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# Humanitarian Paradigm of Contemporary Kazakhstan: A Philosophical Reflection

The article presents a socio-philosophical analysis of the humanitarian paradigm of contemporary Kazakhstan in the context of globalization, digitalization, and institutional reforms. It argues that the humanitarian paradigm is not a secondary "appendix" to economic modernization, but a fundamental value-normative framework that sets the horizons for social development, the quality of education, and the resilience of cultural identity. The study demonstrates that the intensification of technocratic thinking in higher education leads to a devaluation of socio-humanitarian knowledge and a deficit of critical thinking, civic responsibility, and worldview reflection among future specialists. The purpose of the research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the value foundations of the humanitarian paradigm and to reveal its strategic significance for contemporary society. The study analyzes the axiological foundations of the humanitarian paradigm, based on fundamental concepts of the human being, society, and culture, and identifies their substantive features in the context of modern Kazakhstan. The article explores theoretical and methodological approaches to the concept of the "humanitarian paradigm," examines its worldview and axiological components, as well as its institutional manifestation in the systems of education, science, and cultural policy. Special attention is paid to the philosophical reflection on processes of modernization of public consciousness, identity transformation in the context of global communication networks, and the impact of the digital environment on the structure of humanitarian values. It is shown that digitalization, alongside expanding access to knowledge and cultural resources, generates new challenges related to changes in forms of social communication, fragmentation of cultural space, and risks of losing spiritual continuity.

*Keywords:* humanitarian paradigm, technocracy, digitalization, identity, higher education, youth, culture, morality, religion, Kazakhstan.

## *Introduction*

In relation to contemporary Kazakhstan, the concept of the humanitarian paradigm goes beyond a narrowly scientific methodology and covers a wide cultural and historical horizon. If in the natural sciences a paradigm sets standards for explanation, verification, and proof, then in the humanities it includes a system of value guidelines, worldview orientations, and conceptions about humans and society. The humanitarian paradigm shapes society's understanding of fundamental values such as freedom, justice, historical memory, identity, and moral responsibility. These categories serve as key spiritual and ethical reference points that influence the cultural and social development of society.

In the context of Kazakhstan's independent development, the humanitarian paradigm acts as a tool for comprehending modernization and national self-determination. It influences the interpretations of historical heritage, determines the role of language and culture in maintaining identity, and sets guidelines for educational policy. Thus, the humanitarian paradigm manifests itself not only as a theoretical model but also as a cultural and normative foundation of social development.

Philosophical reflection on the humanitarian paradigm of contemporary Kazakhstan allows one to identify its dual orientation: on the one hand, it is directed towards global intellectual trends, and on the other hand, it aims to preserve national and cultural originality. In this context, the humanitarian paradigm can be defined as a holistic system of interpretations and values that ensures the semantic unity of society and sets the direction for its spiritual evolution in the conditions of global transformations.

The theoretical basis of the concept of "paradigm" is provided by T. Kuhn's interpretation, according to which a paradigm represents a system of theoretical assumptions, methodological norms, value orientations, and problem-solving patterns shared by the scientific community, determining the character of scientific thinking in a certain historical period. A paradigm forms the framework of rationality, sets criteria of scientificity, and institutionally organizes the intellectual space of an era [1].

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In the humanities, the concept of a paradigm has a broader meaning. It includes not only methodological principles but also values, worldview perspectives, and cultural-historical foundations. The humanitarian paradigm expresses society's understanding of human beings, justice, freedom, historical memory, identity, and the meaning of life. In this way, it influences not only research approaches but also the development of social consciousness.

This issue is particularly relevant in the context of Kazakhstan, where the period of independence was accompanied by extensive political, socio-economic, and cultural transformations. These processes included rethinking historical heritage, forming new educational and cultural policies, and searching for sustainable models of national identity. The transition from the Soviet ideological model to a pluralistic and globally integrated intellectual environment required a philosophical analysis of the foundations of social development and clarification of the value guidelines of modernization.

The change of humanitarian paradigms is historically associated with the transformation of interpretive strategies and changes in the image of the human being. The transition from the classical rationalist model to post-classical forms of thinking was accompanied by increased attention to language, communication, intersubjectivity, and cultural identity. Philosophical hermeneutics, presented in the works of H. Gadamer emphasizes the historicity of understanding and the dialogical nature of culture [2]. Existential analysis by M. Heidegger highlights the rootedness of human existence in language and tradition, allowing the humanitarian paradigm to be considered as a historically conditioned system of meanings [3].

In the context of globalization and digital transformation, the question of the correlation between technocratic rationality and humanitarian values becomes particularly acute. The strengthening of applied education and orientation towards market competencies increases the risk of marginalizing the humanities. However, without the development of critical thinking, moral reflection, and cultural self-consciousness, modernization may lose its humanistic meaning and be reduced to a purely technological process.

Thus, the humanitarian paradigm of contemporary Kazakhstan should be considered not only as an academic concept but also as a philosophical project that unites: an ontological understanding of humans as culturally and historically conditioned beings; an anthropological focus on the spiritual development of the individual; an axiological orientation prioritizing moral and humanistic values. Philosophical reflection on this paradigm allows the identification of strategic guidelines for social development in the interaction of tradition and modernization, globalization, and the preservation of cultural identity.

Modernization processes in Kazakhstan have a multidimensional character, encompassing not only economic, institutional, and technological spheres, but also profound changes in the cultural and worldview space of society. In the framework of the political and institutional reforms initiated by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev under the project "New Kazakhstan" modernization is interpreted as a comprehensive transformation of the state and society. In his Address to the Nation "New Kazakhstan: The Path of Renewal and Modernization" (2022), Tokayev emphasized that the renewal of the country cannot be limited to economic growth or administrative reforms alone; it requires deep political restructuring, strengthening the principles of justice and the rule of law, expanding civic participation, and renewing public values [4].

In this perspective, the humanitarian dimension of modernization acquires particular significance. Economic growth, digitalization, and technological innovations, while necessary conditions for progress, do not exhaust the criteria of sustainable development. Without reflection on values and philosophical understanding, modernization can become one-sided and overly technocratic. In such a situation, a person may begin to be seen mainly as a productive or informational resource rather than as a full human being. The danger of such reduction was highlighted in the philosophy of technology by M. Heidegger, particularly in his work "The Question Concerning Technology", where he demonstrates that the dominance of technological thinking forms a specific mode of revealing Being, in which the world is perceived as a "standing-reserve" subject to calculation, control, and exploitation [3; 17].

Transposing these ideas to the context of Kazakhstani modernization allows asserts the necessity of a balance between technological development and humanitarian reflection. The modernization of public consciousness implies not a rejection of tradition, but its reinterpretation in light of contemporary challenges. Preserving the cultural code, historical memory, and spiritual orientations serves as a condition for organic renewal. Humanitarian knowledge – philosophy, cultural studies, history, philology – plays an integrative role here: it provides a meaningful accompaniment to reforms and forms the value-based foundations of social transformations.

*Materials and Methods*

This article employs historical-philosophical and hermeneutical methods to analyze the evolution of the concept of "paradigm" and the interpretation of humanitarian concepts in the context of contemporary Kazakhstan; a socio-philosophical analysis is applied to comprehend the processes of modernization, globalization, and digitalization; and an axiological approach allows for the identification of the value-based foundations of social development.

The empirical component of the study was implemented in the form of a sociological survey among students of higher education institutions in five cities of the Republic of Kazakhstan — Astana, Almaty, Karaganda, Uralsk, and Pavlodar. The selection of regions was determined by their socio-cultural specificity and differences in the educational environment. The study included students from both humanitarian and technical fields of study, which made it possible to conduct a comparative analysis of the perception of the humanitarian component of education.

*Results*

To deepen the socio-philosophical analysis of the humanitarian paradigm of contemporary Kazakhstan, the research structure includes an empirical component aimed at identifying value orientations, worldview positions, and the attitude of student youth toward humanitarian knowledge in the context of digitalization and institutional transformations. In this way, the theoretical propositions of the article are correlated with trends emerging in the real educational environment.

The methodological toolkit included surveys, the organization of focus groups, and the conduct of expert interviews. The survey was aimed at identifying the level of humanitarian awareness, value priorities, and sources shaping students' worldview orientations. Focus groups made it possible to specify ideas about identity, the role of language, historical memory, and spiritual heritage, as well as to assess the impact of the digital environment on the structure of values and models of social communication. Interviews with teachers of humanities subjects, staff of educational institutions, and specialists in cultural and educational policy helped to obtain professional opinions on the current state and future development of the humanitarian paradigm in higher education.

Data processing was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. Quantitative processing of survey results allowed for the identification of stable ratios and trends, while qualitative analysis of discursive positions and semantic emphases in participants' responses provided a deeper understanding of youth value orientations. The comprehensiveness of the methodological approach increased the reliability of interpretations and the representativeness of conclusions.

Consequently, the inclusion of an empirical component allows the humanitarian paradigm of contemporary Kazakhstan to be considered not only as a philosophical-theoretical construct but also as a socially manifested phenomenon reflecting the current state of value consciousness among student youth and the dynamics of the transformation of humanitarian orientations.

*Discussion*

The modern higher education system is still largely focused on preparing narrowly specialized professionals who meet the needs of the labor market. Emphasis on practical skills, technological efficiency, and professional mobility forms graduates with strong technical competencies, but they are not always sufficiently prepared for critical reflection, ethical responsibility, or a broader understanding of social processes. In this context, the position of J. Dewey is illustrative, emphasizing that social effectiveness becomes formal if it is not grounded in rational empathy and an understanding of the diversity of human goods [5]. Consequently, education devoid of humanitarian depth risks turning into a mechanism for reproducing functional performers rather than forming thinking citizens.

Digital transformation reinforces this tendency, as the acceleration of information flows and the dominance of media platforms contribute to a fragmented perception of reality. Clip-style thinking, the pragmatization of language, and a reduced capacity to sustain complex argumentation have become cultural symptoms of the era. Such changes are described within the critique of the "screen generation," where traditional humanitarian culture is displaced by brief formats and superficial assimilation of meanings [6].

From a philosophical perspective, the transformation of language and communication affects the fundamental foundations of human existence. If language is understood as the space in which human engagement with the world is revealed, its simplification and coarsening can be interpreted as markers of deeper

cultural shifts. In this sense, Heidegger's thesis on language as the "house of Being" acquires not only theoretical but also socio-diagnostic significance [3, 19].

The issue of religious and worldview literacy deserves special attention. In conditions of pluralization of the religious space and the activation of various spiritual practices, the deficit of systematic humanitarian knowledge increases the risks of uncritical acceptance of radical or pseudo-religious interpretations. At the same time, the humanitarian paradigm implies the formation of value-based resilience, grounded in knowledge of tradition, the history of religions, and norms of intercultural dialogue.

The ontological perspective of the humanitarian paradigm makes it possible to consider the human being as an entity whose existence unfolds within the horizon of culture and history. Such an approach overcomes the naturalistic reduction of the human being to a merely biological or social function and emphasizes their rootedness in a symbolic and traditional space. In twentieth-century philosophy, this position received conceptual elaboration in the existential analytic of Martin Heidegger, where human existence is interpreted as being-in-the-world, structured by temporality and historicity [3, 21].

This line of thought was further developed in G. Gadamer's hermeneutics, which substantiates the principle of the "effectiveness of history" as an indispensable condition of understanding. According to Gadamer, interpretation is a dialogue of times, in which the past is not mechanically reproduced but actualized in a changed context. Consequently, the humanitarian paradigm presupposes the recognition that the subject is formed within historical-cultural interaction and cannot be understood outside tradition [2, 16].

In the Kazakhstani context, this thesis gains particular significance: modernization and globalization increase the need for a conscious engagement with spiritual heritage. Abai's philosophy demonstrates an understanding of social existence as dependent on the moral state of the individual [7]. Similarly, al-Farabi's concept of the "virtuous city" links the stability of society to the moral maturity of its citizens [8]. Thus, cultural and spiritual continuity becomes not an addition to reforms but a condition for their meaningful integrity.

Consequently, modernization in Kazakhstan should be understood as a dialectical unity of economic rationality and cultural identity. Only with the inclusion of the humanitarian dimension is it possible to form a sustainable development model oriented not only toward growth indicators but also toward the quality of human capital, moral responsibility, and the spiritual self-consciousness of society. This fundamentally distinguishes genuine modernization from the mechanical adoption of technological models not rooted in the cultural context.

In the context of globalization, processes of identity formation acquire a dynamic character. M. Castells notes that the network society generates multiple forms of self-identification: identity becomes a processual construct, formed in spaces of global interactions and media discourses [9]. Castells distinguishes legitimizing identity, resistance identity, and projective identity, emphasizing that under global changes the importance of projective identity increases — one oriented toward the future and capable of integrating local cultural resources into the contemporary context.

In this regard, the issue of preserving language, cultural memory, and spiritual heritage as the basis of sustainable societal development gains special significance. Language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a carrier of historical experience, value structures, and worldview orientations. Cultural memory ensures generational continuity and forms historical self-consciousness, strengthening national identity in the face of external challenges.

Spiritual heritage — philosophical ideas, literary traditions, religious and ethical values — performs an integrative function, connecting individual experience with collective history. In conditions of accelerated globalization and expanding digital communication, it is precisely these spiritual foundations that allow society to maintain internal integrity and resilience. In this sense, cultural memory becomes a strategic resource for sustainable development, consistent with J. Assmann's conceptual conclusions on the role of memory as a form of political and cultural identity [10, 11].

Thus, the dynamic nature of identity in the era of globalization requires active cultural policy aimed at supporting language, historical memory, and spiritual traditions. The combination of global integration and cultural uniqueness becomes a key condition for the harmonious development of contemporary society and reveals the potential for a value-oriented future.

Overall, the humanitarian paradigm of contemporary Kazakhstan represents a system of worldview and value orientations, formed under conditions of globalization, digitalization, and socio-cultural transformation. It expresses the aspiration to combine national tradition with universal principles of modernity, serving as an intellectual matrix of social development. Unlike narrowly economic models of modernization, the

humanitarian paradigm emphasizes the human being as the central value of social existence, focusing on their spiritual potential, cultural identity, and moral responsibility [11].

The results of the conceptual analysis confirm that a humanitarian understanding of the human being fundamentally differs from the functionalist interpretation characteristic of technocratic models of society. From a humanitarian perspective, the individual is conceived as an end in itself, not as a tool for achieving external goals. This conclusion aligns with Kant's ethics of autonomy, in which the human being is defined as an end in itself and a bearer of intrinsic dignity [12]. Consequently, the anthropological dimension of the humanitarian paradigm presupposes recognition of the moral autonomy of the individual and their responsibility for forms of social interaction.

## *Conclusion*

In the context of global transformations — the expansion of the information space, the intensification of intercultural contacts, and changes in forms of social communication — the humanitarian paradigm acquires strategic significance. It sets normative guidelines for evaluating social processes and establishes criteria for justice, solidarity, civic responsibility, and cultural continuity. Through the systems of education, science, art, and public discourse, humanitarian values serve as the foundation for societal consolidation and the strengthening of national self-consciousness.

Philosophical reflection plays a particularly important role in the development of the humanitarian paradigm, providing a critical analysis of the value foundations of reforms. Philosophy, cultural studies, history, and philology not only interpret ongoing changes but also shape the semantic space in which long-term development strategies are formulated. Without such guidance, modernization processes risk losing their internal integrity and value orientation.

Further development of the humanitarian paradigm requires the institutionalization of humanitarian knowledge within strategic planning systems. This entails the inclusion of humanitarian expertise in the development of state programs, educational standards, cultural policy, and media strategies. The integration of humanitarian knowledge into managerial and social practices contributes to the formation of a balanced development model, oriented not only toward economic indicators but also toward the quality of human capital, the level of civic culture, and the resilience of cultural identity.

An important condition is also the active presence of humanitarian discourse in the public sphere. Scientific forums, academic publications, media platforms, and public discussions should promote the dissemination of humanitarian ideas and value orientations. This strengthens the dialogue between the state, the scientific community, and civil society, forming the prerequisites for a mature and responsible public consciousness.

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## Қазіргі Қазақстанның гуманитарлық парадигмасы: философиялық рефлексия

Мақалада жаһандану, цифрландыру және институционалдық реформалар жағдайындағы қазіргі Қазақстанның гуманитарлық парадигмасына әлеуметтік-философиялық талдау ұсынылған. Гуманитарлық парадигма экономикалық жаңғыртудың екінші кезектегі «қосымшасы» емес, керісінше қоғамдық дамудың көкжиектерін, білім беру сапасын және мәдени бірегейліктің тұрақтылығын айқындайтын базалық құндылықтық-нормативтік негіз екендігі туралы тезис негізделеді. Жоғары мектептегі технократиялық ойлаудың күшеюі әлеуметтік-гуманитарлық білімнің құнсыздануына, болашақ мамандардың сыни ойлау, азаматтық жауапкершілік және дүниетанымдық рефлексия деңгейінің төмендеуіне алып келетіндігі көрсетілген. Зерттеудің мақсаты гуманитарлық парадигманың терең құндылықтық негіздерін жан-жақты пайымдау арқылы оның қоғамдық дамудағы стратегиялық маңызын ашып көрсетуге бағытталған. Атап айтқанда, зерттеу барысында гуманитарлық парадигманың адам, қоғам және мәдениет туралы іргелі түсініктер жүйесіне сүйенетін аксиологиялық тұғырлары талданып, олардың қазіргі Қазақстан жағдайындағы мазмұндық ерекшеліктері айқындалады. Мақалада «гуманитарлық парадигма» ұғымының теориялық-әдіснамалық тәсілдері ашылып, оның дүниетанымдық және аксиологиялық құрамдас бөліктері, сондай-ақ білім беру, ғылым және мәдени саясат жүйесіндегі институционалдық көрінісі талданған. Қоғамдық сананы жаңғырту үдерістерін философиялық тұрғыдан пайымдауға, жаһандық коммуникациялық желілер жағдайында бірегейліктің трансформациялануына және цифрлық ортаның гуманитарлық құндылықтар құрылымына ықпалына ерекше назар аударылады. Цифрландыру білім мен мәдени ресурстарға қолжетімділікті кеңейтуімен қатар, әлеуметтік коммуникация формаларының өзгеруімен, мәдени кеңістіктің фрагментациялануымен және рухани сабақтастықтың әлсіреу қаупімен байланысты жаңа сын-қатерлерді де туындататыны көрсетілген.

*Кілт сөздер:* гуманитарлық парадигма, технократизм, цифрландыру, бірегейлік, жоғары білім, жастар, мәдениет, мораль, дін, Қазақстан.

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## Гуманитарная парадигма современного Казахстана: философская рефлексия

В статье предлагается социально-философский анализ гуманитарной парадигмы современного Казахстана в условиях глобализации, цифровизации и институциональных реформ. Обосновывается тезис о том, что гуманитарная парадигма выступает не вторичным «приложением» к экономической модернизации, а базовой ценностно-нормативной рамкой, задающей горизонты общественного развития, качества образования и устойчивости культурной идентичности. Показано, что усиление технократического мышления в высшей школе приводит к девальвации социогуманитарного знания и к дефициту критического мышления, гражданской ответственности и мировоззренческой рефлексии у будущих специалистов. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении ценностных оснований гуманитарной парадигмы и определении её роли в обеспечении устойчивого развития общества, сохранении культурной идентичности и формировании ответственного гражданского сознания. В работе раскрываются теоретико-методологические подходы к понятию «гуманитарная парадигма», анализируются её мировоззренческие и аксиологические компоненты, а также её институциональное проявление в системе образования, науки и культурной политики. Особое внимание уделяется философскому осмыслению процессов модернизации общественного сознания, трансформации идентичности в условиях глобальных коммуникационных сетей и влияния цифровой среды на структуру гуманитарных ценностей. Показано, что цифровизация, наряду с расширением возможностей доступа к знаниям и культурным ресурсам, порождает новые вызовы, связанные с изменением форм социальной коммуникации, фрагментацией культурного пространства и рисками утраты духовной преемственности.

*Ключевые слова:* гуманитарная парадигма, технократизм, цифровизация, идентичность, высшее образование, молодежь, культура, мораль, религия, Казахстан.

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