

The concept of respect in Central Asia: Historical roots, cultural practices and contemporary transformations

Karaeva Z^{1*}, Bayzhigitova A.A²

Kyrgyz International University, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic¹

I.K.Akhunbaev Kyrgyz State Medical Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic²

abdybekova84@mail.ru¹



Article History

Received on 20 February 2025

1st Revision on 1 March 2025

2nd Revision on 15 March 2025

Accepted on 20 March 2025

Abstract

Purpose: This paper explores the historical and cultural origins of respect in the region, its manifestations in traditional practices, and its transformations under the influence of globalization, urbanization, and generational paradigm shifts.

Research methodology: This research employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary approach, combining historical analysis, ethnographic fieldwork, and discourse analysis to explore the evolution of respect in Central Asia. Data will be collected through documentary research, interviews, participant observations, and media analysis, with thematic and comparative analysis used to interpret findings.

Results: Based on the analysis of ethnographic, sociological, and historical sources, it demonstrates how respect serves as a mechanism for preserving identity and adapting to changing conditions.

Conclusions: The concept of respect in Central Asia is both enduring and evolving.

Limitations: The main limitation of this study is the difficulty in capturing the full diversity of respect across different Central Asian cultures, historical periods, and social contexts, as well as the potential bias in interpreting evolving cultural norms through contemporary perspectives.

Contribution: This study highlights how respect in Central Asia has evolved across time, blending tradition and modernity. It offers interdisciplinary insight and provides practical value for cultural understanding, education, and policymaking in the region.

Keywords: *Central Asia, Culture, Elders, History, Hospitality*

How to Cite: Z, K., & A, B. A. (2025). The concept of respect in Central Asia: Historical roots, cultural practices and contemporary transformations. *Journal of Indigenous Culture, Tourism, and Language*, 1(1), 1-13.

1. Introduction

Respect is a fundamental social value shaping interpersonal relationships, political structures, and cultural traditions worldwide. In Central Asia, the concept of respect has deep historical roots, influenced by nomadic traditions, Islamic teachings, Soviet rule, and modern globalization. From expressions of deference within family hierarchies to broader societal expectations in governance and education, respect manifests in diverse ways across the region. However, with rapid social transformations including urbanization, digital communication, and political changes traditional notions of respect are being redefined. Understanding the historical evolution, cultural practices, and contemporary shifts in the concept of respect in Central Asia is essential for grasping broader societal changes and identity formation in the region. This study aims to explore how respect has been historically shaped, how it is expressed in everyday life, and how it is adapting to modern influences (Beyer & Finke, 2019; Prior, 2024; Yemelianova, 2018).

In the context of Central Asia, respect is traditionally expressed through various forms of reverence toward parents, community leaders, teachers, and religious figures. Within the family environment, younger generations are taught to use polite language, maintain a respectful tone, and adhere to norms of decorum passed down across generations. For instance, in Kazakh and Kyrgyz cultures, standing when an elder enters a room or offering them the best seat are deeply ingrained gestures of respect instilled from an early age through family education (Haerpfer & Kizilova, 2020). These practices serve as mechanisms for maintaining social hierarchy and communal stability. However, with the accelerating pace of urbanization, digitalization, and globalization, traditional understandings of respect are increasingly challenged and transformed. Young people in major cities such as Bishkek, Almaty, and Tashkent—who are more exposed to Western values and digital interactions have begun to form new interpretations of respect. They tend to be more egalitarian and open in their communication, and no longer necessarily consider hierarchical structures as absolute standards in social relations. This reflects a complex social dynamic in which tradition and modernity interact and negotiate within the cultural and identity realms (Almahdali, 2025; Buribayev, Khamzina, & Buribayeva, 2025; Rizky, Suparto, & Florina, 2025).

This shift is also influenced by expanded access to education and social media, which enables faster and broader cross-cultural value exchanges. On one hand, respect remains a highly regarded moral and social value; on the other hand, its expressions have become more flexible and contextual. For example, showing respect to teachers or community leaders is no longer solely manifested through physical formalities but also through active participation, critical appreciation, and constructive dialogue (Gaur & Gupta, 2020). Understanding the historical evolution, cultural practices, and contemporary shifts in the concept of respect in Central Asia is essential for capturing the broader dynamics of social change and understanding how collective identity is formed and negotiated in society. This study explores the historical shaping of respect, its expression in daily life, and its adaptation to modern influences.

1.1 Research Problem and Questions

Despite its central role in Central Asian cultures, respect has not been widely studied in an interdisciplinary manner that combines historical, sociocultural, and contemporary perspectives. The key research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. **Historical Roots:** How has the concept of respect evolved in Central Asia from pre-Islamic traditions to contemporary times?
2. **Cultural Practices:** How is respect practiced and reinforced in social institutions, family structures and public life?
3. **Contemporary Transformations:** How are globalization, digitalization, and sociopolitical changes affecting traditional notions of respect in Central Asia?

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This research aims to:

1. Tracing the historical development of respect in Central Asian societies.
2. The cultural expressions of respect in various settings, such as family, education, and governance, were examined.
3. Analyze the transformations in the concept of respect in response to modernization and external influences.

1.3 Significance of the Study

By providing an in-depth analysis of respect in Central Asia, this study contributes to anthropology, history, and cultural studies by offering novel insights into regional identity, social cohesion, and value systems. It also has practical implications for education, policymaking, and intercultural communication, particularly in an era of globalization, where traditional values are being reinterpreted.

2. Literature review

Respect is a fundamental value in Central Asian cultures, reflected in various aspects of social life, including family dynamics, community relations, and interactions with others. Central Asia is a region

with diverse cultures and ethnic groups, such as Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks, each with its own nuances of understanding and expressing respect. However, certain shared elements across these cultures emphasize respect as a cornerstone of social harmony and personal dignity (Beyer & Finke, 2019; Putri & Nurhuda, 2023; Ulfa, Agustiani, Qodariah, & Jatnika, 2023).

Here are some key points regarding the concept of respect in Central Asia:

2.1 Respect for Elders

Respecting elders is one of the most important values in Central Asian society. In many families, the elderly are considered the primary source of wisdom and guidance. This reverence for older generations is ingrained in daily interactions, and younger people are expected to show deference through specific behaviors.

- a. Language: Younger individuals use formal language and honorifics when speaking with elders.
- b. Physical gestures: In many Central Asian cultures, it is customary to stand when an elder enters a room or offer them a seat of honor.
- c. Consultation: Major decisions, whether personal or familial, are often discussed with elders, as their opinions carry significant weight.

2.2 Respect for Family

In Central Asia, the family is a key institution, and respect for one's family is a central part of social life. Loyalty and devotion to family members are crucial, and individuals are expected to prioritize the well-being of their families. The family is often seen as a collective unit rather than an individual entity, and one's actions reflect the family's honor. For instance, disrespecting a family member or not adhering to family expectations can bring shame not only to the individual but also to the broader family (Choi et al., 2021; Thibault & Caron, 2022; Wawin & Arianti, 2024).

2.3. Respect for Hospitality

Hospitality is highly valued in Central Asia, and showing respect for guests is essential in this region. Hosts go to great lengths to ensure that visitors are well taken care of, offering them food, drinks, and sometimes gifts as a sign of respect and gratitude. Guests are also expected to demonstrate respect in return by expressing gratitude and honoring the cultural norms of the visit. Hospitality is not just about providing material goods but also about building and maintaining strong social bonds.

2.4. Respect for Traditions and Customs

Central Asian societies place a high value on preserving traditions and customs passed down through generations. Respect for cultural practices, such as religious observance, rituals, and festivals, is important. For example, respect for Islamic customs is evident in the observance of Ramadan and reverence for religious leaders, while Turkic and nomadic traditions are reflected in practices such as horse riding and storytelling (Beyer & Finke, 2019; Prior, 2024).

2.5. Respect in Social Hierarchy

Social hierarchy plays a role in the expression of respect in Central Asia. There is often a clear distinction between social classes, and respect is tied to one's position in society. For example, government officials, teachers, and religious leaders are afforded a higher level of respect than other people. However, respect is not solely based on status; it is also tied to personal character and how one treats others.

2.6. Respect in Gender Roles

Gender norms in Central Asia can influence the display of respect. In more traditional settings, men and women may have different roles and responsibilities, and expressions of respect often align with these roles. For example, men may be expected to show respect by providing for the family and protecting it, whereas women are expected to maintain the household and uphold family honor. However, these roles are evolving in contemporary Central Asia, especially in urban centers, as gender equality becomes a more prominent social issue (Choi et al., 2021; Guzaloy Dovronbek kizi Tohirova, 2024; Hafezi, 2021; Rasulov & Juraev, 2023; Yerimpasheva, Lipovka, Tarakbaeva, & Zakirova, 2023; Zharkynbayeva, Abdiraimova, Sarsenbayev, & Bekzhanova, 2020).

2.7. Respect for Nature and the Environment

In the nomadic cultures of Central Asia, there is profound respect for nature, including the mountains, rivers, and vast steppes. This respect is often tied to spiritual beliefs and the nomadic lifestyle, where the land is seen as a source of life and sustenance. Traditional practices, such as leaving offerings for natural spirits or following environmental practices that preserve resources, reflect this deep connection to the land (Lyailya et al., 2018; Prior, 2024; Ridho, Fauzan, Faisal, & Hanafi, 2024).

2.8. Respect for Language and Communication

The manner in which people communicate is another reflection of respect. In Central Asia, maintaining a polite and formal tone, especially when addressing superiors or strangers, signifies respect. In many Central Asian languages, such as Kazakh and Uzbek, specific forms of address are used to show deference. Avoiding direct confrontation and using indirect language when discussing sensitive matters is also common as a way to preserve the respect and dignity of both parties (Hanafi & Kholil, 2025; Mambetnizayova, Babaeva, Dauletbayeva, Paluanova, & Abishova, 2024; Yudiyanto & Kholil, 2024).

2.9. Religious Respect

Religion, particularly Islam, plays an integral role in shaping respect in Central Asia. Religious leaders, scholars, and those who closely follow Islamic practices are treated with great respect. This respect extends to the ways people observe religious rituals, from praying to fasting, as well as respecting the sanctity of religious spaces, such as mosques and holy sites.

3. Research methodology

To research the concept of respect in Central Asia, a combination of qualitative and interdisciplinary methodologies would be effective in understanding the cultural, historical, and sociological dimensions of this concept.

3.1 Research Approach

A qualitative interdisciplinary approach combining historical analysis, ethnography, and discourse analysis is ideal. This will help explore respect as a cultural value in Central Asia across different time periods and in different social contexts.

3.2 Research Design

A **multi-method qualitative research design** that incorporates:

1. **Historical Analysis:** Examining texts, historical records, and past practices related to respect.
2. **Ethnographic Study:** Conducting fieldwork, observations, and interviews to understand contemporary cultural practices.
3. **Comparative Analysis:** Exploring variations across different Central Asian societies (e.g., Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

1. **Documentary Research:**
 - a. Historical texts, manuscripts, and literature related to Central Asian customs.
 - b. Religious and philosophical texts on respect in Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions.
 - c. Political speeches, educational materials, and legal codes were used to trace changes over time.
2. **Interviews and Oral Histories**
 - a. Conduct **semi-structured interviews** with older adults, historians, educators, and community leaders.
 - b. Gather oral histories to capture the intergenerational transmission of respect for the elderly.
3. **Participant Observation:**
 - a. Attending cultural events, social gatherings, and traditional ceremonies.
 - b. Observe interactions in everyday settings (families, workplaces, political institutions).
4. **Media and Discourse Analysis**
 - a. Analyze newspapers, social media, and television content to understand contemporary narratives of respect.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

1. **Thematic Analysis:** Identifying key themes related to historical, cultural, and modern perceptions of respect.
2. **Discourse Analysis:** Examining how language, traditions, and power relations shape the concept of respect.
3. **Comparative Analysis:** Comparing findings across different Central Asian countries and historical periods.

4. Results and discussions

4.1 Historical and Cultural Roots of Respect. Nomadic traditions

In nomadic societies (Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmens), respect is linked to survival under harsh conditions. Elders, as carriers of experience, played the role of guardians of knowledge about nomadic routes, conflict resolution, and resource allocation. The principle of the “aksakal” (white-bearded elder) symbolized wisdom and authority, and their words were considered law.

One of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia, the Kyrgyz, by the beginning of the 20th century, came in their majority as people without their own ethnic script, although quite a few among them, especially the family members of wealthy people, the upper stratum of society, and the servants of Islam, possessed the Arabic script and corresponded among themselves in this script. Writing was not widespread among the population’s deep masses. Therefore, the Kyrgyz paid special attention to the knowledge of sanzhyr or oral history, the history of lineage - the oral genealogy of one's family, tribe, and eventually the nation, including neighboring ethnic groups and Turkic peoples—on the basis of oral transmission from generation to generation. The peculiarity of oral genealogy was that when tracing the genealogy, it also told about the relations with other clans and tribes, as well as with neighboring ethnic groups - about peaceful, economic relations, or the state of war with them. Minimal socioeconomic and political history, heroic deeds of members of this tribe, and that tribe and generation were also described. Thus, a minimal oral chronicle of the history of the clan, tribe, and people was formed in oral form.

Among the Kyrgyz, there is a proverb known to every member of nomadic society, «zhetai atasyn bilbegen kyl—a man who does not know the seven tribes of his family tree is a slave’. Moreover, Osmonaly Sydyk uulu, one of the first historians of the Kyrgyz, a connoisseur of family trees in the early XX century, believes that “ych atasyn bilbegen kyl” (a man who does not know the three tribes of his father) is a slave. Therefore, every member of Kyrgyz society, including tribes, clans, and families, especially parents or the older generation of close relatives, «bir atanyn baldary» - ‘children of one father’ up to seven tribes or subsequent generations, insistently tried to make their children or descendants of their close relatives aware of their ancestry. The members of the «bir atanyn baldary»—the older generation - strictly ensured that their members, especially the young ones, had a clear understanding of the clans, realized “who is from where” and “who is this or that member of the clan or tribe for them.” (Golden, 2011).

The spiritual culture of the ethnic groups of modern Central Asia is historically characterized by diverse cultural and religious practices, which, in their ethnogenesis, determine the worldview basis for the social development of society. In the global community, ethno-national identity and the definition of the ethno-cultural basis of society are important for the state and its citizens to understand each other. The social and cultural practices of Central Asia in the context of traditional culture in modern societies show that ethnic consciousness and national identity are based on an ethnocultural mentality. The peculiarities of ethnos mentality, which are part of the spiritual and cultural basis of a person, explain the mechanisms of formation and religious consciousness and their social significance in modern society. Multi-ethnic and multi-confessional diversity, which is a historical feature both in the past and in the present, determines, along with other social and economic factors, the peculiarities of the spiritual and moral development of citizens of Central Asian societies and their civic and patriotic consciousness (Golden, 2011).

4.2 Influence of Islam

Since the 8th century, Islam has introduced new norms: respect for parents, teachers, and spiritual leaders has become a religious duty. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, 'urmat,' in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the concept of 'khurmat' (respect) is closely linked to the observance of Islamic precepts, such as honoring elders.

Muslims should respect each other because we share our worship of the Prophet and his family; we respect together some, perhaps not all, of the great Muslims who have contributed to our understanding of faith. If we differ in the way we express our faith, so be it. In the Qur'an, God praises various people who seek to express their devotion to Him in various ways. Those who believe that Islam and culture are intertwined must develop (a system of concepts) a vocabulary that better suits this reality. Three concepts were proposed: 1. The interrelationship between faith and culture. 2. Coexistence of differences in the same 3. Empathizing with a meaningful relationship with God. 1. Relationship between faith and culture. How does culture relate to faith? Both philosophy and faith are committed to the theory of reality; however, living faith is different in that it always requires a community of believers to exist. A living community implies not only shared theory and values, but also shared rituals and, often, importantly, shared life. Faith embodies ways of living and understanding, as well as culture.

Culture is part of faith because it is a particular way of making and understanding the common good. Separating faith from its relationship with life is to lose in many ways. 2. Coexistence of Differences in the same All Muslims struggle with the uniqueness of their individual experiences. We differ from previous generations and, in some historical periods, even more than others. We differ from each other because we have our own unique life experiences. Biology has proven that even identical twins have different brain structures because gravity has different effects on the structure of their nerve cells. In addition, two types of hybrids were created. First, we are complex individuals who have absorbed many different cultures. For example, the most educated Central Asians, who proudly call themselves Muslims, do not want to erase the name of the great Russian poet, Pushkin, from their lives. Pushkin belongs to them, as do all the great poets, thinkers of the European Renaissance, India and many others. What is wrong with trying to understand reality as a logically coherent relationship with the help of the world's great thinkers? Second, cultures can comprise different parts. Openness to other cultures allowed Muslims in the tenth century to make a huge contribution to knowledge; Prophet Muhammad recommended seeking knowledge even in China, and many did. Chinese culture has enriched miniature art and architecture.

They liked the way the Chinese used colored wood in ceremonial buildings. As Muslims, they applied their own patterns, which were more abstract and geometric, to the crossbars in mosques. Did they consider Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato un-Islamic? No, they simply considered their concepts because their ideas were interesting and valuable to them. Hybridity is a condition of modernity and any other age of creativity. At such times, unique people grasped traditions in extraordinary ways. 3. Empathy for meaningful action. To understand religious practices, we must consider what they mean to people of faith. It is foolish to assume that the Kyrgyz or Tajiks worship trees because they tie a knot on a branch and recite a prayer in front of them. Alternatively, if a Muslim performs a ritual that resembles a Hindu ritual, they are Hindu and not Muslim. Every action in a ritual is symbolic of something. They take a broader view of something and take it beyond its limits; thus, we should respect and look for the motives and meanings of symbolic action. We must listen to what people say about their rituals, how they interpret their actions, observe the patterns of their lifestyles, and then bring them together. This is one of the foundations of modern anthropology and one of the reasons why anthropologists began to explore and explain the amazing and marvelous diversity of Muslim rituals from Morocco to China. Many such rituals have been stumbled upon and condemned by some of the world's Muslim intellectuals (mostly urban and male), who want to purify, simplify, and as a result, weaken the richness of Muslim culture.

The relationship between Islam and traditional culture is a very difficult and important problem because the consideration of this issue opens a 'window' of memory into the ethnogenesis of the people. Well-known features of Islamic culture manifest in various spheres of life. However, the realities of today show that not everything in the culture of these peoples and other Muslim peoples is reduced to the norms of Shariah. If we turn to the spiritual culture of the Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, etc., we

will see that, on the one hand, some norms of the Shariah have not entered the daily life of Muslims, and on the other hand, the majority of customs and rituals show Islamic unity in different ways. Customs and rituals reproduced by Tajiks are not found, for example, among Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, but are found among Uzbeks in the Fergana Valley. The reason for the peculiarity of the cultures of different Muslim peoples lies in the time of adoption of Islam, the different historical conditions in which their lives took place, and the different ethnic histories of each of them. Many researchers of the material and spiritual culture of the Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and Turkmens have noted the strong pre-Muslim traditions that Islam encountered. They were often incorporated into religious practice and regarded as traditions that were Muslim or not contradictory to Islam. The preservation of pre-Muslim customs and rites was greatly promoted by Sufism, which always recognized itself as a religious movement. However, even outside the connection with Sufism, a powerful layer of pre-Muslim religious traditions has been preserved in the lives of the people. These traditions continue to exist because they do not contradict Islam (Dzhumagulov, 1960; Hudson, 1966).

4.3 Social practices of respect. Family and the older generation

Honoring parents: The Kazakh proverb ‘Ata-ananyn azharyn ashpa’ (do not dishonor your parents) reflects the idea that an individual's actions affect the reputation of the family. Council of Elders: In rural communities, important decisions (weddings, division of property) are made with the participation of aksakals.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Kyrgyz as ethnos were engaged in nomadic and semi-nomadic agriculture, with some farming. By the time of joining the Russian Empire, patriarchal-feudal relations prevailed in Kyrgyz society, with its own social structure (Abramzon, 1984). The society consisted of several hierarchical levels that were strictly regulated by customary law on an oral basis.

The lowest and smallest economic unit in a patriarchal-feudal society was the family, varying on average from 5 to 20-25 people. Wealthy men, allowed to have 2-3 wives, had on average 4-5 to children from each. For example, Eshimbek manap, who lived in Jungal in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, had 17 sons and daughters from three wives, totaling 21 people in his family. The family had its own micro-territory, dzhaloo, winter, and autumn camps. The family owned common property and livestock. They travelled together, and the family head had unquestionable authority.

Another economic unit and social group was the ‘children of one father’ – family members of siblings, cousins, and even triple cousins. The children of one father had a common territory for grazing and keeping cattle during winter and autumn. Several families, which, on average, consisted of 7-8 families (sometimes more) “Bir atanyn baldary” - ‘children of one father’ formed the basis of the economic and social unit of the community. The Council of Aksakals resolved all worldly issues. Families were large; when Eshimbek Manap fled to China during the national liberation movement of 1916 with his blood relatives, they numbered 100 (Allworth, Imshenetsky, Hambly, Smith, & Sinor, 2025).

The main masses of Kyrgyz in traditional society were owners of relatively small herds (bukara charba), nomads, and farmers. They and their cattle roamed seasonally in search of the best grass, together with wealthy feudal lords. They settled around the yurts of manapas in jalloo and pastibshchahs, served them, and grazed their cattle. There was a category of population, zhatakchy, who did not nomadically live in one place and cultivated the land of manapas and bays. They had no land of their own and received remuneration for their labor in the form of cattle on which they subsisted.

4.4 Hospitality

The guest in Central Asia is a ‘messenger of God.’ Hospitality rituals (‘dastorkon’ in Kyrgyz, ‘dastarkhan’ in Kazakhs, and ‘dasturkhon’ in Uzbeks) include obligatory treats and respectful treatment, which strengthens social ties.

Relatives are visited uninvited (to visit), and strangers are invited. In mountainous areas and villages, people visit without invitation for an unlimited period of time. However, if an uninvited guest appears,

he is given the same honors as an invited guest because it is believed that ‘a guest is a messenger from God’ and he cannot be refused. Hospitality is an ethnic characteristic of the Buryats. The guest is served the best viands, greeted with the words “welcome, dear guest, and then followed by a set of questions about his health, children, and family (Caravanistan, 2021). In Central Asia, people like to visit each other, visit the sick and elderly, and participate in all family rituals of their relatives and neighbors. Women visit with ‘dastarkhon,’ which includes small muffins, sweets, samsas, and other gifts. From the countryside, they bring what grows in the garden or vegetable garden to the city as gifts to their children. After the guest entered the room, the table was set for 5-10 minutes. If the guests are close relatives, both men and women participate in joint meals together. Tea was always served first on the table. Bread-nan, dried fruits, fresh fruits, and sweets were served on a tablecloth. Two dishes were usually prepared for guests: the first was shorpo, and the second was national pilaf, which meant special respect for the guest. It is believed that if a guest is not served plov, they could be offended (Allworth et al., 2025). If the dastarkhan was laid poorly, depending on the material well-being of the family, the guest should be seen off with a smile so that he would not be offended (Khalid, 2007).

If a guest came from far away, the neighbors were invited to join the conversation. When a new person enters the room where the guests gather, he greets everyone sitting by hand, going around the room from the right to the left. At the same time he pronounces the words of greeting widespread in the East: ‘Assalomu alaikum’ (‘Peace for you!’) and continues: - ‘How are you, how is your health? In the first case, everything is done standing up, while in the second case, the guests do not stand up but continue the meal. If the new guest belongs to the category of highly respected citizens or the older generation, those gathered greet him. If the person is of equal status, everyone remains seated. It is a sign of respect to offer a place of honor in the center of the row of seated guests, opposite the entrance.

The eldest person in the house, who could also be a guest, was supposed to start the meal. It is supposed to be eaten with the right hand. Before eating together, everyone washed their hands over a basin – “chylapchyn.” Water was poured on the hands from a jug – “chogun.” Hands were washed before serving pilaf, which was eaten from one big bowl, “tavoń.” The dastarkhan (tablecloth) was considered a holy thing; it was forbidden to step on it, and even more forbidden to sit on it. After the meal, the dastarkhan was removed. Before starting the meal, everyone present recites the prayer formula ‘Bismillahi rahmonu rahim’ – ‘In the name of Allah the merciful and gracious.’ It is considered improper to talk, slurp, take large portions, or watch another member of the meal while eating. All these rules are learned from childhood. When a person is full, in particular, the host does not give the appearance that he is full but continues to participate in the meal, offering treats to the guest. As for serving bread, one breaks the flatbread in front of the guest and offers it periodically: ‘Take it, take it’ – “alynyzdar, alynyzdar.” Before the guest leaves the house, he washes his hands with water or washes them himself, because there is a belief that he can take “barakat”-“prosperity”) of this house with him.

4.5 Traditions

Most often, we associate our traditions with our personality, and the creation of traditions is a kind of creation of the image in which we present ourselves to others. Simultaneously, traditions are endowed with a social role in the process of communication between individuals, groups, and communities that ensure stability in society. It is possible that we may not even notice the traditions we observe daily, mainly because they are not perceived as significant. However, these same traditions can play a very significant role in people's lives during important events such as marriage or divorce, birth or death, and noteworthy family or community events. Traditions can also provoke a clash and create tension when something unexpectedly challenges the status quo, thus opening up the possibility of looking at traditions from a different perspective. We may have discovered traditions that we were unaware of previously. What is a tradition? Is it a static or changing transient concept that balances somewhere between the two extremes? Is it relevant in everyday life, or is it only important during official ceremonies or rituals? Are there any official traditions in place? Are there any unofficial ones? Are these good or bad? (Privratsky, 2013; Project, 2011).

4.6 Gender aspects

Traditionally, respect for women has been linked to their role as guardians of the hearth, whereas men dominate the public sphere. Modern urbanized societies show a shift towards gender equality, but patriarchal norms persist in rural areas.

The woman played the role of an assistant and adviser to her husband and very rarely opposed his decisions; she respected not only her husband but also his relatives. The wife addressed her husband not by name, but by the word “Bayim” - “my master.” Biys, Manaps, and Bays, as a rule, had two or three wives. The eldest wife was the most respected woman in the family; in the event of her husband’s death or during his absence, she remained the head of the family. For example, Kurmanzhan Datka in Alai (southern Kyrgyzstan) in the second half of the 19th century. After the death of her husband Alymbek Datka, Russian officials called her the “Alai Queen,” She entered into negotiations with the military leaders of the Russian Empire, who sought to annex the south of Kyrgyzstan, and ruled the entire Bargy tribe, which formed the main backbone of the population of this mountain valley. She had great and unquestioned authority not only among the population of Alai but also among Russian officials and military personnel of the Russian Empire, who were at that time in Osh and southern Kyrgyzstan.

This suggests that Kyrgyz women from the wealthy class were relatively free and, to a certain extent, tried to be helpers and advisers to their husbands. Younger wives had to carry out not only all the instructions of the husband and the elder wife but also those of the husband's brothers. They unquestioningly followed the instructions, did not engage in conversation, silently agreed, and tried to carefully carry out the tasks assigned to them. In wealthy families, the relationship between husbands and wives is strictly observed in accordance with the family law-adat. Wives of wealthy people are not involved in men’s economic affairs. Among ordinary community members, housekeeping and raising children fell on the shoulders of women, and in the absence of a husband, she had to do men's chores. Women in society and family behaved freely, and there were no special restrictions on them. The Kyrgyz proverb “Kyzdyn kyrk chachy uluu” (literal translation: “The girl’s forty braids are older than everyone else”) has a basis. Foreign travelers and scientists have written extensively about this, particularly English traveler Irla Dunmore, who visited in the second half of the 19th century. population of the Pamirs, noted that Kyrgyz men treat their women well compared to men in other Muslim nations.

Kyrgyz women have relative freedom of action and never isolate themselves. Women have the same rights as men (Liu, 2012). Many foreign scientists and travelers have noted the boundless hospitality and kind attitude of the Kyrgyz towards guests. They wrote about how girls and women ran out of the house or yurt and offered various edible dried dairy and other products. Boundless hospitality and courtesy can amaze and embarrass even the most educated people, as noted by Irla Dunmore. The father was the head of the family and decided on all family issues. The children, and their grandchildren, unquestioningly carried out the will of their fathers and brothers. Sons and daughters married strictly according to their parents’ instructions. Parents were obliged to allocate “enchi” to each married son - property in the form of livestock; the son separated and lived nearby in a separate yurt near his father's house. It was common for a large family to own a farm, and all the livestock they acquired was equally divided among themselves. Usually, the youngest son lived with his parents; they had common property and territory, and he was obliged to care for and look after his elderly parents. If one of the married sons did not obey his father, he was kicked out of the house and family, and the property was given to the enchi in the form of cattle. This was tantamount to the “death” of their son. In rare cases, children independently disobeyed their elders.

4.7 Modern challenges and transformations

Globalization and the Young Generation. Young people influenced by Western values have begun to reconsider traditional norms. For example, in Bishkek and Almaty, there is a growing number of cases in which children challenge the authority of elders in matters of education or career. The modern era has created a need for modernization, primarily for socioeconomic reasons. The need for economic achievements and explanations of why they are unaffordable for most countries has given rise to many discussions and concepts in the literature. Despite the breadth of their range, various variations in the technological vision of modernization and different versions of economic and geographical

determinism prevail among them. Conspiracy theories are also popular in countries that are lagging. Each of these concepts has, if not a heuristic, a psychological function, thereby allowing it to explain the complex modern world in its own unique way.

All modern countries, including the most advanced, have their own traditions. Here, it is sufficient to provide the example of Great Britain or Japan. It should be noted that these modern countries are clear in their traditionalism, primarily through the preservation of some of their sociocultural rituals that are widely known worldwide. It should be emphasized that it is not so obvious, but traditions are present and preserved in any society because a person does not have the ability to purposefully manage them, stop, or resume their influence. In modern world socio-humanitarian knowledge, based on the ideas of Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jose Ortega y Gasset and a number of other thinkers, it was possible to overcome the false dichotomy of “tradition-innovation”, their simplified opposition. These thinkers have created an awareness that almost all of our activities take place in the context of tradition based on prerequisites and prejudices formed within its bosom.

To modernize, Central Asian countries need large-scale differentiation that goes beyond just technical specialization because complex activities and the development and production of complex technologies in any sphere of society require not only technical skills but also a special type of person. It cannot be created solely within the time allotted for work. He must live in a certain social and cultural environment, which is different from others and contributes to his formation as a bearer of not only a specific skill but also of specific sociocultural qualities. In this regard, we can provide comparative examples of the lives of developed and developing countries. Professional personnel in these societies differ not only in their training and level of labor productivity, but also in sociocultural qualities such as the type of thinking, the structure of emotions, and even bodily characteristics. Ultimately, this set of qualities, formed by a special way of life, or their lack, predetermines the quality of professional personnel. We can discuss the sociocultural differentiation of the modern type when specific habitus and identities are formed in different communities.

4.8 Urbanization

Migration to cities weakens these ties. However, even in megacities, rituals are preserved, such as visiting relatives on holidays (“Nooruz,” “Kurban Eid”). Urbanization is no longer a phenomenon, and its pace is accelerating. In the last century, many people have moved from rural areas to cities in the hope of living a better life, thereby securing a brighter future for themselves. Coming from cities with old rural traditions, they adapted to the new living conditions in the city. Cities create a special sociocultural environment in which there are many opportunities for the emergence of new traditions, but at the same time, there is also the possibility of the disappearance of old ones. Cities have existed since ancient times and contain social, economic, and political institutions. The close interaction of people in a small space greatly changes their behavior and value systems. Cities laid the foundation for the state system and formed economic and political centers, which, in turn, attracted rural residents and influenced social structures. Particularly, picky people can even dare to say that if there were no cities today, life would be completely different, perhaps better than it is now. Urban areas are interconnected with rural ones. In fact, the life of cities depends on villages, the work of a simple village resident, and the food products supplied by them. Consequently, not only have cities developed, but the countryside has also changed (ARCHNET, 1992).

Respect for state sovereignty is a generally recognized principle of international law, which includes recognition and respect for the political independence of a state, its territorial integrity, equality with other states, and the right to freely choose and develop its political, social, economic, and cultural systems (ARCHNET, 1992).

Respect for the dignity of the individual, human rights, and freedom is the direct responsibility of every state. At the same time, a person has the right to respect his dignity from the state itself, its bodies and officials, and from other members of society, which is also ensured by state support measures (Vlasova, 2020).

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion.

Respect remains a fundamental cultural value in Central Asia, deeply rooted in historical traditions, religious influences and social hierarchies. Respect has shaped interpersonal relationships, governance, and everyday customs from the nomadic era to the Islamic period and the Soviet regime. Despite political and ideological changes, traditional expressions of respect, such as deference to elders, hospitality rituals, and hierarchical authority, continue to play a significant role in society. However, contemporary transformations, including urbanization, globalization, and digitalization, have altered the traditional notions of respect. Younger generations increasingly engage in more informal and egalitarian interactions, and social media platforms provide spaces where authority can be questioned. Political and economic changes across the region have also influenced how respect is perceived, with some societies maintaining strict hierarchical structures, while others experience shifts toward individualism and open discourse. In conclusion, the concept of respect in Central Asia is both enduring and evolving. While historical values continue to shape cultural practices, modern influences are redefining respect in family life, education, and politics. This ongoing transformation reflects the region's dynamic social landscape, where tradition and modernity coexist and interact to shape societal norms.

5.2 Suggestion

Future research should conduct comparative studies among Central Asian countries to explore the diversity of respect practices across ethnic and national lines. Additionally, intergenerational and gender-based analyses could reveal how modernization, education, and urbanization reshape traditional norms. Incorporating social psychology and sociolinguistics would enrich our understanding of how language, perception, and communication reflect evolving respect. A longitudinal study could capture value shifts among younger generations that are influenced by digital culture. Practically, the findings can inform the development of multicultural education curricula, promote culturally sensitive policy-making, and guide community outreach programs led by elders and religious figures. Governments may also benefit from establishing a Cultural Respect Index to assess societal cohesion. Documenting and digitizing respect-based traditions may foster a sense of cultural identity among the youth. Simultaneously, a critical approach should be taken to address hierarchical traditions that may hinder equality, promoting a humanistic reinterpretation of respect aligned with modern democratic values. Overall, this study serves as a foundation for interdisciplinary engagement and culturally informed interventions in education, governance, and social development in Central Asia.

References

- Abramzon, S. M. (1984). *Kyrgyz and Their Ethnogenetic and Historical-Cultural Ties*.
- Allworth, E., Imshenetsky, A. I., Hambly, G. R. G., Smith, D. R., & Sinor, D. (2025). Cultural life in Tajikistan. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tajikistan/Cultural-life>
- Almahdali, H. (2025). Tantangan dan Peluang Inovasi Pelayanan Publik di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0. *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Sosial dan Politik*, 4(2), 63-73. doi:10.35912/jasispol.v4i2.4104
- ARCHNET. (1992). *Kampung Kali Cho-de On-site Review Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.archnet.org/publications/933>
- Beyer, J., & Finke, P. (2019). Practices of traditionalization in Central Asia (Vol. 38, pp. 310-328): Taylor & Francis.
- Buribayev, Y., Khamzina, Z., & Buribayeva, A. (2025). Between traditions and globalization: value orientations of Kazakhstani youth. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 10, 1563274. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2025.1563274>
- Caravanistan. (2021). Dos and don'ts in Tajikistan.
- Choi, Y., Kim, T. Y., Lee, J. P., Tan, K. P. H., Noh, S., & Takeuchi, D. (2021). Upholding familism among Asian American youth: Measures of familism among Filipino and Korean American youth. *Adolescent Research Review*, 6(4), 437-455. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-020-00148-9>
- Dzhumagulov, A. (1960). *Family and Marriage among the Kyrgyzs in the Chuy Valley*.

- Gaur, P. S., & Gupta, L. (2020). Social media for scholarly communication in Central Asia. *Central Asian Journal of Medical Hypotheses and Ethics*, 1(2), 152-157. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.47316/cajmhe.2020.1.2.09>
- Golden, P. B. (2011). *Central Asia in world history*: Oxford University Press.
- Guzaloy Dovronbek kizi Tohirova, S. S. u. R. (2024). The History Of Gender In Central Asia And Contemporary Issues. *Texas Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 36, 19-29. doi:10.62480/tjms.2024.vol36.5546.pp19-29
- Haerpfer, C. W., & Kizilova, K. (2020). Values and transformation in Central Asia *Transformation and development: Studies in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) member states* (pp. 7-28): Springer International Publishing Cham.
- Hafezi, A. (2021). Investigating the relationship between self-control and family factors in girls and boys with mental disabilities. *Psychohealth: Scientific Journal of Psychology and Mental Health*, 1(1), 13-24. doi:10.35912/psychohealth.v1i1.497
- Hanafi, M. R., & Kholil, S. (2025). Implementasi Model SMCR dalam Stretegi Komunikasi Layanan Publik di KOMINFO Kota Medan. *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Sosial dan Politik*, 4(1), 27-37. doi:10.35912/jasipol.v4i1.3666
- Hudson, C. (1966). Folk history and ethnohistory. *Ethnohistory*, 13(1/2), 52-70.
- Khalid, A. (2007). *Islam after communism: religion and politics in Central Asia*: Univ of California Press.
- Liu, M. Y. (2012). *Under Solomon's throne: Uzbek visions of renewal in Osh* (Vol. 24): University of Pittsburgh Pre.
- Lyailya, K., Zaure, S., Aigul, K., Zhanat, Y., Ainur, M., & Saule, Z. (2018). Spatial Orientations of Nomads' Lifestyle and Culture. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 10(2), 27-39. doi:<https://dx.doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v10n2.03>
- Mambetniyazova, A., Babaeva, G., Dauletbayeva, R., Paluanova, M., & Abishova, G. (2024). Linguistic and cultural analysis of the concept "politeness". *Semiotica*, 2024(258), 73-91. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/sem-2023-0141>
- Prior, D. (2024). Nomadic Culture in Islamic Central Asia *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*.
- Privratsky, B. (2013). *Muslim Turkistan: Kazak religion and collective memory*: Routledge.
- Project, A. K. H. (2011). TradiTion and Change. Retrieved from <https://ucentralasia.org/media/pg0najcl/tradition-and-change-eng.pdf>
- Putri, Y., & Nurhuda, A. (2023). Moralitas Aborsi karena Kehamilan Remaja: Ditinjau dalam Perspektif Feminisme dan Sains. *Kajian Psikologi dan Kesehatan Mental*, 1(1), 17-24. doi:10.35912/kpkm.v1i1.2284
- Rasulov, I., & Juraev, Z. (2023). Short Review on Gender Studies in Central Asia. doi:<https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202307.1881/v1>
- Ridho, F. M., Fauzan, M., Faisal, A., & Hanafi, H. (2024). The Effectiveness of Health Communication in Preventing Stunting. *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Sosial dan Politik*, 3(2), 99-107. doi:10.35912/jasipol.v3i2.2609
- Rizky, A. A., Suparto, D., & Florina, I. D. (2025). Analisis Pola Komunikasi dalam Disfungsional Family & Resiliensi pada Anak Kota Tegal. *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Sosial dan Politik*, 5(1), 69-84. doi:10.35912/jasipol.v5i1.4616
- Thibault, H., & Caron, J.-F. (2022). An overview of shame and its manifestation in Central Asia. *Uyat and the culture of shame in Central Asia*, 1-14. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-4328-7_1
- Ulfa, A., Agustiani, H., Qodariah, L., & Jatnika, R. (2023). Children's Perceptions of Parental Mediation on Internet Use. *Kajian Psikologi dan Kesehatan Mental*, 1(2), 97-108. doi:10.35912/kpkm.v1i2.2759
- Vlasova, O. (2020). *Human Dignity as a Moral and Legal Value: general theoretical research*. dissertation.
- Wawin, M. A. F. R. T., & Arianti, R. (2024). Proses Menghadapi "Tekanan dan Badai" pada Remaja Akhir Asal NTT yang Mengalami Corporal Punishment Orang Tua. *Kajian Psikologi dan Kesehatan Mental*, 2(1), 1-12. doi:10.35912/kpkm.v2i1.2799

- Yemelianova, G. (2018). How 'Muslim'are Central Asian Muslims? A historical and comparative enquiry. *Being Muslim in Central Asia*, 11-37. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1163/22142290-00403002>
- Yerimpasheva, A., Lipovka, A., Tarakbaeva, R., & Zakirova, A. (2023). Comparative analysis of gender stereotypes in Central Asia and Central Europe. *Bulletin of" Turan" University*(1), 130-144. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.46914/1562-2959-2023-1-1-130-144>
- Yudiyanto, A. R., & Kholil, S. (2024). Pola Jaringan Komunikasi Organisasi dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pelayanan Kesehatan: Studi di RSIA Murni Teguh Rosiva, Medan. *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Sosial dan Politik*, 4(1), 17-25. doi:10.35912/jasipol.v4i1.3734
- Zharkynbayeva, R., Abdiraiymova, A., Sarsenbayev, A., & Bekzhanova, N. (2020). Societal perspectives: gender equality in Central Asia, between desideratum and realities. *Codrul Cosminului*, 26(2), 331-356. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.4316/CC.2020.02.003>