

would be of interest to both academics and policy makers working on Russia as a foreign policy actor.

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Marlene Laruelle (ed.), *The Nazarbayev Generation: Youth in Kazakhstan*. Lexington Books, 2019.

The book is devoted to the youth's perspective on the current situation in the post-Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan. The authors of the volume used Habermas, Bourdieu, and Levi-Strauss's concepts to describe young people's opinions on nationalism, globalization, activism, value orientations, etc. The book challenges the top-down approach to the study of Kazakhstan's society and the widespread focus on state policies and regime narratives. The methodological approaches vary from sociological surveys through document analysis, observations, qualitative interviews, or focus groups, to mixed-method research. This methodological focus allows the book to distance itself from the official rhetoric and reveal the grassroots opinions of the general public, which is the main goal of the volume.

The book consists of four parts illustrating young people's attitudes towards such concepts as national identity, changes in moral standards, globalization, and activism. Although it touches upon other fields of social and political life, the analysis of the book moves around the issues of national identity and nationalism. Therefore, it falls into the category of constructivism, considering national identity as a social creation.

The first part of the book is devoted to the young generation's understanding of national identity. Azamat and Barbara Junisbai argue that people aged 18–29 are more egalitarian and in favor of liberalism, and more tolerant of economic inequality, nepotism, and family rule due to their socialization in such conditions. These factors influence young people's understanding of national identity. Aziz Burkhanov, comparing the results of 2005 and 2016 surveys, notes that there has been “a shift toward a more civic understanding

of national identity and a decline in the prevalence of ethnic markers,” but that ethnicity becomes more pronounced where Russian and Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs are concerned (p. 64). This point is supported by Dina Sharipova, who points out that young people confuse civic and ethnic elements of national identity, because of the ambivalent policies of the government. Language is also a very important marker of national identity and, thus, is highlighted by Diana Kudaibergenova. In this sense, notions of national identity and ethnicity comprise several definitions at once and are more complex.

The second part illustrates youth opinion on questions of morality. According to Ulan Bigozhin, moral attitudes of young people constitute a bricolage: they move between local and global ideas, between nationalism and globalism. Galym Zhussipbek and Zhanar Nagayeva, exploring the youth’s acceptance of liberalism and liberal values, claim that a majority of youth in Kazakhstan support the core liberal values, and that influences their identity building. Socialization of youth and the context they grew up in is also important, according to Reuel Hanks. He points out that young people accept other ethnicities more if they socialize with them.

The third part of the book is devoted to youth culture and globalization. Nazgul Mingisheva explores the consumption of popular culture and social networks usage and notes that it contributes to changes in youth culture and identity. Sabina Insebayeva analyzes the agency of non-state actors in music production. She notes that in Kazakhstan national identity is formed through consumption of Kazakh popular music. Turning to the analysis of cinema, Peter Rollberg stresses that films help the government to maintain international prestige and serve educational purposes of forming patriotism and national identity. Douglas Blum explores the value orientation of returning migrants from the US and claims that exposure to foreign culture may change the values of young people. “Return migrants actively mediate and instantiate cultural globalization” and choose what values to adopt and to refuse (p. 224). Continuing to explore the hybridity of national identity, Rico Isaacs analyzes the case of Almaty hipster culture, which mixes global trends

and local traditional values. This hybridity helps us to think of national identity beyond the binary terms of ethnic and civic identity.

The fourth part is devoted to activism. Daniyar Kosnazarov notes that youth activism is expressed through the use of social media, where they consume and produce political or socio-economic content. Direct reach of the audience and absence of censorship make social media a safe space. According to Alexandra Tsay, contemporary art also constitutes a safe public space, where topics discussed in exhibitions reflect the issues urgent for Kazakhstan. Karlygash Kabatova analyzes the issue of sexual health. The author notes that due to the refusal to introduce sexual education in schools and other formal institutions, the internet has become the primary source of such information. However, the access to it is limited and there is a need to systematically address this issue.

Although the book presents an excellent study of youth attitudes in Kazakhstan, there are several criticisms that might be made. First of all, although some chapters explain the terms they use, it would be helpful to have a separate section devoted to the terms and concepts in the introduction. Secondly, there is no justification of the cases presented in some chapters. Therefore, it is not always clear why this or that particular city or institution was chosen. Thirdly, some chapters present data from 2012, 2014, or 2015. On the one hand, it might be considered a bit outdated and youth perceptions might have changed since then. On the other hand, taking into account the time-consuming process of data analysis, it might be justified.

Otherwise, the chapters of the book have precisely captured the realities of Kazakhstan's social, political, and economic issues, investigating young people's attitudes to national identity, cultural traditions, gender roles, language, liberalism, and paternalism in contemporary society. It is interesting that the book was published after the long-awaited succession. Thus it presents an evaluation of the measures undertaken during the time of Nazarbayev's presidency and assesses how these political, social, and economic transformations influenced the views of the generation that grew up in independent Kazakhstan. It is a worthwhile read for those who want to understand young people's perceptions of the issues that they

face. The analysis presented in this volume only calls for deeper exploration of the post-Nazarbayev epoch.

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Beth A. Fischer, *The Myth of Triumphalism: Rethinking President Reagan's Cold War Legacy*. University Press of Kentucky, 2020.

As its title suggests, *The Myth of Triumphalism* aims to deconstruct the view that the Cold War ended thanks to the bold and proactive policies of the Reagan Administration. Beth Fischer addresses her invectives to so-called “triumphalists,” i.e., scholars and political pundits like Peter Schweizer, Francis Fukuyama, Jay Winik, Paul Lettow, and Francis Marlo among others, who, in the author’s opinion, mistakenly argued the Soviet Union collapsed due to President Reagan’s hawkish policies, unprecedented military buildup, aggressive political rhetoric, and refusal to negotiate with America’s ideological enemy.

Fischer maintains it is a “flawed logic” to presume the Soviets disarmed simply because this was the primary aim of the Reagan administration. To prove triumphalists wrong, the author proposes to take a deeper look into the Soviet decision-making process. The opening of Soviet archives, as well as subsequent publication of interviews and memoirs written by Mikhail Gorbachev’s advisors, provided students of the Cold War with additional primary sources and first-hand data. Combined, they prompted Fischer to reassess some traditional views on the impact that President Reagan’s policies had had on the Soviet domestic developments.

Fischer presents her arguments in six chapters. The first three debunk the conventional view that President Reagan constantly employed only hardline policies toward the Evil Empire. Fischer opposes the claim that his administration decided to launch a military build-up so as to entice the Soviet leaders into an expensive arms race. In fact, she argues, Reagan’s advisors had no intention to