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SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL DETERMINANTS OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND NATIONAL SELF-AWARENESS IN DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES

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Abstract. This article investigates the socio-philosophical determinants of political consciousness and national self-awareness under demographic transformation. Drawing on social identity theory, the sociology of nationalism, deliberative political philosophy and research on demographic transition, it proposes a multi-level explanation of how changes in age structure, migration, urbanization and education may reshape collective belonging and orientations toward public institutions. The study applies comparative conceptual analysis and a structured synthesis of published international literature; it does not claim original survey observations or causal estimates. The results identify four interacting mechanisms: intergenerational value transmission, institutional recognition, transnational experience and civic learning. A conceptual framework distinguishes demographic pressures from the cultural and institutional mediators through which political attitudes are formed. As an illustrative demographic context, a United Nations projection indicates that among countries whose populations have already peaked, the share aged 65 or more is expected to increase from 17% in 2024 to 33% in 2054. Such structural changes do not mechanically determine political identities. The central conclusion is that inclusive institutions and opportunities for public dialogue condition how demographic shifts become either sources of civic integration or tensions over belonging. The article formulates testable propositions for future research, including work in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: demographic transformation; political consciousness; national self-awareness; social identity; migration; intergenerational change; social philosophy; civic inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Demographic transformation describes changes not only in the size of populations but also in their age composition, spatial distribution, migration patterns, educational attainment and household structures. These shifts alter the settings in which people encounter institutions, learn social norms and articulate public interests. Political consciousness, understood here as the historically situated knowledge, values, expectations and evaluative orientations through which individuals interpret collective power, cannot be reduced to population variables. Likewise, national self-awareness is not an automatic reflection of ancestry or territory: it concerns the meanings attributed to shared history, symbols, civic membership and cultural continuity. The theoretical challenge is therefore to explain the mechanisms that connect demographic change to changing interpretations of political community rather than to assert an inevitable causal relationship (1, 2, 15).

A nation can be experienced as an imagined community while remaining socially contested and institutionally reproduced. Anderson links nationhood to historically formed media and shared forms of communication, whereas Smith underscores collective memories and symbolic repertoires in identity formation. Brubaker cautions researchers against treating ethnic or national groups as internally uniform and permanently bounded entities. Together, these perspectives suggest that demographic restructuring

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modifies the social arenas in which identities are narrated, but it does not prescribe a single trajectory of identity development (1–3).

The problem is especially relevant to societies where generational renewal coexists with fast-changing communications environments and enduring cultural traditions. In such contexts national self-awareness may combine civic attachments, language, historical remembrance and transnational experiences, while political consciousness takes shape through schools, public institutions, families, media and voluntary associations. The present article asks: through which socio-philosophical determinants can demographic transformation influence these two forms of consciousness, and under what conditions can their interaction support reciprocal recognition and civic participation? Its objective is to develop a transparent explanatory framework, distinguish mechanisms from outcomes and specify an agenda for empirical testing rather than claim an unobserved national pattern.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research employs a qualitative, theory-building design organized according to the IMRAD structure. Its materials comprise seminal works on nationalism, political identity, civic culture, intergroup processes and demographic transition, supplemented by the United Nations World Population Prospects 2024 and methodological information from the World Values Survey (1–15). The unit of analysis is a socio-philosophical mechanism: a plausible sequence connecting a demographic condition to an institutional or cultural mediator and, subsequently, to a potential outcome in political consciousness or national self-awareness. A mechanism is treated as an interpretive proposition, not an estimated population-level effect.

Three analytical procedures were applied. First, conceptual differentiation separated political consciousness (the capacity and disposition to interpret political relationships), national self-awareness (reflective belonging to a national community) and demographic transformation (change in population structure and mobility). Second, a structured comparative reading assessed where the selected theories converge and where they offer competing explanations. Third, a mechanism matrix located intervening institutions—education, communication, citizenship practices, social networks and intergenerational exchange—between the demographic context and possible identity outcomes. This strategy follows the caution that observed social categories should not be equated with homogeneous collective actors (3, 4, 12).

The empirical component is deliberately modest. Figure 2 reproduces two rounded values reported in the United Nations 2024 summary for the group of countries and areas whose population sizes have already peaked: 17% aged 65 or older in 2024 and a projected 33% in 2054. The 2054 value is a projection, not an observation, and the group must not be confused with the world population or Uzbekistan. No respondent-level survey data, regression results, national identity scores or causal coefficients were generated. The World Values Survey is cited as an appropriate source of future comparable indicators rather than presented as a dataset analysed in this article (7, 14).

RESULTS

The synthesis produced a four-layer model. Demographic transformation constitutes the contextual layer; schools, social organizations, communication systems and public institutions form the mediating layer; interpretations of authority, rights, obligations and social solidarity constitute political consciousness; and reflective understandings of shared national membership constitute national self-awareness. The relationships are iterative: changes in public identity may influence demands on

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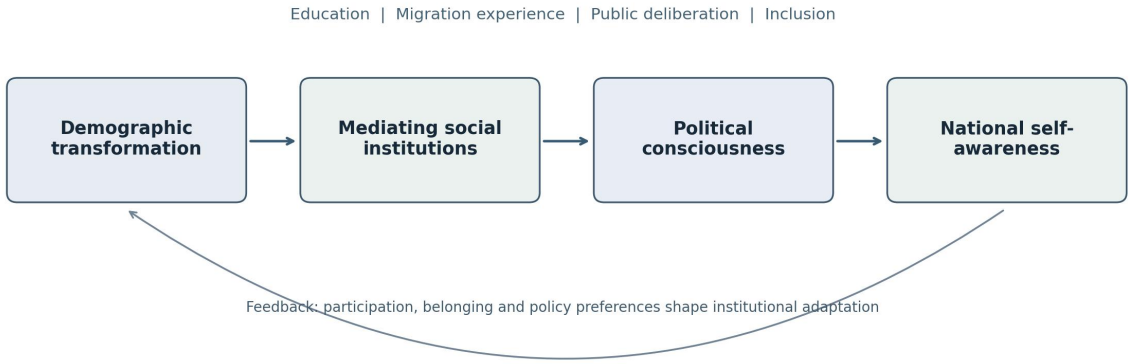
institutions, and institutional reforms can alter the experience of belonging. Figure 1 presents this model as a heuristic explanation rather than a tested structural equation (1, 3, 11, 12).

Figure 1. Analytical model linking demographic transformation and collective consciousness



Source: Author's conceptual synthesis based on the cited theoretical literature (1–6, 8, 11, 12). Arrows express hypothesized relationships, not empirically estimated effects.

The first determinant is the intergenerational transmission and reinterpretation of values. Educational expansion and generational replacement can redistribute opportunities to learn national history, debate public issues and participate in association life. Socialization is nevertheless not unilateral: older generations preserve and reinterpret memories, while younger people introduce different communication practices and expectations. Inglehart and Welzel identify patterned relationships between socioeconomic development and value change; their account should be read alongside the possibility of culturally specific trajectories and unequal access to public participation (5, 6, 13).

The second determinant is recognition by institutions. Citizenship rules, equal access to education, fair administration and opportunities for reason-giving in public settings affect whether collective identity is experienced as shared membership or as a contested boundary. Habermas's account of democratic legitimacy places communicative participation at the center of legitimate collective rule. Social identity theory, by contrast, explains why categorization can also accentuate perceived intergroup distinctions. The combination implies that institutional conditions mediate whether diversity becomes a resource for dialogue or a source of mutual suspicion; neither outcome follows from population composition alone (4, 12).

Table 1. Demographic processes and hypothesized pathways of political and national consciousness

Demographic change	Potential consciousness pathway	Mediator or boundary condition
Generational renewal	Changes in political vocabulary, historical interpretation and expectations of voice	Family transmission, education, public forums

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Demographic change	Potential consciousness pathway	Mediator or boundary condition
Population ageing	Greater salience of solidarity, memory and intergenerational obligations	Welfare institutions, age inclusion, civic organizations
Internal urbanization	Exposure to diverse social contacts and new modes of collective identification	Housing, urban services, equal treatment
Cross-border migration	Plural or transnational identities; reconfigured civic attachments	Legal status, remittance networks, integration policy
Educational restructuring	Expanded interpretive capacities and potential civic engagement	Educational quality, access, media literacy

Note: The table states theoretically possible mechanisms, not observed universal effects (3–11).

The third determinant is mobility-mediated belonging. Levitt and Glick Schiller argue that migrants can participate in social fields linking origin and settlement societies at the same time. Berry's model of acculturation indicates that adaptation depends on both individual choices and the receiving social context. Consequently, movement across borders does not require that a person abandon national self-awareness; alternatively, exclusionary experiences can sharpen boundary-conscious identities. Migration should thus be examined through interpersonal relations, rights and opportunities, not simply by measuring inflow or outflow (8, 9).

The fourth determinant is the relationship between social capital and public reasoning. Participation in associations may enable people of different ages and backgrounds to cooperate on shared problems. Putnam emphasizes the importance of civic networks for institutional performance, while Habermas highlights the normative quality of deliberation. A combination of association density and inclusive deliberative norms is relevant because strong ties within a single group can coexist with weak ties across social boundaries. The relevant mechanism is therefore not mere social cohesion but the capacity to translate difference into common problem-solving without erasing plural identities (11, 12).

Table 2. Operational framework for future empirical verification

Construct / determinant	Proposed observable indicators	Interpretive limitation
Political consciousness	Institutional trust; political efficacy; civic knowledge; reasons for participation	Self-report does not establish behavioral causation
National self-awareness	Civic belonging; attachment to national symbols; inclusive definitions of membership	Multiple identities can coexist; wording matters

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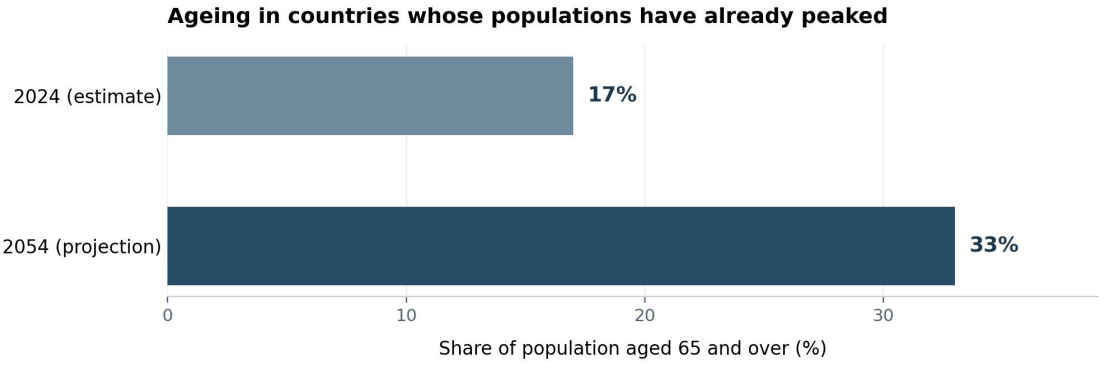
Construct / determinant	Proposed observable indicators	Interpretive limitation
Generational mediation	Age cohort; education; intergenerational discussion; digital access	Separate age, cohort and period effects
Migration mediation	Migration history; cross-border networks; discrimination experience	Avoid treating migrants as a single social group
Institutional inclusion	Perceived equal treatment; service access; voice in local decisions	Cross-sectional associations are not causal effects

Note: The indicators are proposed measurement options. The article reports no newly collected responses (4, 8, 9, 14).

A demographic example contextualizes the scale of possible structural adjustment. The United Nations projects that in the set of countries and areas whose population sizes have already peaked, the share of residents aged 65 and over will rise from approximately 17% in 2024 to 33% in 2054. This figure is not a measurement of political consciousness; it illustrates why questions of memory transmission, intergenerational fairness and institutional adaptation may become increasingly salient in ageing societies. It cannot be extrapolated to the demographic structure of Uzbekistan, which requires its own country-specific estimates and local data (7).

Figure 2. Older-age share in populations that have already peaked: UN estimates and projections



Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results (7). Values are rounded; 2054 is a projection, not an observed result. The data refer specifically to countries and areas whose populations have already peaked.

DISCUSSION

The first implication is that demographic transformation should be described as a condition of possibility rather than a single-direction cause of political development. The same movement toward urbanization can facilitate cross-group communication where public services and civic infrastructures are accessible, yet reinforce perceived competition where housing, education and employment remain unequally distributed. Similarly, migration can sustain national attachment through long-distance

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networks and can also expand practical identification with more than one political community. Such alternatives follow from relational accounts of identity, transnational fields and acculturation rather than from a general law of demographic determinism (3, 8, 9).

Second, the idea of national self-awareness requires philosophical precision. The term may describe a reflective relationship to cultural heritage, a civic commitment to shared institutions or a feeling of historical continuity; these meanings overlap but are not identical. National self-awareness is not adequately measured by ethnic origin alone. Anderson's emphasis on shared imagination, Smith's account of cultural memory and Brubaker's critique of groupism together discourage any simplistic equivalence between national consciousness and a uniform population category. Moreover, an individual may experience strong cultural belonging while critically evaluating state institutions, or express civic loyalty without endorsing an exclusive definition of identity (1–3).

The model is relevant as an analytical agenda for Uzbekistan without claiming country-specific conclusions that the present materials cannot support. Research could compare urban and rural settings, migration-experienced and non-migration households, and distinct age cohorts, while attending to language choice and educational background. Appropriate questions would ask how respondents define shared civic membership, which institutions they regard as responsive and whether national narratives are interpreted in inclusive or boundary-drawing ways. Comparable instruments may draw on World Values Survey constructs, but any national application requires validated translations, representative sampling and explicit attention to questionnaire context (14).

Several limitations constrain interpretation. This article is a conceptual synthesis rather than a systematic meta-analysis or field survey; selection of references reflects theoretical relevance rather than an exhaustive database protocol. The United Nations illustration covers only a defined subset of countries and uses a future projection. The conceptual diagrams are heuristic and their arrows have not been statistically identified. No statement in the article establishes that demographic transformation necessarily increases or decreases national cohesion, political trust or support for any political program. Further inquiry requires contextualized evidence capable of discriminating among alternative mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

Political consciousness and national self-awareness are historically produced and institutionally mediated forms of collective orientation. Demographic transformation changes the settings of their formation through generational renewal, population ageing, education and migration, but it does not generate a uniform ideological response. The literature supports a model in which social institutions and communicative experiences intervene between demographic shifts and public attitudes (1–15).

Four determinants emerge as especially useful for future investigation: intergenerational transmission of norms, recognition through inclusive institutions, transnational and intercultural experiences, and opportunities for civic learning and deliberation. Their interaction explains why similar demographic patterns may coexist with different meanings of national belonging and political participation.

The article's contribution is a multi-level conceptual framework, a structured comparison of mechanisms and a set of measurable propositions. A valuable next step is a comparative, ethically designed field study addressing age cohorts, urban-rural contexts and migration experiences in Uzbekistan. Such an investigation should test the explanatory pathways rather than assume them, and

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should preserve the distinction between national self-awareness, state-related attitudes and civic participation.

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