Portrayal of Kazakhstan: Sentiment and Topics in Online Media (2022-2023)

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Abstract—This paper sought to delineate how English media frame Kazakhstan. We employed co-occurrence network and sentiment analysis across 130 newspaper pieces published in 2022 and 2023. The results showed that the news in the UK and Qatar often associated Kazakhstan with Russia and China, and also referred to it as a Muslim country, which until the events of January 2022 was considered a peaceful and quiet country. Among the prevailing terms, there were "Kazakhstan," "country," "Tokayev," "Russia," and "protest". Kazakhstan was represented as a country ruled by an influential leader (Tokayev), maintaining diplomatic relations with countries in Europe and Asia. Kazakhstan's image suffered due to the violent crackdown on protests during the January events and accusations of supporting Russia to circumvent sanctions, which the government denies. However, the January events awakened a wave of foreign media interest in Kazakhstan, which gradually subsided over time. The sentiment analysis unearthed that the peak of positive sentiment coincided with events such as scientific achievements, cultural successes and progressive changes, while the decline was characterized by coverage of problems within the country facing serious challenges, including worker safety issues, political suppression, economic instability and questions about the legitimacy of elections. Resultantly, a rather ambivalent portrayal emerged.

Index Terms—corpus linguistics, media framing, news, world

I. INTRODUCTION

A country's image as a multifaceted process wherein people shape intricate mental frameworks influenced by both indigenous factors like national branding and exogenous factors such as media (Xing & Jin, 2023). Consequently, the portrayal of a nation on the global stage holds immense significance. Particularly, the impressions framed by global news bring about manifold implications. E.g., they can confront unfavorable stereotypes, spark business prospects, and isolate or unite nations (Thumpakattu, 2021). The advent of digital technology has enabled faster and widespread circulation of news across the masses. This has been made possible through the use of digital communication platforms and social media, which enable news organizations to reach a global audience instantaneously (Jiang et al., 2022).

Over recent years, Kazakhstan, the largest country in Central Asia, has been garnering burgeoning media interest owing to its rather brisk development and its ascending role as a key player in Central Asia economy, politics and culture (Aguirre-Unceta, 2023). News outlets are instrumental in capturing how the globe views Kazakhstan, as media do not just mirror the journalist's perspective, but also accommodate the reader in part. Furthermore, political, economic, and ideological interests of language users can be explored through the analysis of linguistic expression (Chernjavskaja & Molodychenko, 2017; Zharkynbekova & Smagulova, 2023). Hence, we seek to contribute to the body of research on the international media representation of countries via parsing news items in the Kazakhstan sections of The Guardian (United Kingdom) and Al-Jazeera (Qatar) tabloids spanning 23 months. This choice was motivated by the fact that these two news outlets employ subjective language when covering events in Kazakhstan, e.g., "the country is inching away from its longstanding Russian alliance" (Wintour, 2023).

The investigated timeframe commences in January 2022, when, following the upsurge in liquid gas prices on January 1, 2022 as Kazakhstan switched to the market pricing model, protests blazed up, later known as the January Events or Bloody January, "Qandy Qantar" (kaz. Қаңтар оқиғасы, Қанды Қаңтар, Қаңтар), spreading throughout the country and involving acts of terrorism and vandalism. Although similar case had already taken place in the city of Zhanaozen in 2010, when protesting workers of an oil plant were shot, Qandy Qantar triggered perhaps an unprecedented international media resonance for the entire period of the republic independence. This news hook closed the COVID agenda in the Russian-language media landscape, while halting the era of Kazakhstan as an overlooked spot on the globe to the English-language press.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first effort to tackle how English media across continents frame Kazakhstan. The portrait of Kazakhstan has been scarcely covered in the reputable academic literature, and unfortunately, almost all of the writings on the Internet are of poor quality. For instance, in the studies by Bączkowska and Khokhlacheva (2019)

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and Bączkowska et al. (2020) the focus was narrowed to the capital of Kazakhstan and the authors approached only Russian-language sources from post-Soviet countries, moreover limiting their approach to a qualitative analysis. The study by Kozhakhmetova (2020) was based exclusively on Kazakhstani Russian-language media. The paper by Kuash and Kabylgazina (2023) addressed the image of Kazakhstan 2018-2022, but it relied solely upon a single Chinese newspaper. One exception is the thesis by Gazizov (2017), which, however, involved only US news periodicals for 2015-2017, and, in support of what we denoted earlier, the only prominent topic there was the boxer Gennady Golovkin.

The theoretical framework for this study rested on the active audience theory, suggesting that audiences tend to align with the messages from their preferred media, sidestepping unwanted content; therefore, the meaning of a text is not solely shaped by its creator's preferences but also by how the text is interpreted by its reader (Taylor, 2022).

II. RESEARCH METHOD

To assess Kazakhstan's portrayal in international media, we manually collected all news articles tagged with Kazakhstan, published between January 4, 2022, and November 20, 2023, from aljazeera.com and theguardian.com in early December 2023. We excluded non-textual content like videos, saving headlines and body text from 130 media outlets into an Excel spreadsheet. We created a list of stop words (primarily function words) and uploaded the dataset to KH Coder software to perform a co-occurrence analysis, combining word frequency and co-occurrence relations based on the Jaccard coefficient. This process helped identify prevalent topics in the corpus and their associations, visualized through co-occurrence networks. Understanding both positive and negative aspects of any country is crucial for forming a balanced and accurate impression. To analyze sentiment, we used the tidytext package, which classified the content into negative and positive sentiments.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Word Frequency

A word frequency analysis with locutions frequently encountered in the Portrayal of Kazakhstan is presented in Figure 1. Among the prevailing terms, there were "Kazakhstan" (803 references) and "country" (538 references), then "Tokayev" (519 references), "Russia" (466 references) and "protest" (429 references).

This paper deals with the image of Kazakhstan, with the word "Kazakhstan" being the key word, hence the most frequent one. Kazakhstan is a country, in which case the word "country" acts as a synonym for the name of the republic, which also increases its chances of appearing in the news text.

The peak of news about Kazakhstan coincided with the January events, followed by a gradual fading of interest in the country. On average, after the gradual decline in interest, there were 1-2 articles about Kazakhstan per month, and there were months when there were no publications at all. In this regard, we believe it is correct to consider frequently occurring words in close connection with the news about the January events.

The frequent occurrence of the surname "Tokayev" may primarily indicate that the Kazakh president's governance, policies and international commitments have attracted media attention. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's leadership style, decisions and diplomatic commitments have repeatedly become key topics of coverage, especially when they have affected international relations or regional dynamics. Overall, the frequency of the terms "Kazakhstan," "country," and "Tokayev" in the media may signify a global interest in Kazakhstan's political landscape, its role in international affairs and the guiding decisions made by President Tokayev that could potentially affect the country's development trajectory. There is news that Tokayev has never faced mass rallies in the country during his short reign (since 2019), but has done his best to resolve issues peacefully. For example, *"Tokayev tweeted that authorities had taken a decision to lower LPG prices in Mangistau in order to ensure stability in the country"*.

However, following the President's statement to "*act decisively*" against the protesters, the US, UK, Turkey, Belarus and France called on the Kazakh government to peacefully resolve the conflict.

The German government also called for de-escalation, and viewed the government's decision to use force very negatively. Representatives of the United Nations called for the release of all detainees solely for exercising their right to peaceful protest: *"...all those detained solely for exercising their right to peaceful protest"*.

China took a different view, *praising the Kazakhstan government's deadly crackdown on protesters as "highly responsible."* Russia also supported Kazakhstan's position, particularly in the decision to block Internet and mobile communications. This fragment highlights Putin's concern about the role of social media in the protests, suggesting that it can be used to spread misinformation and incite violence: *"Putin also said the events in Kazakhstan showed the dangers of social media and unrestricted internet use"*.

The word "protest" is one of the frequently used words due to the high volume of news about the January events. For example, the question *"What is behind the protests rocking Kazakhstan?"* was often raised. The connection of the word "protest" with the surname of the president is presented in the exemplar fragment: *"Tokayev has accused foreign-trained "terrorist gangs" of driving the unrest"*.

Foreign experts believe that *"the protests will hurt the reputation of the Kazakh government which has always been a fairly stable country"*. They argue that *"Tokayev's move during the protests to sack the country's cabinet did little to ease dissent"*.

There is a limited response of Western countries to the unrest in Kazakhstan, which may reflect their lack of influence in the region: *"The West has so far mainly limited its response to calls for calm"*.
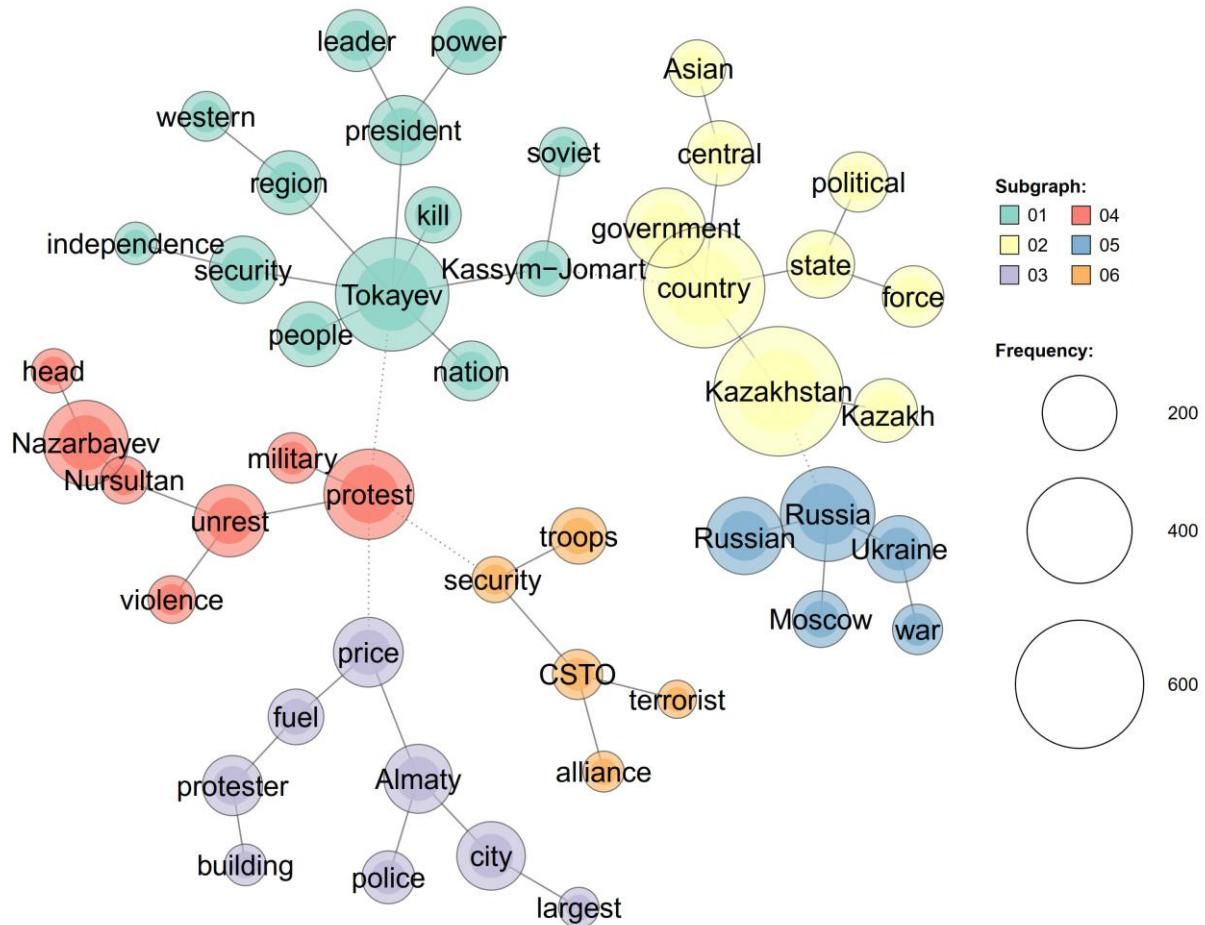

Figure 1. Co-Occurrence Network Analysis of Extracted Words in Portrayal of Kazakhstan

B. Co-Occurrence Network Analysis

According Figure 1, we consider 5 main clusters.

(a). The Word Cluster "Tokayev"

The word cluster "Tokayev" encompasses topics related to the "president" "leader" "power" "Western" "region" "Soviet" "independence" "kill" "people" "nation" and "security". Here are relevant exemplar fragments from the corpus for each of the topics, along with an explanation of how the cluster is represented in the corpus from linguistic and framing standpoints:

1. President / Leader

The cluster "Tokayev" is linguistically represented as the president and leader of Kazakhstan. From a framing standpoint, the text portrays Tokayev as the central figure in the government's response to the protests, emphasizing his actions and decisions as the country's leader. Exemplar fragment: *"Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has sacked his cabinet and imposed states of emergency in the country's largest city and an oil-rich western region following mass protests triggered by a rise in fuel price"*.

2. Power

The cluster "Tokayev" is linguistically represented in the context of wielding power and authority. From a framing standpoint, the text depicts Tokayev's use of power in responding to the protests, highlighting the severity of his actions and the control he exerts over the situation. Exemplar fragment: *"Faced with a popular uprising Kazakhstan's president Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has responded in hardline fashion. He has ordered a security crackdown called protesters "terrorists" and said those who take to the streets deserve to be wiped out"*.

3. Western / Region / Soviet / Independence

The cluster "Tokayev" is linguistically represented in the context of the western region, the Soviet era, and Kazakhstan's independence. From a framing standpoint, the text contextualizes Tokayev's actions and the protests within the specific geographic and historical framework of the western region, the Soviet past, and the country's independence. Exemplar fragment: *"The protests started in the town of Zhanaozen in the oil-rich western Mangistau region before spreading to other areas"*.

4. Kill / People / Nation / Security:

The cluster "Tokayev" is linguistically represented in the context of security and the nation, with references to his response to the protests and the use of force. From a framing standpoint, the text emphasizes Tokayev's role in addressing the security implications of the protests and the measures taken to maintain control and order in the country. Exemplar fragments: *"Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has promised to act "robustly" in response to nationwide protests prompted by a sharp rise in fuel prices as he took over as head of the country's Security Council."* and *"Tokayev said in an ominous televised address that he had ordered troops to kill demonstrators without warning in the event of further disturbances"*.

It is impossible not to mention the tragedy that happened not so long ago on October 28, when 46 miners died as a result of a fire at the Kostenko coal mine in the Karaganda region. Exemplar fragment: *"Dozens of miners killed in fire inside Kazakhstan coal mine."* The news about the killing of people affected Kazakhstan's reputation in a negative way, highlighting domestic problems.

In summary, the word cluster "Tokayev" is represented in the corpus both linguistically, through direct references to the president and leader of Kazakhstan, and from a framing standpoint, by highlighting his use of power, the geographic and historical context of his actions, and the security implications of the protests.

(b). The Word Cluster "Country"

The linguistic representation of the cluster "country" in the corpus is primarily through the use of proper nouns, adjectives, and verbs that describe the political, economic, and social conditions in Kazakhstan. For instance, the corpus uses words such as "authoritarian government," "free-market economy," "violent crackdown," "commercial capital," "prosperity," "unrest," "oil reserves," "vestiges of the command economy," "high-handedness," "tribal identities," "rights watchdog," "post-Soviet wealth," "untapped hydrocarbons," "economic stagnation," and "corruption" to describe the country. These words are used to frame the discourse around the challenges faced by the government, the aspirations of the people, and the impact of external factors on the country's development. The corpus also uses examples and anecdotes to illustrate the points being made, such as the description of Almaty as a mirage of prosperity, the impact of inequality on the protests, and the role of tribal identities in the country's political life. Overall, the linguistic representation of the cluster "country" in the corpus is characterized by a critical and analytical tone that seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex issues facing Kazakhstan.

The framing representation of the cluster "country" in the corpus is characterized by a critical and analytical perspective on the political, economic, and social dynamics in Kazakhstan. It highlights issues such as corruption, authoritarianism, economic inequality, and the impact of foreign involvement. The framing of the cluster 'country' in the corpus emphasizes the challenges faced by the government, the grievances of the people, and the geopolitical implications of the unrest in Kazakhstan.

(c). The Word Cluster "Price"

The word cluster "price" encompasses words such as "price," "fuel," "protester," "building," "Almaty," "police," "city," and "largest". The provided corpus contains a detailed account of protests in Kazakhstan triggered by a rise in fuel prices, particularly liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Here are the relevant exemplar fragments from the corpus for each word in the cluster:

1. Price / Fuel

The protests were sparked by the lifting of price caps on LPG, with demonstrators demanding a reduction in the price of LPG, which is used by many to power their cars, especially in the western region of the country where most of Kazakhstan's oil reserves are located.

2. Protester

The corpus contains numerous references to the protesters who took to the streets in various cities, including Almaty, demanding lower fuel prices and expressing broader discontent with the government.

3. Building

Government buildings were reportedly taken over by protesters, and the Almaty mayor's office was set on fire during the protests.

4. Almaty / Largest

The largest city in Kazakhstan, Almaty, was a major center of the protests, with reports of violent clashes and the storming of the airport, unprecedented thousands-strong marches and violent clashes with the police.

5. Police

The police were involved in attempting to disperse the protesters, with reports of tear gas, stun grenades, and even gunfire as the protests escalated.

6. City

The protests took place in various towns and cities, including Almaty, and regional hubs like Aktau on the Caspian Sea coast.

From a linguistic and framing standpoint, the cluster "price" is represented in the corpus as the central issue that sparked widespread public dissent and protests. The rise in fuel prices, particularly LPG, served as a catalyst for the demonstrations, which quickly evolved into a broader expression of discontent with the government, including demands for lower fuel prices, better pay, and working conditions. The protests were characterized by a significant level of public anger and frustration, leading to unprecedented mass gatherings, violent clashes with the police, and the storming of government buildings and the airport. The framing of the cluster "price" in the corpus is one of social unrest, public dissatisfaction, and the government's struggle to regain control in the face of widespread protests and escalating violence.

(d). The Word Cluster "Protest"

The word "protest" encompasses a cluster of words related to protests, including "military" "unrest" "violence" "Nursultan" "Nazarbayev" and "head". In the given corpus, the word "protest" is used in various contexts, reflecting different aspects of the phenomenon. Here are some exemplar fragments and their explanations:

1. This fragment highlights the diversity of the protesters, suggesting that there was no unified mass movement: *"It is not that a single group or political party took to the streets".*

2. This fragment emphasizes the non-violent nature of most protests in Kazakhstan, contrasting with the events that unfolded in 2021: *"Over all these years protests were never violent".*

3. This fragment illustrates the gradual evolution of the protesters, as they were joined by discontented youth from rural areas: *"Gradually they were joined by groups of marginalized youngsters mainly from the countryside who are dissatisfied with their socioeconomic situation and ever-present corruption".*

4. This fragment highlights the role of young unemployed people in the protests, who were expressing their frustration with injustice: *"In Almaty they slowly became the main group of protesters – young unemployed people from the regions expressing their frustrations against injustice".*

5. This fragment questions the validity of the government's claim that foreign-trained terrorist gangs were responsible for the unrest: *"The president's statement that there were 2000 fighters sponsored from abroad does not seem true".*

6. This fragment recounts a rare instance of violence in Kazakhstan's protest history, which occurred in 2011: *"The only exception were the 2011 Zhanaozen protests where a peaceful demonstration of 1000 oil workers ended with a provocation that led to clashes with the police and the deaths of at least 15 people".*

7. This fragment explains that the protests were initially triggered by a rise in fuel prices, which led to broader dissatisfaction with the political and economic situation in the country: *"The unrest was sparked when the cost of liquefied petroleum gas almost doubled after the authorities lifted price caps – and soon spiraled".*

8. This fragment highlights the protesters' anger towards both the current president and the former president, who has maintained significant influence in the country: "Protesters are angry with Tokayev and benefactor Nursultan Nazarbayev who ruled Kazakhstan between independence in 1991 and 2019 and has remained powerful behind the scenes".

In summary, the word "protest" is used in various contexts in the corpus, reflecting the different aspects of the phenomenon, such as the diversity of protesters, the non-violent nature of most protests, the involvement of marginalized youngsters, and the protesters' anger towards the current and former presidents.

(e). The Word Cluster "Russia"

The word cluster "Russia" encompasses words related to Russia, including "Russian," "Ukraine," "Moscow," and "war". Here are some exemplar fragments and their explanations:

1. Russia / Russian

Russia stood out as one of the frequently referenced nations due to its status as the world's largest country in terms of area. Additionally, it holds significance as a global player and occupies a position as one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (Cansun & Arik, 2019).

This fragment emphasizes the geographical and demographic proximity between Kazakhstan and Russia, which has implications for their political and economic relations: *"Kazakhstan shares a long border with Russia and has a sizeable ethnic Russian population".*

In addition, Russia was often in the news regarding the Bloody January events. Exemplar fragments: *"Kazakhstan asks Russian led alliance for help quelling protests"* and "*Russian paratroopers arrive in Kazakhstan as unrest continues."* This fragment highlights Russia's military involvement in Kazakhstan, which has been described as a

"peacekeeping" mission by the CSTO: *"Russia has sent troops to its ally Kazakhstan as part of peacekeeping forces deployed by the Moscow-headed Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)."* Russia supported Kazakhstan, expressing the opinion that *"in a friendly country there was an externally inspired attempt to forcibly undermine the security and integrity of the state using trained and organized armed formations"* and sent peacekeeping forces to resolve the conflict.

However, Western media treat this support with some skepticism. This fragment suggests that Russia's intervention in Kazakhstan is motivated by its economic interests in the country, particularly its natural resources: *"The Russian deployment was a gamble by the Kremlin that rapid military force could secure its interests in the oil and uranium-producing Central Asian nation by swiftly putting down the worst violence in Kazakhstan's 30 years of independence."*

This fragment suggests that Russia's intervention in Kazakhstan may be related to its geopolitical interests in Ukraine and its desire to assert its influence in the region: *"The decision for the CSTO intervention came just as Russia has demanded security talks with the US over Ukraine and amid fears of a Russian intervention there."*

The EU said Russia's military intervention had triggered *"memories of situations that should be avoided"* and urged Russia to remember Kazakhstan's sovereignty.

2. Moscow

This fragment explains that Moscow is the leading member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a military alliance that includes Kazakhstan and other former Soviet states: "Moscow leads the CSTO security alliance which includes five other former Soviet states".

3. Ukraine / War

Russia was often mentioned in the context of the war with Ukraine and Kazakhstan's attitude to this event. Kazakhstani officials oppose Russia's war with Ukraine. Exemplar fragments: *"Not the time to resolve differences through war."* Amidst the Ukraine conflict, Kazakhstan has navigated quite an equilibrious path. Particularly, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has notably kept communication lines open not just with Russian President Vladimir Putin but also with counterparts in Ukraine and the West. Offering refuge to Russians escaping mobilization, yet steadfastly declining to acknowledge Ukrainian territories under Russian occupation, Kazakhstan has balanced its approach.

Western media, citing interviews with Kazakh officials report that Kazakhstan is ready to mediate a diplomatic solution to the conflict. However, so far, its proposals have not been met, but "*we will shout to be heard*". In turn, Kazakhstani politicians call for an understanding of the precariousness and sensitivity of Kazakhstan's position, since Russia and Kazakhstan are neighbors. For example: "…*continue to be understanding of the precariousness and delicate nature of our position because we are indeed in this neighbourhood*".

In summary, the word cluster "Russia" is used in various contexts in the corpus, reflecting the different aspects of Russia's involvement in the political life of Kazakhstan. The fragments illustrate Russia's geopolitical interests in the region, its military intervention in Kazakhstan, and its economic ties with the country. The media framing of the cluster may reflect different perspectives on Russia's role in the unrest and war in Ukraine, ranging from concerns about foreign interference to accusations of Russian aggression.

C. Sentiment Analysis

Figure 2 presents the chronological dynamics of the sentiment captured in the pieces on Kazakhstan. Except the first quartile of 2022, when news from Kazakhstan centered almost entirely on the January uprisings, the average tone of the texts was above neutral, with peaks in August 2022 and April-May 2023, and a dip in November 2022. The upsurges in August 2022 and April-May 2023 are likely due to the fact that the news items published that time focused on positive stories, such as the Pope's visit, the Russian satellite launch, the election of a new world chess champion and the abolition of the death penalty in Kazakhstan, while using words like "successful" and "peaceful resolution" to describe the reported events. The articles dated November 2022 framed Kazakhstan as a country facing major challenges, including worker safety concerns, political suppression, economic instability, and questions about electoral legitimacy, collectively explaining the drop in affect score. The average emotional connotations of this two-year span can be summarized as rather ambivalent.
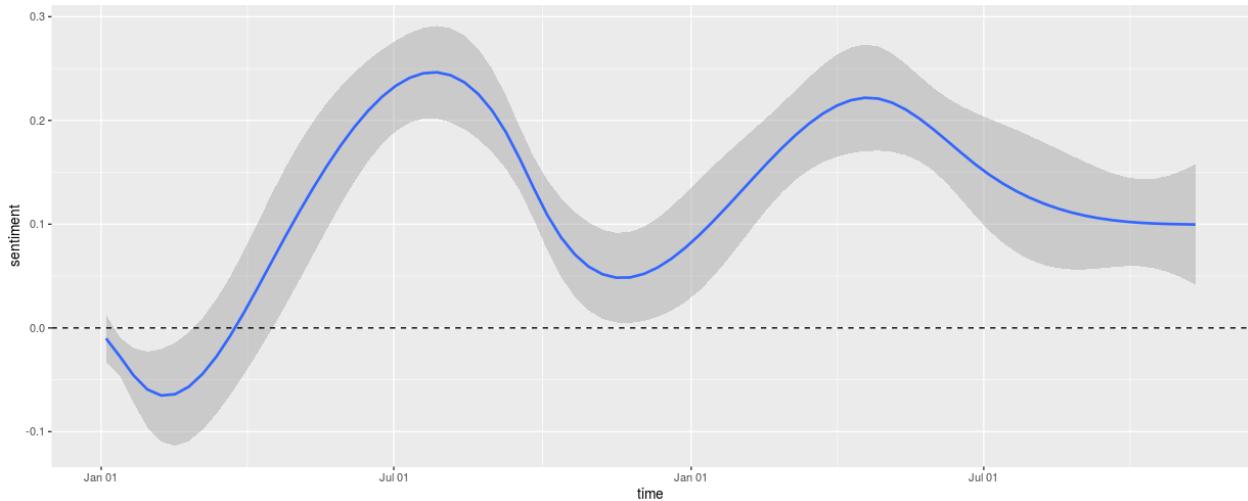
Figure 2. Sentiment Analysis of Extracted Words in Portrayal of Kazakhstan

It is apparent from Figure 3 that term density depleted by the end of the period covered compared to its inception. This is attributed to the decline in the number of publications concerning Kazakhstan in the considered media: by then, the topic of the special military operation on the territory of Ukraine had entered the fading phase, similar to the coronavirus by late 2021, while the military conflict between Israel and Palestine, to which Kazakhstan is not related even indirectly, came to the fore, and the January 2022 events lost their relevance all the more.
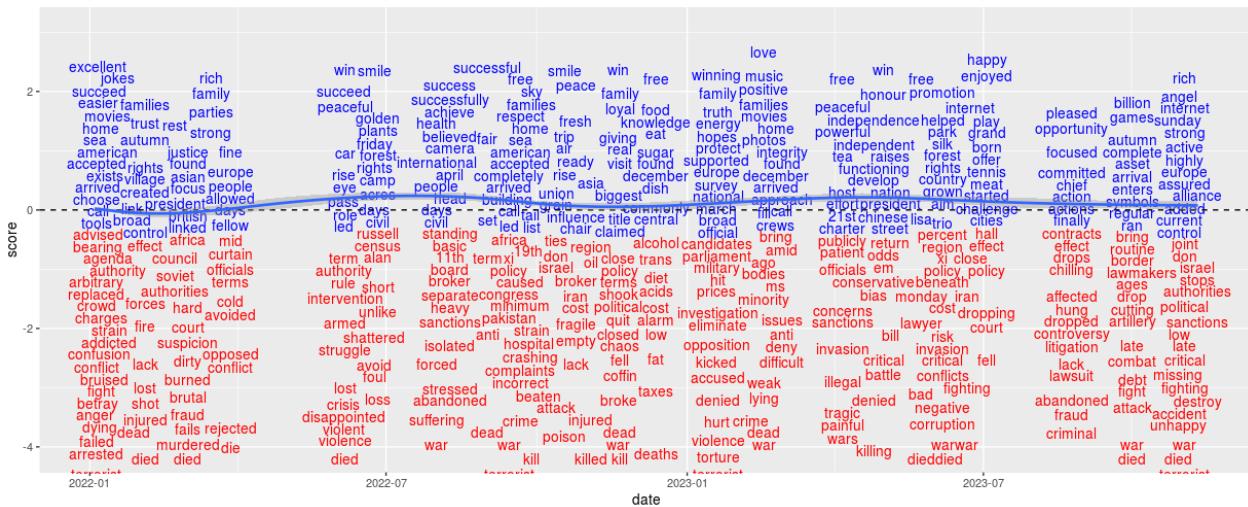
Figure 3. Prevailing Positive (Blue) and Negative (Red) Words in Portrayal of Kazakhstan

Thus, over a two-year period, media coverage of Kazakhstan showcased a fluctuating sentiment. While positive peaks coincided with events like the Pope's visit, scientific achievements, cultural successes, and progressive changes, November 2022 brought forth a negative tone due to highlighted challenges within the country. This resulted in an overall ambivalent emotional portrayal.

Simultaneously, towards the end of the analyzed period, the frequency of Kazakhstan-related terms in media declined, reflecting reduced coverage. This decline aligned with a shift in global media focus towards other international events, causing Kazakhstan-related topics to receive comparatively less attention.

Discussing the above, it should be noted that the portrayal of Kazakhstan in the media is presented in different ways. The representation of modern Kazakhstan society in the Kazakhstani press is analyzed based on the study of newspaper material reflecting axiological components and value semantics of society (Kozhakhmetova, 2020). Favorable portrayals in Central Asian media frequently emphasize Kazakhstan's impact on economics, politics, culture, and its role as a catalyst for forums and summits, contributing positively to global dynamics (Bączkowska et al., 2020). According to Kazakhstani media, Kazakhstan is known in the international arena as the initiator of many forums, summits, and meetings that have a positive impact on the economic, political, and cultural situation both in our country and around the world (zakon.kz, 2014). For example, there have been a number of unprecedented summits with Russia, China, the United States, and France, which want to strengthen and confirm mutual cooperation with Kazakhstan and Central Asia (Bakieva, 2023). The continuity and sustainability of Kazakhstan's foreign policy course in the international arena, as well as adherence to the principle of multivectorism and the development of various forms of

regional integration within the framework of interstate associations such as the SCO, CICA, CSTO, EAEU and others are considered (kazpravda.kz, 2023). With reference to foreign media, Kazakhstani news reports that European and American business leaders believe that Kasym-Jomart Tokayev's reforms not only have a positive impact on the development of democracy in the country, but also make Kazakhstan even more attractive for investment (time.kz, 2022). However, in popular American newspapers, the image of Kazakhstan is more negative than positive, and it is often mentioned in connection with Russia and other post-Soviet countries (Gazizov, 2017). This contrast might stem from diverse geopolitical perspectives, historical contexts, and the specific angles or events these media outlets choose to cover.

Positive views in Central Asian sources could result from Kazakhstan's active role in regional stability and its efforts to engage on the international stage positively. Meanwhile, the negative slant in some American papers might be influenced by broader geopolitical narratives or specific incidents that link Kazakhstan to issues or concerns related to larger global powers like Russia. For example, Kazakhstan's reputation with European countries has been tarnished by accusations that it is helping Russia evade Western sanctions (Hedlund, 2023).

The discrepancy in portrayal might also reflect differing editorial priorities, audience preferences, or the way in which news is framed to align with the interests and perceptions prevalent in their respective regions.

Overall, the varying representations of Kazakhstan in different media sources could be attributed to a complex interplay of geopolitical interests, historical contexts, editorial choices, and the intended audience perspectives of those media outlets.

IV. LIMITATIONS

Media holds the power to craft and influence politics through the imagery it presents, the discourses it weaves, and its portrayal of individuals and occurrences. While an expectation of objectivity and equilibrium exists, the media actively chooses what to highlight or overlook, determining newsworthiness, prioritizing specific actors or events, and providing contextualization. Consequently, the media considerably influences widespread perceptions of individuals and nations (Cansun & Arık, 2019). The media can create and shape policy through the images they show, the stories they tell, and the way they present actors and events. While the media might be expected to be objective and balanced, they select or ignore news, decide what is newsworthy, prioritize certain actors or events, and contextualize them.

Often, news writers are not on the official staff of the newspaper; such news may be copied from another, less reputable source, with a link. In this case, there may be a spread of fake news. Thus, the image of Kazakhstan in the foreign media may not be objective enough, and information from the media should be treated critically.

V. CONCLUSION

Overall, the news articles published in the sampled sourced delineate quite a heterogenous portrait of Kazakhstan, highlighting both the country's problems with safety, political freedom, and democracy, while concurrently illuminating positive shifts in a variety of areas, including peace and diplomacy, human rights, and sporting achievements.

The global perception of a nation holds immense significance. Shaping a favorable image can yield economic growth, trade advantages, heightened tourism, and foster political and defense alliances. How a nation is perceived internationally directly influences its cultural confidence, security, and its potential for global cooperation. Crafting a positive national image involves multiple facets and institutions, such as the presidency, legislative and executive branches, judiciary, political parties, and local governance. Moreover, a positive country image significantly impacts international trade, with even a small rise in positive perceptions correlating to increased trade flows. Hence, it's vital for countries to prioritize and actively manage their portrayal on the world stage.

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