

N.N. Abdinassir\*, K.B. Baudiyarova

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

\*e-mail: nazzira.abdinassir@gmail.com

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERNIZATION: AN ETHNOSOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF EASTERN KAZAKHSTAN

Today, the study of marriage and family remains a topic of interest not only within academic circles but also among the general public. Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has experienced significant economic, political, and social transformations that have also impacted marriage and family structures. As a result, this subject has become the focus of extensive scholarly research.

This article examines the state of marriage and family in the eastern region of Kazakhstan, exploring its development over time, shifts in family values, reasons for marriage, age at first marriage, the educational background of spouses, divorce rates, and causes of marital dissolution. The study employed historical-ethnographic and ethnosociological methods, supplemented by a comparative analysis of data from the national censuses of 1999 and 2009. The theoretical and methodological framework of this article is grounded in general scientific methods including analysis, synthesis, and systems methodology alongside historical and ethnographic approaches. To investigate issues of marriage and family in the East Kazakhstan region, the historical-chronological method was utilized. Statistical methods were employed to analyze census data from 1999 and 2009, while the comparative method was applied to determine trends in marriage age and divorce rates.

The empirical foundation of this study consists of ethnological and ethnosociological materials, statistical data, and scholarly research.

Statistical findings are enriched with ethnographic insights, offering a deeper understanding of the evolving characteristics of families in the region. Particular attention is given to the influence of region-specific socio-economic factors on the state of marriage and family life. Ultimately, the article aims to contribute to efforts that strengthen family stability in contemporary Kazakhstan.

**Key words:** society, state, marriage, family, family stability, divorce.

Н.Н. Әбдінасыр\*, Қ.Б. Баудиярова

Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан

\*e-mail: nazzira.abdinassir@gmail.com

### Модернизация жағдайындағы неке және отбасы: Шығыс Қазақстанның этносоциологиялық талдауы

Қазіргі таңда неке және отбасы мәселесін зерттеу ғылым үшін, қарапайым адам үшін де қызығушылық тудыратын тақырыптардың бірі. Тәуелсіздік алғаннан бері неке және отбасы экономикалық, саяси, әлеуметтік өзгерістерге ұшырады. Көптеген ғылымдардың зерттеу нысанына айналды. Мақалада Қазақстанның шығыс өңіріндегі неке және отбасы жағдайы, оның дамуы, отбасы құндылықтарының өзгеруі, некеге отыру себептері, некеге отыру жасы, жұбайлардың білім дәрежесі, ажырасқандар саны, ажырасу себептері қарастырылды. Тарихи-этнографиялық және этносоциологиялық зерттеу жүргізілді. Бұл мақаланың теориялық және әдіснамалық негізі тарихи және этнографиялық тәсілдермен қатар талдау, синтез және жүйелік әдістемені қамтитын жалпы ғылыми әдістерге негізделген. Шығыс Қазақстан облысындағы неке және отбасы мәселелерін зерттеу үшін тарихи-хронологиялық әдіс қолданылды. 1999 және 2009 жылдардағы санақ деректерін талдау үшін статистикалық әдістер қолданылды, ал салыстырмалы әдіс неке жасының және ажырасудың тенденцияларын анықтау үшін қолданылды.

Бұл зерттеудің эмпирикалық негізі этнологиялық және этносоциологиялық материалдардан, статистикалық деректерден және ғылыми зерттеулерден тұрады. 1999 жылғы және 2009 жылғы Ұлттық халық санағы мәліметтері салыстырмалы түрде талданды. Мақалада статистикалық материалдарды этнографиялық деректер толықтырып отырды. Қазіргі таңдағы өзгеріске ұшыраған отбасылардың ерекшелігі сипатталды. Зерттеу барысында өңірге тән әлеуметтік-экономикалық факторлардың неке және отбасы жағдайына ықпалына назар аударылды. Мақала отбасы тұрақтылығын нығайтуға бағытталған.

**Түйін сөздер:** қоғам, мемлекет, неке, отбасы, отбасы тұрақтылығы, ажырасу.

Н.Н. Абдинасыр\*, К.Б. Баудиярова

Казахский национальный университет им. аль-Фараби, Алматы, Казахстан

\* e-mail: nazzira.abdinassir@gmail.com

**Брак и семья в условиях модернизации:  
этносоциологический анализ Восточного Казахстана**

В настоящее время изучение проблемы семьи и брака является одной из тем, представляющих интерес как для науки, так и для социума. С момента обретения независимости в институте семьи и брака также произошли экономические, политические, социальные изменения. Изучение этой темы стало объектом многих социально-гуманитарных наук. В статье рассмотрены семейно-брачные отношения Восточного Казахстана. Автор рассматривает не только развитие и изменение семейных ценностей, причины вступления в брак, возраст вступления в брак, степень образования супругов, а также количество разводов их причины. Проведено историко-этнографическое и этносоциологическое исследование. Теоретическая и методологическая основа данной статьи основана на общенаучных методах, включая анализ, синтез и системную методологию, а также на исторических и этнографических подходах. Для исследования вопросов брака и семьи в Восточно-Казахстанской области был использован историко-хронологический метод. Статистические методы были использованы для анализа данных переписей населения 1999 и 2009 годов, а сравнительный метод был применен для определения тенденций в брачном возрасте и показателях разводимости. Эмпирическую основу данного исследования составляют этнологические и этносоциологические материалы, статистические данные и научные исследования. В ходе исследования проанализированы данные национальной переписи населения 1999 и 2009 годов, статистические материалы, которые дополнены этнографическими данными. Описана специфика современной семьи. В ходе исследования было обращено внимание на влияние социально-экономических факторов на состояние брака и семьи исследуемого региона.

**Ключевые слова:** общество, государство, брак, семья, стабильность семьи, развод.

## Introduction

The family, as a fundamental social institution, has evolved alongside the formation and progression of human society. Although it exists as a relatively autonomous entity, familial relations are deeply intertwined with the broader socio-cultural and economic fabric of society. Consequently, the development of family structures among the peoples of the world reflects their historical trajectories. The Kazakh family is no exception in this regard.

The family serves as the foundational cradle where individuals are nurtured and socialized from birth. It is within the family unit that essential values—such as respect for elders, care for the young, compassion, humanism, and patriotism—are first imparted. Thus, the family holds a critical and enduring role in shaping human identity and societal continuity.

The well-being and advancement of any nation are inherently linked to the capacity of its younger generation to form stable families. In Kazakh tradition, the establishment of a family has historically been imbued with profound meaning and societal responsibility. In contemporary research, scholars have sought to explore evolving attitudes toward the purposes and underlying motivations for entering into marriage. Key focal points include the

functional role of the family, the perceived quality of marital relationships, and the distribution of authority within the household.

To investigate these dynamics, a sociological survey was conducted involving 300 women from diverse social backgrounds. The analysis of their responses revealed the following primary motivations for marriage:

- a) The desire for companionship and emotional support throughout life;
- b) The need to feel valued and the urge to care for another person;
- c) The continuation of familial lineage;
- d) The intention to remain with a loved one;
- e) The aversion to loneliness;
- f) The aspiration to create a well-furnished and comfortable household.

Findings suggest that the institution of marriage and its associated values remain highly significant across all segments of the population.

Sociologist Z.A. Zhanazarova (2004), in her monograph, identified four prevailing perspectives on marriage among respondents:

1. A negative or indifferent attitude toward marriage, deeming it unnecessary;
2. An idealistic standard where individuals prefer lifelong solitude over compromising their expectations;

3. A balanced approach, where individuals marry a suitable partner when the opportunity arises;

4. A dependency-based perspective, where the need for marriage supersedes considerations of self-worth and independence (Zhanazarova, 2004).

In considering the practical implications of marriage, it is essential to examine the legal processes governing marital unions. In Kazakhstan, civil marriage registration is administered by the Civil Registry Offices under the Ministry of Justice (CMRO), in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Marriage and Family” and the Rules on the Procedure for Registration of Civil Status. As part of this legal process, a marriage contract may be established. Such contracts define each party’s rights concerning income sharing, responsibility for household expenditures, and property ownership. Notably, they do not regulate matters related to personal relationships or domestic management. These contracts may be amended or terminated at any time by mutual agreement and automatically become null and void upon dissolution of the marriage.

### Materials and methods

The theoretical and methodological framework of this article is grounded in general scientific methods including analysis, synthesis, and systems methodology alongside historical and ethnographic approaches. To investigate issues of marriage and family in the East Kazakhstan region, the historical-chronological method was utilized. Statistical methods were employed to analyze census data from 1999 and 2009, while the comparative method was applied to determine trends in marriage age and divorce rates.

The empirical foundation of this study consists of ethnological and ethnosociological materials, statistical data, and scholarly research.

Between 1926 and 1930, several short studies were published addressing the Kazakh family and marital practices. These included the works of B. Kuftin, V. Sokolovsky, A. Shtusser, S.I. Rudenko, F. Fielstrup, and I.D. Starinkevich. Numerous articles from this period focused on the role of women in the family, intra-household relationships, and the division of domestic responsibilities. In his research, V.G. Sokolovsky offered a comprehensive analysis of the economic, tribal, and statistical conditions of both nomadic and sedentary Kazakh

populations (Sokolovsky, 1926:20). A. Shtusser’s article explored the advantages and disadvantages of early marriage, the average age of marriage across the republic, and elite attitudes toward early unions (Shtusser, 1929:150). I.D. Starinkevich examined various marriage types among the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Siberian Turkic peoples, presenting profound theoretical insights into the subject (Starinkevich, 1930:215).

A significant contribution to the study of Kazakh marriage and family was made by one of the most distinguished ethnographers of the older generation, Kh.A. Argyngbayev. His scholarly legacy includes in-depth research across all areas of traditional Kazakh ethnography—material culture, economic systems, spirituality, and marital and family relations (Argyngbayev, 1973). The work of ethnographer A.B. Kalysh is also of particular importance, especially in exploring the dynamics of marriage, family life, and divorce across various regions of Kazakhstan (Kalysh, 2013).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the diverse issues concerning the social development of the population—particularly urban and rural residents of East Kazakhstan—the studies of leading Kazakhstani historians and demographers such as M.B. Tatimov (Tatimov, 1993), M.Kh. Asylbekov, V.V. Kozina (Asylbekov, Kozina, 1995), and A.N. Alekseenko (Alekseenko, 2007) were also taken into consideration.

### Results and discussion

According to the 2009 national census, the total population of the Republic of Kazakhstan was recorded as 16 million (Marriage and Family. Results of the National Population Census, 2010). Of this number, ethnic Kazakhs comprised 63.1%, making up more than half of the country’s population. In the East Kazakhstan region, the number of individuals who had never been married increased for both sexes in 2009 compared to 1999. Conversely, the proportion of those who were married decreased: among men, the rate declined from 62.8% to 58%, and among women from 55.2% to 51.3%. This trend reflects a clear increase in the number of never-married individuals. Specifically, the share of never-married men rose by 5.4%, while the increase among women was 4.8%. These dynamics are presented in the table below.

**Table 1** – Marital status in East Kazakhstan

Name	Men				Women			
	1999	%	2009	%	1999	%	2009	%
Everything	538224	100	525717	100	612467	100	602644	100
Unmarried	155284	28.9	180160	34.3	121301	19.8	148092	24.6
Married people	338169	62.8	304105	58.0	337850	55.2	308871	51.3
Widows	17379	3.2	17041	3.2	100990	16.5	95912	15.9
Divorced	27392	5.1	23411	4.5	52325	8.5	49769	8.3

There are several underlying reasons for why men do not enter into marriage. Firstly, factors such as military service, completion of higher education, and entry into the workforce contribute to the delayed timing of marriage. Secondly, the lack of stable employment and insufficient financial resources are among the key contributors to the growing number of unmarried men. Additionally, there are men who have previously been married but lost their spouses. According to census data, the proportion of such individuals remained approximately the same between 1999 and 2009 (I).

When analyzing male marriage rates in comparison to women, the 2009 census data reveal a notable increase in the proportion of unmarried men. Specifically, while 24.6% of women had never been married, the figure for men was significantly higher, at 34.3%.

Several reasons explain why young people are postponing or avoiding marriage. First, there is the rising level of educational attainment, which often delays the formation of a family. Second, there is a growing trend toward individual freedom in choosing a spouse, reflecting a shift in social norms. Third, economic factors, particularly concerns about financial stability, play a critical role in decisions regarding early marriage (II).

The role of education in delaying marriage age is particularly evident in Kazakhstan. According to a situational analysis by UNICEF (2019), rural communities still face higher risks of early marriage, though national trends show an overall decline. The study attributes this improvement to increased access to education, especially for girls, and a growing emphasis on professional and personal development before marriage. These findings correlate with 2009 census data in Kazakhstan, which show a marked increase in the number of women marrying after the age of 30, particularly in urban centers where higher education and career opportunities are more accessible.

Moreover, the postponement of marriage among women in urban Kazakhstan can also be understood through the lens of post-Soviet transformations in gender norms and personal agency. Rosenberger discusses how women in these contexts navigate between traditional expectations and emerging individual freedoms. She observes that many women delay or forgo marriage not only due to education and employment but also as a conscious rejection of outdated gender roles. This framework helps explain why an increasing number of Kazakh women are choosing to marry later, or not at all, particularly in cities where alternative life paths are more viable (Rosenberger, 2001).

As Tokhtakhodzhaeva argues, women in Central Asia are increasingly caught between preserving cultural traditions and adapting to modern social structures. Urbanization, expanded access to education, and shifting gender expectations have all contributed to a new model of marriage and family life—particularly among younger generations in Kazakhstan. While rural areas still retain many traditional norms, cities have become spaces of negotiation and transformation, where women, in particular, are redefining their roles within both family and society. These trends suggest not just a demographic shift, but a deeper reconfiguration of cultural identity and social values (Tokhtakhodzhaeva 2004).

Overall, an analysis of marital trends shows that, compared to 1999, the 2009 census reflects a decline in the number of people entering marriage. This trend can be attributed to several factors. Whereas in previous decades, young adults typically married in their early twenties, it has now become increasingly common for individuals to marry closer to the age of thirty. This shift reflects a general increase in the average age of first marriage.

Additionally, residents of rural areas tend to marry earlier than those in urban centers. Young people in cities tend to delay marriage due to a num-

ber of priorities: pursuing higher education, securing stable employment, and establishing financial independence. Urban-specific barriers, such as the lack of private housing or the need to live with parents, further hinder early marriage.

Among both men and women, the highest marriage rates are observed between the ages of 35 and 39. Several factors contribute to this trend. Firstly, by this age range, individuals have typically com-

pleted higher education and spent several years in the workforce, which often delays marriage. Secondly, there is a notable improvement in material well-being during this period, with many individuals attaining property ownership or financial stability. Thirdly, the fear of future loneliness—the desire not to remain alone—becomes a motivating factor for marriage at this stage (III). These patterns are illustrated in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2** – Status of married men in East Kazakhstan

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
All	28.9	34.3	62.8	58.0	3.2	3.2	5.1	4.5
15								
16-19	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	98.3	98.9	1.7	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
25-29	73.0	80.8	25.3	18.5	0.1	0.0	1.5	0.7
30-34	34.3	46.6	60.0	50.3	0.3	0.1	5.3	3.0
35-39	16.0	28.2	76.4	66.0	0.5	0.4	7.1	5.4
40-44	9.5	17.7	82.1	75.0	0.8	0.6	7.7	6.7
45-49	6.1	11.4	84.1	79.9	1.3	1.2	8.5	7.5
50-54	4.5	8.9	85.2	81.3	2.0	1.9	8.3	7.9
55-59	3.3	7.0	85.9	82.3	3.3	3.2	7.5	7.6
60-64	2.3	5.1	85.2	83.6	6.4	4.9	6.1	6.5
65-69	1.5	4.0	84.6	82.8	9.7	7.9	4.3	5.3
70 and above	1.0	3.3	82.3	79.3	13.7	13.8	2.9	3.6

**Table 3** – Status of married women in East Kazakhstan

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
Everything	19.8	24.6	55.2	51.3	16.5	15.9	8.5	8.3
15								
16-19	99.8	100.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	90.9	95.0	8.6	4.7	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.2
25-29	47.9	61.7	46.0	35.5	0.8	0.3	5.3	2.6
30-34	19.6	28.8	67.7	62.9	1.8	1.0	10.9	7.3
35-39	10.1	17.3	75.0	69.6	2.8	2.2	12.1	10.8
40-44	6.7	12.3	76.4	71.1	4.1	3.7	12.8	12.9
45-49	5.0	9.0	75.5	71.1	6.2	6.3	13.3	13.5
50-54	3.8	7.4	73.4	69.5	10.0	9.6	12.8	13.4
55-59	3.1	6.2	69.2	66.4	16.2	15.0	11.5	12.4
60-64	1.9	5.2	63.0	60.8	26.6	22.9	8.5	11.1
65-69	1.8	4.3	55.5	53.2	35.7	33.8	7.0	8.7
70 and above	2.1	3.3	44.0	43.6	48.3	47.4	5.6	5.7



The age gap between spouses varies across generations. Among older cohorts, the typical age difference ranges from 5 years to 6–10 years, and in some cases exceeds 11 years. Among Kazakh individuals aged 60 and older, the spousal age difference is most commonly within the 6–10 year range (IV). In certain instances, men being 6–10 years older than their spouses is attributed to second marriages.

In contrast, among the younger and middle-aged groups, the age gap between spouses typically does not exceed 1–5 years. There is also an increasing trend where women are older than their husbands. While this phenomenon was rare among older generations, it has become more common among younger couples in recent years.

According to 2009 census data, divorce rates for both men and women decreased compared to 1999. Early-age divorces are frequently associated with several factors: lack of readiness for marriage and family life, early unintended pregnancies, incompatibility of personalities, and expectations of future remarriage.

In middle-aged couples, the most influential factor leading to divorce is intra-family conflict. These include: disputes over household authority, differences in educational attainment, incompatibility of character, lack of mutual understanding regarding marital responsibilities, and interference from in-laws or extended family. In some cases, late-age marriage may also contribute to marital instability.

Among individuals aged forty and above, divorces are often linked to the diminishment of emotional attachment, improved material conditions, and the fact that children have grown up and no longer serve as a unifying force within the family. Additionally, for some couples, cohabitation loses its necessity, and extramarital emotional involvement may also become a contributing factor.

As previously noted, among the urban population, the number of marriages in 2009 was lower compared to 1999. Among men, the highest marriage rate was recorded in the 45–49 age group, reaching 80.2%. At the same time, divorce rates were highest in the 45–54 age range, accounting for 8.6%. These statistics are detailed in Table 4.

**Table 4** – Status of married men by urban population in East Kazakhstan

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
Everything	26.2	34.0	64.1	57.7	3.4	3.2	6.3	5.1
15								
16-19	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	98.1	98.8	1.8	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
25-29	69.9	79.3	28.1	19.9	0.1	0.0	1.9	0.8
30-34	30.7	43.3	62.3	53.2	0.3	0.1	6.7	3.4
35-39	13.5	25.7	77.4	67.6	0.6	0.4	8.6	6.3
40-44	8.2	16.0	81.5	75.6	0.8	0.6	9.4	7.8
45-49	5.5	10.0	83.0	80.2	1.4	1.2	10.2	8.6
50-54	4.1	8.0	84.0	80.7	2.2	2.0	9.7	9.3
55-59	2.9	6.3	84.5	81.4	3.5	3.3	9.1	8.9
60-64	2.1	4.3	83.6	82.8	6.6	5.0	7.7	7.8
65-69	1.4	3.6	83.4	81.7	9.8	8.3	5.4	6.4
70 and above	1.1	3.4	81.6	78.7	13.6	13.6	3.7	4.4

The growth in urban population is largely driven by the concentration of employment opportunities in cities. Young people migrate to urban centers to pursue higher education, and upon graduation, many choose to remain in the city, secure employment,

and eventually form families. Over time, they strive to acquire land, build homes, and thereby contribute to the increase in the urban Kazakh population.

Economic changes and the growing impact of global social values have noticeably reshaped

marriage practices across Central Asia. In her ethnographic research in a Kazakh village, Werner illustrates how globalization and market-oriented reforms have influenced family life—leading to later marriages and giving individuals more freedom in choosing their partners. Similar trends are evident in urban areas of East Kazakhstan, where young people increasingly focus on education, building careers, and achieving financial stability before starting families. Together, these shifts point to a broader transformation of traditional family roles, shaped by the region’s evolving social and economic environment (Werner, 2009).

When describing urbanization, several critical factors should be taken into account:

There is a higher concentration of women compared to men in urban areas;

The growth of the urban Kazakh population has occurred not through natural increase, but rather as

a result of mass migration driven by the declining socio-economic conditions in rural areas.

More specifically, the current pattern of urban migration among Kazakhs has shown significant acceleration, regardless of its initial drivers. To some extent, this process continues to unfold in a spontaneous and unregulated manner. Nonetheless, if this urbanization trend aligns with national interests, supporting demographic growth and multifaceted development of the population in terms of both quality and quantity, then it holds considerable promise for the country’s future.

According to 2009 census data, when compared to 1999, urban Kazakh women tend to marry at later ages, particularly after the age of 30. This shift is primarily due to extended periods of education, career advancement, and efforts to achieve financial stability. These trends are clearly illustrated in Table 5.

**Table 5** – Status of married women by urban population in East Kazakhstan

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
Everything	19.9	26.5	52.5	47.6	16.8	15.8	10.8	10.1
15								
16-19	99.9	100.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	91.9	95.5	7.6	4.2	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.2
25-29	50.5	63.9	43.0	33.2	0.6	0.2	5.8	2.7
30-34	21.1	30.3	64.4	60.6	1.7	0.8	12.8	8.2
35-39	11.1	18.8	70.8	66.4	2.8	2.2	15.2	12.6
40-44	7.6	13.7	72.1	66.9	4.2	3.7	16.1	15.6
45-49	5.6	10.4	71.5	65.9	6.2	6.4	16.7	17.3
50-54	4.3	8.8	69.2	64.3	10.1	9.5	16.5	17.3
55-59	3.6	7.3	65.2	61.6	16.1	15.2	15.1	16.0
60-64	2.4	6.2	59.5	56.1	26.2	23.3	11.9	14.4
65-69	2.1	5.2	53.3	49.4	35.1	34.3	9.5	11.1
70 and above	2.4	4.0	42.4	41.1	47.9	46.8	7.3	8.0

Urban culture inevitably exerts a significant influence on socio-cultural development. It also shapes the trajectory of ethnic processes, particularly in multi-ethnic societies. The process of urbanization, in conjunction with ethnocultural development, affects both the traditional spiritual and material culture of a nation. It also impacts the ethnic psychology of its people, leading to transformations in national consciousness.

As noted by the eminent Kazakhstani demographer M.B. Tatimov, “It is evident that the Kazakh people have yet to reach the forefront of global urbanization trends. However, given the scale of this phenomenon, which is now encompassing the entire globe, I would argue that a people who until recently lived a nomadic lifestyle still require broader development within the rural way of life. Only after that should we, through measured and responsible

efforts, begin to master urban living—supported by a well-developed agricultural foundation.”

In terms of rural populations, marriage rates also declined in 2009 compared to 1999. Among rural men,

the highest marriage rate was observed in the 45–49 age group, amounting to 79.5%. The highest divorce rate was recorded in the 45–54 age range, reaching 6.2%. These trends are illustrated in Table 6.

**Table 6** – Status of married men by rural population in East Kazakhstan

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
Everything	32.6	34.8	61.1	58.3	2.9	3.3	3.4	3.6
15								
16-19	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	98.5	99.1	1.5	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
25-29	77.0	83.1	21.9	16.3	0.1	0.0	1.1	0.6
30-34	39.3	51.5	57.0	46.0	0.2	0.1	3.5	2.3
35-39	19.2	31.5	75.2	64.0	0.4	0.3	5.2	4.2
40-44	11.2	19.8	82.9	74.1	0.7	0.7	5.3	5.4
45-49	7.2	13.1	85.9	79.5	1.1	1.2	5.8	6.2
50-54	5.1	10.0	87.3	82.0	1.8	1.8	5.8	6.2
55-59	3.9	7.8	88.3	83.3	2.8	3.0	4.9	5.9
60-64	2.5	6.0	87.5	84.5	6.0	4.7	4.0	4.8
65-69	1.6	4.6	86.3	84.2	9.5	7.4	2.7	3.8
70 and above	0.9	3.1	83.5	80.1	13.9	14.1	1.7	2.6

Among rural women, marriage most commonly occurs between the ages of 30 and 35, according to recent data. This trend reflects a convergence in cultural norms between urban and rural areas. The development of internet technologies has played a significant

role in influencing women’s psychology, contributing to evolving attitudes toward family and marriage.

In terms of divorce rates, the highest levels are observed after the age of 35, reaching 8.2%. These figures are detailed in Table 7.

**Table 7** – Status of married women by rural population in East Kazakhstan

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
Everything	19.7	21.6	59.7	56.9	16.0	16.2	4.6	5.3
15								
16-19	99.8	100.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	89.3	94.1	10.2	5.6	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.2
25-29	43.5	57.7	50.8	39.6	1.1	0.3	4.5	2.4
30-34	17.2	26.3	73.0	66.6	1.9	1.3	7.8	5.8
35-39	8.5	15.0	81.2	74.6	2.7	2.3	7.5	8.1
40-44	5.3	10.2	83.7	77.2	3.9	3.8	7.2	8.8
45-49	4.1	7.0	82.8	78.4	6.2	6.3	7.0	8.2
50-54	2.8	5.4	81.6	76.9	9.9	9.9	5.8	7.8
55-59	2.1	4.5	76.9	73.5	16.6	14.8	4.4	7.2



Continuation of the table

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
60-64	1.1	3.7	68.5	67.9	27.1	22.3	3.2	6.1
65-69	1.2	2.9	59.5	59.3	36.7	33.0	2.6	4.8
70 and above	1.6	2.2	47.2	47.2	49.1	48.3	2.2	2.4

One of the key factors influencing marital stability among young couples is the level of education and shared interests. Education fosters mutual understanding between spouses and plays a critical role in promoting compatibility. When both partners possess a similar level of education, it contributes to shared worldviews, enhances the appreciation of cultural and family values, and strengthens the overall foundation of the marital relationship (V).

According to the 2009 census, aligned with the structure of the national education system, there was a noticeable increase in the number of male stu-

dents who had never been married, reaching 20.2%. Among those who were married, 73.4% had attained higher education, while 67.9% held specialized secondary education. These trends are presented in Table 8.

Among women who were married, 59.8% had attained higher education, while 60.4% had completed specialized secondary education. However, when comparing census data from 1999 to 2009, there was a decline in the number of students within the married population. This trend is clearly illustrated in Table 9.

**Table 8** – Educational status of married men in East Kazakhstan

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
Everything	28.9	34.3	62.8	58.0	3.2	3.2	5.1	4.5
top	10.0	20.2	82.9	73.4	2.2	2.1	4.9	4.3
Unfinished top	47.6	63.7	47.0	32.4	0.9	0.7	4.5	3.2
Medium special	15.5	24.0	76.5	67.9	2.0	2.4	6.0	5.7
Main specialization	25.5	31.0	66.2	60.5	1.5	2.4	6.8	6.0
General knowledge	33.1	39.0	60.0	54.6	1.6	2.3	5.3	4.2
Basic environment	50.4	50.1	42.2	42.2	2.9	3.9	4.5	3.9
Elementary	11.4	37.9	70.8	45.2	13.7	14.5	4.1	2.5

**Table 9** – Educational status of married women in East Kazakhstan

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
Everything	19.8	24.6	55.2	51.3	16.5	15.9	8.5	8.3
top	13.3	20.9	66.1	59.8	8.4	8.6	12.2	10.8
Unfinished top	49.5	59.1	39.5	32.2	3.9	3.4	7.2	5.3
Medium special	11.4	15.5	67.4	60.4	9.5	12.7	11.7	11.3

*Continuation of the table*

Name	% of unmarried people		Married %		Widows %		Divorced %	
Years	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009	1999	2009
Main specialization	15.7	20.6	64.9	56.7	7.8	12.7	11.6	10.0
General knowledge	23.5	28.7	59.6	52.5	8.5	12.0	8.4	6.8
Primary environment	40.5	37.8	37.9	36.2	16.1	20.8	5.4	5.2
Elementary	5.4	20.5	39.6	24.5	50.7	52.4	4.3	2.6

## Conclusion

An analysis of overall marital trends, based on the 2009 census data, indicates a decline in the number of marriages in East Kazakhstan. In addition, there is a noticeable increase in the average age at first marriage. Urban youth, in particular, tend to postpone family formation, as pursuing higher education, securing stable employment, and achieving financial independence are prioritized. In urban settings, factors that facilitate partner selection and relationship development include living in close proximity, working together, studying in the same institution, meeting in recreational spaces, or interacting during business trips, among others.

In conclusion, the article identifies several key factors that influence the stability of marriage. First, ethnic values—particularly respect for parents, elders, and family members—play a significant role in fostering marital stability. These values are instilled through both the upbringing of younger generations and the individual's personal life experience. This pattern is especially prevalent in extended families consisting of three to four generations, where older generations uphold and transmit traditional values.

Second, in our view, the stability and value of marriage are shaped by the ethnic environment in which spouses were raised. For example, in areas

densely populated by Kazakhs, particularly in rural districts, the extended family and even the broader community contribute to sustaining family cohesion. The presence of elder family members helps enforce ethnic norms that support marital stability.

The article aims not only to explore the current state of marriage and family life, but also to contribute to creating conditions for younger generations—who represent the future of our nation—to grow and thrive within well-rounded, supportive family structures. By analyzing the contemporary challenges facing Kazakh families, the study seeks to foster love for the nation and a deep appreciation of cultural values among the youth.

## Acknowledgements and Conflict of Interest

The author expresses sincere gratitude to K.B. Baudiyarova for her methodological support, assistance in preparing empirical materials, and contribution to the analysis of the data used in this study.

This article was prepared within the framework of the grant-funded project AP23490262 “The Kazakhs of the Tarbagatai Region: A Historical and Ethnographic Study (19th – Early 21st Century).” The author declares no conflict of interest related to the findings or interpretations presented in the article.

## Informants

- I. Arslanbek Zhakupov – Born in 1969, Semey, Abai Region
- II. Qurali Abdyrahmanova – Born in 1972, Öskemen, East Kazakhstan Region
- III. Gulbarshyn Abdrakhmanova – Born in 1980, Ayagoz, Abai Region
- IV. Qanysh Egizbayev – Born in 1968, Kyzyl-Kesik village, Aksuat District, Abai Region
- V. Zhumash Imanbayev – Born in 1969, Öskemen, East Kazakhstan Region

### Литература

- Алексеев Н.В. (2007). История Восточного Казахстана в документах и материалах. – Усть-Каменогорск: Медиа-Альянс. – 108 с.
- Аргынбаев Х.А. (1996). Қазақ отбасы. – Алматы: Қайнар. – 288 б.
- Асылбеков М.Х., Козина В.В. (1995). Демографические процессы современного Казахстана. – Алматы: Оркениет. – 128 с.
- Брак и семья. (2010). Итоги Национальной переписи населения 2009 года в Республике Казахстан. Статистический сборник. – Астана. – 172 с.
- Жаназарова З.Ж. (2004). Современная семья в Казахстане и ее проблемы. – Алматы: Қазақ университеті. – 257 с.
- Калыш А.Б. (2013). Семья и брак в современном Казахстане. – Алматы: Қазақ университеті. – 464 с.
- Rosenberger N. R. Performativity, agency and victimhood in the post-Soviet world // *Anthropological Quarterly*. – 2001. – Т. 74. – №2. – С. 99–112.
- Соколовский В.Г. (1926). Казахский аул. (С 17-ю спец. прил., иллюстрирующие основные особенности казахского аула). – Ташкент. – 51 с.
- Старынкевич И.Д. (1930). Формы заключения брака у турецких племен Сибири и у кочевников Средней Азии // *Музей антропологии и этнографии АН СССР*. – Л. – Т. 9. – С. 215–235.
- Тәтімов М. (1993). Қазақ әлемі. – Алматы: Атамұра-Қазақстан. – 160 б.
- Тохтаходжаева М. Между прошлым и будущим: женщины Центральной Азии. – Ташкент: Женский ресурсный центр, 2004. – 204 с.
- UNICEF. Child marriage in Kazakhstan: A situational analysis. – New York: United Nations Children's Fund, 2019. – 36 p.
- Werner C. Globalization and marriage: Family change in a Central Asian village // *Ethnology*. – 2009. – Vol. 48. – No. 2. – P. 101–120.
- Штутсер А. (1929). Ранние браки и брачный возраст в Казахстане // *Журнал рандетского возраста*. – №7. – С. 150–164.

### References

- Alekseenko N. V. (2007). *Istoriia Vostochnogo Kazakhstana v dokumentakh i materialakh* [History of East Kazakhstan in documents and materials]. Ust-Kamenogorsk: Media-Allians. (In Russian)
- Argynbaev Kh. A. (1996). *Qazaq otbasy* [Kazakh family]. Almaty: Qainar. (In Kazakh)
- Asylbekov M. Kh., & Kozina V. V. (1995). *Demograficheskie protsessy sovremennogo Kazakhstana* [Demographic processes of modern Kazakhstan]. Almaty: Orkeniet. (In Russian)
- Brak i sem'ia. (2010). *Itogi Natsional'noi perepisi naseleniia 2009 goda v Respublike Kazakhstan. Statisticheskii sbornik* [Marriage and family. Results of the 2009 national population census of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Statistical yearbook]. Astana. (In Russian)
- Kalish A. B. (2013). *Sem'ia i brak v sovremennom Kazakhstane* [Family and marriage in modern Kazakhstan]. Almaty: Kazakh universiteti. (In Russian)
- Rosenberger, N. R. (2001). Performativity, agency and victimhood in the post-Soviet world. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 74(2), 99–112. <https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2001.0027>
- Shtusser A. (1929). Rannie braki i brachnyi vozrast v Kazakhstane [Early marriages and marriage age in Kazakhstan]. *Zhurnal ranedet'skogo vozrasta*, (7), 150–164. (In Russian)
- Sokolovskii V. G. (1926). *Kazakhskii aul* [Kazakh aul]. Tashkent. (In Russian)
- Starinkevich I. D. (1930). Formy zakliucheniia braka u turetskikh plemen Sibiri i u kochevnikov Srednei Azii [Forms of marriage among Turkic tribes of Siberia and nomads of Central Asia]. *Muzei antropologii i etnografii AN SSSR*, 9, 215–235. (In Russian)
- Tatimov M. (1993). *Qazaq alemi* [Kazakh world]. Almaty: Atamura-Kazakhstan. (In Kazakh)
- Tokhtakhodzhaeva, M. (2004). *Mezhdru proshlym i budushchim: zhenshchiny Tsentral'noi Azii* [Between the past and the future: Women of Central Asia]. Tashkent: Women's Resource Centre. (In Russian)
- UNICEF. (2019). *Child marriage in Kazakhstan: A situational analysis*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/kazakhstan/en/reports/child-marriage-kazakhstan>
- Werner, C. (2009). Globalization and marriage: Family change in a Central Asian village. *Ethnology*, 48(2), 101–120. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25651349>
- Zhanazarova Zh. Zh. (2004). *Sovremennaiia sem'ia v Kazakhstane i ee problemy* [The modern family in Kazakhstan and its problems]. Almaty: Kazakh universiteti. (In Russian)

### Information about the authors:

Nazira Nurkozhaqyzy Abdinassir – Specialist at the Department of Archaeology, Ethnology, and Museology, Faculty of History, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: [nazzira.abdinassir@gmail.com](mailto:nazzira.abdinassir@gmail.com))

Kuralai Batyrbekovna Baudiyarova – candidate of historical sciences, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Archaeology, Ethnology, and Museology, Faculty of History, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: [baudiyarovakb@gmail.com](mailto:baudiyarovakb@gmail.com))

**Сведения об авторах:**

Абдинасыр Назира Нуркожаевна – специалист кафедры археологии, этнологии и музеологии факультета истории Казахского национального университета имени аль-Фараби (Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: nazzira.abdinassir@gmail.com)

Бәудиярова Куралай Батырбековна – кандидат исторических наук, старший преподаватель кафедры археологии, этнологии и музеологии факультета истории Казахского национального университета имени аль-Фараби (Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: baudiyarovakb@gmail.com)

**Авторлар жайлы мәлімет:**

Әбдінасыр Назира Нұрқожақызы – әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университетінің Тарих факультеті, Археология, этнология және музеология кафедрасы (Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: nazzira.abdinassir@gmail.com)

Бәудиярова Куралай Батырбековна – тарих ғылымдарының кандидаты, әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті Тарих факультеті, Археология, этнология және музеология кафедрасының аға оқытушысы (Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: baudiyarovakb@gmail.com)

Поступило: 06.04.2025

Принято: 05.06.2025