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Universidad del Zulia  
Facultad Experimental de Ciencias  
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# The formation way of independent Kazakhstan from the individualism and collectivism perspective

**Zhuldyz Kabayeva<sup>1\*</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Political Science and Socio-Philosophical Disciplines, KazNPU  
named after Abay, Zhambyla 25, 50056, Almaty, Kazakhstan  
[zhuldyzkabayeva@gmail.com](mailto:zhuldyzkabayeva@gmail.com)

**Bakittizhamal Imanmoldayeva<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup>Department of Political Science and Socio-Philosophical Disciplines, KazNPU  
named after Abay, Zhambyla 25, 50056, Almaty, Kazakhstan  
[zamanhankyzy@mail.ru](mailto:zamanhankyzy@mail.ru)

**Sapargali Mussabaev<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup>Department of Political Science and Socio-Philosophical Disciplines, KazNPU  
named after Abay, Zhambyla 25, 50056, Almaty, Kazakhstan  
[sake\\_071086@mail.ru](mailto:sake_071086@mail.ru)

**, Zhanyl Madalieva<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>4</sup>Department of Political Science and Socio-Philosophical Disciplines, KazNPU  
named after Abay, Zhambyla 25, 50056, Almaty, Kazakhstan  
[zhanna\\_madalieva@mail.ru](mailto:zhanna_madalieva@mail.ru)

**Zhanargul Karanova<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>5</sup>Department of Political Science and Socio-Philosophical Disciplines,  
KazNPU named after Abay, Zhambyla 25, 50056, Almaty, Kazakhstan  
[j7029040002@yandex.ru](mailto:j7029040002@yandex.ru)

## Abstract

The authors, having applied the phenomenological and comparative approach, set a goal to justify the position about the tendency towards a great predisposition of the Kazakhstani society to collectivism. As a result, it is important to both understand the essence of security and acquire specific knowledge that ensures the strengthening of individual and social security. It is concluded that consideration of the economic, social and political aspects of the formation and development of a young independent state, based on the definition of Kazakh culture as a collectivist culture, will affect the methodology of sociological, political, cultural, economic and philosophical studies.

**Keywords:** individualism, collectivism, culture, post-Soviet.

# El modo de formación de Kazajstán independiente desde la perspectiva del individualismo y el colectivismo

## Resumen

Los autores, aplicando el enfoque fenomenológico y el enfoque comparativo, establecieron un objetivo para justificar la posición acerca de la tendencia hacia una gran predisposición de la sociedad kazaja al colectivismo. Como resultado, es importante comprender la esencia de la seguridad y adquirir conocimientos específicos que aseguren el fortalecimiento de la seguridad individual y social. Se concluye que la consideración de los aspectos económicos, sociales y políticos de la formación y el desarrollo de un joven estado independiente, basado en la definición de cultura kazaja como cultura colectivista, afectará la metodología de sociología, política, cultural, económica y filosófica estudios.

**Palabras clave:** individualismo, colectivismo, cultura, postsoviético.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the XXI century, the world community is shaken by cataclysms, it is a process of growing social, economic, cultural problems. The problems of modern society have both global and local causes. In our time, it is important to understand from what position to consider the culture of society. Most of all, the basic foundations of national culture are determined by whether it is collectivist or individualistic. Consideration of socio-economic

problems from the point of view of domination in the society of collectivism or individualism allows to make step-by-step approaches to an adequate explanation of them, on the whole to a better understanding of the development prospects of modern society, including Kazakhstan. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that according to this topic, literature is minimal, as with the case marked «The literature on the effects of Eurasian regionalism is minimal» (Hancock, 2014). The purpose of this article is to comprehend the complex path of the emergence of independent Kazakhstan from the perspective of individualism and collectivism and with the emphasis on the fact that the dominance of collectivism in the national culture best ensures a positive resolution of many social problems. From what follows two tasks: showing the trajectory of the emergence of a young independent post-Soviet republic and determining the type of original national culture. The topic under consideration is interdisciplinary. A review of the literature on the problem of collectivism and individualism shows that their consideration is associated with different concepts and contexts, with a differentiated approach, with their structuring, etc. In this form it is most often considered in foreign literature. There is a variety of approaches and assessments of the problem of collectivism and individualism. «In fact, both personal and collective cultures are too plural, contradictory and complex, and we should not be surprised to realize how difficult it is principles» (Branco, 2012). If in the Western literature the problem is more prominently covered in the context of other topics, Chinese authors write more specifically about collectivism, considering it a separate topic (Liu et al., 2010). Most authors prefer the collectivist culture.

In our domestic literature this problem has been little studied and investigated, and therefore the methodology of approach to it should be different. In this perspective, this article refers to one of the first works on the correlation of collectivism and individualism in our society. Our theme is also included in the cultural issues, which we do not consider in line with the Eurocentric approach; We are close to the position of Levi Strauss that « the world civilization cannot be on the world scale anything other than a coalition of cultures, each of which retains its identity» (Levi-Strauss, 1978). In the Soviet period, there were very few studies on the East, and they are important now for understanding the development path of the young post-Soviet republic. There is also little literature on the path of development of the post-Soviet republics. This problem is relevant and interesting for a wide audience. There are interesting works on the stages of Soviet culture, about Eurasia Brooks and Zhuk (2014), Hancock (2014) with which we in many positions agree. In foreign literature, there is no specific analysis of the problems of the Republic of Kazakhstan in either the social, political, or economic spheres.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

In the study, phenomenological, axiological, comparative approaches were applied; methods of analogy, narrative, the unity of the historical and logical; principles of holism; and the approach chosen is determined by the fact that «one of the best ways in trying to

understand the variative cultures of different peoples is to look at them from the perspective of individualism and collectivism» (Choi, 2007).

### **3. DATA, ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

The Collectivist Morals of Soviet Society. Until December 26, 1991 citizens of Kazakhstan were members of Soviet society, lived in a socialist state with a state form of ownership and with a Marxist-Leninist ideology. Under the leadership of the ruling Communist Party, they were moving towards the goal of building communism, as was officially stated. This distant goal determined the direction vector of the economic, social and political development of the entire state. The ideology was based on communist collectivist morality, meaning that in Soviet society, the interests of society were placed above the interests of the individual, so the public consciousness in Soviet society (1917-1991) was also relevant: in it, collectivism prevailed over individualism. This situation refers to the prerequisites that form the public consciousness of modern Kazakhstan (RK). Although it is necessary to understand that the changes in the culture of the post-Soviet republics were significant. « But the post-Soviet experience in the 1990s was quite the opposite. The cultural footprint of the years of the Soviet Union was cleared out of the Soviet Union. That culture has been so thoroughly embedded in all aspects of life for seven decades could have faded so quickly poses fundamental questions about its nature, etiology, evolution and value (Brooks and Zhuk, 2014). But in general, the values of Soviet morality as a humane morality left their

significant mark. The values of the consumer society for the Kazakh society are more alien than close. Thus, in the Kazakh society one can distinguish one more factor that influences the prevalence of collectivism in it over individualism.

According to history, it is known that many eastern countries of the Pacific region gave preference to the socialist direction of development. Perhaps, therefore, as noted by the Russian author: “Continental countries of East Asia have a more traditional way, close to a clear collectivistic vector. Perhaps this explains the rather easy involvement of Chinese society and the Indochina countries in the socialist experience” (Lunev, 2012: 15). All the post-Soviet republics had the same Soviet and socialist past, but the traditional national foundations of their cultures were different. For example, Kazakh culture along with the Soviet foundation has a Turkic and Asian basis. Collective culture of Turkic-speaking peoples due to the fact that in our country, sociological research is not so widespread, therefore, to justify some of the provisions, one has to turn to data from foreign sources. We will apply scientific results characterizing the parameters of the culture of the Turkish people that are related to us. The Kazakh people belong to the Turkic-speaking people, and our culture - to the Turkic, therefore the Turkish and Kazakh peoples have much in common in the mentality. What has been noted in scientific studies on the Turkish mentality can be attributed to a greater degree to the Kazakh mentality. To one of these provisions is the following. Of the three countries (United States, Turkey, Norway), Turkey is the most collectivist culture. The data of scientific research show that

collectivism prevails over individualism in the Turkish society. Applying the method of analogy, it is possible and from this position the Kazakh culture is attributed to the collectivist culture. Indeed, even among the Kazakhs, the fraternal feeling (*bauyrmaldy*), like the Turkish «brotherly attitude» is highly developed and the collectivist spirit prevails over the individualistic spirit. This spirit is manifested in many spheres of society. Kazakhs experience warm (related) feelings for other completely unfamiliar people, especially for the younger generation. In recent years, the ongoing process of urbanization in our country has had an impact on urban culture. In cities, the atmosphere of people's relationships is getting warmer. All this is clearly visible in the cities of Almaty, Astana, Chimkent and others.

The prevalence of collectivism over individualism in the cultures of the Asian peoples of South-East Asia. The collectivist culture of the Kazakh people is based on the fact that the Kazakhs are Asians. A vague understanding, a feeling of Asians, but not understanding this as a definite and effective factor takes place to be in our society. Conducting a comparative analysis between the collectivist cultures of the Eastern Pacific region (Korean, Japanese, etc.) and Kazakhstani will make it possible to more clearly define the common parameters inherent in them. In our society, it is important to focus on such successful Asian countries. The approach to understanding national cultures from the position of the correlation of the spirit of collectivism and individualism in them brings us closer to an understanding of both the essence of the national culture and the comprehension of successful ways of economic, socio-political

development of countries. «According to Choi (2007), in an edominantly individualistic culture, the interests of an individual are considered more important than the interest of the collective the individual belongs to» (Rumsey, 2013). Let us dwell on Korean society to disclose certain features of collectivism. «The essence of the Korean national culture is expressed in collectivism, defined as» a sense of harmony, interdependence, and concern for others» (Hui and Triandis, 1986). In this definition, the parameters of collectivism are distinguished from the psychological point of view. All these qualities are more characteristic of the Eastern peoples. The Korean author emphasizes one of the fundamental principles of the Korean community: “The group first and then the individual” (Choi, 2007: 18), which can be attributed to the ontological principle of the existence of the Korean people. It follows that in Korean society, the values of the collective (families, firms, companies, etc.) stand above the values of the individual. Choi (2007) Jun Sik gives the following explanation: “I firmly believe that if there were any companies in the country, the family: (Choi, 2007: 23). As for the person his family is important, so for the Koreans the collectives of the companies, firms, in which they work, are significant.

One can put emphasis on the fact that it is not just formal and administrative relations that form the business atmosphere in modern Korean companies, but the understanding of their kinship relations; there is a transfer of the spirit of the family to modern companies by Koreans: Generally, workers and junior managers of any given company, the chairman of the board of directors. In this way, a

company becomes something like a Hugh family (Choi, 2007). In modern Korean companies, the nature of production relations differs from the corresponding relations in the teams of Western countries. Thus, another objective factor that has influenced the prevalence of collectivism over individualism in Kazakhstani society is the traditional collectivist culture of the Turkic-speaking peoples. Parameters of the value of the family Koreans transfer to the understanding of their teams. « Even an infinity entity such as the universe was understood as a family» (Choi, 2007). This is the warm human attitude of the Koreans, even to the universe, thus the objects they are considering are, as it were, « humanized». Due to the fact that the concept of family for Koreans is a universal concept, therefore they are more adapted to their social environment and they have less social phobias. Thus, they have less estrangement, misunderstanding, loneliness. In the Kazakh society, in which representatives of more than 130 nationalities and nationalities live, the Korean diaspora is well adapted. This feature of the national character manifested itself in the disintegration of the Soviet Union, when only 3% of the Koreans interviewed responded positively to the question of leaving the RK. The level of education of the Korean diaspora in our republic is the highest among all Diasporas. Studies conducted in the United States show the level of education of people who emigrated at different times from the Asian region. «The 2010 census shows that a higher proportion of Asian students earn college degrees than the general U.S. population. Of the 48,069 research doctorates granted at U.S. universities in 2010, U.S. born and foreign-born Asian students account for 25 percent. Their share of Ph.D. is especially high in

engineering (45 percent), math and computer sciences (38 percent), physical sciences (33 percent), and life sciences (25 percent) (Lee, 2016). The success of the Asian minority in the United States has even become a center of scientific research. «The success story of Asian American children, however, is generated heated debate; the central concern is its broad social and political implications» (Lee, 2016). The peculiarities of the national mentality, national culture of Koreans were determined by the impressive economic achievements of South Korea. «The best example of this would be Korea's economic development, which we call the Miracle on the Han River» (Choi, 2007). Today, some authors describe the Korean people as a technical genius. Under this statement, representatives of many countries of the world can sign, because the economic achievements of South Korea are impressive. South Korea, Singapore and Japan are examples for young independent countries.

Korean and Japanese cultures are united by the fact that they have the same traditional worldview attitudes. The antithesis of the term «collectivist» is «individualistic», and synonymous with « non-individualistic». «First of all, it is necessary to note the» traditionally rooted in Japanese culture « non-individualism» writes the Russian philosopher (Skvortsova, 2014). The Japanese are practically dissolved, on the one hand, in nature as the Universum in the whole, with which every resident of the Country of the Rising Sun is in close emotional connection, and on the other - in the social group with which he identifies himself (be it a country, family, a circle of ikebans, etc.). They do not oppose themselves to either nature or society. The

traditional Japanese is oriented toward harmonious coexistence with the whole world around him, so the culture of antagonism that is widespread in the West, including Russia, is alien to him (Skvortsova, 2014). Here it is necessary to agree with E.L. Skvortsova (2014) is that the «culture of antagonism» does not lead to peace, harmony. Conflictlessness of the Japanese appears as a consequence of harmonious coexistence with the surrounding world, as a consequence of worldview national attitudes that have a peace-loving character. The collectivist spirit of the post-Soviet legacy, the brotherly feeling of the Turkic peoples adds the Asian collectivist spirit and they all together define our national culture as a culture of collectivism. Collectivist culture is a more humane culture. « In societies having a high human orientation, others are important, altruism and kindness are valued, and a need for a person and affiliation motivates people. In societies with a low human orientation, self-interest is important; pleasure, comfort, and self-enjoyment are important; and power and material possessions motivate people» (Rumsey,2013).In the study of East Asian culture as a collectivist have their own characteristics. « East-Asian collectivism is characterized by cooperation within a group as an interpersonal network» (Liu et al., 2010). As some authors note, that there are changes in collectivist cultures of a different order. Continuity of Generations as an Important Value of Collectivist Culture. For any society, the problem of succession of generations is one of the topical problems and is considered in various contexts. «Taking into consideration the world outside the United States» (Lee, 2016; Branco, 2012).

In the collectivist cultures, communication and the behavior of people have their own specifics, features. To the features of the collectivist culture, as shown above, we can add the following. The social, political and economic stability of society depends on how the transfer of deep knowledge and experience from the older generation to the younger. It is with this process that «human capital» is formed. «The principle of» stake on human capital «is a kind of key to our political and civil worldview, based on belief in people and their special opportunities (ability, talents, knowledge, competence, experience), on the conviction that this intangible asset determines the future of the country» (Nazarbayev, 2017). In the Western countries in the 1980s-1990s, there were concepts like «Conflicts of Generations», «Generation Crises», etc. Logically, it follows that in societies where collectivism prevails over individualism, conflicts of this content and level should be much less, as is confirmed by practice. For example, in our Kazakhstani society, where respect for the elders is traditional, there are very few such conflicts. The connection of generations among Kazakhs is reinforced by the fact that every Kazakh should know by name seven of his direct ancestors. These are the roots of the national culture. Communication of generations in the Republic of Kazakhstan is strong, and it is most cultivated in general educational institutions and its external manifestation can be observed during meetings of graduates of different years, at which former students remember their teachers, and those in turn, their teachers. There is a continuity of generations, not only among pupils of different generations, but also among generations of teachers. Already adults express gratitude to their teachers not only for their knowledge, but

also for the formation of their individual consciousness, which determined their social status. Public life, together with public consciousness, determines the life of society. Path of the development path of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Even thirty years there is no independent (since 1991) state, the formation and development of which take place before our eyes. We are witnesses and participants in these events. Therefore, social and personal experience, combined with theoretical comprehension, complement each other and allow us to approach a better understanding and understanding of many social issues. Let us recall the specific features of Kazakhstan. The maximum distance from the ocean (13 thousand km), the trap of continentally «restraining the economic growth of the country. As a rule, most continental states are inferior in their development to countries that have access to the open sea. It is no accident that, with a few exceptions, the continental states are included in the category of developing (29 out of 35)» (Sultangaliyeva, 2016). Kazakhstan, having a large territory with a population of (2018) slightly more than 18 million people, is multinational (more than 130) and multi-confessional.

The goal and strategic directions of the republic's development were outlined in the grandiose project «Kazakhstan - 2030». When this project was involved in the early 90s, there were a lot of skeptical statements about him. Time has confirmed the correctness of the choice of a strategic direction for the successful economic, political, social development of our state. Many of the goals set in it were achieved in Kazakhstan early, by 2012. Therefore, in December 2012,

a new strategic project Kazakhstan - 2050 was involved, in which an even higher goal was set: Kazakhstan will enter by 2050 in the thirty of the developed countries of the world. Almost all post-Soviet republics at the same time (1991) gained independence. Therefore, 1991 can be considered a point of bifurcation, from which the formation and development of all independent post-Soviet republics began. At the moment, they are all at different stages of development. The RK is ahead of some post-Soviet countries in many economic and social indicators. «Based on the results of the 2014 survey, Kazakhstan ranked 50th among 144 countries in the competitiveness rating. ... Tajikistan - 91, the Kyrgyz Republic -108 place» (Espaev, 2015). Or the next indicator: “The country's location according to the Human Development Index (UNDP) and GDP per capita, 2014: RK - 70th place, Russia -57th, Uzbekistan-116th, Kyrgyzstan-125th” (Espaev, 2015:31). Many other achievements of the Republic of Kazakhstan on other parameters. The progressive way of development in the RK was to a greater extent ensured by the correctly chosen value system, which had the following hierarchy: first to ensure the country's security, to raise the economy, and then to engage in political and other spheres. In some other republics, there was another development trajectory. The Kazakh choice has paid off FDI (Cummings, 2014).Kazakhstan's economic liberalization program was predicated on its enormous wealth and its attractive foreign investment. The first years of independence were very difficult. Before the young independent state there were tasks of paramount importance - it is to clearly define its borders, close the Semipalatinsk test site. There was a question about the withdrawal of the RK from the crisis. In common sense, people

needed security and work. And at the same time, it was necessary to move to a market economy, i.e. from state ownership to private ownership, and these were cases on a historical scale. The transition period was very painful both for the country and for its inhabitants. In some neighboring republics, the transition to a market economy was slower, they still had many years of state farms and other forms of socialist property. Therefore, in the early 90's, it was easier for the residents of these countries than for the residents of the RK, as factories and factories worked by inertia, which means that salaries were paid on time, etc. Such a movement by inertia after a while was exhausted, as in the conditions of market relations the old system of production relations was unviable. In the economic sphere, the transition to a market economy took place without hesitation, irrevocably in all sectors. The transition, which had a specific feature for our country, was a transition to a market economy regulated by the state. In the transition period, the concentration of forces in the same hands, a clear leadership of the country had a significant significance. It is known that during the transitional periods, subsequently successful countries, there were individuals of historical proportions. These include Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1038) - the first President of the Republic of Turkey, the 32nd President of the United States Franklin Roosevelt (1882 - 1945) and many others. The first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan is Nazarbayev (2016), who has the status of the Leader of the Nation.

The processes taking place in our country did not fully correspond to the status of «democratic», - there were such statements.

What kind of full democracy could be spoken at a time when it was important for people and society to simply survive, so the economic issue was at the forefront? In this connection, one can draw a historical analogy, remembering how US President Franklin Roosevelt was taking his country out of the greatest crisis of the 30s of the last century. For F. Roosevelt, the main thing was to save the country. In common sense, what the American people needed was first of all work and safety. When the father comes home, he must bring a salary, said F. Roosevelt in his conversations with the people, conducted by him on the radio. At the same time, it must be emphasized that the crisis of the early 1990s in our country, compared to the American crisis of the 1930s, had its own specifics. Crises have a systemic nature, but we had, if I may say so, an in-depth systemic crisis. It was necessary not only to lead the country out of the crisis, but also to write the country's economy into the world economic process; go from one system of economic relations to another, from one form of ownership to another; but that the most difficult thing is to change the mentality of the population to a certain extent. This process continues in our country. The founder of the so-called «Singapore miracle» Lee (2016) Yew visited Kazakhstan many times. He observed the pace of development of the economic and social spheres and highly appreciated them. At the next visit to Astana (8.04.2002), he concluded: “You have outrun all your neighbors and not only them” (Lee, 2016: 22). The universal significance of security. The development of the country is influenced by internal and external factors. We have considered important internal factors. Security refers to both internal and external factors. It should be noted that Kazakhstan immediately after the recognition of its

independence closed the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Foreign policy was quickly a way of cementing. For example, Kazakhstan was one of the four nuclear legatees (alongside Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine) and the decision to denounce nuclear weapons (Lease et al., 2012). People on an intuitive level feel the need for security without even identifying it from related states. Safety is related to survival. Therefore, issues relating to human security will always be relevant. «The research project, implemented in 2010 - 2013 gg. at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, presented a lot of evidence in support of the thesis about the universal significance of security» (Panarin and Stepanova, 2015).

In this paper, we consider it as an external factor. At the beginning of the XXI century. «Militarism deeply penetrated the consciousness and behavior of people» noted in the Manifesto «The World. XXI century», which was given to the leadership of the United Nations and the diplomatic community at the last nuclear security summit on March 31, 2016 (Nazarbayev, 2016). With this state of collective consciousness, the threat to peace will only increase. Manifesto «The World. XXI century» under the authorship of Nazarbayev (2016) is an appeal to the collective mind of mankind. Because philosophy is characterized as an epoch grasped by thought, and in this Manifesto the essence of the XXI century is grasped by thought, then it can be characterized as a philosophical comprehension of the century. It provides a deep analysis of the world's threats, the largest of which is war. It is important to realize that « in the new war, the use of weapons of mass destruction will be inevitable»

(Nazarbayev, 2016). A reminder of this kind should always be, because « this potential danger must be understood as an axiom» (Nazarbayev, 2016), i.e. take it without proof, understand it as a necessity. To a greater extent, the danger increases not only because of unstable situations in different regions of the world, although for the reason of this, but because of attempts to resolve them not peacefully. All this causes great concern for people, communities, and countries. In our modern society, it is important to cultivate not a militant, but a conflict-free approach to solving problems that is based on the harmonious coexistence of different countries and communities. Strengthening of safety factors leads to a reduction of danger. «We must do everything we can to rid humanity of the threat of a deadly war forever. Now, in the foreseeable future, we have no more urgent task». In the modern world, the country's security strengthens its « sustainable social and economic development», and not its possession of atomic weapons. Security is a social problem, and it is included in the totality of the society's value priorities. Safety is of paramount importance for all people. «The value of security has long influenced the norms and patterns of people's behavior, even there and when and where for it there is no special concept» (Panarin and Stepanova, 2015). Therefore, it is important to both understand the essence of security and acquire specific knowledge that ensures the strengthening of individual and social security. The integrity of the perception of social being and social consciousness, together with personal individual understanding, is the basis that determines the economic and social progress of society. The RK follows this path of development. A holistic approach to the problems as early as the beginning of the

formation of an independent republic determined the direction of development of our country. First, raise the country's economy, then modernize the political system on a democratic basis, while improving all parameters of the living standards of the population.

#### **4. DISCUSSIONS**

a) In sociopolitical and philosophical literature the problem of collectivism-individualism is considered in the context of the relationship between the West and the East; in the same context, it is important to study the problem of collectivism-individualism;

b) Due to the fact that there is not enough sociological research in the RK, there is a large undeveloped field of a debatable and problematic nature; it is important to consider many issues not only theoretically and in general trends, it is important to specify them;

c) At the same time, efforts are made to approach understanding between different cultures; «New trends are always possible, and great efforts will be made to progressively better planetary balance among different cultures and societies» (Branco, 2012);

d) There is a complexity in the comprehension and evaluation of cultures of the peoples of Central Asia, awaiting concrete research;

e) Cultural changes occur constantly, but there is a foundation of national culture, which is what determines both the sustainability of the ground and determines the essence of the national culture;

e) It is possible to allocate a lot of tangles of problems, dependent on the fact that the Kazakh society passes from a closed to an open type of society; when analyzing such an object, it will be important to use such a methodological approach as a singular approach;

g) It can be noted that there are different orientations in national cultures: “some societies prefer subjugation-to-nature, others prefer harmony-with-nature, while the remainder prefer mastery-over-nature” (Rumsey, 2013: 25); in the Far Eastern Asian countries, the traditional preference is accorded harmony with nature. It is more likely that Kazakhstan society needs just such a vector of development direction.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Collectivism in Kazakhstani society prevails over individualism, which is based on the following:

a) The post-Soviet Kazakhstani society was dominated by collectivist morality;

b) Kazakh culture is close to the culture of the Turkish people, which, according to the results of scientific research, is characterized as a collectivist culture;

c) Kazakh culture is part of Asian culture, in which collectivism prevails.

Consideration of the economic, social and political aspects of the formation and development of a young independent state, based on the definition of Kazakh culture as a collectivist culture, will affect the methodology of sociological, political, cultural, economic and philosophical studies. It is the holistic approach to the problems of social and economic development, the deep awareness of national problems, the unity of the aspirations of the people and the leader of the country, the prevalence of collectivism over individualism in the Kazakh society - all of these together formed the basis for the achievements of the RK at the moment and in the future will contribute to its successful development.

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