

# İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Akademi Dergisi

(Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Academy)

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[DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.6480936](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6480936)

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Eser Geçmişi / Article Past:

Başvuru Tarihi  
Applied  
07/05/2021

Kabul Tarihi  
Accepted  
02/06/2021

Araştırma Makalesi

Orjinal Makale / Original Paper

Research Paper

## NOMADIC CULTURE AS ARCHETYPE OF CENTRAL ASIAN CULTURE

### Abstract

In connection with the fact that in the 20th century the ontological unity of the world was destroyed, many concepts of philosophy lost their high status and began to be considered as multivariate meanings. So, instead of the human mind as such, the political mind has come to the fore. Accordingly, life in the being of others began to be presented as a necessity of co-referring with other political minds. In this regard, the phenomenon of dialogue has taken the form of the paradigm of the era. At the same time, the dialogue began to be presented as intercultural, interreligious, interpersonal, interstate. This became a trend of practical reality. In connection with the fact that the political mind became the dominant, elements of the political began to be introduced into all spheres of human life, generating certain distortions. For example, the manipulation of religious feelings in politics has given rise to a phenomenon such as religious terrorism and extremism. The search for comfort groups is one of the reasons for this phenomenon. The way out is the development of a traditional culture at the proper level, which will allow the negative energy to be sublimated to positive.

In the refraction of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan), the idea of archetypes of culture is being repeatedly raised. Appeal to archetypes is one of the options for acquiring the lost meaning of being. The problem of the actualization of the archetypal is also connected with the sacred problem, because when appealing to cultural archetypes, the sacred as a certain higher spiritual heritage is in the first place in demand.

**Keywords:** Culture, Archetype, Central Asia, Nomad, Traditional Values, Tengrianism.

CITE: URMANBETOVA, Jyldyz, "Nomadic Culture as Archetype of Central Asian Culture", *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Academy*, 1/1 (June 2021), pp. (001-008)

ATIF: URMANBETOVA, Jyldyz, "Orta Asya Kültürünün Arketipi Olarak Göçebe Kültürü", *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Akademi Dergisi*, 1/1 (Haziran 2021), ss. (001-008)

turnitin

Screened by

ISSN: 2791-6766

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## ORTA ASYA KÜLTÜRÜNÜN ARKETİPİ OLARAK GÖÇEBE KÜLTÜRÜ

### Özet

20. yüzyılda dünyanın ontolojik birliğinin yok edilmesiyle bağlantılı olarak, birçok felsefe kavramı yüksek statüsünü kaybetti ve çok değişkenli anlamlar olarak görülmeye başlandı. Böylece insan zihninin yerine siyasi akıl ön plana çıktı. Buna göre, başkalarının varlığındaki yaşam, diğer siyasi akıllarla ortak atıfta bulunmanın bir gerekliliği olarak sunulmaya başlandı. Bu bakımdan diyalog olgusu çağın paradigması şeklini almıştır. Aynı zamanda, diyalog kültürlerarası, dinlerarası, kişilerarası, devletlerarası olarak sunulmaya başlandı. Bu, pratik bir gerçeklik eğilimi haline geldi. Siyasi aklın egemen hale gelmesiyle bağlantılı olarak, siyasal unsurlar insan hayatının tüm alanlarına dâhil edilmeye başlandı ve belirli çarpıklıklar yarattı. Örneğin, siyasette dini duyguların manipüle edilmesi, dini terörizm ve aşırılık gibi bir olguyu doğurmuştur. Konfor grupları arayışı bu fenomenin nedenlerinden biridir. Çıkış yolu, geleneksel bir kültürün uygun düzeyde geliştirilmesidir ve bu, negatif enerjinin olumluya yüceltilmesine izin verir.

Orta Asya'nın (Kırgızistan) kırılmasında, kültür arketipleri fikri tekrar tekrar gündeme geliyor. Arketiplere itiraz, varlığın kayıp anlamını elde etmenin seçeneklerinden biridir. Arketipin gerçekleştirilmesi sorunu aynı zamanda kutsal sorunla da bağlantılıdır, çünkü kültürel arketiplere başvururken, belirli bir yüksek ruhani miras olarak kutsal talep ilk sırada yer alır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kültür, Arketip, Orta Asya, Göçebe, Geleneksel Değerler, Tengrianizm.

### 1. Introduction

It is reasonable to examine the contemporary era in the context of history's challenges and answers to systems of culture, peoples, and states. The main problems and contradictions, such as world development, as well as the development of particular regions and states, are most clearly manifested in this case. In that regard, culture can be seen as the most relevant concept of era, attaining the level of phenomenon and projecting all changes and metamorphoses of development. Namely, culture in the present defines the context of changes in the world from conflict situations to the formulation of new levels of relationship. Philosophy, once deemed the "quintessence of the thought of the era" by Hegel, forms the paradigms of the era and necessarily emphasizes the concept of world and person. Accordingly, the philosophy of modernity cannot ignore the problems of the transformation of culture from generation to generation.

A significant feature of the modern era is the actualization of cultural archetypes in the definition of existence and strategies for the development of peoples and states, about it in due time wrote Karl Jaspers.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, the concept and phenomenon of nomadic culture emerges anew, projecting the archetype of Central Asian culture. Hence the leitmotif of culture in reflection of the world generally is specified in the refraction of the Central Asian region. The uniqueness of nomadic culture lies in its representing a completely different form of existence in contrast to settled civilizations. The archetype of nomadic lifestyle, occurring alongside the settled lifestyle in Central Asia, dictates a different approach to the sacred and to the search for and manifestation of spirituality. The various aspects of mentality of Central Asian nomads have been studied by researchers from Kazakhstan as E. Shakenova, K. Nurlanova, M. Auezov, M. Orynbekov, Z. Naurzbaeva, S. Akatay, D. Kshibekov. Every one of them raised a particular problem in covering the specifics of mentality, culture and society.<sup>2</sup> Such studies

<sup>1</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Spiritual Situation of Time, in The World of Philosophy* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 547, 548.

<sup>2</sup> Nurbolat E. Masanov, *Nomadic Civilization of Kazakhs (basics of life migratory habits of society)*, (Almaty: Socinvest - Moscow: Horizont, 1995), 27-46. E. Shakenova, "Artistic assimilation of the world" in "Nomads

about nomadic way of life is also in Kyrgyz scientists. S. Abdrasulov highlights several aspects of the formation of the ontological grounds of the nomadic way of life. The symbol of the nomads seemed yurt that projects a particular world view of ancient nomads.<sup>3</sup> Such researchers as Dzhusupbekov A. and D. Ashiraliev emphasize on the formation of kinship as a basis of ethnic consciousness and philosophic thinking of nomads, based on Tengrianism.<sup>4</sup>

## **2. Dialogue as paradigm of the modern era**

The development of humanity, or so called “global development” at present, must be considered first of all in the context of culture. This has been noted by a number of minds, such as Huntington, Bibler, and many other representatives of philosophy. Huntington maintained that “In this world the most widespread, important and dangerous conflicts occur not between social classes or between rich and poor, but between peoples of different cultural identifications.”<sup>5</sup> This dictum underlines the fact that culture in modern reality is the epicenter of being, where the problems and contradictions of the era intersect. V.S. Bibler focuses on the priority of cultural dialogue, despite the tendency of every culture to dominate in the being of others: “...the meanings of various cultures are not conceptualized in the 20th century as higher or better meanings; each of them claims totality, uniqueness, and superiority, although in our modern sense they only make sense in relation to each other.”<sup>6</sup> Toffler, describing in his work the changes occurring in the last third of the 20th century, claimed that “more and more people are realizing that a new culture is forming around us. And it’s not just about computers... It’s a new attitude toward work, gender, nation, leisure, authority...”<sup>7</sup> In this case, it is a matter of postmodern culture. Culture is the determinant of development for individual peoples, states, and systems of civilization, and that is why it anticipates the changes of the era. The principle of cultural diversity, arising at the end of the 20th century, is essentially both a challenge and a threat. The dialectic of history is included in this. In this regard, the humanitarian component is increasingly being actualized, which means the role of philosophy is beginning to rise. Philosophical comprehension of the problems of culture and the contradictions of the modern era emphasize understanding the world and man.

Because the ontological unity of the world was destroyed in the 20th century, many philosophical concepts lost their elevated status and began to be considered varied in meaning. So, instead of the human mind as such, the political mind came to the fore. Accordingly, life in the being of others began to be presented as the need for correspondence with other political minds. In this regard, the phenomenon of dialogue acquires the form of the era’s paradigm. At the same time, dialogue began to be presented as intercultural, interreligious, interpersonal, and interstate. This became the trend of practical reality.

Dialogue is not by chance the paradigm of our age, since in the era of the destruction of spatial boundaries, in the era of postmodernism, and in the era of relativity of unity and differences, dialogue can lead to insight in understanding the essence of life and the essence of various systems ethnic, cultural, religious, and political. In an era when unconditional values of truth, goodness and justice are

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*Aesthetics*” (Almaty: Gylym, 1993), 83-84. Akatay S. National Kazakh mentality. - Almaty, 1998. Muhanmadiyar S. Orynbekov, *Predfilosofiya Protokazahov* (Almaty: Olke, 1994), 147-148, 158-159. Murat M. Auezov, “*Enkidiada: the problem of the unity of the worlds of nomadic and settled nomads*”, in “*Nomads. Aesthetics*”, (Almaty: Gylym, 1993), 59. Kanat Sh. Nurlanova, “*The symbolism of the world in the traditional art of the Kazakhs*”, in “*Nomads Aesthetics*” (Almaty: Gylym, 1993), 208.

<sup>3</sup> Zhyldyz K. Urmanbetova, Savetbek M. Abdrasulov, *The sources and tendencies of development of Kyrgyz culture* (Bishkek: Ilim, 2009), 8-85.

<sup>4</sup> Aziz K. Dzhusupbekov, *Ethnic Identity of Nomads* (Bishkek: Ilim, 2009), 265. Zhenishbek A. Ashiraliev, *Methodological aspects of the study of nomadic culture* (Bishkek: Kyrgyz Dip Servis, 2008), 230.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (Moscow: ACT, 2003), 25.

<sup>6</sup> Vladimir S. Bibler, *From the Study of Science to the Logic of Culture. Two Philosophical Introduction to the XXI Century* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 373.

<sup>7</sup> Alvin Toffler, “*Race, Power and Culture*”, “*A New Technocratic Wave in the West*” (Moscow: Progress, 1986), 286.



lost, only dialogue can prevent catastrophes, collapse and unnecessary fuss. But this requires a global perspective on life itself, history, and humanity, and that perspective requires penetration into nascent trends of development. Moreover, it should be noted that the very understanding of dialogue demonstrates certain dynamics. The traditional concept of dialogue (in the interpretations of Bakhtin, Bibler, and Lotman)<sup>8</sup> in the first half of the 20th century proceeded from the awareness of the stable existence of man and mankind. The modern understanding must proceed from a conflictual (contradictory) existence, as dictated by the modern era. Perhaps that is why, despite the cultivation of the idea of dialogue, the processes of violence arising from the opposition of ethnic and religious communities are not diminishing and sometimes even intensifying. That is also why the source of conflict in the modern world is cultural differences, with primarily ethnic and religious differences the most defining. This is the consequence of the leitmotiv of the common era in person to person interrelation. All the problems, conflicts, and contradictions of today's world arise from the ambiguity of this interrelation.

According to Huntington's figurative expression, the 20th century was the century of ideological conflicts. Indeed, the struggle of ideologies in the last century led to the modern alignment of powers; dominant ideological concepts came to an end. The socio-cultural explosion at the end of the 20th century defined the place and role of states in world politics. Ideological collapse caused the downfall of the once powerful Soviet Union, which, playing the role of great empire, had unified many geopolitical units. Ideological tension, having reached a peak, led to a historical outcome, which became the basis of the modern round of world development. This is all logical and in line with social patterns defining the path of history for several centuries.

As the 21st century has just started to gain momentum, it is too early to discuss the results of cultural development. On the other hand, it makes sense to determine which concepts logically predetermine the development of the new century. In the context of modern development, ideas came to the fore which were born at the end of the last century. These ideas vary from the base logic of last century's era. In the 21st century, ideology has not yet reached its zenith, and it is unlikely that it will be able to reach it, as was the case in the last century. In the new century, identification is primarily through culture and religion. The role and status of nation-states have not lost their power, but are nevertheless somewhat different.

If we return to the characterization of eras and centuries, then it is possible to say that it was a century of ideology but became a century of culture. This is simultaneously a chance to find a "self" for the nation-state based on its core culture, as well as the opportunity to sink into history. The principle of cultural diversity, which arose at the end of the twentieth century, is inherently a challenge and a threat. The dialectic of history is included within. The 20th century revealed the power of ideology and on this basis world empires were formed. At the same time, it is precisely the fact that these empires were based on the unity and strength of ideology, and not on the real unity of culture, that led to these empires collapsing very quickly (one ceased to exist, while another lost its credo). Ideology was a powerful tool for uniting the state as an element of political being of the historic era, especially of multiethnic being. This allowed the state to be turned into an empire as the dominant mode of world politics. However, there are two sides to every phenomenon: strong and weak. If the strong side of ideology contributed to the formation of empire then the weak side is that the weakening of ideology promptly led to the collapse of the state. So it was in the USSR: once powerful ideology turned the state into one of two world powers leading the world. The collapse of ideology also quickly led to the imminent death of this formidable empire. The USA was also quickly able to become one of the centers of world politics thanks to the American credo, which was the cornerstone of its victorious ideology. However, despite victory in the ideological struggle of the two superpowers, the role of credo was occupied by the idea of cultural

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<sup>8</sup> Mikhail M. Bahtin, *Aesthetics of Verbal Creativity* (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1986), 445. Yuri M. Lotman, *The Structure of Artistic Text* (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1970), 384

diversity enabling the gradual destruction of national identity of the state, which began to face significant problems by the end of the twentieth century.

The turn of the centuries equalizes large and small states. In this is the paradox of history. It is interesting in the 20th century that the lowering of the status of ideology gives states with a strong core culture the chance to rise, despite their small size. The interesting thing about the 20th century is that it is the century of the rapid upsurge of the cultural component. If the core culture of the state turns out to be strong enough, and the politics measured, it will be possible to make a leap. The possibility of forming new empires is the most rhetorical question in this context of the evolution of history. However, at the same time there is another side to the coin: the idea of cultural diversity predetermines the chaos of the present century, since the lack of a dominant ideology in the formation and development of states does not allow them to properly consolidate their national identity. This is a kind of whirlwind of national states and peoples. This is the strength and weakness of the 21st century.

In the present century, ideology is called to play several different roles. On the basis of cultural awareness of the states' peoples, a well-defined ideology should arise, intended to consolidate symbols and adjust the work system, rather than struggle with another system and dominate. This means that a mere insistence on an ideological concept without full cultural content will not lead to awareness of the specifics of the state, nor will it lead to victories, since the century of cultural diversity has come to replace the century of opposing ideologies of large states. However, it is difficult to say that in the present all peoples have clearly identified their core culture, thus the development of national identities continues. What is lacking in understanding the phenomenon of dialogue in the present? The answer is centering dialogue as an objective necessity in a world of openness and at the same time, of crisis of the human essence, that is a crisis of spirit. What is this? This is the ability to go beyond the boundaries of narrow-minded comfort and try to determine the strategic line of development in the context of family, ethnicity, society, state, and the world in general. Dialogue means the inevitable recognition of the existence of a different point of view and way of life that also has the right to exist by virtue of the infinity, multidirectionality and multidimensionality of the universe. However, the most important aspect is realizing that another's values, whether stronger or less significant, provide an opportunity not only to understand another's position, but also to gain a deeper awareness of oneself.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, dialogue has a positive impact opposing oneself to another: initially, it was necessary for a person to look to another for a more subtle understanding of their differences. This phenomenon gives rise to an instinctive intimacy between the participants, which is why it is so durable and stable. A positive basis for dialogue is that it involves not only contrasting oneself with another, but at the same time the possibility and necessity of interaction. In this sense, dialogue is the necessary component of communication. Due to the fact that the political mind became dominant in modern life, elements of the political began to penetrate all spheres of human life, creating certain distortions. For example, political manipulation through religious feeling has given rise to phenomenon such as religious terrorism and extremism. The search for comfort groups is one of the reasons for this phenomenon. The way out is the development of traditional culture, which allows for the sublimation of negative energy to positive.

Culture has become increasingly dominant in the world of human relations. In this regard, the era of economic domination has passed, and an era of universal cultural dominance has arisen in identifying sources of conflicts, political messes and dissonances, and social contradictions. Perhaps this is why the individual ceased striving to achieve a certain ideal, but preferred ambivalence, i.e. reflection in the consciousness of contradictory processes of the universe, that is, the world itself. Perhaps that is why there was a general appeal to the archaic and the archetypal premises of human consciousness, when stability arose in the definition of the human essence. In search of lost ideals, a person involuntarily

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<sup>9</sup> Nadejda N. Nikolenko, "Intercultural dialogue in the context of modern Kazakhstan's realities", "Actual questions of social sciences: Proceedings of VI international scientific-practical conference" (Novosibirsk: SibAC, 2011).



returns to where his initial development began, where the systems of culture and religion are formed. This is unpredictable history, when it shakes the human conscious of a man who has fallen asleep, descending, or rather bringing him back, to where his being begins. What is not the paradox of the very history of human existence?

### **3. The Archetype of the Central Asian Culture**

As regards Central Asia, and Kyrgyzstan as a sovereign state in the region, the idea of cultural archetypes is being repeatedly raised when the crisis of social development brings systems to the original foundations of the self-presentation of cultures. Appeal to archetypes is, therefore, one of the options for acquiring the lost meaning of being. The problem of actualizing the archetypal is also related to the problem of the sacred because when appealing to cultural archetypes, above all the sacred is demanded as a certain higher spiritual heritage. If we look at the history of the Kyrgyz people and the formation of statehood in the context of cultural values, we can distinguish the three most valuable stages (naturally, this division is conditional), during which values were formed and developed that orient people in society and symbolize the existence of stability. The initial stage, identified by Berdyaev in the application to development of a certain people through historical tradition, embodied the formation of traditional culture in the sense of laying the foundations of spiritual and cultural specifics. This stage of our history is associated with the nomadic, which has become the source of formation for a singular culture of thought and system of spiritual values. The most historical and simultaneously functional elements of the culture of thought from the ancient period of our nomadic ancestors were sensitivity to nature, dynamism, and contextuality. It is no coincidence that nature was regarded as the highest value, and life in harmony with it was thought of as the main task of the nomad. At the same time nomads were not conservatives, since life itself passed in an eternal and infinite dynamic, which is why tolerance was not just a value, but a way of thinking and communicating. As for contextuality (the need for life in the context of type), it gave rise to the value of collectivism. These preferences of nomadic culture were fixed at the subconscious level and were reflected in the formation of a traditional value culture.<sup>10</sup>

Another significant stage is related to the Soviet Union, when traditional values underwent the powerful influence of ideology. Spiritual and national values represented the Kyrgyz version of ideological norms adapted to culture. It should be noted that collectivism became a special symbol of the era of socialism, which suited the contextualist psychology of the former nomad. At the same time, national guidelines were mostly reduced to external parameters of culture. Sovereignty happened during the era of globalization, which organically flowed into post-globalization. The cultural form has also undergone a crisis of identity. There was a revival of collectivist thinking at the tribal level, in contrast to socialist collectivism-internationalism, this was reflected in modern tribalism.

Two versions of development in spirituality have occurred: the revival of Tengrianism as a method of ancestral thought, and the surge of Islamic values as a kind of response to the emerging spiritual emptiness, both of which developed with independence. These two versions are denoted by the context of their reversal of history. Another tendency of spiritual development is directly related to the era of globalization, during which universal values came to be absolute in the struggle for independence and openness to the world. According to the logic of our development's history, Islamic values have never been the central component of our spirituality. The sharp rise in the percentage of young people highly susceptible to Islam is explained by the transition from well-understood socialism to the "unexplored" democratic present. When the window to the world opened wide, also opening the horizons of the universe, there was practically no ideology, and the crisis intensified, not only in economics and politics, but also in culture. It is in such difficult social periods that religion, as one of the components of spirituality, comes to the fore: a stream of Islamic culture has flowed to us in the form of mosque building and fighting for the hearts and minds of young people, who must create the

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<sup>10</sup> Zhyldyz K. Urmanbetova, *The Culture of the Kyrgyz in the Projection of Philosophy of History* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1997), 70-79, 136.

future. The field of the spiritual is always subtle and precise, especially as concerns religious predilections. Since ancient times, religion was, above all, about spiritual fullness. At the same time, for the sake of objectivity, it must be noted that among the Central Asian republics Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan were the least susceptible to the absolutization of Islamic values, as descendants of the same nomads, even taking into account the special characteristics of the Fergana Valley.

Another argument in favor of Islamic values flourishing was the tendency to search for cultural identity in pulling down the old world and discovering a new one. One sort of impetus for this was globalization, which had invisibly posed the question of opposing cultural systems' ability to respond to the onslaught of universal values. Lack of proper attention to this subtle sphere became the basis for using Islamic values as the dominant method of filling the spiritual space. At the same time, young people are the most vulnerable layer, due to their awareness of maximalism. If a young person joins a spiritual movement, they often participate with unbridled excitement. Their emotions become overwhelmed and their minds do not engage in time. It then becomes fertile ground for strategic infiltration in the struggle for religious preferences.

Enthusiasm for Tengrianism only affected the part of society concerned with the sources of our culture's spirituality. This was expressed both in the increase of scientific research and in the propagation of this idea as the basis of ideological work. The reversion to Islamic values was embraced by a more extensive layer of society, especially the younger generation. Universal norms, however, appealed to the representatives of society alienated from the foundations of traditional culture.

What unites all three stages of development of spiritual and cultural values in the context of specifics in thought? The contextuality of thought is reflected in all periods of development: originally the nomad thought of himself in the context of tribe, then in the period of socialism in the context of collectivism of the Soviet people, and finally in the era of the emergence of sovereignty in the context of a tribal clan relation revival. This means that spiritual values will be easier to perceive in the context of their contextual presentation, despite the fact that globalization is brought to the fore by individualism and universal values that level out ethnicity.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Culture, which shapes the era, is manifested at present as a culture of postmodernity. Accordingly, at the level of world development, there is a shift in emphasis as far as understanding the essence of the world and man himself. Some uncertainty, as a characteristic of postmodern culture, is reflected in the uncertainty of the system of unconditional values. In this regard, the promotion of dialogue as a paradigm of the era is a reflection of the self-preservation instinct, when co-existence of cultures, peoples and states predetermines the dominant understanding of oneself in the context of understanding the other. In this case, it becomes possible to translate conflict into mutual understanding.

The culture of modern Central Asia, not coincidentally, reveals the surge of a particular archetype: nomadic culture. This is due to the need to find motivation for renewal through appealing to one's cultural origins. Nomadic culture, which is foremost characterized by its adherence to dynamism, contextuality and sensitivity to the environment, presents its own version of understanding the world and emphasizing this perception. It makes sense to focus on this in the era of contradictions and crisis of the spirit.

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