18 years. This applies to Russia (25%), China (18%), the USA (16%) and Kyrgyzstan (13%). Whereas in relation to Ukraine, young people more than citizens of other ages support the association created in the event of internal military conflicts (10%). That is, it is hardly possible to talk about some kind of dominant ideological orientation of young people, manifested in support of unification with certain countries. Rather, we are talking about the fact that some young people believe in the defense capability of their own country less than the population of other age groups.

For young people aged 14 to 18 years, the ideas of unification with the United States and the European Union in educational issues look more attractive than for other Kazakhstanis (24% and 26%, respectively). Whereas for citizens of all other ages, it is desirable to unite on economic issues, or they found it difficult to answer this question.

**Distribution of answers to the question
"With which countries should Kazakhstan work together on the following issues?.."**

In case of military conflicts within the country		In case of external military conflicts		On the issue of migration	
Turkey	10%	Russia	20%	Kyrgyzstan	8%
Russia	10%	Turkey	16%	Uzbekistan	8%
Kyrgyzstan	8%	Ukraine	14%	Ukraine	5%
Uzbekistan	7%	USA	12%	China	4%
Ukraine	5%	China	11%	Russia	4%
China	4%	European countries	11%	USA	4%
USA	4%	Uzbekistan	9%	European countries	4%
European countries	3%	Kyrgyzstan	8%	Turkey	3%
On economic issues		On education issues		On cultural issues	
China	32%	European countries	22%	Uzbekistan	16%
Russia	24%	USA	18%	Kyrgyzstan	15%
Turkey	23%	Turkey	15%	Turkey	12%
Uzbekistan	22%	Russia	9%	European countries	7%
USA	22%	China	9%	Ukraine	7%
European countries	21%	Uzbekistan	3%	China	5%
Kyrgyzstan	20%	Kyrgyzstan	3%	USA	5%
Ukraine	18%	Ukraine	3%	Russia	4%

Table 73

In the educational context the data demonstrate that citizens with higher education are significantly more likely than respondents with other educational level to advocate unification with certain countries on the basis of economic issues. While citizens with secondary education are slightly more likely than others to believe that Kazakhstan should unite with other countries in the event of military conflicts.

In the context of the welfare of citizens differences in the attitude to the issue under consideration are also quite clearly manifested. More wealthy citizens⁴⁰ noted the desirability of uniting Kazakhstan with a number of countries on education and economic issues.

⁴⁰ Respondents who characterized their level of wealth as follows: I have enough money for everything not to deny myself; The purchase of most durable goods (refrigerator, TV, etc.) does not cause difficulties.

With which countries should Kazakhstan work together on the following issues?

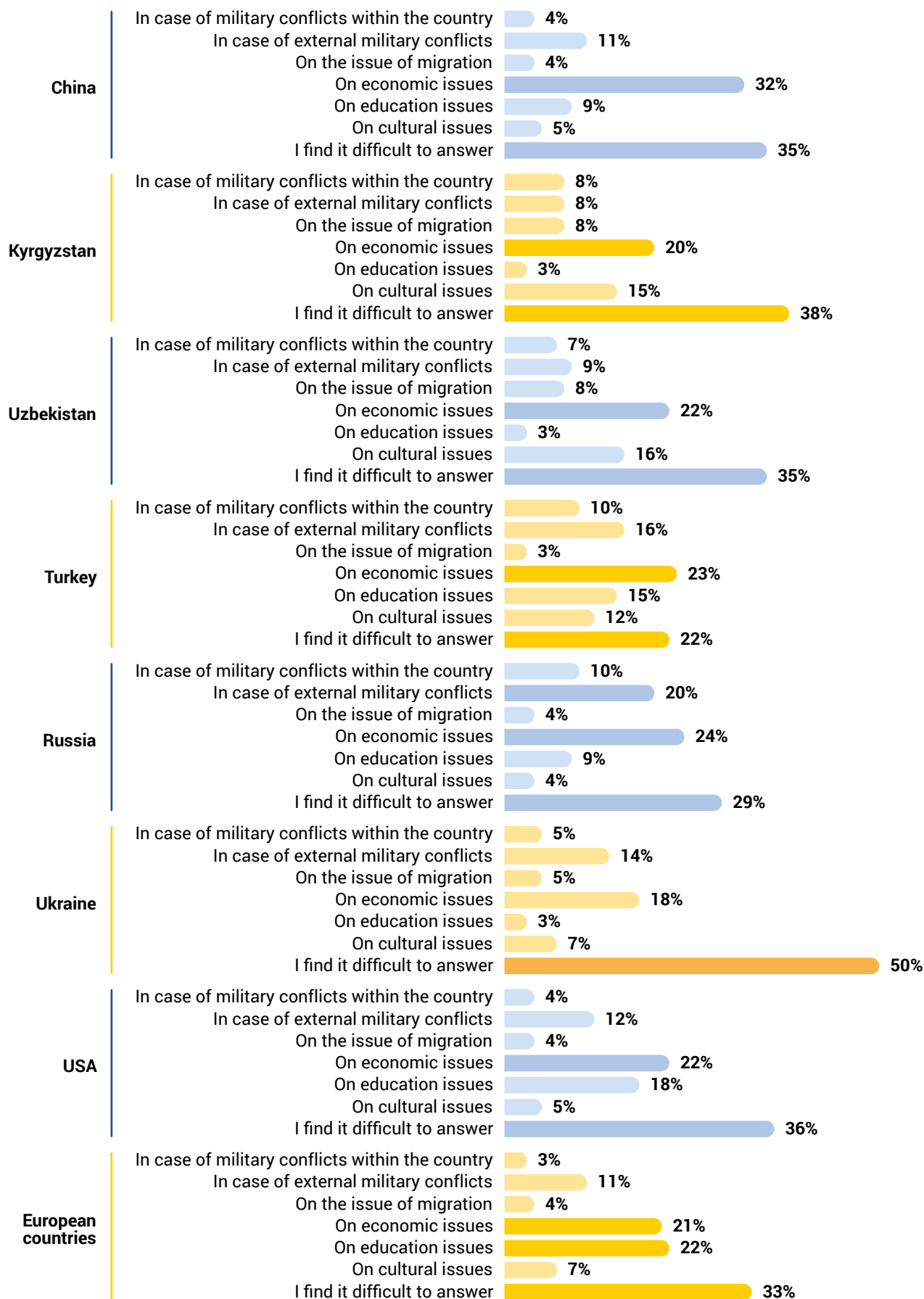


Diagram 27

In the regional context, it is clear that the idea of unification on a military basis is supported primarily by residents of the southern region of Kazakhstan, on economic issues – primarily by residents of Astana.

In the gender context, men more often indicate the priority of unification with certain countries on the basis of economic issues, while women more often find it difficult to answer the question with which countries Kazakhstan should unite with.

CONCLUSIONS FOR THE SECTION

The most resonant events in the judgements of the citizens of Kazakhstan

- Study data demonstrate that the January events were the most traumatic for the citizens of Kazakhstan, they cause the strongest emotional reactions: condemnation (anger) and fear. At the same time, if the anger of Kazakhstanis is caused by torture (40%) and shooting (36%) on protesters, then the fear is also caused by the protest of society itself, as indicated by every third citizen of the country (32%).

- The situation of Muslims in Xinjiang, the presence of internment camps (29% of the country's citizens) were among the events causing anger and condemnation of Kazakhstanis.

- The five events that were perceived most negatively by Kazakhstanis also include the participation of CSTO forces in the January events (23%), as well as the war (special operation) between Russia and Ukraine (23%).

- If we consider the events that cause anxiety among the citizens of the country, that is, having a remote prospect of danger in the minds of the citizens, the following facts can be listed in order of priority: the protest of the Kazakh society

in January (24%), the war between Russia and Ukraine (20%), as well as the inclusion of CSTO forces in the January events (15%).

- As for the events that arouse the interest and enthusiasm of Kazakhstani citizens, these are mainly the Hearing State and the reforms of President Tokayev (44%).

- Fear in connection with the January events is more often experienced by urban residents. Rural residents are a little more often feel anxiety in relation to these events.

- Representatives of the oldest group (58 and older) more than others feel anger and condemnation in connection with the following events: the shooting and torture of protesters during the January events, the deprivation of autonomy of Nukus (Karakalpakstan). At the same time, representatives of this age category are characterized by the most contradictory assessments of such events as the participation of CSTO forces in the January events; war (special operation) between the Russian Federation and Ukraine; the Hearing State and the reforms of President Tokayev. This age group includes the largest number of those who are neutral to the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang and the presence of re-education camps are also represented (41%).

- Thus, it can be seen that the representatives of the oldest age category are the most heterogeneous and contradictory in relation to the perception of some events in Kazakhstan.

- It is worth noting the peculiarities of the perception of the events under consideration by representatives of the younger subgroup (14 to 18 years old), who are more afraid than representatives of other age categories in connection with the shooting of protesters (January events) – 40%; and war (special operation) between the Russian Federation and Ukraine – 35%. And also, they more often than others perceive the following events neutrally: the inclusion of the CSTO forces in the January events (32%), the hearing state and the reforms of President Tokayev (40%).

- **In the educational context**, population with higher education show more negative perception of the January events, war (special operation) between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang (internment camps), the deprivation of autonomy of Nukus (Karakalpakstan). And,

on the contrary, they showed a more positive perception of the concept of a hearing state and President Tokayev's reforms than other citizens.

- **Differences in the context of well-being are also quite clearly seen.** Thus, citizen with higher income often indicate that they feel anger and anxiety in relation to the January events, the war between Russia and Ukraine, as well as the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang (internment camps).

- In turn, citizens who can be conditionally classified as poor, experiencing the greatest financial difficulties, more often than all other categories of citizens, feel fear in connection with all the events under consideration.⁴¹

Foreign policy attitudes of the citizens of Kazakhstan

- The idea of uniting Kazakhstan with certain countries is most often perceived ambiguously by the citizens of the country (I find it difficult to answer), regardless of the purpose of the cooperation.

- The two areas for unification that have been supported are most often the association on economic and educational issues. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the number of those who support such actions did not exceed a third of the total number of study participants.

- Thus, the idea of unification on economic issues is most positively perceived, and China holds the leading place with 32.3%, followed by Russia with a significant margin – 24% in the list of countries with which citizens consider unification effective.

- The second most important area where cooperation looks attractive to about a fifth of the country's citizens, is education. Here, the countries with which the citizens of Kazakhstan would like to cooperate are European States – 22.3%, USA – 18.0%, and Turkey – 15.1%.

- The two areas in which cooperation was supported by less than a fifth of the country's citizens are "external military conflicts", as well as cultural issues. Thus, 19.9% of citizens of

Kazakhstan support the idea of cooperation with Russia and 15.6% – with Turkey in case of external military conflicts. As for cooperation for cultural reasons, Uzbekistan – 16.0%, Kyrgyzstan – 15.0%, and Turkey – 11.6% are among the most appreciated countries.

- To the least extent, citizens support cooperation on such grounds as "internal military conflicts", as well as migration. Only 10% of Kazakhstanis admit the hypothetical possibility of cooperation of Kazakhstan with Turkey and Russia for protection in case of internal military conflicts.

- Whereas with regard to cooperation in migration issues, only 7.7% of Kazakhstanis equally believe that Kazakhstan should unite with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

- Additionally, the greatest difficulties with understanding the possibilities and grounds for unification arise in relation to Ukraine (50%), followed by Kyrgyzstan with a significant gap (38%).

- On the contrary, the citizens of Kazakhstan have a clearer vision of the issues on which unification would be possible in relation to Turkey (22% found it difficult to answer), as well as Russia (29% found it difficult to answer).

- Thus, it is clear that the citizens of Kazakhstan more actively adopt the idea of unification on economic and educational issues and, on the contrary, do not support the cooperation in migration and to resolve domestic military conflicts.

- More than a third of the country's population as a whole do not support the idea of cooperation of Kazakhstan with any country, regardless of the reason.

- **In the age context**, it is quite interesting that the idea of unification with certain countries, and primarily in the case of external military conflicts, is supported by young citizens of the country aged 14 to 18 years. This applies to Russia (25%), China (18%), the USA (16%) and Kyrgyzstan (13%). Whereas in relation to Ukraine, young people more than citizens of other ages support the association created in the event of internal military conflicts (10%). That is, it

⁴¹ I have enough money only for the purchase of food, but not enough to pay for utilities; I have not enough money even to purchase food, I constantly have to live in debt.

is hardly possible to talk about some kind of dominant ideological orientation of young people, manifested in support of unification with certain countries. Rather, we are talking about the fact that some young people believe in the defense capability of their own country less than the population of other age groups.

- For young people aged 14 to 18 years, the ideas of unification with the United States and

the European Union in educational issues look more attractive than for other Kazakhstanis (24% and 26%, respectively).

- Citizens of all other age groups more often pointed out a desirable cooperation on economic issues and found it difficult to answer the question with which countries and on which issues Kazakhstan should unite.

section 4.

FEATURES OF MEDIA CONSUMPTION OF CITIZENS OF KAZAKHSTAN

(based on focus groups and analysis
of mass media and social networks)

This section presents the results of a series of focus group discussions (FGD) held in Almaty, Astana, Petropavlovsk, Atyrau, villages of Almaty and Turkestan regions.

6 to 11 individuals took part in each focus group. The participants of the focus group

studies were journalists and human rights defenders, public figures, civil service employees and teachers, that is, those citizens whose activities are directly related to the analysis of information.

Focus groups associated with the qualitative types of research, demonstrating the multiplicity of subjective realities, allow us to see the versatility, depth and complexity of the phenomenon under study⁴². In the context of the presented work, they demonstrate the meanings, values, as well as the general position of the professional community, its attitude to the ongoing changes in the information space.

⁴² <https://naukovedenie.ru/PDF/63PVN214.pdf>.

Sources of information about local news

The study participants identified several main factors that, in their opinion, have a decisive influence on the choice of information sources by citizens.

The most important, according to the study participants, are the **age and territorial factors**. It is a common point of view that the older population gives preference to traditional media sources, including due to the fact that they consider the information from them more reliable and accurate. Whereas younger citizens, according to the participants of the FGD, choose social networks, primarily due to the promptness of the submission of the material.

It is worth mentioning separately about the rural residents, who, according to the study participants, also prefer traditional media. They believe that this factor may be associated, among other things, with a weak quality of Internet connection in rural areas.

« It seems to me that some part of our society, probably the older ones, watches TV.

« The elderly generation, especially those living in rural districts, probably still get information via media and television, radio, etc. The poor quality of Internet connection may also be important here. Young citizens – via local pages on "Instagram", "Telegram", where everything is published instantly, and these news are the most relevant, where they spread quickly and have a very large coverage.

« My relatives in the village mostly watch TV, they don't use Instagram or Facebook.

« According to the statistical data: individuals aged 45-65 years receive information from television, newspapers; those aged 35-45 years – from Facebook, and young people receive information from Instagram and Telegram.

« My parents get information from such publications as Tengri News and Zakon Kz, because they usually provide more verified information.

It is also a fairly common point of view that social networks have their own specific audience in the context of the age factor. So, there were opinions that Facebook was more often chosen by the audience of the advanced age and with a high level of education. At the same time, one of the participants believes that the age factor is secondary in relation to the level of education and expertise. This opinion of the study participant is due to the fact that there are highly specialized groups on Facebook, which include experts of different ages.

« Social problems are mainly discussed by adults on Facebook, who are experienced enough to perform analysis. That's why I like Facebook.

« I don't quite agree with Facebook about the age distribution. Yes, maybe so, there may be a distribution depending on the expertise in "Facebook".

The study demonstrates the existence of a stable opinion that Instagram is a social network with a dominant entertainment component, which is more in demand among young people and representatives of professions associated with show business. At the same time, some of the study participants indicate that this opinion is already losing its relevance today both in terms of the content and in terms of the audience of the social network.

« It has long been believed that Instagram is a place where singers post what they eat, drink, where they rest abroad, post photos.

« I do not agree that Facebook is more serious, because Instagram has probably been publishing very serious, topical topics of our city in various publics over the last six months, and they are being reposted. Basically the same as on Facebook.

« Even now, the adult generation, for example, even my mother, she's on Instagram too. I didn't even know she was on Instagram, I was surprised. Therefore, I will probably even refute this statistic in the sense that only the young are now on

Instagram. Instagram has both adult and young audience. Therefore, these statistics are now inaccurate, the fact that young people, starting from 20 years, use Instagram, is even completely irrelevant.

« And by the way, my mom is 75, and she's on Instagram, not Facebook.

Among other aspects associated with the age factor determining the choice of media, it was indicated that the audience most trusting news from news spread through messengers are primarily elderly citizens, which ultimately affects the fact that they are more likely to become victims of fake news.

As for the postings in messengers the study participants indicated that citizen sharing the same groups in WhatsApp are often relatives, that is these are groups where information passes a kind of filter for credibility. And there is often a lot of false information in these groups.

« Grandma believes information distributed via WhatsApp, and they send something that cannot be believed. Last year there was information that the national bank would forgive all loans, and people believed, collected the documents and went to the bank. I think it depends on the age. If, conditionally, we, the younger generation, who have a higher education, are able to think critically and analytically, we somehow still understand this information, then as for adults, if we take our grandparents, who are 50-60 or more years old, they believe everything they see. Let's take my parents as an example, they ask me: "Is this true or not?".

The next factors directly correlating with age, determining the participant's choice of media, are **educational and professional factors**. Most often there were opinions that the more educated readers are, the more they are immersed in some highly specialized topics, which, in turn, affects the choice of certain social networks. In this context, it was most often about Twitter, as well as Facebook.

« A minority of ultra-educated people who are deeply immersed in some highly specialized aspects, they probably read "Twitter" more often.

« Other criteria in addition to age, which determine what people watch, what they read and who they trust, are professional affiliation. I read Tengri News, and similar news portals, or I go to the website of a specialized body and get information from there.

« Public and intellectual figures mostly use Facebook, and when a problem occurs, they discuss it there. Social power is more active on Facebook than on Instagram.

« There is a correlation in education, that is, there are relatives who do not necessarily have a good education, I am not sure of their critical ability to evaluate information, mainly these are postings, algorithm-based Facebook posts. And if there is a demand for a higher level of critical thinking, then I think these are various foreign and domestic media.

Other factors that, according to the study participants, determine the choice of the media by citizens of Kazakhstan to receive local news is the **regional** factor.

Opinions were expressed that in the regions bordering with Russia, citizens are mostly exposed to the Russian information space. On the contrary, the southern regions of Kazakhstan prefer and trust the domestic media to a higher extent.

« I am a Southerner, from the Turkestan region, all my relatives watch our local channels and completely support all the presidents of Kazakhstan, and what they say on official TV channels, and there is no other opinion and other sources for them.

« I have made a lot of business trips to the Northern Kazakhstan, and I have a feeling that in the north information is received from Russian sources, Russian television, including Russia 24. It is much more common there than in the other regions of Kazakhstan.

« I have a big family in Petropavlovsk. The fact that Russian news is mostly read on the boundary regions of Kazakhstan is absolutely true. Everyone lives in this field, but not because they want to read them or it's their choice. Well, because even here in Kazakhstan, if we connect to cable (or now it's digital) television, we inevitably fall into the sphere of Russian information influence. That's what I wanted to say.

Public figures and activists themselves turn to social networks to get news first of all: Facebook, Telegram channels, Instagram, Twitter to a lesser extent. The study participants indicated that a common strategy is to receive news from social networks, and then search for their confirmation on the official Internet resources of the country. The study participants indicated that they try to read news from official agencies and government resources, refer to them very often. At the same time, for a more objective picture, they also turn to independent media: "Mediazona", "Vlast", "Masa Media".

A separate strategy is a search for information in local publics on Instagram, where there is often information that is not reflected in the central media. In addition, the study participants pay great attention to comments on social networks, which give an understanding of the perception of a particular news or topic in the public space, about the arguments of citizens.

« I read Kazinform to know what the state considers important in order to understand the official narrative. As it is also interesting to see what topics the state decides to cover through the state media.

« I get the primary information from Facebook and Telegram channels, or from colleagues, but I usually look for confirmation in the "Zakon KZ" and "Tengri News".

« I mostly get information from the Telegram channels, including government telegram channels. Among state official channels, "Communication Service", which can also serve as a lead for accessing information of a different kind. I follow the channels of the General Prosecutor's Office, of the Ministry of Information and Public

Development, presidential channels, "Board No. 1", and some others. From Instagram I can also get information that can serve as a tip to search for information further.

« On "Instagram", as everyone probably knows, there are such small regional publics. In Northern Kazakhstan: SKO Revizor And very surprisingly, there I can find information that does not reach me. It is filtered out along the way and may not reach the general reader. But it can be very interesting, it can be local, it can be national, it can be international, global, but it is published in very small publics.

« "Vlast Kz" for me is the most-trusted source, and there are no protest things, and in general. And, of course, "Mediazona", "Orda Kz" and "Masa Media".

« Personally, I mostly read Telegram channels, I follow some, also independent, "Mediazona", "Vlast", "Masa Media". When there is a need to search for information, SCK, presidential channels, those of ministries, and in order to also get information I am still subscribed to them to watch something important.

« I get information from local websites, "Akzhayyk", "Caspian commune", "ATPress". These are sources of information for me.

« To have an objective view of the situation, I read comments, I always read comments, for example, articles of the same information portal "Kumash" are more humorous, sometimes I want to read something good.

« There are Telegram channels that, in addition to the news, are trying to provide some kind of analysis. I like some details, analytics and complex events more than just photography.

« Recently I have been more focused on TikTok, because there algorithms make the optimal selection, as well as Instagram, Youtube, Facebook, Odnoklassniki, VKontakte, Telegram. I have been using them for a long time.

« "Tengri News" – I constantly watch their telegram page, and also "Kumash kz". They publish so positively, they write in modern slang, they are

not completely political, but they have content about politics, etc. also in modern language, it's so nice to read somethin not purely literary or abstruse. And the third for me is "Khabar 24". Also, the public "Ne molchi". I watch them every day, check their page, get information to find out if there is something about our city, any offenses, so that there may be some benefit, if there is one at our local level, in our city, to immediately react from the spot, as public figures and human rights defenders, so that there is some kind of help, etc. So it was after the January events.

« We have such very interesting channels as "16/12", "DVK", "Za nami uzhe vyekhali", the channel of the first adviser to the president "Adilet Online". There they publish information for a narrow circle of individuals.

« "For you, Bake", "Chris Pi", the local edition of the Enbekshikazakh district, newspapers "Zhetysu" and other publications, the page of the Enbekshikazakh district on Facebook.

Sources of information about world news

The study participants indicated that they follow many foreign resources, nevertheless they try to double-check, draw their conclusions, not rely on the vision provided by a single source of information. The most popular among Kazakhstani public figures and activists are Western resources such as BBC, CNN, Guardian, Financial Times, Reuters, Deutsche Welle. "Media zone" and "Dozhd", Meduza were also commonly indicated. There were single cases when they indicated Middle Eastern resource Al Jazeera.

Of Kazakhstan resources, that are used by activists to learn about world news, only one of the study participants indicated the broadcast "Hyperborea" by Vadim Boreyko, as well as "Za nami uzhe vyekhali".

« BBC, Reuters, National Park Radio, Deutsche Welle, or some local newspapers of the countries, if I speak the language, Al Jazeera in the Middle East, "Dozhd" in Russia, channels of popular politics, Navalny's videos, selectively, depending on the speaker. I mainly focus on experts: political

scientists, sociologists, journalists. A lot depends on the question I want to delve into.

« As for global news – BBC and, probably, the Eurasian Net as a whole for our region, high-quality reporting is done by The Economist.

« I often read Medusa, on a regular basis, BBC, CNN, the newsletter of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, Twitter is also a constant source of news for me.

« BBC, Guardian, New York Times and Mediazona by region, if I am interested in some information, and there are some political events taking place in this region, then I get the information from there.

« CNN, and also I often look for information from some government websites, the Guardian, CNN, BBC, Meduza, which in terms of Russia is very useful.

« Novaya Gazeta, for example. By the way, very often I watch mostly Fake News and Insider on Youtube. I mean, YouTube can be more common here.

« I listen to world news on business radio - Business FM. I have it in my phone. It broadcasts a complete economic situation worldwide, they are the very first to give more up-to-date and reliable news. Also "Sputnik Kazakhstan", but it gives one-sided information, I read it in "Telegram". Mostly in Telegram.

« I follow Azattyk on Facebook, they have a website, and a radio channel. I learn about the events from them. They write that they have only the truth. I read about Kazakhstan and world politics on "Azattyk".

I get world news most often through social networks, but in this context, YouTube and Instagram are more commonly used. In particular, the study participants indicated that they receive news about world events via Instagram based on recommendations and, if interested, dig deeper into the topic by studying expert reviews on other resources.

« I get world news only through Instagram, it's easy to repost there, and there is a translation function. I look at the recommendations, the news that has gained the most views, as well as CNN, I specifically watch American bloggers who also publish news related to law, etc.

« To read world news, I use Instagram, if I see some interesting news, I go deeper on Youtube, there are opinions of experts, masters in the respective fields, or I read documentary articles in Google.

« I watch CNN, they have a special website about politics, by a link about politics. Mostly I use these resources. And the rest – according to recommendations, hash tags, etc. – go in and choose what is interesting. The most relevant resource that I watch every day is CNN.

« For me, these are primarily YouTube channels, "Azattyk Radio", "Nashe Vremya". But first of all YouTube, Navalny LIVE.

« Most of all on Instagram: BBC and CNN, and in Telegram these are "Topor live" – a group where you can learn about global news.

« My main source is YouTube, too, most often such channels as "Greenpeace", "Sortirovochnaya", BBC, from well-known Kazakh channels are – Vadim Boreyko's channel, "Za nami uzhe vyekhali."

« I learn some foreign news from relatives who live directly in those countries, because I am skeptical on this topic. It seems to me that it would be more correct to learn from those people who live in these countries. As it is very difficult for us, as residents of Kazakhstan, to identify the reliable sources.

Some of the study participants indicated that they are not interested in world news because they do not want to read negative news, another argument is that the current situation is presented in a very complex and confusing way.

« I'm not interested in world news. I do not follow public about world news. Among the world news today, the war in Ukraine is most discussed,

it comes out everywhere on social networks, if it's interesting, I look, if not, then I scroll down.

« I'm not subscribed for this. If there is some kind of global situation, we can even see it through in "Whatsapp" or in "Instagram". I learn it the same way like previous participants. But I purposefully do not follow such publics.

« I don't watch at all, I try not to watch the news, I don't watch TV. If I'm interested, I go online and read something, for example, from Google,. On special sites, everything is very deep and complex, so it seems to me that it is not worth digging deep into them.

Bloggers

The reasons why the study participants read certain bloggers on a regular basis are as follows:

1. Competent, clear and accessible speech.
2. Support for the bloggers' positions ("He writes the right things, there is something to think about").
3. Bloggers give food for thought, for further analysis, they do not pretend to be the most authoritative specialists (equal dialogue, without pressure with the authority).
4. Bloggers call things by their proper names ("they are not afraid of anything").
5. Bloggers touch on the pressing social problems.
6. A high level of bloggers' involvement in the issues covered.

At the same time, the study participants indicate that bloggers can give unverified information, and also in their activities they can proceed, among other things, from selfish goals, presenting information one-sidedly, in a favorable light for them.

« As for the opinion on how decent people they are, I have big doubts. It is necessary to distinguish between a person and a professional.

« Of course, we can't believe all bloggers, maybe they say their one-sided opinion, maybe they say what they wanted to see, what they themselves think is right. They are not journalists, they do not conduct analysis, they are mostly subjective, so you can't believe them all.

« There are no reputable ones, I probably know this area too well.

Kazakhstani bloggers and authors who are more often read by the study participants:

« Dosym Satpayev, Margulan Seisembayev, Sanzhar Bokayev, Mukhtar Dzhakishev, Armanzhan Baitasov..

« The founder of the Club of Good Deeds, Gulmira Abdrasheva, who has such a positive feed, they also are very helpful. There is no one else from Kazakhstan, and I follow Dzhakishev, and when some news comes out in the feed, I read or listen to him. He performs well. Lawyer Yerzhan Esimkhanov, he generally writes competently and clearly. I follow him and Gulmira. He says right things, there is something to think about. He does not claim that he is right, but he writes for reflection.

« These are Satpayev, I read Dzhakishev, Botagoz Omarova, she has a telegram channel, I also read Boreyko in Telegram.

« Nagimusha, she talks most about women's rights, about violence, etc. She clearly sets forth her thoughts, and is not afraid of anything, explains everything in an accessible language, that's what I like.

« I love to travel, so I watch Alisher Yelikbayev mainly, to find out places to visit. Is it accessible or inaccessible, he evaluates, pros and cons in the field of tourism. There is Aigul Orynbeq from Shymkent, and Kamisha Esmukhambetova from Almaty. She always protects the rights of young people, protects their rights regarding violence, mostly I watch them when they write about rights – I read the information on the specific topics. Next, Bibigul Dauletkyzy, as a public figure, gives an assessment of the situations taking

place in our society. I read Zhunas from Atyrau, he always clearly understands social issues, our local problems. Actually, I received information on the situations taking place in our country from his video. Additionally, Gulnaz Kosmurzieva, a blogger and volunteer, who protects the rights of disabled people, she mainly writes about it.

« I follow Tanirbergen, I like his point of view and the way he presents the situation; he helped people with this, taxes were raised and he handled the situation, he approached this very well, addressed the Ministry of Road Management, I like his competent speech and how he treats the situation in general, he does not feel cold, but on the contrary, so that there is a result, that's what I like.

« Gulmira Abdrasheva, founder of the Good Deeds Club: I followed her since 2017, she not only tells positive, funny stories, she really sometimes touches on pressing problems. She is among the Kazakhstani bloggers that I read, and so I used to follow Yelikbayev, Sayasat Nurbek for a while.

« I read travel blogger Orken Kenzhebek, psychologist Dinara Bolat, Aeka Posh, Aika Baitasova, Syimbat, Maulenov, Erke, she is an expert in English, and also I read Zhan Tanatar.

« I listen podcasts by a blogger named Dauletten from Instagram. He mainly publishes the latest news, he is a journalist.

« Aeka Posh, beauty blogger, Aika Baytasova, for example, Fariza Toreali.

« I watch Rysbal, she buys an apartment and does charity work.

« I look at Yerkanat Kopjasar in politics. He covers all news, whether foreign or domestic. I watch Dauletten and Kadyrbayev, Syrymbek.

« I mostly listen to Yelzhas Yertayuly on parenting, Zhuldyz, Ainura Tursynbayeva. I watch about 50 people.

« Among bloggers, I also like Kirill Pavlov's channel, he is engaged in agriculture.

Kazakh public figures and activists also read Russian bloggers:

« Many bloggers who have visited the channels by Pivovarov, Varlamov, like their analysis, their behavior and presentation of data.

« I listened to Russian bloggers, but I don't remember now, I can't name them.

« Of foreign ones, as I said – Varlamov, I like to read him sometimes, but not often, maybe twice a month, if there is something interesting.

« I watched Russian blogger Gusein Gasanov, I know that he arranged an experiment for a taxi driver and bought a car.

« I watch Russian blogger Sasha traveling around the world, I also watch the Russian blogger who is an English teacher.

Only one research participant from all the focus groups indicated that he was watching a blogger not from Kazakhstan or Russia, but could not remember his name:

« There is a young guy from New York, he talks about everything, not only about USA, about Europe, he is a politologist. He keeps track of everything, conducts courses, teaches how to choose the right information, how to look so as not to look at the information one-sidedly. This is how he conducts broadcasts and also streams in TikTok, where he fully articulates his thoughts, etc.

Sources of information on the situation in Ukraine

The sources of information about the situation in Ukraine for Kazakhstani activists and public figures who took part in the study are mostly Medusa, the BBC, which were indicated most often. Among other sources of information there are both Ukrainian and Russian media:

« I take some facts from Medusa and the BBC, because they have a wonderful, very good selection of information, they have almost daily, periodic reviews of the situation, and they collect a pool of fact that is, they use their journalistic experience and intellectual force to check the information. I think there is a minimal chance that fakes and unverified information will get there.

« In questions on the topic of covering the war in Ukraine, I mostly trust YouTube channels, I obtain information from: "Ostorozhno, Sobchak", "Redaktsiya", they have a news review every Sunday. And sometimes I watch news from Varlamov.

« Currently, Radio Liberty, Dozhd, Tikhon Dzyadko. International – CNN, The Guardian – I trust these ones. Well, there are also Telegram channels. An important and useful sources of information are regional public channels, with the comments to the news, which give information that is not covered in other media.

« These are CNN, Medusa, BBC. Medusa is very helpful in terms of Russian military reports, which, among other things, cover what Russian officials in Russia say. I follow Ukrainian telegram channels, including the regular chats of residents of different cities, and in principle it becomes clear from their correspondence what is happening there, in which city; of course, the office of President Zelensky, Podolyak, Arestovich, etc. I get the most information from my friend in Ukraine, he sends me daily reports.

According to the study participants, disinformation or untruthful information is found primarily from the Russian side, but it also exists from the Ukrainian side.

« Of course, Russia broadcasts false information. We're not stupid, we see what's going on. But disinformation also comes from the Ukraine. I am watching Ukrainian public channels. After all, now there is an information war, the XXI century in all its glory. Not only that war, but also the black PR. That's why I don't support the war and the aggressor, but I don't believe Ukraine right now, sometimes they broadcast misinformation. Well, this is the current reality. You just have to keep

a clear mind not to be like a fanatic. But Russian, of course, they are much more powerful, they are everywhere. And they are in Kazakh groups and publics. They flood, and mess with others' minds.

In particular, the point of view was expressed that disinformation aimed at aggravating relations between Russians and Kazakhs can come from both Russia and Ukraine:

« It seems like you're watching a Russian fake, but, in fact, it is the work of the Ukrainian special agencies. The Russian special services act the same. Somewhere, probably, our special services are also present. Accordingly, this is how hatred begins. People are very emotional, bloggers even use this, even in Nagimusha, when some Russian writes a negative reply, she makes a screen, responds to this, but what if this is some Ukrainian writes that Russians helped the Kazakhs. The work by their special agencies. You see, here it all begins, and people are a little promiscuous.

The study participants also confirm the data published by Demoscope⁴³ that there in Kazakhstan there are both individuals who support Ukraine and those who support Russia. So, in many families of focus group participants there are at least bright discussions on this subject:

« As for the environment, some of the relatives also watch mostly independent, pro-Ukrainian, the other part - Russian channels such as NTV, Russia 24, Russia 1, Mir.

« As for my relatives in Petropavlovsk, they live in the same information field with Russia, and my brother said to me, "Don't you watch TV?" when we were arguing about Ukraine. For him, the TV is a reliable source, and, like for the rest in Petropavlovsk, which does not require any rechecking at all.

« And as for my relatives, I'm not very lucky either, I have relatives who watch Solovyov, Russia 24, Channel One throughout the day. Well, it's kind of hard to communicate with them, because they believe that there is only one appropriate position.

« I even have relatives divided into two camps, one for Russia, the other for Ukraine. And on both sides there is an imposition. I believe that imposing an opinion is propaganda. I have my own opinion, I adhere to the position of neutrality in this case, I do not take anyone's side, but when one of the parties shouts that, look here, they did it like this or like this, is it being done for what? When the same thing is being treated again and again, it is propaganda. They are already almost arguing with each other, they refuse to sit at the same table, because this is going straight beyond the limits.

Awareness of the concepts of fact-checking

As part of the study, the awareness of the study participants about the basic concepts in the field of media literacy and fact-checking was assessed. In particular, it was about the concepts of "disinformation" and "misinformation", about their semantic content and the differences between the concepts.

The majority of the study participants are quite well aware of the concept of disinformation, that it is aimed at purposeful misleading, of its manipulative content deliberately created to cause harm.

« Disinformation is an obviously untruthful information that initially has the intention to convey it to the reader, listener. Honestly, until you said "misinformation", I had never heard this term before. I double-checked and now I know what it is.

« In my opinion, disinformation is when deliberately false information is broadcasted to the masses. It seems to me that, let's say, the

⁴³ <https://www.dw.com/ru/opros-molodez-kazahstana-za-ukrainu-pozilye-za-rossiu/a-63957639>.

media, if it works against the authorities, sets them up, and they have such an idea to somehow spoil their reputation, then they will follow every step and in the future they will find some moments, draw their conclusions on their basis and direct the mass against the authorities. But this will not be disinformation at all, but it is possible to make a mountain out of a molehill. Let us keep in mind the fact that some media deliberately distort information. When information is distorted, I also consider this disinformation. I think this is obviously false, deliberate distribution of false information.

« I would like to add that disinformation usually does not happen by mistake, but in order to spread false information for someone's benefit.

« Often there is a stuffing with information aimed at, maybe, distracting attention, or rocking of some kind, creating resonance on a topic that is either not worth a damn or obviously does not have any quick or safe solutions. Probably so. Therefore, today it is very important to clean your content so as not to become a victim of such actions.

« If we perceive disinformation as a pure lie, there also is a half-truth. When they tell you half the truth, and half a lie. This is scarier for the consumer, because he may get confused about how to filter this information to rule out the lie. And this is a really difficult topic, it needs working with sources.

« The danger of the situation is in the principle of work of one well-known television in a neighboring country, according to the 70 to 30 method, 70% truth, 30 - awful lies. But it is not possible to distinguish this lie within the 70% of truth.

« It seems to me that misinformation in the news is sometimes used to slander someone, to denigrate a certain person.

According to the study participants, the goals of disinformation can be of a variable nature:

1. Divert the attention of society from the real problem.
2. Influence the behavior of the target audience, making a certain decision, lobbying their interests.
3. Creating a certain image of a person, for example, to denigrate some objectionable person or, on the contrary, to promote some people.
4. Find out how society reacts to some information.

As for **misinformation**, the study participants mainly see its difference from disinformation in the intent: in the first case, false information is spread unconsciously, based on the best intentions – to warn, whereas in the case of disinformation, a clear goal is to deceive, to harm.

Indeed, according to a number of scientists, this term means the dissemination of false, erroneous information, but when the author does not realize that this information does not correspond to reality⁴⁴, has no intent to mislead⁴⁵.

« Disinformation and misinformation differ by their intent. The person or resource spreading disinformation is directed by the wrong idea about something. I would say, like manipulation. And misinformation is just incorrect information, it can already be spread with no intent to mislead.

« There difference is in the intention. Because when you misinform, you pursue a specific goal, you do it on purpose. Probably, this is the difference.

« For me, disinformation is false, incorrect information. Misinformation is information that may be incorrect, but not intentionally, that is, a person had no intention to misinform others.

⁴⁴ Lewandowsky, Ecker, Seifert, Schwarz et al, 2012.

⁴⁵ <https://1gai.ru/publ/529014-misinformacija-ili-dezinformacija-v-chem-raznica.html>.

When I talked to my Ukrainian colleagues, fact checkers, they provided a very cool example about disinformation. They showed photos of children with Ukrainian flags against the background of tanks. When the war began, this photo was actively distributed by the Ukrainian media. And they do not regard it as disinformation, they regard it as misinformation, because this photo was taken in 2014, and they are spreading it now as if it is fresh. It is impossible to say that this is completely false information, but it can be misleading.

« Disinformation is untrue information presented with the intention to harm some person, company, or state. That year there was a lot of news that the import would be banned, the import of cars from abroad, and the people reacted very strongly to this and, it turns out, they postponed it for another two years. Every news, every law from the state are aimed at the achievement of a reaction from the people. If the reaction is negative, it is cancelled.

At the same time, among the definitions of disinformation, erroneous ideas about the concept were also specified. Some study participants did not take into account the fact that the main and ultimate goal of misinformation is not the erroneous presentation of information, but its deliberate distortion in order to cause harm.

« Disinformation is false, unverified information, without a reference to the sources, limited by rumors. Today bloggers are trying to share information as quickly as possible, without verification and confirmation from the authorities, they submit any kind of information. After that, they apologize. The people believe the information that came out first, and then, without checking if it is true or not, they begin to condemn.

« This is false and distorted information, but disinformation is not always false, it can be incorrectly submitted. For example, it is closely associated with photos when they take pictures from the other side, but if you take a frontal picture of a person it will be completely different.

The study participants shared the most bright examples of misinformation that they had to deal with.

« Average salary in Kazakhstan. Today any opinion on the idea can be purchased, any information can be presented in the desired way. There is a whole industry for this, there is legislation. This is the industry of lobbying for certain laws, so I don't even know how to express myself... You need to understand some news, the problem, in order to find the real numbers and the real picture. The same, for example, applies to vaccination. Let's take the figures that are being submitted, and the information that is being kept silent. We cannot unless we ourselves begin to figure it out directly, search for facts, so nowadays you need to trust only your head, not someone else's, and conduct the analysis yourself.

« They brought a newspaper to my grandmother, well, such a small newspaper, where they advertised the drug "Visoria", which uses a unique formula of the potion, discovered by a Kazakh genius, a student-schoolboy – such a wording was in the article: "I beat the pants off all the scientist of the world." I read the article, reviewed it, Googled. In Russia, in general, this story is actually quite old, and everywhere are these different geniuses who invent miracle pills. But these companies themselves, who are engaged in this commerce, they carry this newspaper to the doors of senior people, who, in turn, buy this medicine. This is a less global, local example.

« I have come across a large number disseminations on whatsapp related to religious topics, that told that the Prophet Muhammad did so, and you, brothers, do the same. Many times I saw family chats, chats of classmates, that is, people of different generations. In the regions, for example, in villages, there are also a lot of such postings, which tell about the intrigues of the district scale, that some doctor found out that, it turns out, so-and-so, so come to get such and such a medicine. And then people come, and found nothing there. I do not know where it all comes from. It is quite widespread. I notice a lot of news in regional publics about the fact that there is this and that message, please do not believe it, here is the comment of the official representative –

something like that. Another separate religious one, which is very common, usually tells about how to live properly, how to eat properly, how to monitor health – up to the information on who will become president in the future. And all this is presented in such a religious canvas. Interestingly, it is in the Islamic one. I have not yet seen such posts from the Christian part.

« There are a lot of such advertising, in fact, they use very cruel methods, they say that President Tokayev instructed that now every resident of Kazakhstan can receive 500 thousand tenge or may have earnings from KazMunayGas. You need to go to the website, register and enter your data, and you will receive money from the subsoil as an investor. I myself have never believed in it, but I think that since this advertisement is not blocked, probably someone may still think: yes, perhaps, since they say that Tokayev instructed... Or some of them were terrible at all, they made reports similar to real media, using, for example, the news story by "Khabar 24", and declared the possibility of winning after registration..

« I work at the school as an organizer, deputy director for the educational work, and they write to me that the akimat allocates money to us for low-income children. Apparently, the fake have been spread this way. Then the akimat confirmed that this was fake information.

The second case was associated with a case when one journalist was attacked. After that, fake information began to spread, someone wrote that he needed to collect money. A fake to slander that journalist. We didn't know this fake, his page was empty. That's the kind of fake information I came across. In general, there is a lot of such fake information, like before, when they told about quarantine, apartments.

« The fact that planes are poisoning people with smoke above us. It seems to me that only a stupid, an uneducated person will believe this, of course, it is all due to an ignorance, etc.

« I study at the North Kazakhstan University. Last year we signed a document with the University of Arizona, and on this basis we have a lot of various fake news, and it will be up for a very long time.

The reasons why people tend to believe misinformation, according to the study participants, are: unwillingness to double-check information, dependency, hope to solve existing problems by some "miracle", belief in "conspiracy theories", desire to get easy money, get something for free, low level of education, illiteracy. Specifically the participants of the FGD noted that in order to induce greater trust, the names of reputable people and institutions are used, that is, their social capital and reputation.

« Indeed, promote the the fact that everyone needs money, and now it is very difficult to find a good job with stable earnings. Especially unprotected strata, for example, my parents have a disability and the allowance is not very large. So they can get advantage of such people, the older generation, who need money right now. And here is such an easy solution: just give us the data, and we will give you everything right now, we will transfer the money.

« Financial literacy is mandatory for young people from the earliest years, from school age, in order to understand how to earn, manage money, and treat them adequately. Financial literacy will allow children to become independent earlier. Untrained children most often get into financial pyramids. They don't know the value of money, they think it's easy to find and get it. Elderly people are also often deceived, because those who are working with them are psychologists, they can charm people with their speech.

It was also pointed out that in Kazakhstan, disinformation can be spread through official sources, which, nevertheless, are not responsible for this, but if it comes from private entities, independent from the state, then any mistake here can cost them their careers, and sometimes their freedom.

Areas where disinformation is most common. Examples

The study participants point out that the object of these fakes always becomes something that has public significance and

touches people emotionally. First of all, these are such areas as healthcare, health, especially the health of children.

Some focus group participants believe that disinformation often comes from official representatives of the authorities, who, by manipulating the submission of information, can advance their own goals.

« It seems to me that it still depends on the time, the informational subtext. During the Covid outbreak, during the pandemic, most of the misinformation was about vaccines, about the existence of Covid. In January, there was misinformation about the events. I remember well how many reports came that the city was being bombed, with rockets, from airplanes etc. Well, now we see that there are a lot of fakes about the war, and this already applies to Kazakhstan. A lot of fakes come to our editorial office about the fact that Ukrainian missiles are falling into Western Kazakhstan. Very strange fakes.

« Government agencies will most often intentionally disseminate deliberately false information. For example, on rallies, on participants of peaceful meetings, when those who go to these peaceful meetings are accused of criminal intent. What is this, if not deliberately false information? Denigration. As for the war with Ukraine – who generates this information, which is frankly false? Here the Russian authorities can be absolutely blamed. Unambiguous dissemination of deliberately false information, starting with calling the war a special operation and people – foreign agents.

« Healthcare, education system, social security, akimat are the spheres with a high number of fake news. I work in the field of education, I can say that it is associated with a large amount of fake news. I am also a volunteer (where fake news are also encountered). We are often asked that when this or that information was spread, whether it is was true or false. We immediately ask the akimat, the regional council, if there are specialists in internal politics, we ask them. When there is disinformation, we tell the people that you can't believe everything. There is a phone number of the regional council, ask them, we say, or write to their Facebook pages. They will respond.

« It seems to me that misinformation can be present in any sphere of our life, either in education, medicine, politics, and even parenting. It seems to me that misinformation can be encountered everywhere. You just need to be able to determine it. Most often, I see it in politics, education, medicine.

« I would like to say that most often, if we are talking about state agencies, it is disinformation when they talk about the motives of their actions, and this applies to all spheres. In particular, from the recent ones: how the Ministry of Justice, which is the author, developer of amendments to the election law, spoke about why these amendments should be adopted, introducing a discriminatory norm according to all standards of international legislation. Even if we refer to our Constitution, which prohibits discrimination, they are essentially introducing discrimination, justifying that by doing so they remove discrimination. That is, in order to justify their restrictions on civil activity, they put an allegedly good and allegedly expanding intention. Disinformation often occurs in the sphere of legal prosecution. Official representatives of law enforcement agencies first declare that a person has been detained for some reasons that he is charged with this and that, as a result, as the legal process approaches, as part of the investigation it turns out that the state, represented by law enforcement agencies, did not even put forward such charges at all. But a negative image has already been created about this person in the public space, which is not associated with him, and this can be done to denigrate some person or expose him in the eyes of society.

« About Bolat Nazarbayev. There were reports that his health deteriorated and he died. Later I saw that he was giving an interview at home, he was in a severe condition. This rumor that spread quickly.

« Now they say on the Internet that flour and sugar will rise in price in 1 week or 10 days. And it looks as if it was made on purpose, because it makes a profit.

« Now there are Wahhabis, in an increased number. They spread their ideas over the Internet. Young people don't know who to believe.

« There have been reports that vaccination against Covid will have negative consequences and lead to impotence. This can be qualified as disinformation. The vaccine does not cause such consequences, it just acts like a regular serum making a person immune to a disease.

« Medvedev said that the Kazakhs will create the USSR.

« Information that if you are vaccinated not with "Sputnik", but with "Kazvac", you will be at risk of harm, you will die in a day; therefore I refused.

The media of which countries resort to disinformation

The participants of the discussion in focus groups believe that Russia is the country resorting to disinformation most often and to a high extent. The US and Chinese media were also mentioned in the context of disinformation.

Among others, the point of view was expressed that in large information forces, in any case, they use fake news or misinform readers through media.

« These are mostly Russian media, because they have more influence on our region. For quite a long time, Russian television is still popular among a large number of people. They are also referred to on the Internet, including by our media. They have more influence, elements of propaganda. Even if you start watching, you involuntarily start believing in it.

« I want to say that we have greatly underestimated Russian propaganda. Missed the moment when it became so powerful, strongly brainwashing. As I had an experience when I forced myself to watch Russian TV channels, I do it periodically to know what is happening there. And there are amazing things, in fact it is impossible to watch without laughter. And sometimes I don't understand why people believe this, they continue to believe that this is the only true information. Therefore, I believe that it is the Russian media, the media sponsored by Russia, as well as telegram channels, bloggers, etc. that are spreading fakes today. I also notice a lot of fakes coming from China.

« I believe that the large information forces, in big countries, probably everywhere there are "fake news", in the sense that the media that are engaged in disinformation, there is Fox, as for me, in general, one of the standards of slipping "fake news". But I think that the Russian state media are simply champions, the most dangerous state machine for the production of lies, which is dangerous especially for Kazakhstan, but also for the whole world. They create these practices, their lies. And what is the difference between the Russian propaganda machine – there are two things. The first is that their lies are on a completely different metaphysical level, it feels like these people have simply forgotten about the existence of the truth at all. And the second thing is that this unique state considers that the meaning of its existence is to lie through these media.

« By the way, I think, that was the New York Times: I remember, 2 years ago, that when this whole situation was with a pandemic, they posted that the whole of Hong Kong was closed, that people were ill. And my friend was just in Hong Kong, he lives there, studies. I called him and asked if it was really that bad, and he said: "No, it's not true at all, we all go shopping, order delivery, but these frightening photos – this is not really happening here." After this, my trust in this portal evaporated, although I liked it before, they often do this to intimidate, so they serve that everything is very bad, but it's not so.

« I think USA. This is because they can spread any information as it is beneficial to them. If a Muslim kills someone, he will be called terrorist. There is a lot of misinformation.

The effectiveness of the work of state bodies with disinformation

The study participants note that for the issues of how certain government agencies react to misinformation, everything directly depends on the position of the head, that is, the human factor is of great importance. If the head is more focused on openness and interaction with society, then the reaction to misinformation will be quick and the information provided will be complete. In

another case, we are talking about clerical and pro forma letters.

Also, the focus group discussion participants noted that their personal interest in disclosure or, on the contrary, the desire to conceal some information will also be important in the reaction and efficiency of the work of state agencies.

« Each case should be reviewed separately. If two years ago it was really bad with this, now they are gradually proceed with some master classes, something else. And they gain experience, there are cases when a refutation of some information really comes out in time. Just the night before, I received a message from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where I was asked not to download applications due to possible data theft. And I see that the republican state bodies are much more advanced in this regard, they immediately try to provide information, as well as, sometimes, local ones, and in general this is entirely a human factor. If an official is ready to provide information and regularly issues it, both he and state agency will issue a refutation in time. And if an official is closed, his press services are silent, etc., nothing can be squeezed out of him at all. That's my opinion on this issue.

« For example, the Ministry of Internal Affairs. If they have an established system for years, they have worked out mechanisms, they immediately clarify through the prosecutor's office, and provide or try to provide information as fast as possible. And, let's say, the city akimat. Until recently, it was awful, because they were generally silent. Sometimes their housing and utilities department provided some information, but even then it was very difficult to trust it as a source. And some departments that have never worked with journalists, with the media - they still don't, there is no progress. There is a complex situation with the press services, since salaries are low and no one wants to work there, because a good specialist will not spend the time for a penny, but they are trying to save money on this and get the corresponding result. If there are very active managers who themselves act as a press service, it is a pleasure to work with them, any time of the day or night you can contact them, find out some point of view and discuss some question. And there are

those who, through begin to stir you up through the enquiries, they say, we have an established procedure, prepare an inquiry and wait. Well, it's clear that you can not expect an answer, and if you get one, it won't be informative.

« This can be understood in different ways: when they really need it, when the state agencies themselves are interested, then they work for five plus, there will be information support at the moment. But if they have no interest, they don't care, the work will be done for F-. For example, some suspect was detained, we know that in this case, let's assume corruption, it became known that he is some famous person, an official. We try to get information. They will respond that this is the secret of the investigation, the protection of personal data, we will never tell you anything. But if they detained someone at random, again, an official whom they need to drown, immediately, at the same moment, the news will fly through all the media that some Khasen Khasenov, the akim of some district, has been detained. And now they will continue to reflect this topic for a week.

One of the study participants noted such problem as the **low level of trust of the country's citizens to state bodies**. This, in his opinion, is a key factor associated with the issue of the effectiveness of the work of government agencies with disinformation. Additionally, he believes that at critical moments, state bodies either do not work quickly enough, or even simply ignore the threats that arise in the country. In this context, the activist considers Russian propaganda, into the orbit of which, in his opinion, a significant part of the population of Kazakhstan is involved. The reasons for this phenomenon, according to the study participant, is the absence of an alternative product with a comparable quality, presentation, charisma of the presenters, professionalism and thoughtfulness of propaganda and counter-propaganda in Kazakhstan. "All these are refuted here. They say that people are more immersed in it anyway, just because it's closer to them, it's interesting to them. In this regard, I don't see the state trying to do something somehow," – emphasizes the public figure who took part in the discussion.

Central Reference Laboratory (biolaboratory) in Almaty: awareness of the study participants

Most of the study participants are aware of the presence of a "biolab" in Almaty and fake information related to its activities.

« Yes, I've heard, I've read. I remember these news were brought to our group, and people started making a fuss. They were outraged that all diseases would be tested on us and people would get sick. Well, I repeat, this is ignorance. Laboratories have been there always. We had a fuss, even a petition came out. I found it so funny. It is 21st century, and people don't even know how to use the phone, they don't know how to use information. Google can provide all information about which laboratories, with which we have contracts. That 's it. The official media did not write about it. These are some incomprehensible links, posts.

« Yes, I've heard that. I've read information from different people. They all posted stories like: "Kazakhs, wake up". They also wrote that some new microbe have been investigated there, a disease that would soon be released and a new quarantine would appear.

« I know that there is a bacteriological laboratory not far away. And now I Googled, there are several of them in the city, in fact. They exist and have been established long time ago. Yes, I recall rumors that someone had to use them, either Russians or Americans, for malicious purposes.

« I've seen fact-check reviews about the message that this is a biological laboratory where bacteriological weapons are being developed, and that it's all sponsored by the United States. It appeared exactly during the pandemic that the coronavirus went from there. I also saw this, but I did not read it, I thought that even if there is such a laboratory, it is unlikely that was true.

« I remembered, this is probably because it was founded by Americans or in cooperation with Americans. And for some reason they do not mention the fact that we have had such a

biological institute near Stepnogorsk for a long time. It has been operating since Soviet times, and biological weapons were also developed there. My roots are from there, and there are people who worked there, and whose 50-year term of non-disclosure has expired, and therefore they made this information public, privately, as one can say.

« Yes, often, in different contexts. Just recently I visited my grandmother in Almaty. She is an elderly person who largely draws information from television, mostly she watches Russian media. And she was just outraged by the presence of this laboratory and what is allegedly happening there, although she does not quite understand it, but she has such an opinion that something is bad, that the laboratory belongs to the USA, etc. I also heard about this laboratory in the context of the fact that it is just an important scientific center, a center for countering some epidemics that we have. So, some strains and possible foci of outbreaks are investigated there. And, in fact, this laboratory is the heir to the anti-plague stations that have been operating in the Soviet Union. The only difference is that it has a state-of-art equipment, and indeed it was built at the expense, in whole or in part, of the US program to improve biological safety, but it is completely subordinate to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. And the United States does not affect the activities of this laboratory. I have also heard in the Russian media about the laboratory, always in a negative context. I myself adhere to the point of view on which I have supporting facts, more convincing arguments. For me, it is more convincing that the laboratory was built or updated by the USA, but now belongs to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

« Indeed, this topic has been encountered quite often recently, in recent months, in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, parallels have been drawn between narratives about biological laboratories and stations in Ukraine and those in Kazakhstan. In this regard, I watched a fairly long three-hour stream on Alexander Plushev's channel. He is a former journalist of the Echo of Moscow. He invited a woman who was engaged in fact-checking on this topic. Indeed, taking into account the argumentation and the personal reputation of the people who provided this argumentation, I am also more inclined to believe that this is nothing more than conspiracy theory.

And I wanted to add such a little funny fact that even in our city I have come across the fact that the educational and laboratory complex currently under construction next to our university is also considered among a certain audience that here is an American biolab in which experiments will be conducted. I personally know an individual who is my close relative, to whom my grandmother approached on the street and asked such questions.

At the same time, two participants of the focus groups indicated that the very existence of a biolab in Almaty is fake and disinformation.

« It's a Russian fake. I heard about it for at least years ago. I see it from time to time, it's very old, but it excites people all the time. The Americans are building or have already built a laboratory in Almaty where they are creating some kind of virus that kills only Slavs or something like that. This is a very old fake. I do not know how much this relates to the topic, but it has always amazed me that the same people have been constantly believing the same fake for five years. Once a year they are told this, and once a year they believe it. And they forget that a year ago this fake was already there. They already believed that right now the whole Almaty would be covered with radioactive ash or biological weapons. They believed and it didn't happen. Tell it to them after one year – they will believe it again, while it is absolutely identical fake. I believe in the analysis that fact checkers do, I trust the fact checker. Of course, they are lacking.

« This fake spread even when I was at the sixth year of school, and then there was another outbreak of meningitis in Almaty, which occurs every few years, but in fact there is no outbreak. And I remember during my school years there was a real panic among parents, and everyone thought that the Americans have spread a new meningitis virus and all their children would die. And the Americans are spreading this virus in schools through Coke and sweets. Therefore, it is really a very old but very interesting fake. And it is very interesting that people continue to believe, even though there have already been a million reviews.

The purpose of this fake, according to the participants of the focus groups, is to disseminate chaos and panic in Kazakhstan, to disorient the citizens of the country; to distract attention from some global news, from serious problems. The study participants also pointed out that this rhetoric is anti-Western in nature and is necessary for Russia in order to justify its military actions on the territory of Ukraine and gain allies against the United States. Opinions were also expressed that by disinformation, Russia in its neighboring countries is destroying trust, including in democratic institutions, and is trying to strengthen its influence on the post-Soviet region.

« I think, this is being done from other countries. As for Russia, their special services have made a big job. I'm not quite sure, but there are special bots, information is being leaked to make a fuss in our country. These people are specially trained, they begin to make such breach.

« This information is fake – brainwashing to distract attention from some global news, from serious problems. It's better for people to deal with Covid, etc., than to think about some serious problems that should really bother us. It may be both foreign and domestic policy. There is a risk in both spheres. Previously, there were real problems, soldiers were dying, people were rising, and news about the laboratory came out. This is a brainwash to distract attention. This is my opinion.

« This is anti-Western rhetoric, which is necessary for the official narrative of Russian propaganda, which allows them to find justifications for military actions on the territory of Ukraine to some extent. Offensive party does not recognize that it is an invader, it builds a narrative against the defending side, the victim, the side that is forced to take these steps. But since, apparently, firstly, a rich fantasy, and secondly, a limited set of real reasons, although, as if by established rules, aggressive unleashing of war is generally prohibited under international rights. And they begin to invent everything they can, starting from bats, ending with the fact that Ukraine was going to develop nuclear weapons and strike at Russia.

« To warm it up, it all comes out, the leak of data by the Russian special services, and the situation is directed into the necessary way. And our people are not checking, if they read on the web on an incomprehensible site or from one of the bloggers. They take it all as true. The panic begins.

« The current Russian propaganda cannot offer a vision of the world that possibly the Communists could offer before or democratic countries today. There are no ideas, and they have not been able to formulate an idea that unites people, so they bombard people with all sorts of nonsense that scares them and that emotionally exhausts and eventually makes people just believe in nothing, but run around hysterically. My relatives have often told me, after all the fakes, something like "I don't know what to believe anymore, everyone is saying something." And for me, this is one of the goals of Russian propaganda – to flood people with so much information, to cause an emotional response that a person simply gets confused, gets tired and does not believe in anything, including good news. And the purpose of propaganda is to stop people's belief in the good: in democracy, in human rights, that we can progress as a society, live in peace with each other. They are flooded with fakes so that they are afraid of each other, so that they do not trust each other, so that society falls apart. It seems to me that this is some kind of deliberate effect of the Russian state propaganda - to destroy our society so that they are scattered in the Russia's neighboring countries.

« This is also one of the elements of propaganda, as I think it is the image of the enemy in the face of the United States, which sponsor the laboratory, respectively, in other post-Soviet countries, and that they want to have such an influence on the post-Soviet region more in order to organize a revolution here later. Russia is creating a picture of what it will be in the future if we don't believe them today don't outrage about it. If there is an enemy in the face of the United States, then there is a friend in the face of Russia. Thus they inspire confidence: you should trust us, only we will tell you the truth, you should follow only us, therefore, you need to trust these sources now, that they are really conducting a special operation there, and not a war. It seems to me that these are all links of one chain.

« It is necessary to unite people against a common enemy, in conditions of war it is very profitable to expose the occupied territories of Ukraine and Georgia and the terrible States as enemies.

According to the study participants, **state bodies are to blame for the fact that they cannot resist the spread of fakes and disinformation in Kazakhstan**, that they cannot provide complete information in time that could dispel rumors and fears of citizens of the country.

« This is a flaw in domestic policy, because this is their direct responsibility. As for anti-vaxxers – the fact that we lost in 20-21 and, as we see, are still losing. It's all due to the ignorance and lack of information. And this is regulated by our internal policy, in every region of the city. They are responsible for keeping ideology, calm, and they have lost it. They did not work with the population, and it is stupid to take offense at the public.

« I think this is due to the fact that the Ministry, which oversees such laboratories, does not work well with information and its dissemination. They are aware that such information has been spread, that people already possess such information, and a frenzy have already developed. At that moment they had to come out with an official statement, they also have access to all the media, and publish information everywhere. We do not work with information, official data are very weak or they are published in the wrong place. As a result, rumors dominate.

« This is a flaw in domestic policy, because they should stop it right away, call people, talk, explain. A lot of money is allocated in Kazakhstan for the media, it happens in every city, in every village, it can be organized everywhere. But our internal policy does not work. I even suspect that some do not understand, do not know how to perform their job. Last year I had a dialogue with the head of the city about internal policy on anti-vaxxers. I said, "Listen, why don't you conduct a conversation?" and he says to me, "Contact the regional health service." Since when does the regional health service have an internal policy? Man, this is your job! Until it reached akim of the city, they began to

work, to provide information to the population, to perform vaccinations in every trading house. The work has begun, although we had "Sputnik V" long before. I mean, it was supposed to be done in the spring, when we just received it, and we only had a wave in 1921 when the black July passed. They don't learn anything, they step on the same rake. It's very, very disappointing. The wrong people are on the wrong places.

« Everyone immediately started sending out these messages that, well, yes, this is a laboratory for biological weapons and for covid. And the Kazakhstan state agencies worked very poorly to counteract this misinformation.

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS DATA (April–September 2022)

As part of the study, a content analysis of the media and social networks was also carried out from the point of view of the perception of the topic of disinformation and propaganda in the Russian-

speaking segment of the Kazakh, Russian and Ukrainian Internet space. We used the keywords "disinformation", "fakes", "propaganda", "war".

The pooled data demonstrate mainly a negative perception of the concept of disinformation.

The negative context of the perception of disinformation and fake news is understandable and logical, since we are talking about deliberate distortion of information, concealment of certain facts, or, in the context of propaganda, a conscious, beneficial to its creator, one-sided presentation of material. In addition, the war has an unambiguously negative assessment in the dominant number of cases.

In addition, today, in the age of hybrid wars, it is quite clear that the opposing sides, Russia and Ukraine, primarily accuse each other of misinformation about the situation related to the war. Among the topics on which, according to opponents, false information was provided, the nature of the conduct of the war and the authenticity of the crimes, the number of victims on both sides, and others⁴⁶.

In addition, in the Russian information space, a significant number of materials are devoted to the topic of the spread of disinformation by Western countries, primarily the United States⁴⁷, while the Russian media uses the same system of argumentation as in Western countries about the dangers of disinformation and propaganda, as well as proposed measures to fight it⁴⁸.

⁴⁶ For example, see: Multimedia platform of foreign broadcasting of Ukraine <https://www.ukrinform.ru/tag-dezinformacia/>; Four "whales" of Russian propaganda: how to resist the Kremlin's fakes about the war in Ukraine. <https://telegraf.com.ua/ukraina/2022-12-05/5725035-chetyre-kita-rossiyskoy-propagandy-kak-protivostoyat-feykam-kremlya-o-voyne-v-ukraine/>; MFA: The news about the alleged smuggling of weapons from Ukraine to Finland is another Russian disinformation <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/869240-amp.html>; <https://www.vesti.ru/article/2682669>; Propaganda of Kyiv <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/video/1001830-kiiev-propaganda-v-smi>; Shoigu caught Kyiv in a lie about the course of hostilities <https://www.tvc.ru/news/show/id/240605>.

⁴⁷ Zakharova accused the Western media of misinformation <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/03/17/zaharova/>; <https://smotrim.ru/video/2403729>; US journalist: Western media are lying about the situation in Ukraine <https://regnum.ru/news/3538284.html>; <http://council.gov.ru/services/discussions/blogs/133660/>; https://ria.ru/keyword_dezinformacija/; A diplomatic official in the UN pointed out the West's fake news about the special operation in Ukraine <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/05/05/feiki/>; "Full-scale information war": The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced a campaign by Western media to spread fake news about the "invasion" of the Russian Federation <https://regnum.ru/news/3582843.html>; <https://russian.rt.com/world/article/961016-mid-smi-rossiya-ukraina-feik>.

⁴⁸ The participants of the Russian and Chinese media forum agreed to fight disinformation on the Internet <https://cgitc.ru/news/uchastniki-foruma-smi-rossii-i-kitaya-dogovorilis-borotsya-s-dezinformatsiyev-internete/>; Zakharova told how to deal with disinformation <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/13919689>.

2022	MASS MEDIA			SOCIAL NETWORKS		
	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral
April	14 008	3 668	4 285	57 951	21 453	16 154
May	10 963	3 754	3 475	47 776	18 276	16 889
June	9 229	3 638	3 002	32 076	15 511	9 071
July	9 976	3 113	3 382	27 855	12 625	7 990
August	5 740	1 913	2 320	14 724	6 406	6 581
September	4 580	1 483	1 886	14 426	6 219	5 239
	146 177	17 569	18 350	461 514	80 490	61 924

In particular, it is indicated that in the Russian segment of the Internet "in 2022, the number of fake news increased almost sixfold compared to 2021 - from 1.5 million to 9.3 million, the main topics were the special military operation in Ukraine and partial mobilization in Russia.⁴⁹"

As a result of the situation with disinformation, which is recognized as critical in both countries, fact-checking structures have been established both in Russia and in Ukraine, whose activities, judging by the resources directed to their development, are perceived as very significant from the point of view of the country's national security.

In particular, in Russia, the partner of the fact-checking structure is the Higher School of Economics, which "has professional expertise, including the necessary methodology for analyzing big data.⁵⁰" Whereas in Ukraine, since 2021, the Center for Countering Disinformation under the National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) has been established, which cooperates with authorities, international partners, as well as with representatives of the media and civil society.

Thus, it is clear that such significant dominance of materials with a negative presentation of the topic of disinformation

is associated with the war in Ukraine and accusations from both Ukrainian and Russian media of the other side of disinformation and the spread of fakes.

As for the **positive presentation of materials about disinformation**, here, first of all, we are talking about materials that are explanatory in nature about the phenomenon of disinformation itself. First, the appearance of such materials is directly related to the critically growing array of disinformation and fake information and, second, indicates a demand of the society to comprehend what is happening, a growing discourse about which ways to confront the phenomenon would be the most optimal for the audience. We are talking about a critical analysis of the phenomenon of disinformation and the development of rational approaches as to how it could be countered.

In the same context, we can consider the **neutral tone** of information, which is evidence that there is also an unappreciated presentation of material in the media based on the presentation of facts. In fact, this approach that is free from propaganda, does not carry the intention to influence the formation of public opinion. It is worth noting here that, according to Kazakhstani expert journalists, this approach is the least common today. In particular, we are

⁴⁹ Smoke and mirrors. Media: the amount of fake information in Russia has increased six-fold over a year <https://newizv.ru/news/2022-12-20/lapsha-media-chislo-informatsionnyh-feykov-v-rossii-za-god-vyroslo-v-shest-raz-374471>.

⁵⁰ See note 47.

talking about presenting the arguments (and counterarguments) of all parties interested or involved in a particular situation to the fullest extent possible and allowing viewers or readers to draw their own conclusions and engage critical thinking. In this context, for example, a situation can be considered in which the positions of the authorities, society and individuals or a social group whose interests are affected by a specific topic covered in the material are represented independently.

In the **Kazakhstan context**, here we are also most often talking about disinformation in the activities of the Russian media and to a much lesser extent about disinformation related to domestic politics and the economy of the country, including the activities of financial pyramids.

It is indicated that as a result of the promoted Russian system of disinformation and propaganda, a significant percentage of citizens of Kazakhstan today support the war, Russia's position in the conflict with Ukraine⁵¹. Kazakh experts argue that Russian propaganda divides Kazakh society, and that in a situation of a split society, which is the main task of modern hybrid warfare, it is easier to appeal to those social

groups whose civil identity and loyalty to the country of residence are more blurred⁵². In this situation, support for Russia's foreign policy is being formed and influence on the government of Kazakhstan appears⁵³. "Russian propaganda creates giant gaps in the country's information security, increasing the split in society and further provoking an identity crisis among a part of the population," experts say.

It is possible to resist this situation only by increasing mobilization around common values and principles of citizens, creating a truly inclusive society⁵⁴, and from this point of view, Kazakhstan should become a country "where the gap between the government and society, between the center and regions, between various social, demographic and ethnic groups is decreasing, where the number of people who consider themselves outsiders, much less than those who consider Kazakhstan their home, where something depends on them and which they are ready to defend."⁵⁵

A separate topic discussed in the context of disinformation in the Kazakh media is the need to increase the level of media literacy of the population, which, according to experts, is very low even among experienced journalists⁵⁶.

⁵¹ The Russian media have switched to the mode of rabid propaganda – Kazakh experts. 19.09.2022. <https://rus.azattyq-ru.kz/society/40973-smi-rossii-pereshli-v-rezhim-ogolteloi-propagandy-kazahstanskije-eksperty>; Survey: A significant part of Kazakhstanis are influenced by Russian propaganda. 07.04.2022. <https://demos.kz/opros-znachitel'naja-chast-kazahstancsev-podverzhena-vlijaniju-rossijskoj-propagandy/>.

⁵² Is Kazakhstan able to resist the threat of hybrid wars? 20.12.2020. <https://qmonitor.kz/politics/439>.

⁵³ Korosteleva Yu. How Kazakhstan can fight against Russian propaganda. 11.10.2020. <https://vlast.kz/politika/52046-nasi-grazdane-daze-ne-osoznaut-cto-oni-zertvy-propagandy.html>.

⁵⁴ Antonova V. Concepts of social inclusion and exclusion in global society: drift by social institutions, actors and practices. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/kontsepty-sotsialnoj-inklyuzii-i-eksklyuzii-v-globalnom-obschestve-dreyf-po-sotsialnym-institutam-aktoram-i-praktikam>.

⁵⁵ Satpayev D. How Kazakhstan became a hostage in Russia's geopolitical game against Ukraine. 24.02.2022. https://forbes.kz/process/expertise/dosyim_satpaev_oboznachil_riski_dlya_kazahstana_v_rossijsko-ukrainskom_konflikte/

⁵⁶ Expert meeting: "Fake news and disinformation in Central Asian countries. How to deal with it?". 25.02.2022. <https://cabar.asia/ru/ekspertnaya-vstrecha-fejki-i-dezinformatsiya-v-stranah-tsentralnoj-azii-kak-s-etim-borotsya>.

MASS MEDIA

SOCIAL NETWORKS

2022	MASS MEDIA			SOCIAL NETWORKS		
	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral
April	63,8	16,7	19,5	60,6	22,5	16,9
May	60,3	20,6	19,1	57,6	22,0	20,4
June	58,2	22,9	18,9	56,6	27,4	16,0
July	60,6	18,9	20,5	57,5	26,1	16,5
August	57,6	19,2	23,3	53,1	23,1	23,8
September	57,6	18,7	23,7	55,7	24,0	20,2

CONCLUSION

The current reality is the information chaos in the unregulated global online information space, in which fake news and propaganda are distributed. This was indicated in the Press Freedom Index for 2022. As a result of propaganda wars on the part of "information autocracies"⁵⁷ that control their media and online platforms, democracy is weakening. According to the authors of the document, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which took place at the end of February 2022, reflects this process, since the beginning of the war was preceded by a Russian propaganda war⁵⁸.

Disinformation, fake news and propaganda are also widespread in Kazakhstan. Among the most common topics: reduction of the

retirement age, credit amnesty and, in general, information related to getting something for free from both state institutions and individual organizations. Also, direct fraudulent schemes are often distributed in the information field, among which there are calls to make advance payments to receive payments, as well as calls to join financial pyramids.

At the same time, as the present and a number of other studies demonstrate⁵⁹, citizens of Kazakhstan are exposed to threats of disinformation and propaganda to a fairly high degree. Russian disinformation and propaganda, primarily television, are of concern from the point of view of Kazakhstan's information security⁶⁰. Russian television, being more industrialized, is

⁵⁷ Information autocracies that rely more on manipulation through information than on violence and ideology. Guriev S. Treisman D. Informational Autocrats, 2019. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.33.4.100>.

⁵⁸ The World Press Freedom Index, 2022. 03.06.2022. <https://www.golosameriki.com/a/rsf-press-freedom-press/6554191.html>.

⁵⁹ Some of the surveyed Kazakhstanis believe that fact-checking is the spread of fakes. 15.12.2022. <https://zonakz.net/2022/12/15/chast-oproshennyx-kazaxstancsev-schitayut-cto-faktcheking-eto-rasprostranenie-fejkov/>.

⁶⁰ Russian propaganda in Kazakhstan. YouTube or TV? Who owns AIRAN? | podcast 20.01.2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4_INqW-vkY.

much superior to Kazakh television due to the available resources for its development, higher-quality content and visualization; and Russian-language content is available to the entire audience of Kazakhstan.

It should be noted that today in Kazakhstan, despite the rapid development of the Internet segment of mass media, television is still the undisputed leader of coverage, primarily due to the factor of greater trust in it from the Kazakh audience, the conviction that unreliable, unverified information can be provided in the Internet space, unlike traditional media. The choice in favor of television is also determined by a number of other factors, including: habitual patterns of information consumption developed over decades, the economic component – “free” television is a more accessible source of information than the Internet, which is not available in a number of remote rural areas of the country. The same applies to the fact that television is the most affordable entertainment for the majority of the population.

Of great importance, according to experts, is the infantile attitude of the audience to the consumption of information in general: this is an unwillingness to independently understand the truth, considering the situation from different points of view, and to take responsibility for the incoming and further disseminated information. Therefore, the audience is looking for clarity in television, ready-made answers about what is happening - and it is this fact that determines the success of any propaganda information. Experts designate this approach of the audience as “religion mode” (“I believed in it, and I feel good”) and contrast it with the scientific view of the world.

Another study shows that almost every fifth in Kazakhstan consumes information about the country’s domestic policy from the Russian media, every third focuses on the Russian mass media when studying issues of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy. Thus, at least a fifth of the country’s population looks at the situation in their country

through the “eyes” of a neighboring country. These figures are confirmed by other studies: according to the Bureau of Express Monitoring of Public Opinion Demoscope, almost a quarter of the surveyed (23%) citizens of Kazakhstan consume Russian news⁶¹.

The present study showed that residents of Kazakhstan’s regions bordering Russia live most of all in the information space of the neighboring country. So, for example, if, studying the socio-political situation in the country, on average 18% of citizens rely on Russian media sources, then in the regional context it is clear that citizens living in the central and eastern regions of the country constitute the majority of them (29% and 28%, respectively).

At the same time, it is obvious that there are quite large discrepancies in the Kazakh society regarding the perception of Russia, including the information provided by the Russian mass media. Thus those who believe that Russian media more often than others resort to disinformation, manipulation of information, and those who, on the contrary, refute this point of view show almost equal proportions (42% and 36%, respectively).

Theorists emphasize that if the purpose of propaganda is to convince people of something, then the purpose of disinformation is more aimed at the inception of distrust, to divide society, affecting its basis - public trust. It is also significant in this regard that today Kazakhstan is on the list of countries with the lowest level of trust⁶².

In this regard, it is of particular concern that Kazakhstan citizens tend not to double-check the information received: only 19% of Kazakhstanis, or one in five, constantly double-check the information they have learned from the media and social networks.

At the round table held in 2022 by the Youth Information Service of Kazakhstan based on the results of this study, different points of view on this matter were also presented. In particular, opinions were expressed that statements

⁶¹ Survey: A significant part of Kazakhstanis are influenced by Russian propaganda. 07.04.2022. <https://demos.kz/opros-znachitelnaja-chast-kazahstancev-podverzhenavlijaniju-rossijskoj-propagandy/>.

⁶² <https://inbusiness.kz/ru/last/kazahstan-nahoditsya-v-spiske-stran-s-samym-nizkim-urovnem-doveriya-42>.

about the high susceptibility to fakes and disinformation of citizens of Kazakhstan should be made "very carefully", since the definition of society in this way can lead to the activation of state bodies. Using the risk formulated in this way, they will try to create the most "sterile" information field with "correct" and "real" authors and sources, where they give only "absolutely guaranteed truthful information", which will actually lead to the introduction of censorship and the revival of the Soviet Union's approaches to information policy.

During the discussion, representatives and authorities did not fail to suggest introducing "black lists" of propagandists and activists who should not be trusted.

In addition, at the end of 2022, the topic of tightening responsibility for the spread of fakes was discussed⁶³. The arguments of civil society representatives against such an initiative were that after the January events, the Kazakh authorities are already trying to restrict free media and such steps will eventually lead to the introduction of censorship and will direct us to the path that Russia and Belarus are following. Experts emphasize that Kazakhstan today ranks 122nd among 180 countries in the press freedom index, being located between Benin and Tanzania, and is in the group of countries where the situation with press freedom is

assessed as complex. Therefore, they insist that any recommendations should first of all protect freedom of speech and human rights in general, and the fight against propaganda should not be associated with an attempt to mute the media, which provided an alternative point of view⁶⁴.

At the same time, it is the open discussion of the problem that provides the basis for public advocacy of a stronger information policy of Kazakhstan and the dissemination of media literacy among citizens of all ages, especially in relation to the adult population of the country, in the Kazakh language, in the most accessible formats, with the involvement of public opinion leaders. In addition, an open recognition of the problem can involve all societies in a nationwide effort to counter disinformation.

According to the obtained data, the society of Kazakhstan expects that the country's authorities will increase the effectiveness of their work in countering fakes and disinformation, will clearly and professionally dispel rumors and fears of citizens of the country and actively involve the population in the implementation of information policy in this area. It is necessary to give more powers to those managers of state agencies who are aimed at openness to society and are able to help it deal with disinformation and propaganda.

⁶³ The responsibility for the spread of fake news can be tightened in the Republic of Kazakhstan. 22.12.2022 <https://24.kz/ru/news/social/item/579146-uzhestochit-otvetstvennost-za-rasprostranenie-fejkov-mogut-v-rk>.

⁶⁴ How fakes, disinformation, propaganda affect society in KZ – HYPERBOREA. Special Issue September 27, 2022 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y50aOGpLaG0>.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Kazakhstan needs to establish a clear policy of state information security, which will protect the internal information space from disinformation and propaganda by external players, undermining the public trust of our society by third countries.

It is also necessary to develop new strategies for counter-propaganda - leveling the effects of negative propaganda through clarification of facts. Such a strategy should be adapted to different groups of the population, taking into account age, language, geographical features of information consumption. Counter-propaganda should not be a mirror image of propaganda messages, but should primarily be truthful and reliable information.

Special attention should be paid to the spread of counter-propaganda in the Northern Kazakhstan, where citizens are most strongly involved in the orbit of information propaganda of the neighboring country.

2 It is necessary to develop domestic online courses on media literacy in Kazakh and Russian for different age categories, adapted separately for the adult and elderly and young population. Famous personalities should be involved in their creation, who will explain in simple language how to deal with disinformation and propaganda. Mass informing of the population about fake news and disinformation with the involvement of artists, musicians and public figures is required.

It is important to investigate foreign experience in the development of media literacy, primarily the Finnish model, which is currently one of the most successful.

3 It is necessary to form fact-checking departments in popular media aimed at addressing disinformation in areas related to

the daily lives of citizens, and to voice the results of their work in simple and understandable language. It is important to further popularize their work in popular social networks to reach a wider audience.

It seems appropriate to create a TV channel that should be responsible for exposing disinformation and propaganda.

4 It is necessary to strengthen domestic media space by revising the policy of the state information order, which affects the reduction of the quality of content in the media. First of all, we are talking about analytical journalism and television content. It is important that the content of Kazakhstani channels itself is diverse and interesting to citizens and can compete in quality and diversity with foreign content.

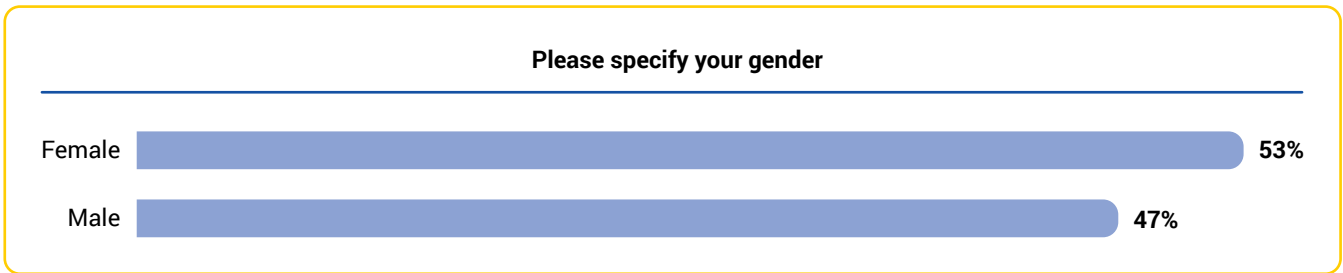
5 Support is needed for NGOs that promote media literacy, as well as work with civil society and help journalists improve the professionalism and quality of content.

6 It is necessary to conduct systematic research aimed at studying the susceptibility to disinformation of various categories of the population, the "myths" common in society, as well as the analysis of the existing communication model in society and the subsequent development of optimal mechanisms of interaction with society for the most effective fight against disinformation and propaganda.

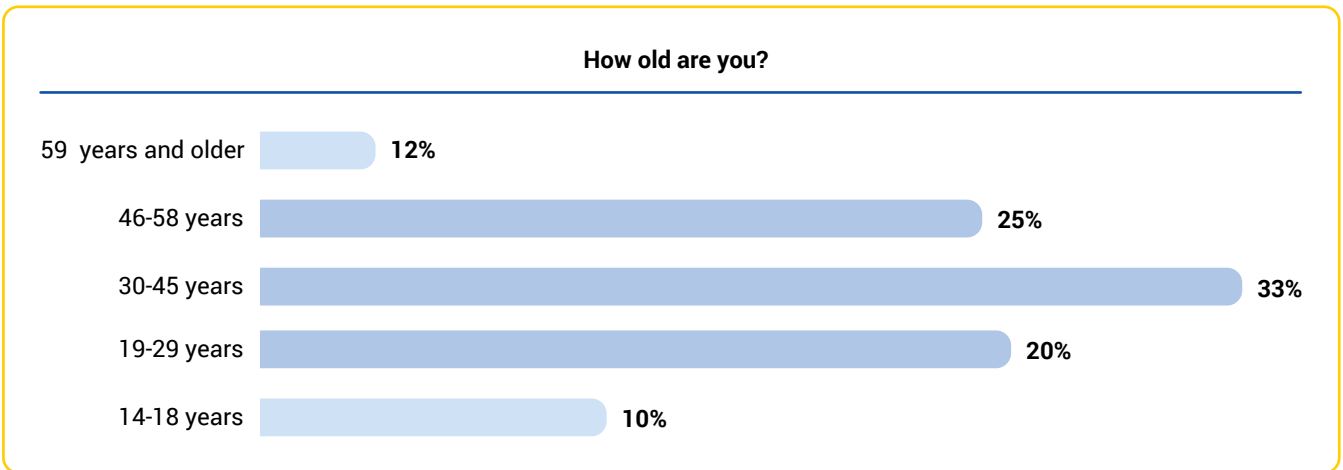
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SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

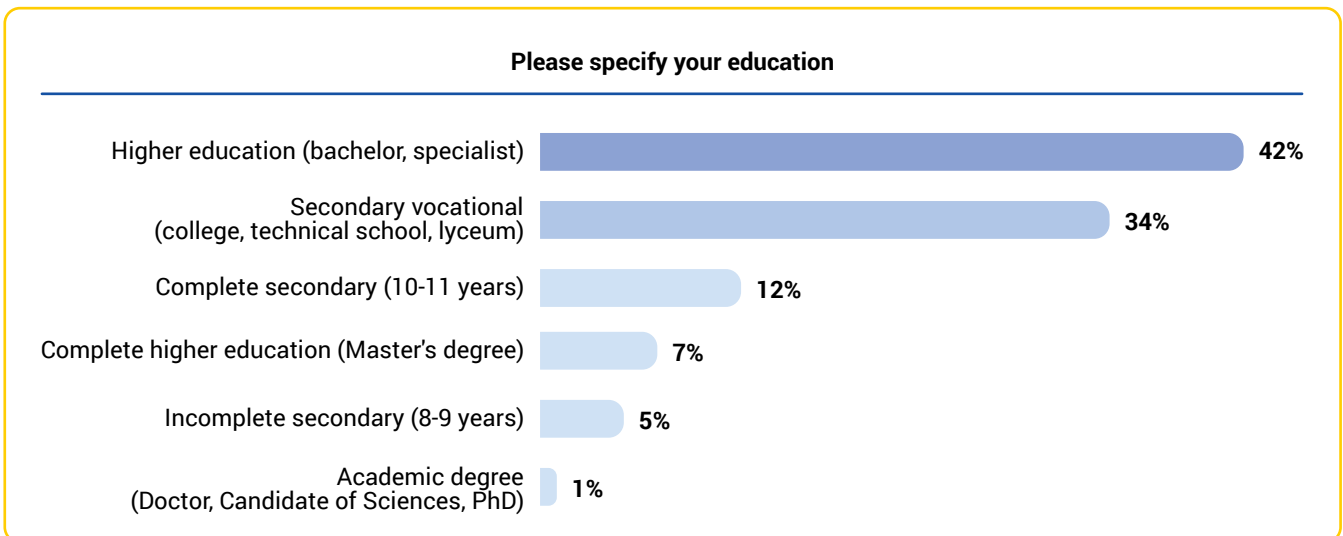
53% of women and 47% of men participated in the study



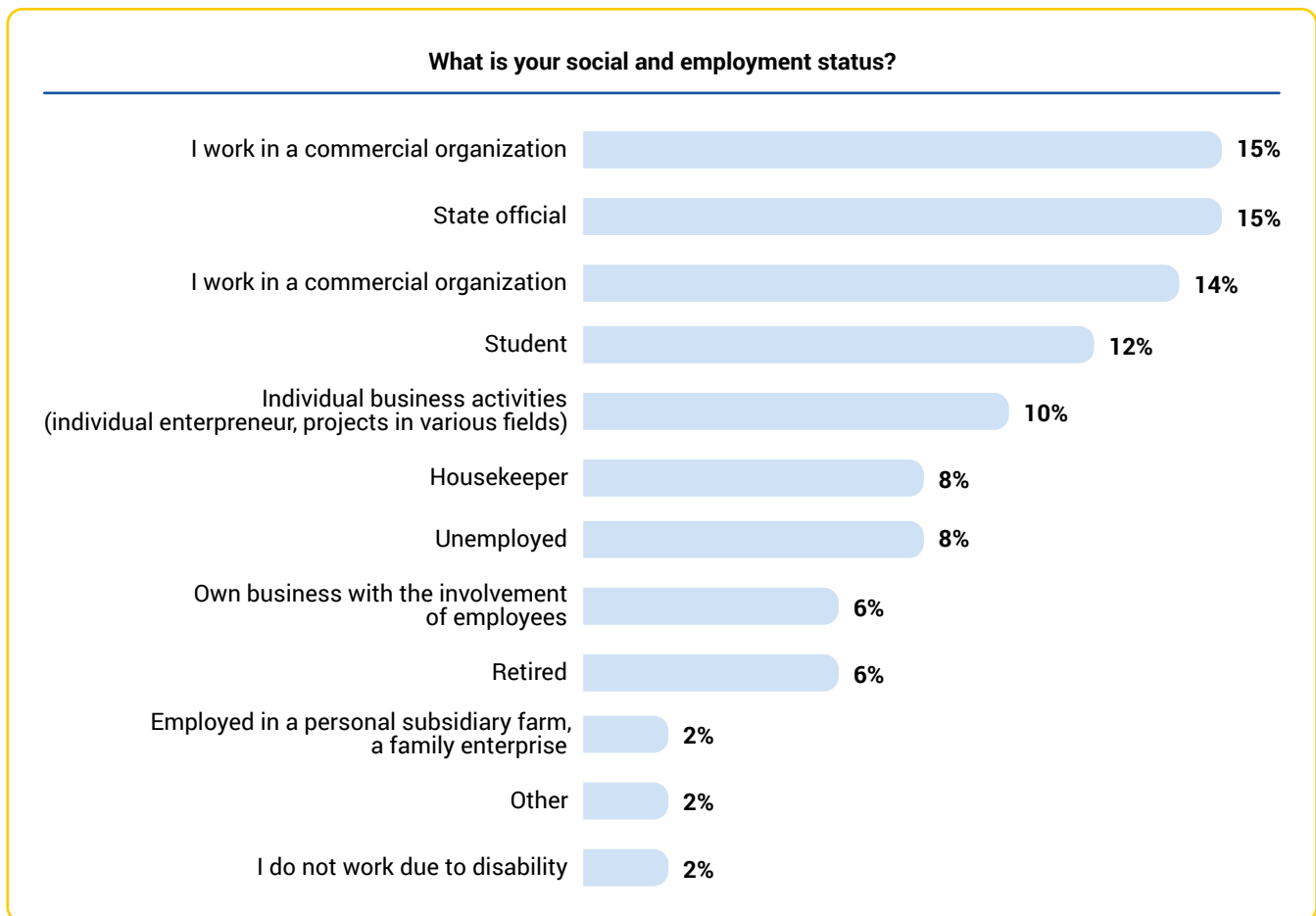
The age distribution of respondents is as follows



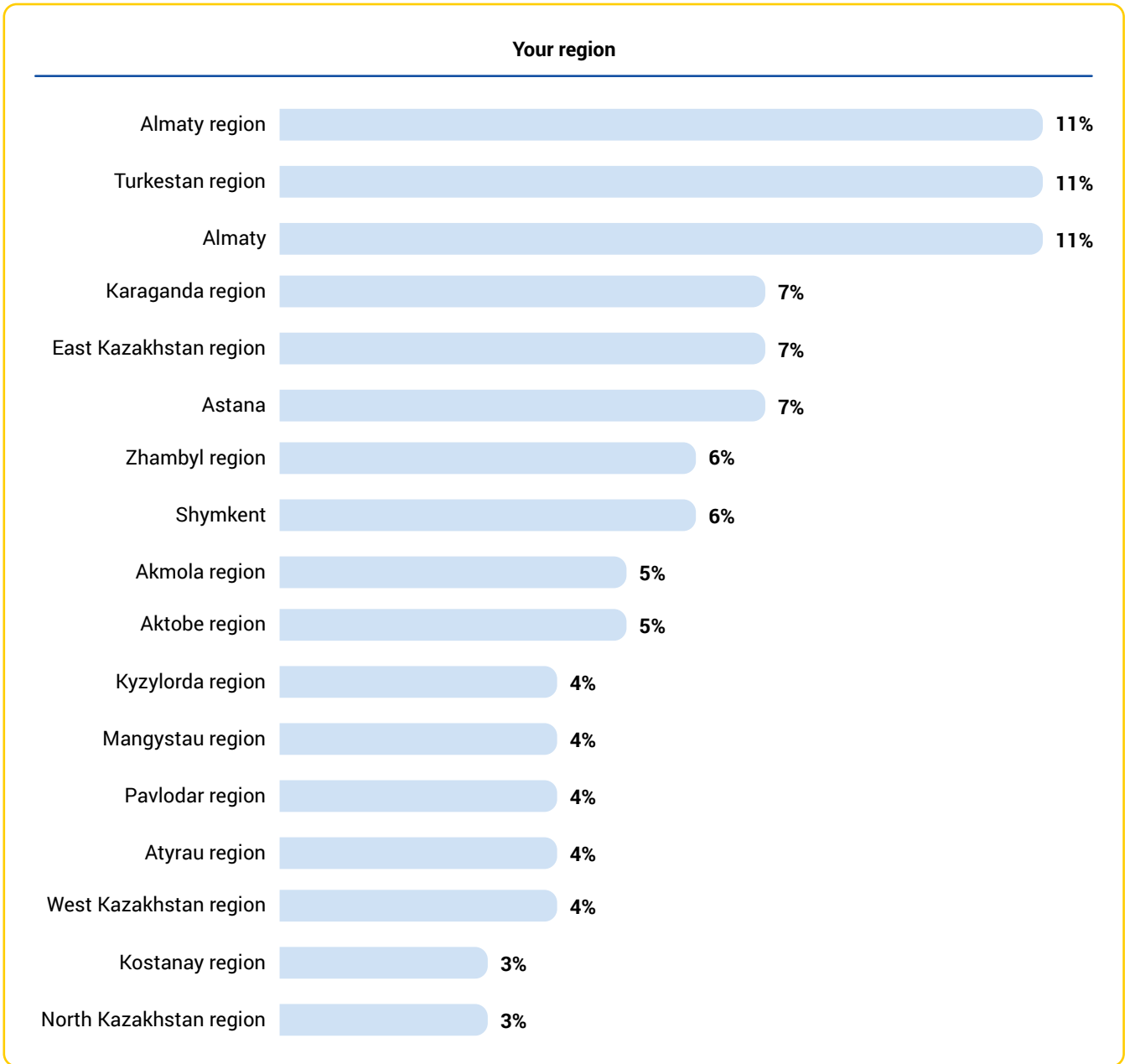
Education of the study participants



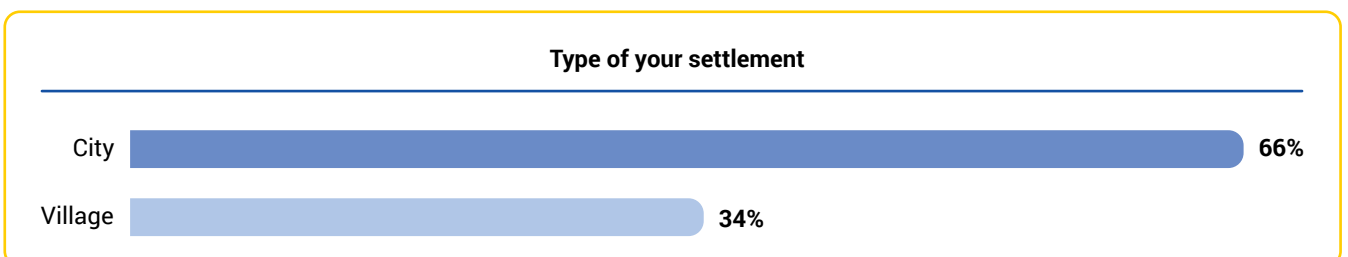
The socio-professional status of the study participants is as follows



Распределение респондентов по регионам страны



66% of the study participants live in urban areas, 34% – in rural areas.



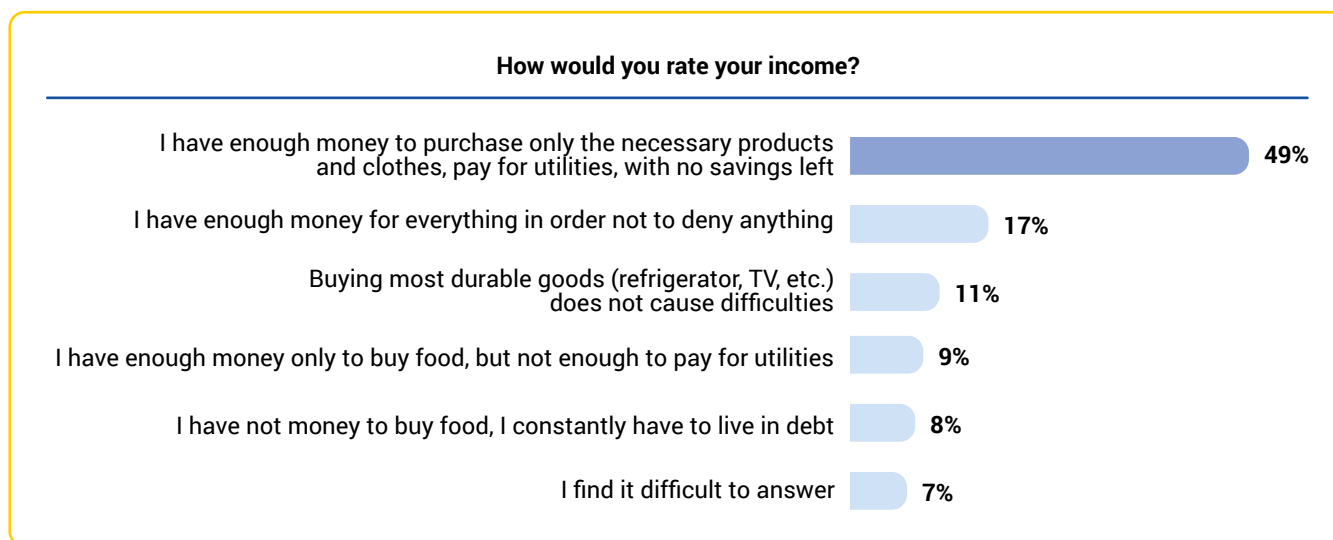
Покупательская способность опрошенных

Based on the income level, 3 groups of citizens can be distinguished.

The first group, which we can designate as **"poor"**, includes those who have not enough money to buy food or have it only to buy food; together they make up **17%**.

One in two, or 49% of the country's population, belongs to the **group experiencing financial difficulties**. Their income is sufficient only for basic needs in food, clothing and utility bills, while there is no money left to save.

The group, which can be conditionally designated as **"secured"**, is 28%. It included those who checked the option "I can buy durable goods", and also those who indicated that there is enough money for everything so as not to deny themselves anything.



Among those with the highest income, there are more citizens with higher education. On the contrary, among those who indicated that they are experiencing difficulties related to the level of income, there are more citizens with secondary education, that is, in Kazakhstan there is a correlation between the level of income and education.

In the age context, it can be seen that the greatest financial difficulties in the country are experienced by citizens of older age groups – 58 years and older. Thus, one out of five of them indicated that their income is not enough even to buy food, they constantly have to live in debt (19.9%).

On the contrary, one out of three young responders aged 14 to 18 referred themselves to those who do not experience any financial difficulties (32%). It should be understood that the case is the fact that young people can live at the expense of their parents, which is probably the cause of such positive assessments. Young people aged 19-29 years constitute 23% of those who checked the same answer option ("I have enough money for everything so as not to deny myself anything").

In terms of employment, it can be seen that among the categories of the population experiencing the greatest difficulties related to the level of income, there are more retired individuals (12%), unemployed (12), housewives (18%) - that is, those who are classified as socially vulnerable segments of the population.

On the contrary, among those who indicated that for them "the purchase of most durable goods (refrigerator, TV, etc.) does not cause difficulties", most are citizens working in a commercial organization (26%), as well as self-employed individuals (individual entrepreneurs, projects in various fields) (17%).

In the gender context, it can be seen that there are twice as many women in the group of those who experience the greatest difficulties of a material nature vs. men.

**Distribution of answers to the question:
"What is your purchasing power?"
by gender**

	Male	Female
I have enough money for everything in order not to deny anything	20%	17%
Buying most durable goods (refrigerator, TV, etc.) does not cause difficulties	13%	11%
I have enough money to purchase only the necessary products and clothes, pay for utilities, with no savings left	51%	53%
I have enough money only to buy food, but not enough to pay for utilities	10%	9%
I have not money to buy food, I constantly have to live in debt	5%	11%

Table 74