

“Measuring normative endorsement of inclusive principles under ceiling effects: Evidence from Kazakhstan”

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MEASURING NORMATIVE ENDORSEMENT OF INCLUSIVE PRINCIPLES UNDER CEILING EFFECTS: EVIDENCE FROM KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract

This study examines how survey-based endorsement of inclusive principles can be measured when highly approved items produce ceiling effects. It develops a compact formative instrument covering equal starting opportunities, civic interethnic inclusion, universal application of law, and social guarantees. The analysis uses unweighted data from a nationwide descriptive survey sample of 3,123 adults in Kazakhstan, collected through computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) from May 10 to June 5, 2025, across 17 regions and the three cities of republican significance with territorial stratification and quota controls. Soft endorsement reaches 95.4% for equal opportunities and 94.1% for civic interethnic inclusion, while 62.7% rate both core principles as mandatory. Four profiles distinguish dual mandatory, equal-opportunity-only, interethnic-inclusion-only, and no mandatory endorsement. Group differences are small, and the indices show weak but consistent positive associations with perceived institutional and socioeconomic cleavages. The instrument provides a compact baseline for monitoring the intensity and cross-domain consistency of normative endorsement. It measures declarative legitimating standards, not realized inclusion, discrimination, institutional effectiveness, or policy performance.

Keywords

normative endorsement, equality of opportunity, civic inclusion, interethnic inclusion, ceiling effects, formative index, Kazakhstan

JEL Classification

D63, J15, Z13, M14

INTRODUCTION

Value orientations are not merely private preferences; they provide public standards through which citizens interpret social order, assess the legitimacy of inequality, and evaluate institutions. In societies where modernization proceeds alongside durable traditional ties, these standards matter for social cohesion, trust, and the political acceptability of reform (Chan et al., 2006; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017; Levi & Stoker, 2000). In Kazakhstan, this issue is especially salient because urbanization, demographic change, and growing civic activity coexist with stable family- and community-centered solidarities. Recent country assessments also document territorial and socioeconomic inequalities and continuing challenges in public-sector openness, responsiveness, and citizen participation (World Bank, 2025; OECD, 2025).

Against this background, the present paper focuses specifically on normative endorsement of inclusive principles: what respondents believe ought to characterize a just social order. It does not measure realized inclusion, actual discrimination, institutional effectiveness, or policy performance. Four domains are examined: equal starting opportuni-

ties, civic interethnic inclusion, universal application of law, and social guarantees. They were selected from the available seven-item survey battery because they jointly represent procedural, civic, legal, and socioeconomic standards of inclusion, whereas the remaining items concern digitalization, artificial intelligence and progress, or general unity rather than inclusive principles.

This distinction is methodologically important. In mass surveys, public formulations such as equal opportunity, tolerance, or equality before the law often function as valence items: disagreement is socially costly, whereas agreement can be inflated by social desirability, acquiescence, and satisficing (Krosnick, 1991; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Krumpal, 2013). Item-level distributions may therefore display ceiling effects and provide little leverage for distinguishing firm endorsement from softer, more conditional approval. The paper addresses this problem by treating normative endorsement as a formative construct and by building two reproducible indices, SII_narrow and SII_wide, together with SII2_count and a strict binary criterion of mandatory endorsement of both core items (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001).

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

The review is organized according to the conceptual movement required by the research aim: from theories of social inclusion and cohesion to justice and procedural legitimacy, to post-communist and Kazakhstan-focused evidence, and finally to the measurement problem posed by socially desirable normative items. The selected sources serve as theoretical and methodological building blocks for defining survey-based normative endorsement and justifying its formative operationalization.

The international literature conceptualizes social inclusion and exclusion as multidimensional, relational phenomena rather than simple distributive outcomes. Inclusion concerns access to participation, resources, recognition, and institutional procedures that convert formal rights into real trajectories; exclusion concerns blocked access, stigmatization, and symbolic distancing (Silver, 1994; Room, 1995; Levitas et al., 2007). Closely related work on social cohesion likewise emphasizes that membership in a shared social order depends not only on material conditions, but also on trust, belonging, and accepted rules of interaction (Chan et al., 2006; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). This shift from inequality alone toward participation and opportunity is decisive for the present study because it directs attention to the standards by which citizens judge whether a social order is inclusive (Das et al., 2013).

The normative axis of inclusion is strongly connected to theories of justice. Equality of opportunity offers a key criterion for distinguishing le-

gitimate from illegitimate differentiation (Roemer, 1998), while the capabilities approach emphasizes real freedoms and effective opportunities rather than legal form alone (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). Read this way, an inclusive order is not exhausted by formal equality before the law; it also presupposes socially recognized rules that let individuals convert rights into educational, occupational, and civic chances. Survey evidence on inclusive attitudes should therefore be interpreted as evidence about normative expectations and legitimating standards, not as a direct measure of institutional performance.

Research on procedural justice, legitimacy, and political trust adds a second layer. Citizens are more willing to regard institutions as legitimate when rules are perceived as fair, predictable, and universally applicable (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1990; Suchman, 1995). In post-communist settings, trust depends on both cultural dispositions and evaluations of institutional performance (Mishler & Rose, 2001; Levi & Stoker, 2000). Strong survey-based endorsement of universal rules may therefore coexist with dissatisfaction with the existing order; the former records a legitimating standard, not institutional performance.

Accordingly, public support for equal opportunity or equality before the law should not be read as approval of the status quo. It may instead express a normative demand addressed to institutions, consistent with the distinction between legitimating standards and evaluations of institutional performance.

The Kazakhstan-focused literature examines general value orientations and modernization (Kulsarieva, 2025; Zabirowa & Buribayev, 2025), while comparative post-communist research investigates political trust and institutional legitimacy (Mishler & Rose, 2001). These approaches illuminate important substantive dimensions, but they do not provide a compact instrument designed specifically to distinguish the intensity and cross-domain consistency of survey-based endorsement of inclusive principles under ceiling effects.

A further problem concerns measurement. Questions that present clearly approved public principles usually generate high agreement and weak dispersion, especially in face-to-face surveys about justice, tolerance, and collective coexistence. Under such conditions, respondents may rely on socially desirable response strategies or low-effort satisficing, and simple item means reveal little about the boundaries of differentiation (Krosnick, 1991; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Krumpal, 2013). This makes it necessary to distinguish declarative support from more demanding, cross-domain endorsement.

The measurement model should also fit the construct. Equal opportunities, civic interethnic inclusion, legal universalism, and social guarantees are conceptually distinct normative standards rather than interchangeable manifestations of a single latent disposition. Treating them as a formative package is therefore more defensible than forcing them into a reflective scale designed to maximize internal consistency (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). In the Kazakhstan literature, the relevant innovation is not another general values or trust battery, but a reproducible rule for extracting variation from highly endorsed inclusive principles and relating it to perceived social cleavages.

In sum, the literature converges on three propositions: inclusive principles are multidimensional, their normative core is tied to justice and procedural legitimacy, and their survey measurement is vulnerable to ceiling effects. The present study addresses the narrower methodological gap by treating survey-based endorsement of four inclusive principles as a formative construct and testing

whether indexation can distinguish mandatory, partial, and softer endorsement.

The aim of the paper is to operationalize survey-based normative endorsement of inclusive principles as a measurable legitimating standard and to test the diagnostic value of index construction under ceiling effects. To achieve this aim, the study specifies four domains, constructs the SII_{narrow} and SII_{wide} indices, identifies profiles of mandatory and partial endorsement, and examines associations between the indices and perceived social cleavages.

Based on the literature review, the study tests four hypotheses.

- H1: Because the source items are publicly approved normative statements, soft endorsement will be very high, but a strict mandatory threshold will identify a substantially smaller segment with mandatory endorsement across both core domains.*
- H2: The indices, count indicator, and strict profiles will recover variation not visible in item-level approval rates.*
- H3: Differences in dual mandatory endorsement across sociodemographic groups will be observable but small.*
- H4: Higher normative-endorsement index scores will be weakly positively associated with perceptions of institutional and socioeconomic cleavages, especially 'officials versus the people' and 'rich versus poor.'*

Conceptually, the model treats equal starting opportunities, civic interethnic inclusion, legal universalism, and social guarantees as formative domains of normative endorsement rather than as interchangeable manifestations of a reflective latent factor. The two indices (SII_{narrow} and SII_{wide}), SII_{2_count}, and the strict core typology, capture the intensity and cross-domain consistency of endorsement; these survey-based orientations are then related descriptively to sociodemographic positions and perceived social cleavages. The model is diagnostic and associative rather than causal.

2. METHODS

The empirical basis is a nationwide descriptive survey conducted through computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) from May 10 to June 5, 2025, by our research team of scientific program BR24993269 at Zhetysu University named after Ilyas Zhansugurov. The target population included residents of Kazakhstan aged 18 years and older who had lived in the locality for at least six months. Geographic coverage comprised 17 regions and the three cities of republican significance; after data cleaning, the analytic file contained 3,123 unique respondents. The design used territorial stratification and quota controls for gender, age, ethnicity, and settlement type. The sample is therefore used to describe the observed survey distributions, not as a fully documented probability sample for population inference.

The delivered settlement-type variable contained four mutually exclusive source categories: megacity, oblast center, city, and small town. These categories classified all 3,123 respondents. The technical documentation did not provide population-size thresholds for the labels and did not identify a separate village or rural category. The source labels are therefore reproduced without reinterpretation; the 95-respondent category is reported as city. The oldest analytical age category is 55 years and older, consistent with the target population of adults aged 18 years and older.

Ethnicity, linguistic self-identification, education, and subjective financial status were analyzed as mutually exclusive source variables supplied in the analytic file, without post-hoc reclassification. All source categories were retained in the descriptive comparisons and Cramer's *V* calculations, including mixed-origin or undetermined ethnicity, difficult-to-answer linguistic identity, and refusal on subjective financial status. These small or non-substantive response categories are displayed for transparency but interpreted cautiously. Each grouped comparison has a valid *N* = 3,123.

Interviews were administered in Kazakh or Russian according to the respondent's preference and lasted approximately 15–20 minutes. Quality control included GPS verification, audio recording, logical checks, duplicate screening, and follow-up

verification of up to 10% of interviews. The available sampling documentation does not reproduce selection probabilities, cluster or primary-sampling-unit specifications, within-household and respondent-selection procedures, a response rate, or design weights. Survey weights were not available and were not used; all results are therefore reported unweighted. No simple-random-sample confidence intervals are presented, and interpretation rests on within-sample distributions, effect sizes, and rank-based associations.

Normative endorsement is operationalized through four items from a seven-item battery introduced by the question, 'Which attitudes or slogans suit you in the context of building a New Kazakhstan?' The selected items cover equal starting opportunities, civic interethnic inclusion, universal application of law, and decent pay with social protection. They share the same prescriptive response scale and map onto procedural, civic, legal, and socioeconomic standards of inclusion. The other three battery items address digitalization and progress, artificial intelligence and development, or general unity and trust; they were not included because they do not directly operationalize inclusive principles. Response options were 'mandatory,' 'possible,' 'not appropriate,' and 'difficult to answer.'

Two formative composites are constructed. SII_{narrow} captures the normative core through equal starting opportunities and the statement 'New Kazakhstan is a homeland for all ethnic groups.' SII_{wide} adds universal application of law and decent pay with social protection. Coding is uniform: mandatory = 2, possible = 1, not appropriate = 0, and difficult to answer = missing. Both indices are normalized to a 0–100 scale as $(\text{item mean} / 2) \times 100$. Primary estimates use complete cases for all components of the relevant index; available-item means are reported as a sensitivity check. This follows formative-index logic, in which substantively distinct components define the construct rather than serve as interchangeable effects of one latent trait (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001).

Two mandatory-threshold variables are used for the core items. SII2_count records the number of 'mandatory' responses (0, 1, or 2), and SII2_strong equals 1 only when both core items are rated man-

datory. SII2_count and the four-profile typology are calculated among respondents with valid answers to both core items ($N = 3,034$); 'difficult to answer' is treated as missing. SII2_strong is a separate full-sample criterion used for the full-sample share and sociodemographic comparisons: all response patterns other than 'mandatory' on both items, including one or more 'difficult to answer' responses, are coded 0 because they do not meet the dual-mandatory threshold. The full-sample share meeting this criterion is 62.7% (1,958/3,123). A profile with no mandatory response does not imply rejection of the principles, because it may include 'possible' responses. The purpose of the threshold is diagnostic: it distinguishes mandatory cross-domain endorsement from softer endorsement under ceiling effects.

Internal-consistency statistics are treated only as descriptive diagnostics because the indices are formative. Complete-case Cronbach's alpha is 0.547 for SII_narrow ($N = 3,034$) and 0.759 for SII_wide ($N = 2,994$); these values do not determine construct validity. The more relevant checks are whether the selected components cover the four specified normative domains and whether substantive conclusions remain stable under the available-item sensitivity specification (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). Item-level characteristics and diagnostic statistics are reported in Appendix A (Table A1).

The analytical strategy combines unweighted descriptive and associative techniques. Item distributions and complete-case index summaries are reported first. Mandatory endorsement is then compared across settlement type, ethnicity, language identity, age, education, and subjective financial status, with Cramer's V used to describe association strength. Finally, complete-case indices are related to perceived 'officials versus the people' and 'rich versus poor' cleavages using Spearman's rho. All estimates describe the analyzed survey sample; they are not presented as causal effects or design-based population estimates.

2.1. Ethics and data availability

The Commission on Research Ethics of Zhetysay University named after Ilyas Zhansugurov approved the study before fieldwork began on May 10, 2025 (Protocol No. 2025-07/K) and classified it

as minimal risk. Participation was voluntary; interviewers recorded verbal informed consent before beginning the questionnaire, and respondents could discontinue at any time. No direct personal identifiers were included in the analytic dataset. Quality-control audio files were encrypted, stored separately, and not linked to the de-identified analytic file. The de-identified data and coding protocol are not publicly posted but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request, subject to the ethics protocol and project data-governance requirements.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Normative support for inclusive principles

Survey-based endorsement is high across the four selected principles. Equal starting opportunities receive 75.6% 'mandatory' responses ($n = 2,361$) and 19.8% 'possible' responses ($n = 617$), for soft endorsement of 95.4%. Civic interethnic inclusion receives 73.0% 'mandatory' responses ($n = 2,280$) and 21.1% 'possible' responses ($n = 660$), for soft endorsement of 94.1%. Universal application of law is rated mandatory by 75.9% ($n = 2,370$), and decent pay with social protection by 84.2% ($n = 2,631$). These are declarative survey responses about what ought to characterize the social order.

The complete-case indices confirm a ceiling-prone pattern. SII_narrow has a mean of 86.2 ($SD = 21.5$; $N = 3,034$), and SII_wide has a mean of 87.7 ($SD = 19.3$; $N = 2,994$); the median of both indices is 100. As a sensitivity check, available-item scoring produces means of 85.9 ($N = 3,099$) and 87.0 ($N = 3,105$), respectively. The small differences do not alter the substantive pattern.

3.2. Strong support for the normative core

Among the 3,034 respondents with valid answers to both core items, 64.5% ($n = 1,958$) rate both items mandatory, 22.7% ($n = 690$) rate exactly one item mandatory, and 12.7% ($n = 386$) rate neither item mandatory. The four descriptive profiles distinguish dual mandatory endorsement, equal-opportunity-only mandatory endorsement (12.6%, n

Table 1. Descriptive profiles of mandatory endorsement of the normative core

Profile	Criterion	Share, % (n)
Dual mandatory endorsement	'Mandatory' on both core items	64.5% (n = 1,958)
Equal-opportunity-only mandatory endorsement	'Mandatory' on equal opportunities only	12.6% (n = 382)
Interethnic-inclusion-only mandatory endorsement	'Mandatory' on civic interethnic inclusion only	10.2% (n = 308)
No mandatory endorsement	Neither core item rated 'mandatory'	12.7% (n = 386)

Note: Profiles use respondents with valid answers to both core items (N = 3,034). In the full sample (N = 3,123), dual mandatory endorsement is 62.7% (n = 1,958).

= 382), interethnic-inclusion-only mandatory endorsement (10.2%, $n = 308$), and no mandatory endorsement. These are mandatory-threshold categories, not categories of support versus opposition. Using the full sample as the denominator, 62.7% (1,958/3,123) rate both core items as mandatory.

In the full sample, 91.5% endorse both core statements when 'mandatory' and 'possible' are combined, illustrating the loss of differentiation under the soft threshold.

Table 1 summarizes the four mandatory-endorsement profiles for the two core principles.

3.3. Differentiation across social groups

Table 2 presents the complete grouped comparisons. Every source variable classifies all 3,123 respondents, so valid N is 3,123 for each Cramer's V calculation. Mixed-origin or undetermined ethnicity, difficult-to-answer linguistic identity, and

Table 2. Group comparisons of dual mandatory normative endorsement

Variable	Category	n	Dual mandatory, %	Cramer's V
Settlement type	Megacity	747	61.2	0.076
	Oblast center	1,302	60.7	
	City	95	51.6	
	Small town	979	67.6	
Ethnicity	Kazakh	2,202	62.7	0.061
	Russian	463	68.0	
	Other nationality	434	57.8	
	Mixed origin / cannot define	24	50.0	
Linguistic identity	Turkic-language	567	61.0	0.055
	Russian-speaking	672	63.4	
	Bilingual	1,429	64.7	
	Trilingual	395	58.5	
	Difficult to answer	60	51.7	
Age	18–24	637	58.6	0.055
	25–34	660	60.8	
	35–44	663	64.6	
	45–54	612	65.2	
	55 years and older	551	64.8	
Education	Higher / incomplete higher	1,587	61.7	0.056
	Secondary / specialized secondary	1,438	64.7	
	Below secondary / no completed education	98	50.0	
Financial status	High	910	60.0	0.052
	Middle	1,626	65.1	
	Low	333	61.3	
	Refusal	254	59.1	

Note: Valid $N = 3,123$ for every variable. The outcome is the full-sample SII2_strong criterion; response patterns that include one or more 'difficult to answer' core responses are coded 0 because they do not meet the dual-mandatory threshold. All source categories were retained in Cramer's V . Cramer's V is reported once for each variable, in the first row of the corresponding block. The city ($n = 95$), mixed-origin or undetermined ethnicity ($n = 24$), and below-secondary education ($n = 98$) categories are small and are not substantively interpreted. The source settlement variable contains no separate village or rural category.

financial-status refusal were included in both the displayed percentages and the association coefficients. Small categories are retained for transparency and are not substantively interpreted.

The associations are uniformly small. Settlement type has the largest coefficient ($V = 0.076$), followed by ethnicity ($V = 0.061$); language identity, age, education, and subjective financial status range from 0.052 to 0.056. The age pattern rises from 58.6% at ages 18–24 to 64.8% among respondents aged 55 years and older. These estimates describe within-sample variation in survey-based endorsement, not differences in realized inclusion.

3.4. Associations between perceived social cleavages and normative endorsement

Complete-case index scores are weakly and consistently associated with the two focal cleavages. For ‘rich versus poor,’ Spearman’s rho is 0.122 for SII_{narrow} ($N = 2,971$) and 0.131 for SII_{wide} ($N = 2,935$). For ‘officials versus the people,’ rho is 0.118 for SII_{narrow} ($N = 2,964$) and 0.129 for SII_{wide} ($N = 2,931$). The direction is positive under coding from no differences to large differences, but the magnitudes are small and do not support causal or population-level claims. The coefficients and valid sample sizes are summarized in Appendix A (Table A2).

3.5. Diagnostic gain of indexation

The group comparisons show heterogeneity, but their small effect sizes do not identify sharply separated social camps. No status or identity group monopolizes dual mandatory endorsement. The principal empirical distinction is between mandatory, partial, and softer endorsement within a high-approval survey context.

Index construction provides its main diagnostic gain under these ceiling effects. Across the four items, mandatory responses range from 73.0% to 84.2%, while soft endorsement reaches 95.4% and 94.1% on the two core items. The joint soft criterion is met by 91.5% of the full sample. Among respondents with valid answers to both core items, 64.5% rate both items mandatory; this group constitutes 62.7% of the full sample.

The strict count and profile distributions recover variation that is not visible in item-level approval rates, without implying that softer responses constitute opposition.

Table 3 contrasts item-level mandatory endorsement with joint soft and dual-mandatory endorsement, using the denominators specified for each indicator.

Table 3. Marginal and joint indicators of mandatory normative endorsement

Indicator	Share/value
Equal starting opportunities (‘mandatory’)	75.6%
Civic interethnic inclusion (‘mandatory’)	73.0%
Universal application of law (‘mandatory’)	75.9%
Decent pay and social protection (‘mandatory’)	84.2%
Joint soft endorsement of both core items (‘mandatory’ or ‘possible’)	91.5%
Both core items rated ‘mandatory’ among valid core-item responses ($N = 3,034$)	64.5%
Exactly one core item rated ‘mandatory’ among valid core-item responses ($N = 3,034$)	22.7%
No core item rated ‘mandatory’ among valid core-item responses ($N = 3,034$)	12.7%
Both core items rated ‘mandatory’ in the full sample ($N = 3,123$)	62.7%

At the descriptive, within-sample level, all four hypotheses are accepted as supported by the observed results. H1 is accepted: soft endorsement of the core items reaches 95.4% and 94.1%, whereas dual mandatory endorsement is 62.7% of the full sample. H2 is accepted: the index summaries, count indicator, and four profiles distinguish variation concealed by high item-level approval. H3 is accepted: sociodemographic associations are small (Cramer’s $V = 0.052$ – 0.076). H4 is accepted: the indices show weak positive associations with the two focal cleavages (Spearman’s rho = 0.118–0.131). These decisions indicate descriptive support within the analyzed quota sample; they do not constitute formal inferential hypothesis tests or population-level confirmation.

4. DISCUSSION

The first result is the gap between high soft endorsement and less extensive mandatory endorsement. This pattern is compatible with survey research on socially desirable value

items: differentiation reappears when analysis shifts from nominal agreement to intensity and cross-domain consistency (Krosnick, 1991; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Krumpal, 2013). The finding demonstrates the usefulness of formative index construction for the four conceptually distinct normative domains (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001).

Second, survey-based endorsement is high across procedural, civic, legal, and socioeconomic standards. This pattern is consistent with literature linking inclusive principles to equality of opportunity, capabilities, and rules governing access to life chances (Roemer, 1998; Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011; Das et al., 2013). It must not be interpreted as evidence that these standards are realized in Kazakhstan.

Third, stronger index scores are weakly associated with sharper perceptions of 'officials versus the people' and 'rich versus poor.' One interpretation is that universal rules and equal-opportunity principles can function as legitimating standards against which respondents evaluate perceived social distance. This interpretation is consistent with procedural-justice and legitimacy research (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1990; Suchman, 1995; Mishler & Rose, 2001; Levi & Stoker, 2000), but the cross-sectional unweighted data establish association only.

For public-management research, the instrument can track whether normative endorsement changes in intensity or becomes more or less consistent across the four domains. The salience of perceived institutional and socioeconomic cleavages provides a relevant associative context for that monitoring. Neither the indices nor the cleavage correlations evaluate the effectiveness of a policy or institution.

The small sociodemographic effect sizes indicate that the main analytical variation in this survey sample lies in the intensity and cross-domain consistency of endorsement rather than in sharp group polarization. For repeated descriptive surveys, the strict threshold and profile distribution may therefore be more informative than aggregate approval alone.

Several limitations follow directly from the design. The indicators capture declarative endorsement of normatively loaded and partly compound statements; the study is cross-sectional; the quota sample is unweighted; and the available documentation does not permit design-based population inference. The analysis also relies on one item per domain and does not establish formal equivalence between the Kazakh- and Russian-language versions. The results therefore do not measure realized inclusion, discrimination, institutional effectiveness, or policy performance.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to operationalize survey-based normative endorsement of inclusive principles and assess the diagnostic value of index construction under ceiling effects. Soft endorsement reaches 95.4% for equal starting opportunities and 94.1% for civic interethnic inclusion, whereas 62.7% of the full sample rated both core items as mandatory. Among respondents with valid core answers, the four descriptive profiles distinguish dual mandatory, equal-opportunity-only mandatory, interethnic-inclusion-only mandatory, and no mandatory endorsement. Complete-case index scores remain high, while the strict count and profile distributions recover variation concealed by item-level distributions. Sociodemographic differences are modest, and associations with perceived institutional and socioeconomic cleavages are weak but consistent.

The resulting instrument provides a compact, reproducible baseline for monitoring the intensity and cross-domain consistency of normative endorsement in descriptive surveys. Its object is what respondents say ought to characterize a just order; it does not establish whether inclusion is realized, whether discrimination occurs, or whether institutions and policies perform effectively.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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APPENDIX A. Additional diagnostic results

Table A1. Item-level characteristics of the normative-endorsement index components

Indicator (item wording)	C	D	M	S	r	α
"Freedom, justice, and equal starting opportunities for everyone"	Yes	1.7	1.740	0.502	0.604	0.678
"New Kazakhstan is a homeland for all ethnic groups"	Yes	1.9	1.704	0.538	0.499	0.736
"Government is for the people, and the laws are for everyone"	No	2.1	1.717	0.565	0.566	0.699
"Decent pay and social protection mean a decent quality of life"	No	1.5	1.821	0.463	0.573	0.698

Note: 'Difficult to answer' is treated as missing. Primary estimates require valid responses to all components ($N = 3,034$ for SII_{narrow}; $N = 2,994$ for SII_{wide}). Available-item sensitivity estimates are 85.9 and 87.0, respectively, and do not change the substantive ordering. C marks an SII_{narrow} core item; D is the percentage selecting 'difficult to answer'; M and S are the mean and standard deviation on the 0–2 scale. For the four-component SII_{wide}, r is the corrected item–total correlation and α is Cronbach's alpha if that item is deleted. These internal-consistency statistics are reported only as descriptive diagnostics for the formative index.

Table A2. Associations between normative-endorsement indices and perceived social cleavages

Index	Perceived cleavage	Spearman's rho (valid N)
SII _{narrow}	Rich versus poor	0.122 ($N = 2,971$)
SII _{wide}	Rich versus poor	0.131 ($N = 2,935$)
SII _{narrow}	Officials versus the people	0.118 ($N = 2,964$)
SII _{wide}	Officials versus the people	0.129 ($N = 2,931$)

Note: Cleavage responses are coded 2 = differences are large, 1 = differences are small, and 0 = no differences; 'difficult to answer' is missing. Indices use complete cases. Spearman's rho describes within-sample associations and does not imply causal or population-level effects.