

# Multicultural Development of Religious Worldview in Contemporary Kazakhstani Society

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The main objective is to study the trends in the transformation of the religious worldview in the contemporary Kazakhstani society and to explain them using the theoretical Dual-circuit Model of Religious World Formation. The application of interdisciplinary approaches enabled a quantitative analysis of the trends in the formation of the religious worldview, while a qualitative analysis revealed how those trends influenced various spheres of public life, including social relations, politics and cultural practices. Data were gathered from a survey of 1,500 respondents as part of the Central Asia Barometer Data waves 1–7 spanning the years 2017–2020, and an analysis of national statistics. Logit regression was utilised for data analysis. The findings of the study demonstrate that in the modern society, the influence of religious and secular aspects of worldview manifests in different ways, shaping civilisational trajectories and determining the future course of development. For numerous years, the Kazakhstani society has remained multicultural and interfaith. Islam is the predominant religion, followed by 69.3% of the population, followed by Christianity at 17.2%. Other religious affiliations are represented by less than 0.1% of the populace, while approximately 2.3% identify as non-believers. Employing a cultural-sociological approach, a bi-contour model of religious worldview formation in the contemporary Kazakhstani society has been developed. The findings of this study hold applicability not only to Kazakhstan but to numerous countries, given their universal nature. The essence lies in the application of universally recognised principles in balancing interests between religion and secularism: a secular form of governance, constitutionally enshrined rights to religious tolerance and freedom of belief, religious institutions and spiritual values.

**Keywords:** desecularisation, model, tolerance, pluralism, faith

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## INTRODUCTION

Globalisation exerts a multifaceted influence on contemporary society and its religious worldview, essentially shaping a new social space. Studies on the role of religion and its influence on

various spheres of social and public life in different countries remain crucial for understanding social processes within these societies. A closer examination of this issue can contribute to a more diverse and in-depth understanding of these changes in the context of religious values and identity. This constitutes the relevance and originality of the present study compared to the previously conducted research.

Using Kazakhstan as a case study, it becomes evident that the religious situation in the country differs from that of other regions of the world due to its multicultural development, necessitating a reconsideration of existing scholarly approaches to defining the role of religion in a secular state and the participation of religious institutions in a multi-confessional society. At the same time, it is necessary to reassess secular and religious aspects within the context of the politicisation of social relations and the consideration of state interests in the socialisation of the younger generation (Burova et al. 2023: 154).

Despite the presence of scholarly research, the question of how social spaces influence the values and perspectives of religious individuals remains inadequately explored. Furthermore, there is an insufficient understanding of the extent to which specific social spaces facilitate or hinder the emergence of specific religious values (Bognár, Kmetty 2023: 25). Presently, a major threat stems from the increasing influence of post-truth narratives in online networks, which, in conjunction with political discourse, contributes to the distortion and misrepresentation of facts, including regarding the essence of religious worldviews and values (Peters 2019: 430; 2021: 3). Religion is not merely an adjunct to what we already accept. It is a vital approach to understanding the surrounding world and its reality, grounded in certain values and beliefs. These form the religious worldview (Stenmark 2022: 572). The utility of religious beliefs as intragroup markers is one of the possible primary biological functions, among many others, that may significantly impact other adaptive functions at biological, social, or psychological levels (Szocik, Oviedo 2018: 525).

This study aims to examine the trends in the transformation of the religious worldview in the contemporary Kazakhstani society and to explain them using the theoretical Dual-circuit Model of Religious World Formation. The main hypothesis posits that understanding ongoing processes in modern societies requires an analysis of the complex interrelationship between religion and globalisation within the context of political, cultural and social practices. Additionally, the interaction between the digital social space and religion is of significant importance, representing one of the emerging directions in the development of the religious worldview in the Kazakhstani society.

To achieve this, the following research objectives are set. Initially, it is proposed to study and compare scholarly views regarding the changes that have affected religious worldviews in the era of globalisation. In the subsequent stage, the role of religion in the social practice of contemporary Kazakhstani society will be examined separately. At the conclusion of the literature review, attention will be devoted to the interaction between the digital social space and religion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **The Role of Globalisation, Secularisation and Desecularisation in the Formation of Social Space**

Globalisation creates complex interconnections between people and ideas, shaping a unified global community where events rapidly spread across great distances. The primary drivers

of this process are information and communication technologies, alongside innovations in transportation infrastructure. As a result, the values of modernism, emphasising change and freedom, have emerged, leading to the development of mass consumer culture, which religious activists have criticised for posing a threat to traditional beliefs (Onuoha, Odeke 2020: 1). These processes, particularly cross-border migrations, provoke a complex religious response at the societal level due to their secularising impact (Szendrő 2025: 1).

In the contemporary globalised world, characterised by its dynamism and the deepening of interethnic, interstate and interreligious conflicts, the need to resolve these contradictions has become particularly acute (Sokolovskyi et al. 2021: 155). Examining the complex interrelationship between religion and globalisation simultaneously raises a range of political, social, cultural, and other issues. Religion, however, exists not merely to oppose or accept global processes; it can also actively contribute to the emergence and consolidation of globalisation within the framework of shared humanistic values (Mercier et al. 2023: 4).

Ancient culture regarded faith as an indispensable social good. However, recently the value of faith has been called into question, especially in relation to religious obligations (McKaughan 2017: 25). A trend in many Western countries is the decline in individual religiosity, the increase in the number of 'non-Christian' religions, the growth of non-Christian religions, changes within religion itself, and the prominence of religion in the public sphere (Furseth 2021: 15). On the other hand, religious identity, beliefs and practices are differently associated with prejudices in different religions (Kollar, Fleischmann 2022: 630). Theology has often regarded religious faith as a 'source of meaning' against the backdrop of 'meaninglessness' (Oviedo 2019: 30).

The term 'social practice' refers to the set of actions, interactions and rituals carried out within a particular social group or society. In the context of a religious worldview, social practices play a crucial role, as they help to shape and maintain shared values, beliefs and identity among members of a religious community. Religious rituals, ceremonies and traditions – such as prayers, festivals and gatherings – serve as examples of social practices that strengthen bonds among believers and facilitate the transmission of religious teachings across generations.

The interaction between the global digital social space and religion represents one of the emerging directions in the development of the religious worldview in the Kazakhstani society.

When considering social practice in religion from the perspective of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, it can be defined as part of the transmitted moral norms and societal expectations through which certain forms of behaviour are legitimised. Others are marginalised within the context of traditional values (Bourdieu 2013: 8). In the Kazakhstani society, this is reflected in the formation of respect for older people, the support and mentorship of younger generations, the preservation of ancestral and family history, adherence to religious rituals, and the maintenance of hierarchical authority relations.

Trust and mutual understanding have become pressing issues for the entire post-Soviet space. While in the Western context, trust is built on the documentation of official relations, in the Central Asian context, it is more reliant on interpersonal and religious relationships (Whitssel, Merrill 2021: 360). In Kazakhstan, a distinctive interfaith model has emerged in the relationship between the secularised state and religion. Its peculiarity lies in the close connections between religious manifestations and secular principles (Zakhay et al. 2024: 10). At the same time, there are individual critical remarks regarding its inconsistency with the declared advantages. This primarily includes state paternalism, embedded hierarchy, as well as widespread

suspicions and prejudices towards religious minorities, inherited from the Soviet times, which remain the key features of the social practice of Kazakhstan's development model (Podoprigo-ra, Kassenova 2020: 65). The religious aspect of worldview can significantly influence the civilisational choices of future Kazakhstani society (Dashkovskiy et al. 2023: 809).

It is essential to understand that the post-Soviet society has objectively shifted from secularisation to desecularisation processes. However, this change was more noticeable at the level of functioning of religious institutions rather than at the level of mass consciousness (Astapov, Krasnova 2022: 190; Hoang et al. 2023). The legal regulation of religion in the formation of contemporary Central Asian societies has been associated with the strengthening of control policies and the construction of a 'national' Islam (Gamza, Jones 2020).

The issue of interfaith harmony and the preservation of unity are increasingly felt in the Kazakhstani society (Burova et al. 2020: 119). Kazakhs, in general, considered religious identity an inseparable aspect of national identity. However, this did not result in substantial changes in the context of individual religious identity, concerning worldview and its practices (Syzykova 2017: 99). For many Kazakhs, religious tolerance serves as a personal spiritual principle based on traditions, history and culture (Aubakirova et al. 2014).

The digital social space has significantly transformed religious practices by providing platforms for the dissemination of ideas and communication among believers through social media. Social networks enable individuals to find like-minded people and establish connections even across great distances, which is particularly important for religious minorities. Furthermore, the Internet has become a source of diverse religious content, including videos and blogs, facilitating a freer exploration and discussion of religious topics. However, the digital space can also serve as an arena for religious conflicts and criticism, where individuals may use the Internet to spread hate or misinformation about other beliefs.

Global networks and the diverse experiences of religious, spiritual, or secular life are creating a new social environment (Mercier et al. 2023: 12). In this environment, religious beliefs are interpreted as 'worldview convictions', vital for everyday practice (Löffler 2018: 23). Digital technologies in religious practice contribute to the restructuring of religious life in accordance with the changing social and cultural circumstances of the modern world (Nyazbekov et al. 2023: 9).

The digital social space and religion represent a highly relevant area of research, as they intersect within the contemporary society, where technology plays a significant role in people's lives. Studies in this field help to elucidate how digital platforms influence religious practices, the formation of communities and the dissemination of beliefs.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

### Research Design

This study was conducted using a cultural-sociological method proposed by Watts (2022: 29). The application of the cultural-sociological method in the study of the religious worldview of contemporary society makes it possible to account for both the unity and diversity of modern religious and social practices, as well as their social and political implications, which is essential for understanding the new religious era and the phenomenon of the religion of the heart.

The research plan consisted of several stages. The first stage involved the analysis of recent literary sources. The second stage, issues concerning the role of religious worldview in

the era of globalisation, as well as religion in the social practice of contemporary Kazakhstani society, were examined. Additionally, the interaction between the digital social space and religion was further explored.

The application of interdisciplinary methods from philosophy and sociology enabled the examination of contemporary trends in the formation of religious worldviews in the Kazakhstani society, while the qualitative analysis determined the vector of their influence in social practice. Logit regression was utilised for data analysis. Additionally, a two-contour model for the formation of religious worldview in the modern Kazakhstani society was developed.

### **Data Source**

The primary informational basis for the study consists of the data from the National Population Census of 2021, which are available on the official website of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Bureau of National Statistics (Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan Bureau of National Statistics 2023). Statistical data on the structure of religious affiliation among the population, socio-demographic age differences, and specific indicators in urban and rural areas were utilised. The secondary information resources for this study include the data from the World Religion Database, 2023 and the Central Asia Barometer survey. In this survey, only data related to demographic, religious, social and gender issues were utilised. Information available to researchers from the Central Asia Barometer Data for the years 2017 and 2020 was used; therefore, those years were selected for assessing trends in the transformation of the religious worldview among Kazakhs. Key characteristics and features were identified. The analysis employed categories such as age, gender and religious affiliation.

### **Survey**

To study the contemporary Kazakhstani society and the characteristics of formation of its worldview and religious positions, data from surveys conducted within the framework of the Central Asia Barometer project were utilised. This survey was conducted by an independent centre for the study of public opinion. In this research, the authors used it for an objective analysis of the social and religious aspects of contemporary Kazakh life. The survey methodology involved telephone interviews. The surveys were conducted in May–June of 2017 and 2020. The purpose of the survey was to obtain reliable data on the public opinion. The 2017 survey included 1,500 respondents, and the 2020 survey also comprised 1,500 respondents.

### **Research Limitations**

The limitations of this study are associated with the peculiarities of investigating religious issues, which necessitate adherence to the ethical principles of the freedom of belief and respect for the right to confidentiality. Despite these constraints, the study managed to transcend the traditional religious criticism and examine various forms of the critique of religious worldview within the modern societal development. Additionally, the use of survey data was constrained by ethical frameworks.

## **RESULTS**

Contemporary Kazakhstani society is characterised by its multicultural and interfaith nature. The country is home to approximately 121 ethnic groups, nationalities and peoples (Agency

for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan Bureau of National Statistics 2023). Religious pluralism and tolerance are essential for maintaining internal stability within society and ensuring its sustainable development.

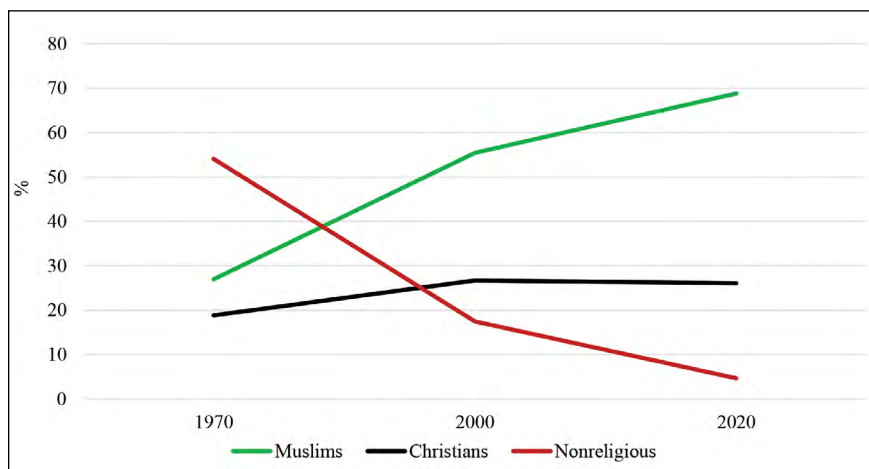
Over the past 30 years, Kazakhstan has undergone a transition from secularisation to processes of desecularisation. During this period, the number of religious institutions has increased, while the official state policy has remained committed to secular development. Additionally, in the face of growing political and ethnonational instability in other Central Asian countries, the authorities and elite of Kazakhstan have long adhered to a traditional secular policy to preserve multicultural and interfaith societal harmony.

Figure 1 illustrates the process of desecularisation in the Kazakhstani society, wherein, as early as 1970, the proportion of atheists exceeded 50% (Fig. 1). At the same time, during the process of desecularisation, the Kazakhstani society remains industrial and urbanised.

Remaining a secular state, Kazakhstan is currently facing specific tasks in developing a modern model of secularism and building more flexible forms of state-confessional relations in response to the challenges that currently exist in the region. These challenges include Islamic fundamentalism, radicalism and terrorism. On the other hand, there is a generational shift, the growing influence of globalisation and social networks.

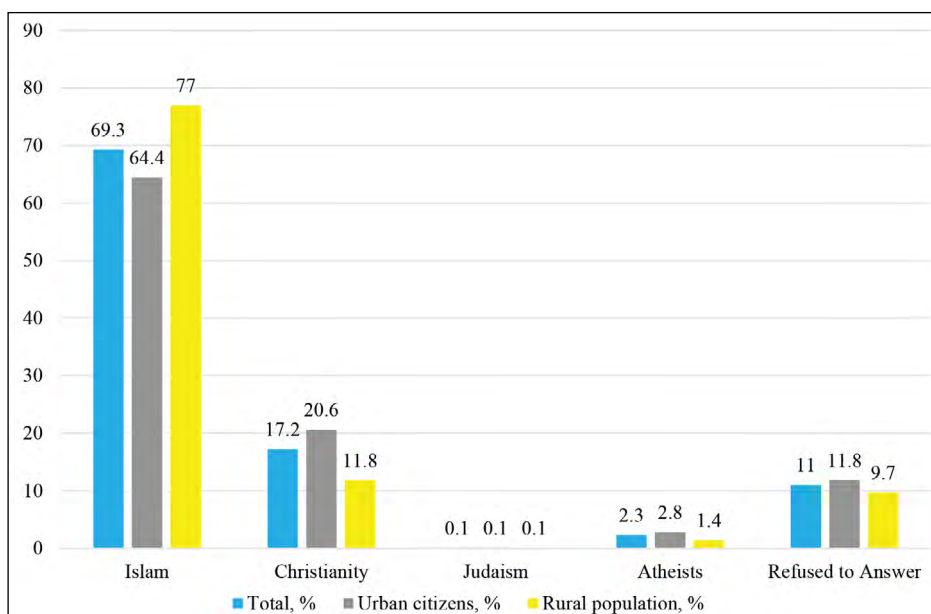
According to the latest census data, the proportion of those professing Islam was the largest, at 69.3%. Christianity is the second most significant religion in the country, at 17.2%. Representatives of other religious denominations account for less than 0.1%. This group includes those who adhere to Judaism, Buddhism, and other beliefs. Additionally, about 11% of respondents refused to indicate their affiliation with any religion, and almost 2.3% identified themselves as atheists (Fig. 2).

However, there are certain differences in the proportion of believers among the population living in urban and rural areas. A higher proportion of the population adhering to Islam is observed in rural areas, where it accounts for approximately 77%, compared to 64.4% in urban



**Fig. 1.** The population structure of Kazakhstan by religious affiliation in the past and present (1970–2020 by World Religion Database, 2020)

Source: National/Regional Profiles (2023).



**Fig. 2.** Population attitudes towards religious beliefs and affiliation to a denomination based on the Analysis of Census Data in 2021

Source: National Composition, Religion, and Language Proficiency in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2023).

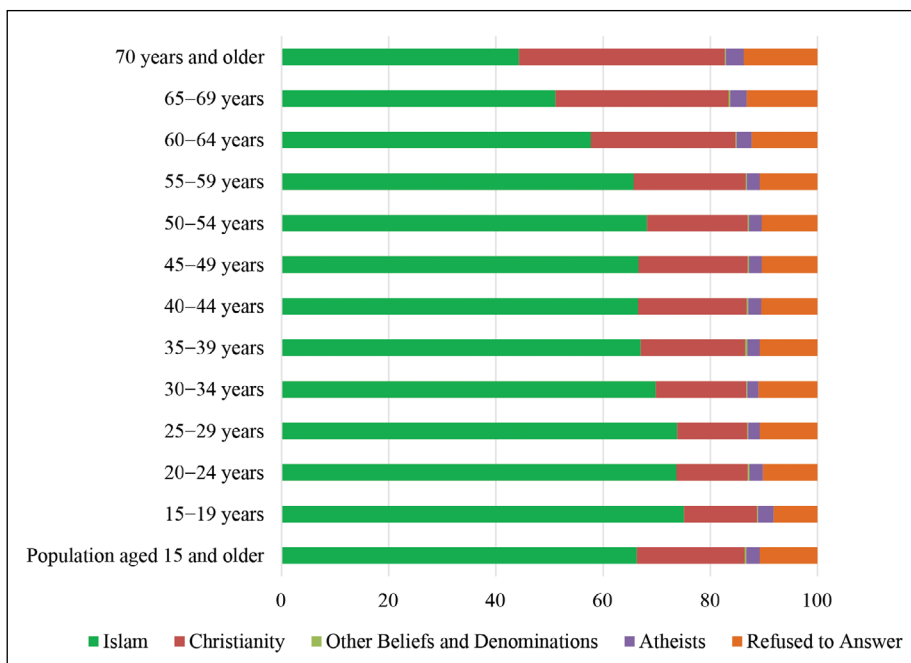
areas. Meanwhile, in urban areas, a higher proportion of the population adheres to Christian denominations, with their share being 20.6%, whereas in rural areas, it is only 11.8%.

The analysis of the population of Kazakhstan according to the socio-demographic typology of different age groups also revealed noticeable differences in responses between the younger and older generations. The older the population, the lower the proportion of those adhering to Islam and the higher the proportion of those identifying as Christians (Fig. 3).

The explanation for this generational correlation can be found in the history of Kazakhstan in the second half of the 20th century when during the period of the Soviet Union's existence, virgin lands were being developed in the republic. The older generation comprises residents of other republics who came and settled in Kazakhstan, adopting its culture and traditions, while also enriching it with their own culture and values.

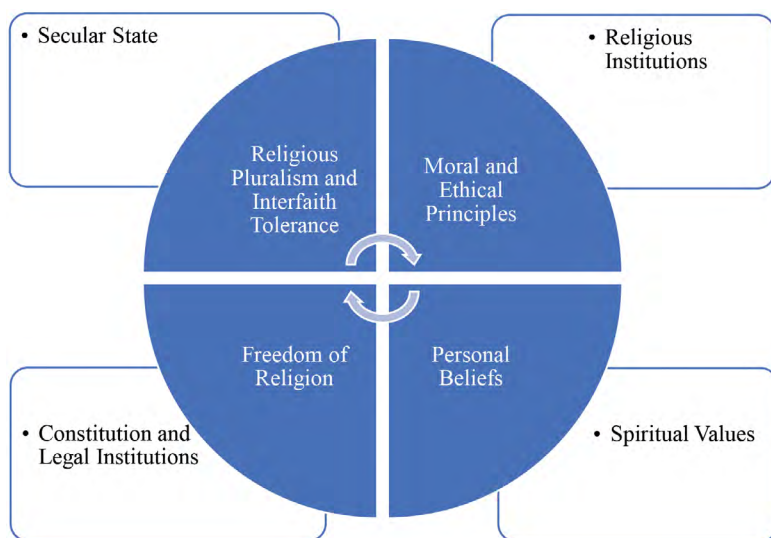
Another pattern can be observed from the analysis of the data in Fig. 4. Analysing the results of the Central Asia Barometer Data for the period 2017 and 2020, selected to assess trends in the transformation of the religious worldview among Kazakhs, the main characteristics and features were identified. Here, the responses of respondents from different social groups are shown, who were asked about the social role with which they most strongly associate themselves. Analysis based on social roles is rarely conducted in similar studies (Table 1).

From the analysis of Table 1, it is evident that the majority of respondents in 2017 and 2020 associated themselves primarily as citizens of the country. The second place was attributed to membership in their family clan, and the third was religious affiliation with their faith. Thus, according to the survey data, the majority of Kazakhstani citizens consider the role of



**Fig. 3.** Attitudes of the population of Kazakhstan of different ages towards religious beliefs and affiliation based on the Analysis of Census Data in 2021 (in percentages)

Source: Ethnic Composition, Religion, and Language Proficiency in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2023).



**Fig. 4.** The dual-circuit model of religious worldview formation in the contemporary Kazakhstani society

Source: Compiled by the authors.



**Table 1. Survey data of Kazakhstan respondents. Question: Who do you consider yourself primarily (%)?**

	2017					2020				
	Total	Urban	Rural	Refused	Don't know	Total	Urban	Rural	Refused	Don't know
1. Citizen of Kazakhstan	85.1	84.9	85.3	–	–	78.2	77.1	81.0	100.0	100.0
2. Member of my ethnic group	1.3	1.4	1.2	–	–	1.7	1.9	1.0	–	–
3. Follower of my faith	2.5	3.0	2.1	–	–	3.9	4.0	3.5	–	–
4. Member of my family clan	9.9	9.4	10.5	–	–	12.3	12.8	11.0	–	–
5. Human being	–	–	–	–	–	1.4	1.5	1.0	–	–
6. Head of household	–	–	–	–	–	0.1	0.1	0.3	–	–
7. Father/Mother	–	–	–	–	–	0.2	0.1	0.5	–	–
8. Man/Woman	–	–	–	–	–	0.1	0.2	–	–	–
9. Other (specify)	0.4	0.8	–	–	–	0.9	0.9	1.0	–	–
10. Refusal to answer	0.3	0.4	0.1	–	–	0.3	0.4	0.3	–	–
11. Don't know	0.5	0.3	0.7	–	–	0.9	1.0	0.5	–	–

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the analysis of Central Asia Barometer Data (2017), Central Asia Barometer Data (2020).

citizenship to be the most important in life (85.1% in 2017 and 78.2% in 2020), followed by the significance of belonging to their clan and family (9.9% in 2017 and 12.3% in 2020). Religious affiliation occupies the third position in importance (2.5% in 2017 and 3.9% in 2020). This indicates an apparent prevalence of secularised values in society.

The question arises as to what is most significant and can influence the choice of affiliation with a religious social group in the contemporary Kazakhstani society. Based on the known data from the Central Asia Barometer Data survey, the following numerical and categorical factors were analysed: age, marital status, place of residence (urban or rural) and gender (male or female). Dependent variable: binary – 1 denotes adherence to one's faith, 0 shows other options (e.g. citizen, member of one's ethnic group, or family). A logistic binary regression model was constructed for the data from 2017 and 2020. The obtained results are shown in Table 2.

The data in Table 1 indicate that the most statistically significant influence (*P*-value) in the religious question was the gender factor, while for all other factors, the level of significance was below the accepted threshold:  $p < 0.05$ ;  $** p < 0.01$ ;  $*** p < 0.001$ . Thus, this primarily suggests that the choice of belonging to religious adherents in the contemporary Kazakhstani society is not significantly dependent on age, marital status, or the place of residence. Rather, it is more likely to be an individual's internal choice and their conscious understanding of the importance of religion in their own life. This can be seen in the example of the developed dual-track model, which helps to understand how this works in the case of Kazakhstan (Fig. 4).

The external circuit is shaped by four main components: the secular state, the democratic Constitution and developed legal institutions, the presence of religious institutions and

**Table 2. Logistic regression model assessing the dependence of choice in the question of adherence to one's faith or other status on categorical factors**

	2017			2020		
	Coefficient	Std. error	P-value	Coefficient	Std. error	P-value
Constant	-5.39767	0.975709	0.0000000317***	-4.06741	0.815229	0.000000606***
Age	0.00105414	0.0109953	0.9236	-0.00562084	0.0103340	0.5865
Family	0.161923	0.202081	0.4230	0.112365	0.178004	0.5279
Urban	0.399516	0.337633	0.2367	-0.114249	0.310236	0.7127
Gender	0.563925	0.332143	0.0895 *	0.678041	0.277306	0.0145 **
Log-likelihood		-174.7909			-241.9550	
Akaike criterion		359.5818			493.9099	

Note:  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

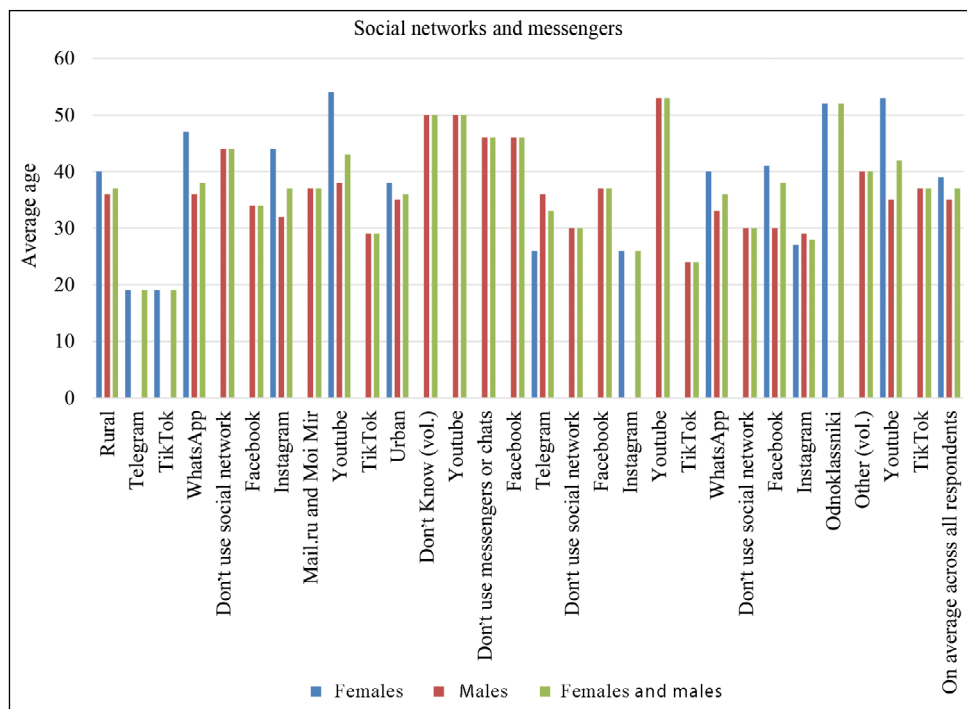
Source: Compiled by the authors based on the analysis of Central Asia Barometer Data (2017), Central Asia Barometer Data (2020).

the dissemination of spiritual values in society. The internal circuit, in relation to each element of the external circuit model, encompasses corresponding foundational worldview principles. For instance, the 'Secular State' element corresponds to 'Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Tolerance'. The 'Constitution and Legal Institutions' element is associated with 'Freedom of Religion'. The 'Religious Institutions' element is linked to 'Moral and Ethical Principles'. The final element, 'Spiritual Values' is aimed at instilling internal convictions.

At the forefront, here is the complex concept of confessional identity, which plays a special role in strengthening interreligious peace and harmony and religious tolerance. In this regard, active involvement and participation from many representatives of religious organisations and denominations are necessary to eradicate negative and harmful forms of religious self-identification, such as selfishness, isolationism, fundamentalism and fanaticism, and to conduct corresponding activities aimed at the widespread promotion of positive religious identity. Moreover, it is essential to maximise the use of social networks and messengers for promoting the positive religious identity, taking into account the age and gender interests of believers (Fig. 5).

As evident from the analysis presented in Fig. 5, messaging platforms and social networks such as Telegram, Instagram and TikTok are predominantly utilised by a younger audience, whereas the older demographic tends to gravitate towards the social network Facebook. These data were obtained from a separate sample of 58 respondents out of 1,500 who explicitly indicated their affiliation with a religious group.

Generalisations regarding social media usage based on a small sample of respondents may be considered justified if the sample includes representatives from diverse age groups and social strata, thereby enabling the identification of overarching trends. The use of random sampling methodology plays a critical role in ensuring the reliability of the findings, as it allows for the representation of a wide range of perspectives. Social media functions as an indicator of public opinion and religious worldview, given that users often share their thoughts and emotional experiences. Even a limited sample can reveal key themes of societal concern



**Fig. 5.** Demographic, gender and social characteristics and interests (social internet) of believers in Kazakhstan based on the Analysis of the Central Asia Barometer Survey in 2020 ( $N = 58$ )

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the analysis of Central Asia Barometer Data (2020).

and serve as a foundation for further research. Therefore, when approached methodologically, such generalisations may be valid and reflective of broader realities.

## DISCUSSION

Discussing the role of religion in modern society necessitates attention to exploring the complex interactions of religious beliefs, practices and institutions that intersect with various aspects of contemporary life (Riviş-Tipei 2023: 115). In contrast to a study conducted in Spain, which examined gender, age and ideology variables in a logistic regression model to explain religious choice and understand secularisation trends, as well as the growth of atheism and the decline in the number of believers (Herranz de Rafael, Fernández-Prados 2022: 1086), this study in Kazakhstan was based on the inclusion of other culturally sociological and demographic variables: age, marital status, place of residence, gender differences, and the utilisation of binary logistic regression models for their analysis.

In the context of globalisation, the issue of religious identity has become a focal point of contemporary interdisciplinary research. This interest is driven by common destabilising phenomena often associated with non-traditional religious movements. Moreover, the Central Asia space, including Kazakhstan, has not escaped the intensification and politicisation of ethno-confessional processes (Dashkovskiy et al. 2023: 810).

It can be argued that when examining the issue of religious identity in the contemporary Kazakhstani society, it is important to consider the following points. Firstly, it has been shaped based on a combination of local traditions from various periods of the country's history. Additionally, factors such as urbanisation, demographics, and ethnocultural aspects are also present (Syzydykova 2017: 100). Taking a separate look at the historiographical interpretations of Kazakhstani religious identity originating from key post-Soviet Kazakh intellectuals and scholars, one can observe that the presented perspectives underscore an internal struggle between resurgent Muslim and Tengrian (i.e. 'indigenous Turkic religious') and shamanistic positions, evolving in dynamic interaction with enduring atheist and growing Western secular approaches to understanding this issue, as well as limited measures of Christian influence among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia (Weller 2023: 130; Yelbayeva, Mynbayeva 2017).

The return to religious roots through liberation from the burden of atheistic ideology and the expansion of Islamic education is a fundamental trend in the development of the national-cultural consciousness of Kazakhstan (Mustafayeva et al. 2023: 110). At the same time, there is another perspective on this matter. The qualitative uniqueness of Kazakhstani society lies in the formation of a stable social life based on traditional personal relationships in the sphere of material and spiritual connections (Aubakirova et al. 2014). This is also corroborated by the obtained data from the study of tolerance characteristics as an indicator of radical sentiments in the polyethnic and multi-confessional society of Kazakhstan. Integrative tolerance corresponds to a medium level in 87% of respondents, while a low level is observed in 11%, and a high level in 2% (Aimaganbetova et al. 2023: 150).

Since gaining independence, religious activity in Kazakhstan has noticeably increased. However, respect for religious diversity, which Kazakhstan promotes, faces challenges within the country. Kazakhstan's legislation guarantees equal treatment of all religions. However, recently, the state has not seemed to welcome 'new' religious movements, which have gained followers in Kazakhstan in recent years. The reason for this is the rise of religious extremism and terrorism worldwide (Vasic et al. 2021: 80). Overall, the process of religious formation in Kazakhstan reflects trends typical of the populations of former Soviet countries. At the same time, religion serves as a certain moral stabiliser of public life (Togaibayeva et al. 2021: 162).

International experience – particularly that of Malaysia – demonstrates the critical importance of fostering a multicultural approach to religious worldview development in the construction of a unified Malaysian nation. Furthermore, a crucial and largely obligatory condition for the timely formation of civilised religious identity in the public consciousness involves creating conditions for pluralism and respect towards all local religious institutions and denominations, fostering moral education to instill pride in national history, customs and traditions (Abdullah et al. 2021: 2137). Consequently, religion can serve as a powerful integrating tool only if the principal parties and participants within the community refrain from emphasising differences and instead strive to identify points of convergence and shared values that unite them (Gill 2021: 313; Halevy, Gross 2024: 253).

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of studying the main and most relevant trends in the transformation of religious worldview in the Kazakhstani society over the past 30 years indicate that the country is undergoing a complex stage of national-cultural revival and construction of religious identity.

Undoubtedly, the return to religious roots through liberation from the burden of secularisation, atheistic ideology, and the expansion of Islamic education is a fundamental trend in the development of national-cultural consciousness.

According to survey data related to the formation of religious identity, the majority of Kazakhstanis consider the role of citizenship as the most important in life (85.1% in 2017 and 78.2% in 2020), followed by belonging to one's kin and family, which is equally significant (9.9% in 2017 and 12.3% in 2020). Religious affiliation occupies the third position in terms of significance (2.5% in 2017 and 3.9% in 2020). Moreover, the choice of belonging to religious followers in the modern Kazakhstani society is not significantly influenced by age, marital status, or the place of residence. This can be explained by the fact that the country has undergone urbanisation and has maintained a secularised type of societal and state development. Therefore, an individual internal choice and their conscious understanding of the importance of religion in their own lives play a significant role in this regard.

In the future, the strengthening of the guiding role of religion as an internal integrating, spiritual and morally shaping determinant of the unified national and social community in the country will be of paramount importance. The practical significance of the research findings lies in their applicability not only to Kazakhstan but also to a large number of post-Soviet countries, as they carry a universal understanding of the processes of desecularisation, the formation of contemporary national religious identity, and the worldview position in social practice. The primary sphere of application of the obtained results is the open scientific discourse on the consideration of religious aspects of worldview in the context of the prospects for the civilisational choice of the future development of the Kazakhstani society.

Received 29 March 2024

Accepted 5 May 2025

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## **Daugiakultūrė religinės pasaulėžiūros raida šiuolaikinėje Kazachstano visuomenėje**

### *Santrauka*

Pagrindinis tikslas – ištirti religinės pasaulėžiūros transformacijos tendencijas šiuolaikinėje Kazachstano visuomenėje ir paaiškinti jas pasitelkiant teorinį dvikryptį religinio pasaulio formavimosi modelį. Tarpdisciplininių metodų taikymas leido atlikti kiekybinę religinės pasaulėžiūros formavimosi tendencijų analizę, o kokybinę analizę atskleidė, kaip šios tendencijos veikia įvairias visuomenės gyvenimo sritis, įskaitant socialinius santykius, politiką ir kultūrinę praktiką. Duomenys paimti iš 1 500 respondentų apklausos, kuri yra dalis Centrinės Azijos barometro 1–7 bangų tyrimo, apimančio 2017–2020 m., bei nacionalinės statistikos. Duomenų analizei naudota logistinė regresija. Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad šiuolaikinėje visuomenėje religinių ir sekuliariųjų pasaulėžiūros aspektų įtaka pasireiškia skirtingai, formuodama civilizacinę trajektoriją ir nulemdama tolesnę raidos kryptį. Daugelį metų Kazachstano visuomenė išliko daugiakultūrė ir tarpreliginė. Dominuojanti religija yra islamas, kurį išpažįsta 69,3 proc. gyventojų, po jo seka krikščionybė (17,2 proc.). Kitoms religijoms atstovauja mažiau nei 0,1 proc. gyventojų, o apie 2,3 proc. gyventojų save priskiria netikintiesiems. Taikant kultūrinį-sociologinį požiūrį, sukurtas dvikryptis religinės pasaulėžiūros formavimosi šiuolaikinėje Kazachstano visuomenėje modelis. Šio tyrimo išvados, atsižvelgiant į jų universalumą, gali būti taikomos ne tik Kazachstane, bet ir daugelyje šalių. Jų esmė – visuotinai pripažintų principų taikymas derinant religijos ir sekuliarizmo interesus: pasaulietinę valdymo formą, konstitucijoje įtvirtintas teises į religinę toleranciją ir tikėjimo laisvę, religines institucijas ir dvasines vertybes.

**Raktažodžiai:** desekuliarizacija, modelis, tolerancija, pliuralizmas, tikėjimas