



# Spiritual and Moral Aspects of the Human Problem in the National Consciousness of the Kazakh People

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## Abstract

The problem of the spiritual and moral components of personality holds key significance in the genesis, evolution, and development of the national consciousness of the Kazakh people. In the contemporary era of globalization, moral imperatives grounded in the values of traditional culture ensure stability in identification amidst interactions with other nations. Within the Turkic-Kazakh philosophical, ethnological, and anthropological traditions, personality was conceived in harmonious interaction with natural rhythms, as an element of the cosmic universe. The objectives of this research are to identify the patterns of evolution of notions about personality in traditional and contemporary Turkic-Kazakh philosophy and culture, as well as to determine methods for preserving, developing, and safeguarding spiritual and moral values within Kazakh national consciousness. The methodological foundation for studying the processes of genesis and evolution of the concept of personality is the social constructivism of Gellner and Smith. The interpretation of the ideological content of epic literature and philosophical works is conducted based on hermeneutic methods. This article explores the processes of forming the concept of personality in Kazakh national consciousness within the spiritual and moral dimensions. The main stages of evolution identified include the periods of proto-states, the presence of the Kazakh ethnicity within the Russian Empire – the Soviet Union, and independent development. The establishment of contemporary multiethnic Kazakhstan requires the protection of the foundations of national consciousness from negative external influences. The homogenizing and standardizing influence of global mass media threatens the traditional worldview of Kazakhs, raised in harmony with the surrounding world. The stability of Kazakh national consciousness is based on the concept of personality, wherein traditional values and modern perceptions of the surrounding world, society, and state are harmoniously combined. The obtained results can be utilized in formulating programs for the operation of governmental bodies, political parties, and social associations, in academic and teaching activities, and in facilitating publications in mass media.

**Keywords:** ethnogenesis, Kazakhstan, national identity, nomadism, personality, spirituality and morality, Turkic-Kazakh philosophy.

## Introduction

In the formation of national consciousness, a pivotal role is attributed to the conceptualization of personality within the context of interaction with society, the state, and the surrounding world. Within such a framework, fundamental moral norms serve as the foundation for stable socio-economic, political, and cultural relations. The Kazakh ethnic group, and subsequently the nation, emerged within the steppe region of Central Asia - the corridor of the Great



Migration of Peoples, amidst intense interaction between European and Asian civilizations. Throughout traditional and contemporary culture, Kazakh national consciousness has absorbed various influences, synthesizing its own model of perception and orientation in the world (Altayev & Imanbayeva, 2021; Mostafa, 2013).

In the early Middle Ages (from late 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century CE), proto-Kazakh nomadic tribes found themselves at the crossroads of economic, political, and cultural influences from Nestorian Christianity, Sunni and Shia Islam. Turkic-Mongol shamanism and Tengrism evolved under the influence of ideas from Greek missionaries from Byzantium, Chinese merchants on the Great Silk Road, as well as Arab and Persian preachers from the countries of the Near and Middle East. At the crossroads of inter-civilizational contacts, the Turkic cultural tradition emerged through the interaction of nomads with sedentary agriculturalists and urban trade-craft populations (Sultanov, 2007).

Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi (presumably 870/872 - 950/951 CE) emerged as one of the founding figures of Arab-Muslim philosophy and delineated the principal directions of development for Turkic humanities and natural sciences. His ideas on the "virtuous city" as an ideal societal arrangement were further developed by medieval thinkers such as Yusuf Balasaguni, Hodja Ahmed Yassawi, Mahmud al-Kashgari, and others (Botagoz et al., 2023). Within the framework of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, this intellectual endeavor was continued by figures like Sh. Ualikhanov (Ch. Valikhanov), Zh. Kopeev, A. Bukeykhanov, A. Baytursynov, S. Seifullin, along with other representatives of the national intelligentsia (Balshikeev & Tusupbekov, 2020; Kaziev, 2014, 2015; Martin, 2011).

During the empires of Genghis Khan and Timur in the 12th to 14th centuries, for the first time, the Eurasian continental space was unified. The "Yasa" codified Mongol customary law and laid the foundations for the state-political systems of Central Asia. In the 18th to 19th centuries, the Russian Empire, as their historical successor, annexed Turkestan, initiating processes of socio-economic and cultural modernization in the region (Abashin, 2007). National construction in Russian Turkestan, and later in Soviet Kazakhstan, commenced under challenging circumstances. Nomadic tribes lacked a written culture, prompting the first Kazakh enlighteners to transform folklore into written history (Keseci, 2017; Rottier, 2004).

In the context of globalization, Kazakhstani society experiences continuous external informational and ideological influences: expanding access to information in global electronic networks, dissemination of previously limited information about philosophical, ideological, and religious movements, dissemination of Western mass culture, consumer society culture, and massive advertising. Integration into global information flows creates a situation where individuality, tradition, and identification intentionally become blurred. In the face of technological and social progress, challenges arise for traditional values, which form the foundation of ethno-cultural identity. The primary issue lies in maintaining stable ethical standards in an era of relativism regarding values and worldviews (Zeinesh et al., 2023). In such circumstances, a significant aspect of traditional Turkic-Kazakh philosophy is the pursuit of self-awareness and spiritual development, serving as fundamental pillars of independent thought (Ismailov & Omarbayeva, 2020). In modern globalized society, external homogenizing influences intensify, propagating materialistic consumer orientations, individualism, and hedonism (Zhumasheva & Abdildin, 2023). Extremism and terrorism pose a significant threat to social stability (Karimov, 2017).

A multi-ethnic Kazakhstan cannot isolate itself from the external world but can only develop by neutralizing negative influences such as for example, the consequences of the sexual revolution, which negatively impact the preservation of family values, or a more permissive attitude towards the use of narcotic substances for the "expanding of consciousness", etc. Only the combination of principles and norms from traditional, Muslim, and secular cultures can ensure free exchange of information and pluralism of opinions, facilitating the construction



of a sustainable informational and ideological space in the interests of the sustainable development of the Kazakhstani nation amidst contemporary risks, challenges, and threats.

## Literature Review

In the development of Turkic-Kazakh anthropology and ethnology, one can discern traditional, modernist, and postmodernist periods. In the early and classical Middle Ages, proto-Kazakh nomadic tribes roamed between the Caspian Sea, the Ural Mountains, the Pamirs, and the Tien Shan. Animal husbandry in the conditions of a sharply continental climate demanded high endurance, energy, good knowledge of natural cycles, and martial arts skills from the nomads. Heroic epics ("Er-Targyn", "Koblandy Batyr", "Kombar Batyr") and love poems ("Kazy-Karpesh and Bayan-Sulu") extolled courageous warriors ready to defend their homeland, devoted wives, and caring mothers (Eitsen, 1998; Tulegenova & Chora, 2020).

In the 9th–11th centuries, the amorphous Turkic-Kazakh mythological consciousness began to transform through the creation of epic poetry into ordered worldview. In the 14th–15th centuries, disparate nomadic tribes united into confederations (zhuzes). Parallel processes of ethno- and politogenesis culminated in the establishment of the first state formations - khanates. The political culture of the nomads was based on the ethos of personal dignity. A Kazakh was born, lived, and died in an inseparable connection with their kinship environment. Loyalty to the clan ensured assistance in difficult life situations. Good service to the khan provided protection from enemy raids. A criminal not only became a homeless outcast but also "lost face" before relatives and neighbors. Turkic-Kazakh ethics were shaped within the Muslim cultural context and were based on the values of humanism and tolerance. In Kazakh auls, the fortified villages or towns found throughout the Caucasus mountains and Central Asia, the imperative of hospitality and aid to travelers was absolute (Altayev et al., 2020; Olcott, 1980, 1995).

In the 18th–19th centuries, within the framework of the Russian Empire, a national intelligentsia emerged, accompanied by the formation of a written cultural tradition and national consciousness (Sabol, 2003). At the beginning of the 20th century A. Bukeykhanov and other leaders of the Alash movement initiated the transformation of oral epic heritage into written history, laying the foundation for national identity (Bashmakov, 2021; Hutchinson, 1987, 2004; Keseci, 2017). In the Soviet Union, within the framework of the "positive discrimination" policy, the formation of the Kazakh nation continued but was constrained by the ideological construct of the "multi-national Soviet people" (Kaziev, 2014; Martin, 2011; Zhanbosanova et al., 2020).

After 1991, the formation of a sovereign Kazakh nation occurred outside the framework of Marxist-Leninist ideology, based on the foundation of Turkic-Muslim culture (Esenova, 2002; Gleason, 2018). At the same time, the theoretical legacy of the Alash movement remains the basis for secular culture, oriented towards the adoption of the best achievements of Western civilization and their synthesis with national values (Beisimbaev, 2021; Kamrava, 2020). The modernization of Turkic-Kazakh culture and philosophy included a reassessment of the concepts of personality by the founders of theoretical thought - Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi (Abdullina & Kasenov, 2020; Altayev & Imanbayeva, 2021; Chongarova et al., 2023), Hodja Ahmed Yassawi, Jusup Balasagyn (Botagoz et al., 2023), Abay Kunanbayuly (Kunanbayeva) (Solovyeva, 2021), M.Kh. Dulati (Tulegenova, 2020).

The years 1991 and 2014 marked pivotal moments in the emergence of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as "nation-building states." These two regional hegemonies of Central Asia encountered similar challenges concerning the duality of state policies: one emphasizing a "constructivist" approach to shaping civic identity and the other reflecting "primordialist" societal ethnocentrism. In Kazakhstan, this duality gave rise to ambiguity and ambivalence in the official ideological discourse. In the post-Soviet multinational state, Kazakhs suddenly



transitioned from being the "junior" to the "senior brother," necessitating a fundamental reevaluation of the entire spectrum of relationships with national minorities.

Strong regional differentiation prevented the new Kazakh elite from accelerating the processes of nation-building. Any imprudent steps leading to an imbalance in social support, conditions of socio-economic development or even ideological dominance of the traditionally patriarchal way of life of rural regions or modernist ideas of industrial regions could provoke conflicts between the industrialized North, agrarian South, and the primary economic donor - the West. Compared to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan experienced a slower transition from Cyrillic to Latin script, while the Russian language retained its status as a language of interethnic communication (Sharipova, 2020).

## **Problem Statement**

The central issue in national development lies in the modernization of the entire complex of human and societal relations. The aim of this study is to identify the preconditions and patterns of development of the spiritual and moral dimension of personality in the Kazakh national consciousness amidst globalization. Existing literature insufficiently analyzes the influence of philosophical works and folklore on contemporary Kazakh socio-political thought, ethics, and anthropology.

To achieve the stated objective, the following research tasks need to be addressed:

- Analyzing the role of spiritual and moral values and the economic-cultural type in shaping Kazakh national identity.
- Identifying key stages of ethnogenesis and nation-building in the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- Studying the mechanism of interaction between traditional, secular, and Muslim cultures.
- Analyzing the influence of external factors such as the United States, Russian Federation, the European Union, China, and Muslim countries in the context of globalization.
- Developing a strategy for strengthening the spiritual and moral foundations of contemporary Kazakh personality in the processes of nation-building and civil society formation.

## **Methods and Materials**

### ***Conceptual Basis of the Study***

The spiritual and moral aspects of personality formation in the Kazakh national consciousness are studied based on the methodology of social constructivism proposed by Gellner (2006) and Smith (1986, 2013). In contemporary ethnology, the dichotomy between primordialist and constructivist methods has been generally overcome. It is recognized that the former is better suited for studying the patterns of development of traditional ethnic groups in natural biogeocenoses, while the latter is more appropriate for analyzing urbanized secularized nations in industrial economies.

Gellner (2006) considers industrialization and urbanization as the main factors in the transformation of kin-based communities into civil nations. The fixation of mythopoetic meanings in written texts and customs in legal codes ensures the stability of societal and state functioning. Personal arbitrary connections, as the basis of social relations, are replaced by formalized impersonal mass communications. Industrial society and economy, based on innovative technologies and oriented towards exponential growth, enable the overcoming of human dependence on nature and the desacralization of human consciousness (Gellner, 2006).



Smith (1986) defines an ethnos as a community of individuals with a common name, myths about ancestors, shared culture, historical past, and a sense of solidarity. The ethnos transform into a nation within a specific landscape that shields it from external military invasions and other negative influences. During the formation stage of national consciousness, the intellectual and political elite shape an ideology oriented towards independent development in the interaction between the state and society. A crucial component of national consciousness becomes identity, based on a complex of myths and symbols that define the psycho-emotional identity of both individuals and the nation. Unified ethno-national characteristics are enshrined in norms of everyday behavior, literature and art, architecture, and other elements of material culture (Smith, 2013).

The study of philosophical texts was conducted using hermeneutic methods based on the principles of historicism and rational interpretation. The rational reflection of thinkers is grounded in folk tales and legends in both prose and poetic forms. The traditional worldview of the Kazakhs is a mythopoetic synthesis of epics and musical compositions. The transmission of folklore from older to younger generations constituted the historical cultural heritage and shaped ethnic consciousness. The principle of historicism allows for identifying the main stages of the formation of an independent personality within tribal communities, transitioning from oral mythological culture to written culture. Here we propose an approach to defining the main parameters of worldview and orientation through the interpretation of philosophical concepts in a value context. For cultures with a significant influence of traditional historically formed value systems, such an approach allows us to model the perception of philosophical concepts more adequately from the point of view of the general public, rather than professional philosophers.

### ***Research Materials***

This study is based on anthropological, ethnological, and cultural studies, as well as materials from mass media, sociological surveys, interviews, and analysis of statistical data. Traditional conceptions of personality in Turkic-Kazakh culture are examined based on epics such as "Er-Targyn," "Koblandy Batyr," "Kombar Batyr," and the love drama "Kozy-Korpesh and Bayan-Sulu." Philosophical reflection begins with the works of Abu Nasr al-Farabi's "Treatise on the Views of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City," Hodja Ahmed Yassau's "Diwan-i Hikmet," and Mahmud al-Kashgari's "Diwan Lugat at-Turk." Chokan Valikhanov continued to define the territorial boundaries and ethnic characteristics of the emerging Kazakh nation in works such as "Description of Eastern Turkestan," "Notes on the Kokand Khanate," "Ablai," "Shuna Batyr," and others. Abay Kunanbayev's "Book of Thoughts," scientific and journalistic works by M. H. Dulati, A. Bukeyhanov, and S. Seifullin help to determine the main spiritual and moral parameters of personality in Turkic-Kazakh anthropology and ethnology.

Sources for studying the contemporary stage of the development of the concept of personality in Kazakh national consciousness include official government documents, legislation, and government programs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The patterns of social development are traced based on sociological surveys, questionnaires, and interviews conducted in focus groups. The study of the concept of personality as a holistic phenomenon is somewhat complicated by the issue of systemic correlation between primordialist, constructivist, and hermeneutic methods.

### ***Design and Methodological Toolkit of the Research***

In the study of historical and philosophical texts, methods of historicism and interpretation were employed. The first stage elucidated the phases of the formation of the Kazakh ethnic group, the transformation of nomadic communities into chieftaincies, and proto-states (khanates). The second stage examined the processes of shaping the Kazakh nation, personality, and society within the framework of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.





Economic, political, and cultural development was accompanied by its interpretation in the works of philosophers, philologists, and folk storytellers (akyns and zhyrau). Rational interpretation is a cognitive procedure for establishing the content (meaning) of concepts through their application in a specific subject area. Accordingly, the works of Turkic-Kazakh thinkers were aimed at shaping the spiritual and moral foundations of personality in a mythopoetic, Islamic, and later secular context.

At the third stage of analysis of the processes of personality formation in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, sociological methods of observation, comparison, and document analysis were used. This allowed for the identification of the main parameters of mutual perception among nations and ethnic groups, regional differences between individuals and groups in their perception of the outcomes of independent Kazakhstan's development, attitudes toward historical and cultural heritage, as well as internal and external political and economic processes. Comparing data from sociological surveys with government programs revealed the main tensions between official and unofficial discourses.

### ***Methodological Limitations of the Study***

The Scope of this article and the state of the sources do not allow for a complete exploration of all the nuances in the evolution of the concept of personality in the Kazakh national consciousness. Further research is required into the works of thinkers from the Middle Ages and the Modern and Contemporary periods in their contemporary interpretations. The formation of the Kazakh nation is far from complete and is occurring within dynamically changing regional and global contexts. This, to a certain extent, complicates the prediction of processes in the further development of the spiritual and moral component of the Kazakh personality.

### **Results**

The spiritual and moral structure of the Kazakh personality has been shaped by ancient historical and cultural traditions. The toponym "Turkestan" (Land of the Turks) first appeared in 639 CE in a letter written in Sogdian about the sale of a girl into slavery in Samarkand. Arab geographers of the 9th to 10th centuries CE placed Turkestan northeast of Maverannahr, i.e., between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers. The Amu Darya delineated Turkestan and Khurasan. In the 11th century, the lands from the Danube to Khwarezm, the Irtysh, and Balkhash were called Desht-i-Kipchak (Kipchak Steppe). After the Mongol conquest, the lands of the Kipchaks became part of the ulus of Chinggis Khan's eldest son, Jochi. The state-building of the Chinggisids in the Great Steppe was closely linked to the spread of Islam, as well as the cultural influence of the Arab caliphate, Iran, and China.

In March 1266 CE, the great-grandson of Chagatai, the Muslim Mubarak, was proclaimed Khan on the banks of the Angren River in Maverannahr. In the same year, he died in a war with his cousin Baraq. The new khan converted to Islam in the winter of 1270-1271 CE in Tashkent but soon died. After him, the Chagatai khans who ruled were pagans. Only Tarmashirin (1328-1334 CE) became a Muslim under the name Sultan Ala ad-Din and declared Islam the state religion in his ulus. The Persian historian and geographer Hamdallah Mustawfi of Qazvin (died 1350 CE), in his description of Uzbek Khan's campaign in Azerbaijan, first called the warriors from the Golden Horde "Uzbeks" (Uzbekiyan).

In 1429 CE, during fierce internal wars, power in the Eastern Desht-i Kipchak was seized by a representative of another branch of the dynasty, Abu-l-Khair-sultan, a descendant of Shayban, the son of Jochi. In 1460 CE, his enemies and rivals, descendants of Urus Khan, Jochid Giray-sultan, and Janibek-sultan, fled to the Semirechye, to the ulus of the Chagataids, descendants of Chagatai, the second son of Chinggis Khan. Like other fugitives, deprived of ties with the kin clan and the patronage of the khan, these prince-sultans were called "free



men" or "Kazakhs." Fearing the accumulation of discontent around the fleeing sultans, in the autumn of 1468 CE (1469?), Abu-l-Khair-sultan set out on a campaign from the lower reaches of the Volga to the Eastern regions of Desht-i Kipchak. The ruler chose an inopportune time for the campaign. In severe frosts, his troops got stuck in snowdrifts, and he fell ill and died. Winning another civil war, in 1470–1471 CE, Giray-sultan and Janibek-sultan seized power in the Uzbek ulus (eastern sources) and founded the first Kazakh khanate (Sultanov, 2007).

In the 16th century, the Shaybanids conquered Khorezm and Maverannahr, creating two states in the interfluvium of the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers, stretching from the Aral Sea to Balkh and Badakhshan. In 1598 CE, after the death of Abdullah II Shaybanid, the power in Bukhara was established by the Janids (named after the founder of the new dynasty, Muhammad Jain-sultan) or Ashtrakhanids (after their place of origin – Astrakhan). In the 17th century, Kazakh khans controlled Western Turkestan with cities such as Tashkent, Sayram, and Andijan. In the early modern period, historical Turkestan extended from the Caspian Sea in the west to the Altai Mountains in the east and from the foothills of the Ural Mountains in the north to the Kopet Dag, Pamir, and Hindu Kush in the south. Semirechye (in Kazakh, Zhetysay) was distinguished as an independent region between Lake Balkhash in the north and Lake Alakul in the northeast, the Tien Shan Mountains in the south, the Jungar Alatau in the southeast, and the Karatau in the west (Sultanov, 2007; Tulegenova & Chora, 2020).

In 1785 CE, the Jainid dynasty in Bukhara was replaced by representatives of the Mangyts dynasty, who retained their power within the Russian Empire as vassals of the tsar and were finally overthrown in 1920 CE. By the late 18th century, in Eastern Turkestan with its center in Yarkand, the dynasty of the descendants of Chagatai, the second son of Genghis Khan, was eradicated. Under Chinese assimilation pressure in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Turkic population of this region became known under the ethnonym "Uyghurs." In 1867 CE, within the Russian Empire, the Turkestan General-Governorate was established with its center in Tashkent (see Figure 1). After the formation of the USSR during the national delimitation process in 1922–1924, the toponym "Western Turkestan" was replaced by "Central Asia" comprising Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, all five new independent states became elements of a regional community known as Central Asia (Sultanov, 2007).



**Figure 1. Kazakhstan in Central Asia**  
Source: utilized by the authors from open sources (worldometers.info).

The Islamization of medieval Turkic khanates did not lead to the displacement of paganism among nomadic tribes but rather prompted the genesis of syncretic "folk Islam." During their nomadic lifestyle in the absence of mullahs and mosques, they preferred to maintain the faith of their ancestors and traditional customs, without burdening themselves with the five daily prayers, fasting, and Hajj (Altayev & Imanbayeva, 2021). The cult of Khukhe (in Turkic), Monke (in Mongolian), or Tengri (Eternal Blue Sky) in Turkic-Mongolian shamanism dates back to the 3rd century BCE. The concept of chenli among ancient Huns is akin to the Sumerian dingir and the Chinese tian. Tengri is an impersonal heavenly spirit, the master of all living beings and the world's elements, including earth, water, and fire. He governs the destinies of people, tribes, and states.

In the Middle Ages, the Mongols and Turks referred to the supreme deity in their pantheon as Khan Monke-Tengri, endowing him with epithets such as Erhetu-Tengri (Mighty Sky) and Deger-Tengri (Highest Sky), emphasizing his absolute power over the world of humans and things. The worship of the Sky, as a symbol of freedom and the source of justice common to all people, became the center of proto-Kazakh's sacred consciousness. Proper performance of rituals in worship of Tengri bestowed nomads with vitality, material prosperity, and security, success in war and hunting, protection against diseases, natural disasters, enemies, and bandits. The image of Bagatur-Tengri signified a god - the defender of people, instilling bravery in warriors and granting victories in battles. This heavenly commander appeared as a rider, defeating enemies who threatened forests and rocks with his steel saber, and when necessary, with lightning bolts (Neklyudov, 1998).

The duality of official Islam and folk paganism persisted until the gradual voluntary acceptance of Kazakh tribes citizenship of the Russian Empire, which took 142 years. Empress Anna Ioannovna, sending A.I. Tevkelev to Khan Abu-l-Khair in 1731 CE to bring the Kishi Juz (Junior





Horde) into Russian subjection, gave the envoy strict instructions "so that in fidelity to Her Imperial Majesty, the said Abu-I-Khair-khan, along with all other khans and elders and all other Kirghiz-Kaisaks, would swear allegiance according to their faith on the Quran." However, during the funeral in the summer of 1748 CE, Abu-I-Khair's rites still combined the norms of Sharia and the precepts of the Tengrians. A sword, spear, and arrows were placed in the grave (Sultanov, 2007).

The foundational parameters of spiritual and moral principles in Turkic philosophy and anthropology were delineated by thinkers of the early and classical Middle Ages: Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi, Korkyt Ata, Yusuf Balasaguni, and Mahmud al-Kashgari. Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi, born in 870 CE in Farab in Maverannahr, received his education in Damascus and was honored with the titles of "the first philosopher of the Arabs" and "the Aristotle of the East" for his encyclopedic knowledge. In his "Treatise on the Views of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City," al-Farabi defined human personality as the fundamental element of the harmonious integrity of society, the state, and the cosmic Universe. All people are equal before the Almighty, but they differ in intellectual and moral qualities, place of residence, and occupation. The state (the virtuous city) is led by an imam, whose main quality is enlightenment, and whose duty is to ensure security, educate and train subjects, and care for their material well-being, and moral dignity (Altayev et al., 2020; Chongarova et al., 2023; Malešević, 2021).

Korkyt Ata laid the ontological foundation of personal existence in his "Words of Wisdom." Under the influence of Neoplatonic Gnosticism, the thinker realizes a pantheistic synthesis of Tengri and Allah, expressing cosmic universalism. The meaning of human life lies in overcoming the ruptures of its modalities, in attaining the original integrity lost at the moment of the Fall. The ideas of Korkyt Ata were further developed by Jusup Balasagyn and Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi (1103–1166 CE). In the service of Tabghach Bogra-khan, Jusup (Yusuf) Balasagyn earned the honorary title of Khas Khadhib (Wise Advisor). In the allegorical poem "Blessed Knowledge," the thinker forms a metaphysical image of the Sun, i.e., a warrior-hero embodying the best qualities of human personality – bravery, willpower, and justice. These virtues are essential for a khan who provides tranquility and prosperity to the people.

Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi was born in Yasi (Sayram), studied in Otrar and Bukhara, and later founded a Sufi order in Yasi (Turkestan). Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi considered the true path of a Muslim Sufi to be self-improvement and reunification with the Most High. This ascent occurs in four stages: Sharia (fulfillment of laws), Tariqat (spiritual perfection), Ma'rifat (comprehension of the meanings of divine will), and Haqiqat (attainment of unity between man and God). The meaning of earthly existence for the individual, as a microcosm, lies in achieving harmony with the Universe – the macrocosm. Sufi asceticism allows one to rid oneself of sinful fleshly desires and attain spiritual perfection (Botagoz et al., 2023).

Mahmud al-Khusein ibn Muhammad al-Kashgari (1028/1029–1101/1126 CE?) was born in Barskhana (Kashgar). In the "Divan Lugat at-Turk" ("Collection of Turkic Languages"), he compiled a fundamental encyclopedia (lexicography) of early Turkic written culture. In the final period of the first Kazakh Khanates in the 18th–19th centuries, folk poets, akyns, and zhiraus preserved and developed the folk culture in the forms of heroic epics and love dramas. Bukhar-zhiraus Kalkamanuly (1693–1787 CE), Kotesh Kanayuly (1745–1818), Shortanbay Kanayuly (1817–1881), Shoje Karzhaubayuly (1817–1881) included wise advice in their poetic works, expressing the spiritual aspects of everyday human life. The philosophical reflections of medieval storytellers expressed ideas about eternal values, the meaning of life, nature, and society.

The works of Kazakh enlighteners Chokan Valikhanov (1835–1865) and Abay Kunanbayuly (1845–1904) became a transitional stage from traditional to modern Turkic-Kazakh philosophy and anthropology. Chingizid Ch. Valikhanov became a well-known researcher – topographer



and ethnographer – as an officer in the Russian army. In 1856, during his journey to Lake Issyk-Kul and Kulja, he recorded folk poems "Edige," "Erkakim," and began the study of the "steppe Iliad" – the epic "Manas." Abay Kunanbayuly completed the formation of the foundations of Turkic-Kazakh anthropology. The thinker considered the spiritual-moral core of personality to be the harmony of three absolute values of ancient philosophy, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, developed in the works of al-Farabi, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, and Mahmud al-Kashgari. Reason, based on goodness, is the conscience of the heart and a reflection of God in man. Personal development consists of liberation from sinful thoughts, corrupt motivations, and actions (Abay, 1993; Muursepp et al., 2020; Sartaeva, 2021; Solovyeva, 2021).

Theoretical research by the Turkic-Kazakh intelligentsia was coupled with practical enlightening efforts. Starting in 1876, the Ministry of Public Education introduced lessons in the Russian language, arithmetic, and natural sciences into Muslim schools in the Turkestan General Governorate. Ibrahim Altysarin opened Russian-Kazakh schools in district towns of the Turgai region. The Revolution of 1905–1907 served as a decisive impulse, leading to the transformation of Kazakh enlightenment into a political national liberation movement (Kindirbay, 1997). The "Alash" movement became the nucleus of national construction. In December 1917, the proclaimed Alash Orda became the government of national autonomy (Bashmakov et al., 2020; Bashmakov, 2021; Tursun et al., 2021). After the Civil War and the establishment of the Kazakh SSR in 1924, the formation of the Kazakh nation continued within the framework of socialist modernization (Table 1).

Table 1. Stages of Formation of Turkic-Kazakh Anthropology

Stages of development	Main parameters of socio-economic, political, and cultural development	Main representatives of philosophical and socio-political thought	Conceptions of Personality, Society, and State
<b>Kazakh Khanates</b>	Nomadic animal husbandry in interaction with agricultural oases	Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi Korkyt Ata Hodja Ahmed Yassawi Yusuf Balasaguni Mahmud al-Kashgari	The ideal of a person living in harmony with society and obeying state authority; the meaning of life lies in adhering to Islamic ethical norms, in the posthumous reunion with Allah.
<b>Russian Empire</b>	Onset of urbanization, formation of transportation and social infrastructure	Chingizid Shokan Ualikhanov Abai Kunanbayev Ibray Altysarin Zh. Kopeyev A. Bukeykhanov M.Kh. Dulati A. Baitursynov	The transition from traditional to modernist culture, studying natural and humanities sciences.
<b>Soviet Union</b>	Intensive urbanization and industrialization	S. Seifullin A.N. Torekulov M. Auezov	Formation of a secular culture and the Kazakh nation within the framework of the Soviet people.
<b>Sovereign Kazakhstan</b>	Modernization of the economy and social sphere with a focus on global counterparts	Scholars of the National Academy of Sciences, university professors, creative intelligentsia	Development of the Kazakh nation and culture based on trilingualism, synthesis of traditional and modern values.

Source: Author's development based on Botagoz et al. (2023), Kaziev (2014), Sharipova (2018, 2020)

In the sovereign Republic of Kazakhstan, a policy of spiritual revival (Ruḥani jañǵırw) is being implemented, which includes the protection of cultural and historical heritage and the "return of names" (Ismailov & Omarbayeva, 2020). The Ministry of Culture has identified 185 religious and historical monuments of national significance, 483 of local significance, mosques, mausoleums, and other objects. Experts from the ministry, the National Academy of Sciences, and universities have compiled a list of the "Hundred New Faces" who have made a significant



contribution to the development of the peoples of Kazakhstan. In "Strategy 2050," the concept of "new Kazakhstani patriotism" is defined as the basis of civic equality, personal duties, and responsibility to the Motherland (Sharipova, 2020).

## Discussion

In the discourse on the spiritual and moral aspects of personality formation in Kazakh national consciousness, particular importance lies in the task of stabilizing the national identity of Kazakhs in interaction with other nations and ethnic groups. In the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Kazakhstan, cultural and ideological pluralism is extremely important, guaranteeing the free exchange of ideas and ensuring pluralism of opinions in the information space. Respect for cultural diversity and support for traditional values, while simultaneously being open to new ideas and experiences, create a stable vector of development and help avoid social upheavals (Burkhanov, 2020; Dordevic, 2021; Grozin, 2020).

In the post-Soviet period, the formation of a sovereign Kazakh nation is complicated by two main problems: overcoming the negative elements of Soviet heritage and integration into the global community (Esenova, 2002; Kindikbayeva et al., 2022; Zhanbosanova et al., 2020). Kazakhstan, like all developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, experiences to some extent the negative consequences of colonial domination, racism, and discrimination against indigenous peoples. In the historical memory of the Kazakh nation, traumas persist from the famine during collectivization in 1929–1933, the terror against the national intelligentsia in 1937–1938, and the negative environmental consequences resulting from the development of virgin lands and irrigation construction in the 1950s–1960s (Ohayon, 2016). The elites in Almaty, and later in Astana, were well aware that in the second half of the 20th century, attempts to introduce a market economy and integration into the international division of labor often led to a sharp increase in socio-economic inequality, hunger, poverty, and armed conflicts. Uncontrolled Westernization disrupted traditional values, creating a cultural vacuum and disorienting individuals in the new dynamic world. Therefore, the dominant discourse of personal freedom demanded constant correlation with basic cultural values and the preservation of responsibility to society at the national and local levels (Pirnazarov, 2021; Zhumasheva & Abdildin, 2023).

An important direction of state policy is ensuring information security, and economic, and social justice. This requires effective counteraction to negative influences that undermine social stability and threaten interethnic peace and harmony through the support and actualization of traditional national culture, values and philosophy; state encouragement of the institution of the family, traditional women's rights, and the promotion of study and promotion of national heritage. Uncontrolled use of information resources carries the risk of using technical platforms for disinformation and manipulation of mass consciousness. In today's open society, censorship, restrictions on freedom of speech, and blocking access to information typically lead to a backlash. The rapid development of modern technologies and the emergence of alternative sources of information allow Internet users to easily bypass restrictions and obtain necessary information.

State prohibitions foster distrust in official sources of information and delegitimize state authority. Restricting the pluralism of opinions and the free exchange of ideas creates significant barriers to scientific and technological progress. Artificial regulation of Internet access creates risks of "digital inequality" and its transformation into "digital divides". Excluding certain social groups from a unified information space deprives them of development resources, and creates threats of increasing economic inequality, social tension, and political conflicts. National elites in the modern global world face the task of managing the preservation of traditions, ethical norms, and values as the foundation of ethnic identity. Establishing intergenerational dialogue and transmitting both the everyday experience of older



relatives and the cultural-historical heritage to youth is an extremely important task (Zeinesh et al., 2023).

In Kazakhstan, located in the heart of Eurasia, the impact of interethnic conflicts in neighboring states is keenly felt, primarily tensions between Muslim and secular cultures in Turkey, and violations of the rights of Kazakh and Uyghur communities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. The Republic of Turkey positions itself as a model of secular (laicist) development for related Turkic peoples but still cannot resolve the issue of the Armenian genocide of 1915. In the People's Republic of China, the consequences of repression against Mongols, Turkic, and other ethnic minorities during the "Cultural Revolution" have not been overcome. The expansion of the Han Chinese ethnicity into national peripheries deprives local indigenous peoples of opportunities for independent development.

The formation of spiritual and moral foundations of personality in Kazakh culture is expressed in the processes of representing collective images of "I" and "We" in historical memory, political and sacred symbols, and public discourse. In the context of informational openness, national and cosmopolitan elites compete in the struggle for influence in group definitions, political positions, and social practices. The establishment of sovereign statehood in Kazakhstan signifies the assertion of a stable structure of geophysical, sociocultural, and mental landscapes. State policy aimed at creating national identity is manifested in the instrumentalization of normative cultural-historical narratives that legitimize the status of the ruling class (von Soest & Grauvogel, 2017; Vukasinović, 2023; Yerekesheva, 2020).

In the Kazakhstani pattern of decolonization, the concept of personal and collective identity serves the functions of autonomy and orientation for individuals, society, and the nation in the surrounding world. In the formation of political culture, effective identification is a condition for constructing authoritative legitimate leadership and ensuring stable state governance. National construction in a country with vast territory and, a multiethnic population, situated between Russia and China, as strong centers of attraction, requires precise adjustment of state policy and ideology. The transition of power from N. Nazarbayev to K.-J. Tokayev has left unchanged the basic concept of Kazakhstan's identification as "the home of Kazakhs and a multiethnic republic" (Gleason, 2018; Heller, 2019; Mukhanova & Absattarov, 2020; Surucu, 2002).

The development of Kazakhstani national consciousness in the contemporary global world occurs under strong external influences from global centers of power, such as China and the USA. This influence does not always have a favorable impact on the spiritual and moral foundations of personality formation. In 2007, at the 17th Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Chairman of China and the General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, Hu Jintao, abandoned the policy of "keeping a low profile" in foreign affairs and set the ambitious task of achieving global leadership. China's external influence is based on "soft power" and is aimed at demonstrating achievements in economics and culture. The Confucius Institutes have become centers of influence, which were established by the Chinese side in universities of Central Asian countries. Currently, there are 5 functioning institutes in Kazakhstan, 4 in Kyrgyzstan, and 2 each in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Sinicization of post-Soviet states leads to the erosion of integration processes in the CIS and the EAEU, and disrupts traditional ties between Kazakhstan and Russia in the fields of education, healthcare, sports, and tourism, without replacing them with a similar positive Chinese influence.

The European Union and the United States also exert ambiguous influence. Western European countries are primarily interested in establishing transport infrastructure to access Kazakhstan's raw materials and allocate insignificant funds for implementing humanitarian projects. For the United States, Central Asia primarily serves as a platform for exerting pressure on China. However, a strong neo-colonial "orientalist" legacy persists in intercultural communications with the West (Bukalerova & Kaminskiy, 2022; Kagan et al., 2024). The task





before the Kazakh intellectual elite and creative intelligentsia is to form a concept of personality as a successor to the original nomadic culture and independent philosophical tradition, capable of embracing the achievements of global civilization and preserving the heritage of their ancestors.

## **Conclusions**

The Kazakh nation emerged as one of the principal components of the Turkic civilizational community or super-ethnicity, as understood by Gumilev (1990). The formation of Kazakh culture and national consciousness occurred within an Islamic context under the strong influence of Persian and Arab thinkers. Philosophers, akyns, and zhiraus made significant contributions to understanding the spiritual and moral aspects of the interaction between individuals, society, and the state. They extensively deliberated on the place and role of proto-Kazakh nomadic tribes in the steppe landscape of Central Asia. Nomads, and later Kazakh khanates, facilitated transit trade along the Great Silk Road and subsequently established contacts between the oases of Maverannah and Russian merchants.

The incorporation of Kazakh tribes into the Russian Empire, and later into the Soviet Union, provided a new impetus for socio-economic and cultural development. National enlighteners outlined paths for the development of the Kazakh nation amidst urbanization and industrialization. The dissolution of the USSR in 1991 marked the beginning of sovereign Kazakhstani statehood, creating new opportunities for development while simultaneously increasing risks, challenges, and threats. Globalization and new information technologies significantly amplified external informational and ideological influences on Kazakh national consciousness and spiritual-moral aspects.

The modernization of the economy and social sphere, along with integration into the international division of labor, is impossible without the utilization of contemporary technologies and discourses. However, uncontrolled adoption of external behavioral and cognitive models poses a threat to the destabilization of societal relations.

In Turkic-Kazakh culture, the family plays a significant role in the formation and development of individuals. The stable development of Asian society largely depends on the preservation of traditional knowledge and its transmission from the older to the younger generation. This informational complex includes communication skills, the ability to establish and maintain a family and raise children, as well as ecological, geographical, historical, and domestic knowledge. While traditional crafts, such as saddle-making and yurt construction, may not be directly applicable to the modern urban dweller's everyday life, these skills still hold considerable pedagogical, sporting, ethical, and cultural-historical value.

It is also important to foster collaboration between Kazakhstani and international researchers for the exchange of experiences and diversity of methodologies. Further research could be directed toward identifying specific measures for preserving and developing spiritual and moral values in contemporary Kazakhstani society. State and societal governance require constant monitoring of the interaction processes between individuals and the environment, interethnic relations, and the improvement of regulatory moral and legal norms. This should become an important task for governmental bodies, non-profit organizations, and the scientific and expert community.

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