



A VALUE-ORIENTED ANALYSIS OF EXPERT POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN KAZAKHSTAN: A SPIRAL DYNAMICS APPROACH TO PUBLIC SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT. *This article aims to provide a systematic analysis of the public discourse of leading Kazakh political experts from the perspective of the theory of spiral dynamics (C. Graves, D. Beck, C. Cowan). In the context of political reforms, growing public mistrust, and institutional transformations, expert discourse serves as a channel for articulating values. The aim of the study is to identify and interpret the dominant and auxiliary value memes based on the analysis of public interviews, articles, speeches, and publications in social networks. Methodologically, it is based on qualitative and quantitative content analysis of more than 670,000 words of direct speech, Kazakh experts Dosym Satpayev, Sanzhar Bokayev, Andrei Chebotarev, and Karlygash Yezhenova. In the course of the study, the data were encoded according to the developed matrix, and the consistency index for Cohen's Kappa was 0.84, which demonstrates a high level of reliability. In the process of coding, an eight-level model of spiral dynamics was applied, namely beige, purple, red, blue, orange, green, yellow, and turquoise. The analysis also used MAXQDA and Python software tools. The results of the study showed the presence of stable value polyphony in public statements of experts. The most frequently encountered value levels in their discourse were blue, demonstrating institutional order and accountability; orange, showing rationality, efficiency, development, and green, which demonstrates humanism, social justice, and dialogue. Moreover, each expert's value meme structure varies, forming unique configurations that reflect their analytical styles and cognitive priorities.*

KEYWORDS: *spiral dynamics; political discourse; vMEMEs; expert thinking; Kazakhstan; content analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the study. The current political discourse in Kazakhstan is undergoing a period of profound transformations caused by internal institutional changes and external geopolitical challenges. Against the background of declared reforms, decentralization of power, devolution processes, and attempts to build a new social contract model, there is an increasing need for a critical understanding of the changes taking place in the country.

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One of the most active and reflexive forms of such understanding is public analysis broadcast by leading political experts and publicists such as Dosym Satpayev, Sanzhar Bokayev, Andrei Chebotarev, and Karlygash Yezhenova.

The experts' discourse not only reflects the state of the political field, but also forms a space of alternative interpretations, political expectations, and value frameworks, as speakers perform the function of «value mediators» between society and power, articulating critical meanings, Prognoses, and institutional deficits. Expert discourse acquires special importance as a channel for value articulation and social reflection in the context of limited political pluralism and weak party competition.

The theory of spiral dynamics (K. Graves, D. Beck, K. Cowan) allows us to reveal the deep structure of these meanings through analysis of predominant value memes (vMEMEs), which determine not only the content of analytical narratives but also the level of public demand for change. The study of dominant subjects in the rhetoric of political experts represents an important step towards understanding the value architecture of the Kazakh discourse, identifying contradictions between the institutional status quo and attempts to overcome it intellectually. It is particularly relevant in the period of unstable political identity, attempts to transition to a «Listening State», and the growth of public mistrust towards formal institutions.

The aim of the study is to identify and interpret the dominant and auxiliary value memes broadcast by Kazakh political experts in a public discourse.

The study's object is the public discourse of leading Kazakh political experts, including interviews, columns, analytical comments, speeches regarding the current political agenda, and publications on social networks. *The subject of the study* is the value memes from the statements made by these experts according to the theory of spiral dynamics (K. Graves, D. Beck, K. Cowan).

The research question is formulated as follows: *Which dominant and auxiliary value MEMEs are transmitted by Kazakh political experts in their public discourse, and what is the structure of these t-memes in the context of the country's political dynamics?*

The study is based on the essential position of the spiral dynamics theory, in which a person, regardless of living conditions, transmits a dominant vMEME. This allows one to interpret not only the content of the statement but also the deep levels of motivation, perception, and positioning of the subject.

The scientific novelty of this study. The scientific novelty of this study lies in the targeted application of Spiral Dynamics theory to the analysis of public rhetoric by Kazakhstani political experts, using content analysis as the core methodological tool. Based on a systematic content analysis of extensive samples of direct speech by four influential experts, their statements are interpreted in terms of the structure of vMEMEs. This approach makes it possible to:

- identify individual and typological features of value orientations in the public speech of the analyzed political experts;
- interpret political rhetoric as a reflection of deeper levels of value evolution;

- apply Spiral Dynamics as a practical analytical tool for examining expert public discourse;
- capture intra-group rhetorical and ideological diversity within the professional field;
- empirically demonstrate how different levels of value-based thinking influence interpretations of current political developments.

In contrast to traditional approaches focused on institutions or normative structures, this study offers a value-semantic analysis of expert discourse based on their actual language practices. The sample size of over 670,000 words of direct public speech ensures the validity of the analysis and sufficient interpretive depth. The study demonstrates the potential of Spiral Dynamics as a tool for analyzing political-expert discourse in the post-Soviet context, using the example of specific, carefully selected figures.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used qualitative and quantitative content analysis of public statements by Kazakhstani political experts to identify dominant and auxiliary value memes broadcast in their discourse. The theoretical and methodological basis of the study is based on the provisions of the theory of spiral dynamics (K. Graves as interpreted by D. Beck and K. Cowen), according to which the levels of values of a person or group are formed as an adaptive response to changing life conditions.

Data sample. The study used a continuous sample of all available materials containing direct speech of four Kazakhstani political experts published in the public domain from the beginning of their public activities to the start of 2025. The analysis included:

- author articles, blogs, posts on social networks;
- interviews in video and text format (YouTube, Internet media);
- podcasts, lectures, conference presentations;
- expert comments and analytical remarks in national and international media.

The sample included only texts containing meaningful, identifiable direct speech of experts. The total volume of the analyzed text was:

- Dosym Satpayev - 431,467 words;
- Sanzhar Bokayev - 53,443 words;
- Andrei Chebotarev - 100,368 words;
- Karlygash Yezhenova - 86,876 words.

This study is part of a larger research project that includes content analysis of the public discourse of 25 Kazakh speakers, divided into different categories. This article presents the category «political scientists». In each category, 4-8 speakers are selected, representing the most active and influential participants of the public field. Selection was based on the following criteria:

- systematic and sustained involvement in public discourse, regular media appearances, participation in expert discussions, publication of analytical materials and comments on the current political agenda;

- influence on the formation of public interpretations and agenda, recorded through a high level of media visibility and active participation in the production of expert judgements;
- the availability of a sufficient volume of accessible texts of direct public speech, which allows for ensuring a valid content-analytical base;
- ideological and rhetorical diversity within the group, allowing a comparative analysis of different types of thinking within the same professional field.

In order to ensure transparency and analytical justification of expert selection, we clarify that the four political experts analyzed in this article were selected through a deliberative process involving the project's core research team and external academic consultants. The selection was carried out by an expert panel based on a purposive sampling strategy. While three of the selected experts possess academic credentials and have published scholarly work, one participant, Karlygash Yezhenova, was included based on her institutional position and discursive impact as editor-in-chief of Exclusive.kz, a multimedia analytical outlet that has been operating since 2002 and is recognized as a key platform in Kazakhstan's civic media landscape. Yezhenova's editorial leadership and public commentary provide an important dimension to the country's political discourse, particularly in terms of media framing and value-driven interpretation of current affairs. Although no candidates were formally excluded during the selection process, only those who met all inclusion criteria and whose public content met the minimum analytical threshold were retained.

All four experts are mainly related to the city of Almaty, which reflects the real spatial structure of the intellectual field of Kazakhstan, where the leading analytical centres, civic initiatives, independent media, and expert communities are concentrated in Almaty. Thus, geographical concentration is not an aspect of sampling, but represents the institutional fact of the contemporary Kazakh context.

It should also be stressed that this study does not claim to be representative in a statistical or universalizing sense, nor does it claim that specific structures of value memes characterize all representatives of the political community. The work represents a separate analytical segment focused on the development and verification of methodological tools for the analysis of value structures of public expert discourse within the framework of the theory of spiral dynamics. All experts agreed to participate in the study following ethical standards. They also conducted interviews and underwent tests on spiral dynamics, the results of which will be published in the future.

Unit and procedure of analysis. The unit of analysis was a paragraph and a semantically completed text fragment having content and value load. In cases where the fragment contained internally heterogeneous blocks of meaning, the fragmentation into micro-fragments was carried out. vMEME was encoded manually, and specialized software such as MAXQDA was used to build a coding base, perform statistical processing, and perform data visualization. Python to structure text and visualize vMEME. In each fragment, the following was defined:

- the dominant vMEME (determined by the number and significance of lexical-semantic markers and logical-semantic construction);

- auxiliary vMEME, if they were clearly expressed in parallel structures of the fragment.

The coding was carried out on the eight-level spiral dynamics model: beige, purple, red, blue, orange, green, yellow, and turquoise. For each level, a categorical matrix of keywords, phrases, and intensities was developed based on the theoretical provisions of the model and adapted to the Kazakh political and cultural context. Operationalization of categories passed the pilot testing phase on a random sub-sample of 1500 words, with subsequent correction of markers.

Reliability and verification. The prominent researcher performed the coding manually with constant verification against the categorical matrix. To check internal reliability, a repeated analysis of 10% of the sample was conducted after a week, which allowed us to record the level of intra-coder consistency (Cohen's Kappa = 0.84). The project archive will store all coding files and the category structure.

Methodological limitations. In this study, we, as the authors, note that vMEMEs manifested in public statements are not always an accurate projection of the speakers' values. Public discourse can perform an instrumental-communicative function, adapting to a specific audience, the format of the speech, or the current political context. Nevertheless, the stable reproduction of certain memes and logics allows us to identify the dominant levels of thinking broadcast in the expert environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Spiral Dynamics Theory, developed by Clare Graves (Graves, 1974) and systemized by Don Beck and Cowan (Beck & Cowan, 1996), is a theoretical foundation of this study. The model has formed the basis of numerous studies in the field of leadership by Pesut (2001), Rosado (2004), political management by Kotze (2009), cultural dynamics by Butters (2015), and the analysis of worldview shifts in national communities by Pierre (2014).

One of the key advantages of Graves' model is its ability to explain how subjects adapt to changing conditions by transforming their cognitive and normative matrices (Graves, 1974; Kotze, 2009). According to the model, the levels of value consciousness are not fixed and linear, but represent a spiral, oscillating dynamics with the possibility of progression and regression. This feature makes Spiral Dynamics applicable to the analysis of political discourse, where transitions from one normative system to another are traced.

The concept of vMEME, a stable set of behavioral, moral, and cognitive orientations, was supplemented by «value spirals» that manifest themselves in group and institutional dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Rosado, 2004).

The study by Butters (2015) emphasizes that Spiral Dynamics is not just a theoretical framework, but also an analytical tool that allows you to decode normative conflicts and ideological fluctuations in society. He also analyzes the discrepancies between the interpretations of the model and different versions, pointing out the need for a critical approach in its application.

Studying the worldviews of the educated population of China through a questionnaire based on vMEMEs, Pierre (2014) demonstrated how Spiral Dynamics can be adapted to cross-cultural analysis. Although the study did not employ classical content analysis, it set a precedent for operationalizing Graves's model in the context of national discourse, confirming the relevance of the theory in studying the structures of expert thinking, especially in societies undergoing rapid sociocultural transformation.

The methodological basis of this study is based on the qualitative and quantitative content analysis, widely presented in the classic works of Berelson (1952), Krippendorff (2004), and Neuendorf (2017). In the context of spiral dynamics, content analysis allows the identification of lexical and semantic markers and the interpretation of deep semantic structures determined by a specific level of the subject's value evolution. Thus, it becomes a tool for reconstructing the value architecture of public speech.

The study by Kotzé (2009) illustrates the possibility of using the psychometric instrument he developed (Lens questionnaire) to measure Graves' levels of consciousness in psychological and social research, where the project emphasized the potential of the model for the empirical measurement of value orientations, as well as its correlation with the phenomenological and existential traditions in philosophy.

Additional attention is paid to the integrative possibilities of spiral dynamics in the works of Wilber (2000), who proposed the theory of integral quadrants as an extension of the model of consciousness. His concept allows us to link external behavioral manifestations with internal motivational structures, which is important for analyzing public discourse, where meanings are formed through text and context, audience, and institutional positioning.

In interpreting Spiral Dynamics, it is necessary to consider the levels of individual consciousness and the collective, institutional, and cultural manifestations of value systems. Rosado (2004) emphasizes the importance of the memetic approach, within which vMEMEs are considered «cultural genes» transmitted through language, images, rituals, and social practices. This understanding opens up a methodological perspective for analyzing expert discourse as an environment for reproducing value attitudes, stable behavioral models, and ideologemes.

In political analysis, Rosado's approach is particularly productive, since it allows us to consider political leadership, communications, and expert strategies as functions of deep value structures. When applied to public statements by political experts, the vMEME model helps to deconstruct the hidden foundations of rhetoric, such as reliance on hierarchy (blue), efficiency (orange), solidarity (green), or systematicity (yellow).

Kotzé (2009) attempted to combine existential philosophy and spiral dynamics, especially regarding individual development and understanding freedom as a structural component of a mature value system. Within this approach, the spiral is viewed as a continuous interaction between the internal development of the subject and external social conditions, which directly resonates with the context of Kazakhstan's political discourse, which is in a dynamic between authoritarian governance and public calls for reform.

Donkers (2014) develops an integrative approach by combining spiral dynamics with Ken Wilber's quadrant model and introduces the concept of integral dynamics, in which value systems are related to ontological «octant» spaces of interaction between the individual and the collective, the internal and the external.

Donkers (2016) confirms the methodological and conceptual relevance of Graves' model for studying political discourse, especially in transitional societies, where public statements of experts become representations of not only rational arguments, but also deep value structures. In the context of the Kazakhstani political field, where there is a clash between the authoritarian management tradition and the growing demand for systemic modernization, using content analysis based on spiral dynamics allows us to deconstruct expert narratives as a reflection of the cognitive and motivational architecture of political consciousness.

Butters (2015) also notes that the practical application of the model largely depends on its interpretative framework, namely structural, transcendental or pragmatic-functional, which also suggests that in our study, due to the nature of the material of public texts, the use of structural interpretation is justified, focusing on the definition and comparison of vMEMEs as stable configurations of meanings.

Kotzé (2009) writes about contextual correspondence between vMEME levels and the socio-cultural environment. In the context of Kazakhstan, this means the need to adapt categorical matrices and semantic markers to local political and cultural realities. This study adapted the theoretical scales to the Kazakh discursive context and conducted pilot testing of the categories.

Pierre (2014) in the study of Chinese worldviews shows how changing socioeconomic conditions lead to the transformation of the value structure, the transition from traditionalism and collectivism to individualism and pragmatism, and such findings are important in the context of the Kazakh political field, where clashes between collectivist norms and individualized forms of political subjectivity are also observed.

The transition from theoretical foundations to methodological implications is done by appealing to works devoted to content analysis as a research strategy. Following classical definitions, content analysis is considered a systematic, objective, and reproducible method of quantitative and qualitative text interpretation. This study acts as a tool for operationalizing value levels, allowing us to establish the frequency, contextual relevance, and discursive function of vMEMEs. The idea of a semantically rich unit of analysis of a paragraph or micro fragment is of particular importance as a carrier of meaning and an ideological attitude.

Content analysis becomes a link between the empirical material and the abstract model of value levels, where the methodological framework allows us to move from superficial lexical reading to the reconstruction of the logical and semantic structure of expert discourse, as emphasized by Fairclough (2013) within the framework of critical discourse analysis.

Despite the applied nature, the conclusions about the links between dominant value levels and institutional behavior models can be transferred to analyzing public speech

as an institutional action aimed at legitimizing a specific type of consciousness and action (Trem, 2021). Existing studies form a methodological basis for a comprehensive analysis of political discourse through the prism of spiral dynamics (Rodic, 2016). This work represents a further development of this direction, offering for the first time in the Kazakhstani context a study of public expert statements to identify the structure and evolution of their value motivation.

DISCUSSION & FINDINGS

The public discourse of four Kazakhstani political experts, Dosym Satpayev, Sanzhar Bokayev, Andrei Chebotarev, and Karlygash Yezhenova, demonstrates high-value polyphony. However, it is generally possible to record the predominance of blue, orange, and green vMEMEs, which indicate a focus on institutional order, modernization projects, and humanistic challenges, respectively. All four experts rely to one degree or another on orange rationality, namely, the use of terms related to efficiency, reforms, development, modernization, strategy, and performance indicators is observed among all participants.

Structure of Dominant and Auxiliary vMEMEs: A Comparative Perspective

A comparative analysis showed that all four experts demonstrate a stable commitment to the values of the blue and orange levels. However, the degree of their expression and semantic function varies depending on the individual style of rhetorical priorities. Sanzhar Bokayev demonstrates a nominal dominance of the blue level in actual frequency. However, a semantic analysis revealed a shift in emphasis towards the green vMEME, reflecting social justice, collective responsibility, and dialogue (see Figure 1a). As the analysis showed, the blue vMEME in his discourse is often used in a functional connection with green, acting as a lexical marker for expressing higher humanistic attitudes.

In Dosym Satpayev's discourse, the blue and orange levels also occupy key positions, but perform a different function, as they form the framework of institutional-analytical and pragmatic thinking, within which systemic failures, authoritarian practices, and economic risks are recorded and analyzed. At the same time, there is a clear growth dynamic of the yellow vMEME, especially after 2017, which indicates an expansion of the analytical horizon and a transition to meta-systemic models of explaining political reality (see Figure 1b).

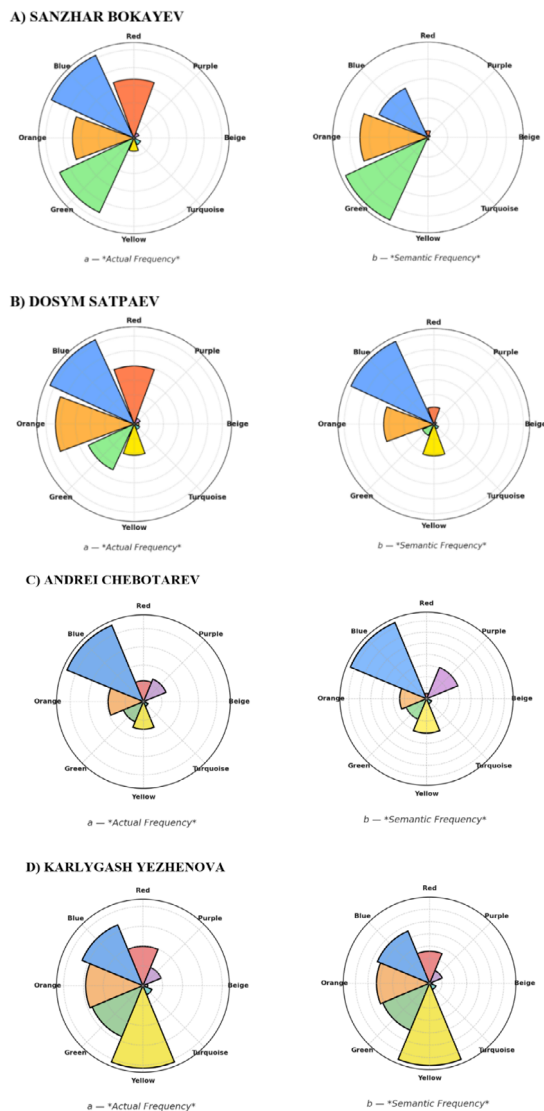
Andrei Chebotarev, unlike Bokayev and Satpayev, presents a more integrative model of thinking, where the blue level performs the function of the structural core, and orange, green, yellow, and purple act as modules of semantic complication. Particularly indicative is the purple vMEME, rare for modern Kazakhstani analysts, which Chebotarev interprets not as traditionalism, but as a cultural-anthropological structure for legitimizing power and collective identity (see Figure 1c).

Karlygash Yezhenova is the only analyzed figure whose dominant vMEME is the yellow level, which is associated with a high level of systemic thinking, reflection, and philosophical depth. Green and orange levels are also consistently represented in her

rhetoric, with a moderate role for blue, which does not determine the structure of the discourse, but is used as an additional layer of criticism of institutional degradation.

Unlike other experts, Karlygash Yezhenova demonstrates the beginnings of the turquoise level, which manifests itself in the themes of global ethics, value integrity, and the ultimate horizons of social imagination (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Comparative Structure of Dominant and Auxiliary vMEMEs in the Discourse of Kazakhstani Political Experts: Profiles of D. Satpayev, S. Bokayev, A. Chebotarev, and K. Yezhenova



Source: authors' compilation based on survey data

Differences in types of semantic load and rhetorical strategies. The analysis revealed significant differences in how v-memes structure the rhetorical strategies of experts (see Table 1). Several studies have been conducted on this topic.

Table 1. Comparative table of dominant vMEMEs

Expert	Dominant vMEMEs	Secondary vMEMEs	Characteristics
Sanzhar Bokayev	Green (Social Justice)	Blue, Orange	It demonstrates a rhetorical shift from institutional normativity (blue) to humanistic and socially oriented discourse (green). It emphasizes collective responsibility, dialogue, and civic engagement while still operating within modernizing (orange) and rule-based (blue) frameworks.
Dosym Satpayev	Blue (Institutional Analysis)	Orange, Yellow	Maintains a strong analytical focus on institutional dysfunction and authoritarian patterns (blue), framed within modernization and reformist language (orange). Increasingly, it exhibits systemic, reflective thinking and value-pluralism (yellow), especially after 2017.
Andrei Chebotarev	Blue (State Structures & Stability)	Green, Yellow, Purple	Constructs discourse with a core emphasis on governance and structural continuity (blue), while integrating social sensitivity (green), complex systemic awareness (yellow), and rare cultural-anthropological dimensions (purple) related to identity and legitimacy.
Karlygash Yezhenova	Yellow (Meta-Analysis)	Green, Orange, Blue	Operates predominantly at a meta-systemic level (yellow), characterized by high cognitive complexity, multidimensional analysis, and value-integration. Incorporates green-level ethics, social justice concerns, and critical orange-level modernization discourse. Blue elements are mainly used to deconstruct institutional limitations. Also displays early signs of turquoise-level thinking.

Source: authors' compilation based on survey data

Bokayev has a humanistic focus on legal justice, support, and trust. His discourse evolves from a normative-law-centric model to an emphasis on collective change, integrating the blue level into the green narrative, indicating a value evolution toward active participation and responsibility.

Satpayev, on the contrary, maintains an institutional distance, acting as an analyst, recording patterns of power, crisis, and transformation. His transition from blue and orange logic to a yellow meta-perspective is expressed not in emotional rhetoric but in the complication of analytical constructs. He is less interested in moral or humanistic optics, focusing on scenario forecasting and the systemic vulnerability of the Kazakh regime.

Chebotarev creates the most balanced structure of vMEMEs, where each level performs its function, where blue provides analytical discipline, green introduces civic sensitivity, yellow provides a systemic perspective, and purple records profound cultural logic. His discourse is characterized by high cognitive complexity and cultural sensitivity, while maintaining analytical precision.

Karlygash Yezhenova, unlike the others, forms a value-ironic metaposition that combines yellow systemic thinking, green moral sensitivity, and critical distance. She does not so much describe political reality as reflect its symbolic structures, revealing internal paradoxes and traumas. Thus, her rhetoric is closest to the second order of consciousness in terms of the theory of spiral dynamics.

Dynamics of transformation of rhetorical attitudes over time

Analysis of the temporal dynamics of experts' public rhetoric showed that the structure of the broadcast vMEMEs is not static but subject to significant changes, reflecting both external political and social transformations and the internal evolution of the authors' analytical positions. Below is a diachronic reconstruction of each expert's vMEME structure based on discursive and frequency analysis.

Sanzhar Bokayev: from normative to humanistic thinking

In the period before 2018, Sanzhar Bokayev's rhetoric was mainly structured around the blue vMEME, emphasizing law, order, accountability, and institutional discipline. The main statements of this stage were focused on normative criticism of governance, calls for compliance with legal norms, transparency of budget policy, and institutional accountability.

However, starting from 2019-2020, a gradual strengthening of the green vMEME has been recorded, which was expressed in a change in the rhetorical emphasis on social justice, support for vulnerable groups, collective responsibility, and trust between society and the state. It was during this period that Bokayev's speeches increasingly began to appeal to the concepts of «justice», «public trust», «humanity», and «citizen engagement».

After January 2022, Bokayev's rhetoric has attempted to synthesize the blue and green levels, where legal requirements are used to justify ethically colored social reforms. The orange level in his rhetoric remains stable, becoming more active in the economic agenda, but does not demonstrate pronounced dynamics. The yellow and turquoise levels are recorded fragmentarily, mainly as a reaction to institutional dead ends, but do not form a stable paradigm of thinking.

Dosym Satpayev: from institutional analysis to systemic reflection

In the early period (2004-2011), Dosym Satpayev's rhetoric correlated with the dominance of the blue and orange vMEMEs, which was due to his analytical focus on the institutional architecture of Kazakhstan's statehood, the role of bureaucracy, and structural limitations of modernization. Pragmatic discourse focused on efficiency and economic risks was combined with the ordering syntax characteristic of expert commentary.

From 2012 to 2016, against the backdrop of increasing authoritarian tendencies in the country, the frequency of terms associated with the red vMEME increased in Satpayev's rhetoric. However, it is important to emphasize that these constructions do not express the expert's commitment to the logic of force, but merely record the aggravation of the authoritarian trend in the political system. The blue level retains its leadership, but becomes increasingly critical, pointing to the weakness of institutions and the lack of accountability.

Since 2017, the yellow level has grown clearly, manifesting itself in the complication of analytical constructs, the expansion of scenario models, risk forecasting, and the desire for a meta-systemic view of political processes. The shift is significantly intensified in 2022-2025, when Satpayev, against the backdrop of social upheavals and repressive measures, records a decline in the blue level, as well as an increase in the beige and red levels as signs of social survival and authoritarian pressure, respectively. However, the yellow vMEME continues to grow, forming a stable meta-position of political analysis to understand the crisis as systemic.

Andrei Chebotarev: from institutional rationalism to cultural and ethical integration

From 2005 to 2015, Andrei Chebotarev's rhetoric demonstrated the dominance of blue and orange vMEMEs, which corresponded to institutional monitoring, reform analysis, and management efficiency assessment tasks. However, in this period, elements of the purple level were recorded, distinguishing Chebotarev from other experts. He began integrating political legitimacy's symbolic and ritual components into his analysis, especially concerning the first president.

Since 2016, against the aggravation of elite conflicts, the red level, recorded as a characteristic of the political landscape, has been intensifying. In parallel, there is an increase in the yellow level, which expresses the desire for a comprehensive interpretation of crises, transitions of power, and cultural and political transformations.

Since 2019, Chebotarev's rhetoric has seen a balanced formation of four vMEMEs: blue remains basic (structure), green is strengthened in themes of civic participation, yellow manifests itself in analytical superstructures, and purple stabilizes as a marker of cultural sensitivity.

Since 2022, fragments of turquoise thinking have appeared, especially in the themes of environmental sustainability, global thinking, and long-term ethical and political prospects, but the turquoise level remains peripheral.

Karlygash Yezhenova: from systemic humanism to meta-integration

Since 2012, the yellow vMEME has been present with high intensity in the rhetoric of Karlygash Yezhenova, which makes her thinking the closest to the second-order levels in terms of spiral dynamics. In the early period, her statements show signs of rejection of binary schemes, analytical multi-layering, philosophical irony, and cultural reflection.

Since 2018, the green level has been strengthening in rhetoric, which is associated with an appeal to trauma, social justice, memory, and support for vulnerable groups. The expansion of the humanistic layer occurs against the backdrop of actualizing political and ethical dilemmas associated with the transition period in power and the crisis of trust.

Since 2020, in the context of the pandemic and the growing crisis of governance, the orange level has been strengthening, expressed in criticism of the quasi-public sector, managerial incompetence, and investment dysfunction. However, it does not replace the humanistic optics, but becomes an auxiliary module in the yellow-green frame.

Since 2022-2024, the emergence of stable elements of the turquoise vMEME has been recorded, expressed in the themes of global responsibility, an ethical state, spiritual sustainability, and systemic trust. Despite the limited lexical expression, Karlygash Yezhenova's turquoise level is gradually acquiring cognitive form, forming an integrative horizon of her thinking.

CONCLUSION

The study allowed us to achieve the set goal and answer the formulated research question concerning the structure of dominant and auxiliary value memes broadcast by Kazakhstani political experts in public discourse. Based on the systemic content analysis of the statements of four key experts, Dosym Satpayev, Sanzhar Bokayev, Andrei Chebotarev, and Karlygash Yezhenova, a stable value polyphony was revealed, while there is a differentiation of rhetorical strategies, levels of thinking, and methods of value articulation depending on the individual cognitive profile of each expert. It was found that blue and orange vMEMEs (institutional order and modernization rationality) prevail in the rhetoric of all four analysts. However, they are implemented in different semantic links and rhetorical purposes.

Bokayev transforms from normative logic to humanistic logic (green vMEME), while Satpayev moves from pragmatic analysis to systemic reflection (yellow vMEME). Chebotarev demonstrates the most balanced and multi-layered structure of discourse, including a purple level, rare for the Kazakhstani context, reflecting attention to the cultural and anthropological foundations of legitimacy.

Karlygash Yezhenova stands out for the high frequency and cognitive development of the yellow vMEME, supplemented by signs of turquoise thinking, which may indicate the formation of an integrative meta-level of value consciousness in her. Of particular importance is the revealed dynamics of the transformation of vMEMEs over time. The transition from the dominance of the first orders to the levels of system integration is observed among all experts, but is realized at different speeds and intensities, which indicates that expert discourse in Kazakhstan is not a static structure, but develops in response to foreign policy challenges, crises of confidence, institutional upheavals, and changing audience demand.

From a theoretical point of view, the study confirms the heuristic potential of the spiral dynamics theory in the analysis of political discourse, allowing us to describe not only the substantive aspects of analytical statements but also the deep structure of thinking, as well as the mechanisms of adaptation of expert consciousness to transforming conditions. Methodologically, the work demonstrates the applicability of the eight-level model within the framework of the content analysis of expert statements in the context of a hybrid political regime, where the symbolic and value diversity of the expert scene compensates institutional limitations.

Analytics in Kazakhstan acts not only as a producer of interpretations, but also as a value system in the process of evolution, reflecting not only institutional realities, but also cultural matrices, intellectual trajectories, and public expectations. Spiral dynamics in this context becomes not just an analytical tool, but also a way of mapping

the future in the logic of the transition from normative to integral forms of political consciousness.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the journal's requirement to disclose any potential conflicts of interest, we would like to formally state that no such conflicts exist in relation to our submitted manuscript. The empirical data used in our research were independently and originally collected by the authors. We do not share this dataset with any third parties, and there is no institutional or financial involvement that could influence the objectivity or integrity of our analysis. All analytical work and interpretations presented in the paper are entirely our own and were developed without external influence.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

GI: supervision, conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, validation, writing – review & editing, project administration, and funding acquisition; MA: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, validation, software, writing – original draft, visualization.

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