

Changing values: intergenerational distinctions in the context of sociocultural changes in modern Kazakhstan

Mukhtar Abdikakimov

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Department of Social Science, Yanushkevich Str., 6, Astana, 010008, Kazakhstan.

E-mail: muhtar.abdikakim@mail.ru

Abstract. In a period of radical socio-economic and political reforms that are experiencing many post-Soviet countries, particularly acute become the problems on axiological reconstruction of society. In Kazakh society, which is still based of traditional values and codes of behavior, formation of a new value system and value orientation in the transition to a market economy is complicated and controversial. Transitive characteristic of society complicates self-definition and socialization of people and is influenced by globalization, on the one hand, and socio-economic reform in the internal politics of the country, on the other hand.

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Introduction

Globalization has political and cultural aspects, which influence national consciousness by changing the relationship between local and global [1]. In contemporary society, the process of formation of ethnic and cultural values among members of different social layers occurs under the conditions of enhanced technical capabilities. The influence of mass media is quite strong as well. Especially worth considering the impact of the Internet as a kind of mouthpiece of the "new world view" of global society, focusing on unrestricted "freedom" and the values of the Western democracy, above all, capitalism, as opposed to traditional values, in our case, the Kazakh traditional values. It should be noted that in today's society, youth is strongly stratified; various needs and opportunities for self-actualization, education, profession, etc. define both intragenerational and intergenerational differences in basic values. The current pace of social, cultural and professional changes is so rapid that in most cases people encounter the problems that previous generations did not face; respectively, these problems are completely new to them, requiring nontrivial solutions. One of the greatest philosophers of the XX century A.N. Whitehead [2] notes that in the past, significant changes in society took considerably longer time than a human longevity. Nowadays, according to the new conditions of human existence, this time has become much shorter than human lifespan. All these make the issue on intergenerational differences in value orientation most challenging in the context of rapidly globalizing and developing society.

Based on the theory of modernization, one can

assume that the process of massive structural changes in culture in the context of modernization defines the occurring changes in the form of a gradual transition from normative values (traditional) to contemporary values, focusing on the rationality of choice, tolerance and self-expression[3]. The gradual nature of this transition is associated with cultural values, which are very deeply rooted in the national consciousness, and it will take a lot of effort to weaken the influence of cultural norms in the rapidly developing world, because it is impossible to change the value orientation in a short time. Many of our daily habits and behaviors stem from the long-standing cultural practices. In social interactions and everyday life, cultural factors have a significant impact on the formation of our movements, gestures and verbal expressions [4].

Analyzing the diversity of relationships between generations, the intergenerational differences in the Republic of Kazakhstan can be explored in terms of a socio-cultural aspect, that is, in the system of rules, traditions and values that determine the differences with regard to cultural heritage, with a glance to the changes in cultural and behavioral preferences. At that, very important are the socio-cultural categories; the first category is socio-cultural values. As it is known, values are generalized attitudes of people towards the most important goals and behaviors that define priorities in the perception of reality, set the orientations in all life spheres and in a great measure form the "lifestyle" of society. Value orientations are complex principles, grouped in a certain way that give harmony and orientation to diverse motives of human thought and activity in addressing common

human problems [5]. The second category is the norms, which represent the rules of conduct and activity of people or their principles; they reflect the values of a particular culture. There are norms-prohibitions (taboos). Every culture has a certain number of prohibitions. The historical process of expanding human freedom reduces taboo actions and deeds. In the social life regulation, the boundaries of acceptable behavior in society are expanded; this gives opportunity to the individual to make choice of his behavior pattern and life-sustaining activity, expressed in certain value-normative frame of reference.

Kazakhstan develops along a modernization path of building a democratic and legal state that causes dramatic changes in the economic and political structure of the country due to the objective needs of society. Undoubtedly, all this is associated with the changes in value orientations. Today, Kazakhstan redefines the Soviet heritage. Given the current realities, the discussion of this issue is important to the topic under consideration, because many people still hold the memories of the Soviet time. At that, almost every Kazakhstani inherits both positive and negative sides of the Soviet heritage. Today Kazakhs, mostly former workers of state-owned and collective farms, who couldn't adapt to the market-based management, prone nostalgia to Soviet times. Another group consists of a people, who were in retirement or pre-retirement age at the time of the Soviet state collapse. All they just were not ready for the collapse of such a strong state as the USSR. To some extent, doctors, teachers and former army men can be attributed to this category. Many of them regret the loss of the social guarantees of employment, education and health care, as well as respect of the society and relatively better remuneration, which they, as professionals, had in the USSR. Often their opinions are shared by the former Communist Party members and activists, as well as individual representatives of Diaspora, who are still nostalgic for the ideology of Marxist internationalism [6].

Thus, in our study it is important to answer the question: what values are currently dominating in Kazakhstan society.

Research methodology.

To investigate the intergenerational differences in terms of values, we performed a mass survey (September 2013) in the form of questioning the population of Semey [Semipalatinsk] city and several rural regions in eastern Kazakhstan [hereinafter EKR]. Total number of respondents was 320; the sample was purposive, the age of the

respondents in the first group was 18-35 years, while the second group consisted of 36-63 years old respondents (up to retirement age).

During the research we studied also 3 focus-groups. The first focus group included 7 townsfolk people of senior generation. The second focus-group included 11 representatives of young cohorts, and third mixed focus-group consisted of 8 country-folk people. In total 26 people with the age ranged from 18 to 63 were interviewed in three focus-groups.

The purpose of the study was to reveal the differences in the value orientation of the older generation and youth. Age cohort was defined as the generation that has experienced some socio-cultural impact of certain socialization factor or group of such factors pertained to a certain value system, educational standards, the major historical and cultural events, fashion, subcultural styles, etc. In short, the impact of major historical events on the formation of value system is important because just at that spot the most significant socio-cultural intergenerational differences were revealed. Definitely, greater differences between the generations arise when the fledging experience of the young cohort essentially differs from the socialization conditions of older generation. All this is presented in the publications of the WVS project [7]. According to Prof. Inglehart [8], changes in the socio-economic environment, affecting the life experiences of individuals, contribute to the reformation of beliefs, attitudes and values at the individual level. Reaching maturity, people usually tend to maintain a learned world perception, whatever it was. Therefore, significant changes in the environment usually are most of all affecting those generations, whose representatives have lived under the new conditions during the years of their personhood achievement.

As noted, Semey city and several villages were chosen as our study region. The main criterion for selection of Semey is that this city is symbolically "spiritual and cultural capital of Kazakhstan". Semey, as a region that is home to such prominent people, pride of the country, poets, philosophers and writers, such as Abai Kunanbayev, Shakarim Kudaiberdiev and Mukhtar Auezov, who impersonate Kazakhstan, has the right to be called the cradle of the Kazakh nation.

In terms of demography, EKR is experiencing a gradual decline in the population. Moreover, the natural population decline is observed since 1996. In Soviet times, EKR was the most important area in the Republic in terms of mining and smelting (polymetallic) industry as well as hydropower industry. The economy of the region is known for

developing agro-industrial complex with its major units: livestock, crops and agricultural raw materials processing. Though, as a result of structural changes, severance of economic ties and other negative factors (especially during the 90's), the region is still in a state of crisis. It should also be noted that EKR, a former military training area, is still environmentally neglected region. Ecological problems are mainly related either to the industry, or to the zones of ecological disasters. These regions include mainly Aral and Semipalatinsk [9].

The movement "Nevada-Semipalatinsk" was originated exactly in Semey. It drew attention of the society to the outrageous price that was paid by Kazakhstan and its people for the presence of military nuclear and chemical facilities, with complete disregard for the health status of those who lived in areas adjacent to the landfill sites.

In terms of economic development, Semipalatinsk region is considerably inferior to Ust-Kamenogorsk, the center of the region. Citizens call Semey the «city of flea markets». After the socio-economic reforms of the second half of the 1990's, the city's industrial base was not earned in full force, and trade has become the main scope of the labor. Market trading involves most Kazakhs who are "bilingual", as well as part of the Russian population. In fact, in these conditions, trade is the only source of income for former employees of the Soviet enterprises, as well as for the people, who do not speak the state language.

Research findings.

Findings of our research demonstrates the fact of alteration of generations. Each generation, in turn, also represents one temporary cohort, changing and developing in the course of generational change. Participants in the focus-group of older cohort more often identify themselves with the generation of the Soviet era, the culture of collectivism: *"We have lived so much, seen so much, saw the Soviets...but after gaining independence we have lost some Soviet values, whereof we regret" (man, 58 years, townsman).*

Young people often identify themselves with the new contemporary values: *"We have other ideals, keep pace with the times and think contemporarily; their advices may be a little bit obsolete, they look to many things in different eyes, their values yet differ from our values; there may be something similar, but there is still a difference"(woman, 31 years old, townswoman, the young cohort).*

The current younger generation faced market laws for the first time in history. The youth of today, put in more stringent conditions in terms of

selection of their adaptation ways comparing with previous generations, shows more contemporary value systems than the older generation. Transition to the market contributed to the outreach of materialistic and even post-materialistic values, among which we include personal freedom, rational pursuit of success, achieving a high social position and willingness to take risks. It is here, as we expected, we found differences in values, especially in relation to the materialistic values. Young people are more individualized and more interested in self-actualization in comparison with the older generation: *"All depends on the person himself. He must fulfill himself in some specialty, to work, to show himself ... (male, 28 years old, townsman, young cohort); "Now nobody thinks about working in favor of society!? As for me, I do not want to bring the benefit to everybody" (woman, 23 years old, townswoman, young cohort).*

In the today's Kazakh society we can detect differences in terms of attitudes and evaluations between the people of older and younger ages. In a study, where we investigated, what was most important to the respondent in traditional and materialistic values, we found that among young people the indicators of orthodoxy are lower, and the choice is made mainly towards materialistic values. If we look at the Table 1, showing the commitment to the various values depending on various age cohorts, we will clearly see differences. Especially the differences are detected in the category of self-expression and the adherence to the country. We see also that for young people traditions are not relevant as much as for the older generation. The data are treated using the version 17 of SPSS program.

Table 1. Value assessment for respondents of different age

Value assessment for respondent	Respondent's age		Total
	18-35	36-63	
Self-expression	30	16	46
Money	26	24	50
Job	50	52	102
Religion	2	5	7
Respect of traditions	6	9	15
My country	54	46	100
Total	168	152	320 (respondents)

If we look at the next Table 2, we will see that the ideals also differ for various generations. The difference is particularly essential in relation to the materialistic values, self-expression and religious relations, as the younger generations show a greater orientation towards materialistic values than older ones.

We tried to measure the assessment of "basic values", or in other words, the "core values" of two generations. The core values include a family and job that serve basis for value

consciousness of individuals. These most common basic values, constituting the foundation of value consciousness of people and influencing their behavior in different areas of their lives, are formed, as a rule, during the period of primary socialization of the individual, while remaining relatively stable in the future.

Table 2. Motivation degree with respect to different values depending on age.

Motivation degree with respect to different values	Respondent's age		Total
	18-35	36-63	
Become wealthy, financially independent person	50	41	91
Become a highly skilled professional	68	36	104
Realize own potential	43	58	101
Save the soul being used of God	7	17	24
Total	168	152	320

According to our research, category of family as compared with other value categories, such as friends, job, politics, religion and spare time, was defined as "very important" (94.7%) for both age cohorts. Based upon the responses, family remains in the first place among such important human values as life, job, friends, leisure, politics and religion. Family life, in all its forms, remains in the minds of most people as a natural way of life. Second place is occupied by job, which is also "very important" value (69.4%). Attitude to job as the highest value is a complex element in human's inner life, which includes specific needs, both material and spiritual. It can be assumed that the labor is valuable in and of itself, as a benefit, as a contribution to the common goal, as well as a means of achieving personal success. Our data suggest that in contemporary conditions of emerging market relations, successful career development, defined by high earnings, is a basis of socialization for concerned categories of respondents.

As is obvious from Table 2, for older generation important is quality self-fulfillment, i.e. realization of their potential (58), while for young respondents, this indicator means just a priority (43). Material interest is quite high for the first cohort category (50), though it is inferior to professional specialization indicator. Most likely, this can be explained by the difference in value systems.

Value system of young people is stipulated by their self-expression through the money; they are characterized by high adaptability to market values and actualization of high wages to the extent that the other working conditions are insignificant to them, whereas older generation puts more value on quality of the work. In today's youth value structure the relation between money and job is rather ambiguous. For some of the young people money

became inherent value, the money for them does not "smell".

Assessing the impact of "material wealth and desire to have a job", we revealed that respondents most likely "will have a job" (54.8%) rather than "will not have a job" (4%). This shows that for people, job is not only means of achieving material wealth, but means of active lifestyle.

Table 3. Impact of material status on the desire to work at the job.

Impact of material status on the desire to work	Respondent's age		
	18-35	36-63	Total
Desire to work	101	76	177
Rather to work	44	51	95
Rather not to work	9	9	18
Not to work	6	7	13
Hard to answer	8	9	17
Total	168	152	320

Here we can assume that in the Soviet era, the work was considered obligatory for all citizens, and all citizens, capable of working, were obliged to work, i.e. consciously and conscientiously participate in labor, strictly submit to labor discipline and working hours, and honestly perform all the requirements in terms of work quantity and quality. Today the order, which was established in Soviet enterprises and institutions, may still have certain influence in the post-Soviet space as Soviet relic.

Based on the general indicators, we can also say that importance of the work is valued much higher than the spare time (37.5%), though for the younger cohort spare time is of great value as compared to older cohort (after category of work and family):

Table 4. Spare time as a value.

Spare time as a value.	Respondent's age		Total
	18-35	36-63	
Most important	66	55	121
Rather important	71	58	129
Rather not important	21	26	47
Not important	10	13	23
Total	168	152	320

Next problem that was studied by reviewing respondents concerned their preferences and motivations to work, i.e. we studied the average indicators, which show the attitude of respondent to collectivism, personal gain and career (individualistic quality). Results can be found in the following Table 5, where the respondents of different age measured their preferences when choosing a job.

Table 5. Preferences of the respondents, when choosing a job.

Preferences of the respondent when choosing a job	Respondent's age		
	18-35	36-63	Total
Job in a stable challenging enterprise.	73	63	136
Job in a company, where there is an opportunity to make a career.	69	30	99
Job that brings benefits to people.	26	59	85
Total	168	152	320

We see that the responses are different depending on the age cohorts. Every person commits acts, aimed at the satisfaction of his needs, by choosing a particular mode of behavior. Today, for many people, job has ceased to be the meaning of life and has become a means of survival. And therefore it is important not to lose a job, and the job in a stable challenging enterprise or company is a priority. But the contemporary labor market is flexible. As is obvious, visions of labor value through the prism of different generations differs: for young people proven track of record is not the only digestible option, an opportunity to make a career is important to them as well. Of course, it must be emphasized that, compared to the older cohort, for young people, collectivist indicators in favor of society are not valued highly, since personal motivation and interest, which are defined as a contemporary value category, are more important to them.

We can assume that young people are interested, first of all, in remuneration for labor. Amount of remuneration is more important than labor input. This shift towards material priorities entailed a decrease in obligations to the community and the adoption of social mobility: social status became something more achievable than inherited by individual from birth. Despite all the difficulties of the transit phase, the main achievement of the post-Soviet period in Kazakhstan is the acceleration of market standards in behavior of the young people (*economic freedom of action, initiative, flexibility, and ability to take risks*).

The economic behavior of youth has a pronounced motivational character as compared with older generation. This includes adherence to work, provision of material well-being, business career, and the pursuit of a worthy life. We may notice that the young man builds his life plans based on the successful development, creation of his family and his own career.

He implements his plans, evaluates himself and surrounding social environment. This proves rationality in his behavior (viable organization of personal privacy). Since the beginning of the 1990's, as a result of reforms and transition to a market economy, the traditional value orientation gets serious challenge from the social reality. Youth, when choosing life values, increasingly draws attention to self-interest comparing with older generation, because for older generation, collectivism in the planned economy had two negative things. First, collectivism led to blurring of individual differences that resulted in the loss of a personal thinking skills and inertia of

thinking (thinking property to remain the same), as well as in the blind worship to leader. Secondly, the so-called "double standard" was used in order to make public interest the main value, though at the same time there was a personal interest of individual that people had to hide. But young people are becoming more aware of their own economic independence, discover the possibility of an individual future in the form of benefits, whereas collective ethics considers these concepts as "selfish", which must be combated. This gave rise to a "double standard", when the external compulsion necessitates compliance with certain formalities.

Throughout the history of mankind, labor was the sphere of human activity, which allowed him to survive in the outside world, and man's attitude to labor, as noted the French historian L.Fevr, depended directly on the era, in which he lived [10]. Therefore, it is necessary to consider material, relevant to the stated theme, in the light of the development principle. Specific socio-historical conditions that determine the nature of labor and the nature of the employment relationships have a huge impact on a career of each individual worker. They determine the attitude to labor in the collective consciousness.

In the Kazakh society, developing towards industrialization, the main values are not only internal personal growth and creativity-based (work-based) self-exaltation, but family as well. Moreover, from the perspective of both younger and older cohorts, in contemporary society it is quite possible to combine a successful career growth and a fulfilling family life.

Table 6. Respondent's most important basic values.

Respondent's most important basic values.	Respondent's age		Total
	18-35	36-63	
Job and career	17	11	28
Family	48	41	89
Both job and family	103	100	203
Total	168	152	320

For the respondents, the category of "family value" is traditionally important, though the relation of Kazakh society towards women, who work and are involved in career advancement, is quite indifferent. It should be noted that the transition from traditional gender approaches to the modern one had a radical impact on the socio-economic relations between the sexes. Thus, if in the traditional family, the patrilineal head (man) administered family property and, as a rule, was the one, who made provision for the family, now women have extensive professional and educational opportunities. All this has led many women to achieve personal career. During the last decade, the

economic situation in Kazakhstan has improved, and at the same time the employment opportunities both for men and women have expanded. As a result, the level of employment in relation to the economically active population in the country rose from 89.6% in 2001 to 93.5% in 2012 [11].

In Kazakhstan, gender equality issues are quite critical. Socio-economic transformation of Kazakh society demanded from the state to form a new policy, taking greater account of the changes in the international policy on gender equality. Assessing the situation by indicators, standardized for all countries, we can say that to date Kazakhstan has already eliminated gender disparity at all levels of education: today there is no gender inequality in education, no problems for girls to access any of the education levels. Kazakhstan is ranked 32 among total 136 countries in terms of gender equality. This is evidenced by data (Global Gender Gap Index) published by the analytical group of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on October 24, 2013, which shows the countries, where women are given the same access as men in education and health service [12].

In practice, in the course of global trend of human development, there is a difference in literacy, education and earnings between men and women; at that, women's opportunities are more constrained comparing to those of men. Studies have shown that in recent years significant progress in achieving women's economic and social rights has been made in various countries. Nevertheless, the implementation of full gender equality still requires a profound shift in certain attitudes and behaviors [13].

Today, social, economic and cultural conditions of the society are characterized by acceleration of the women's personal enhancement not only as the domestic goddess, but as a professional employee as well. A growing number of women are beginning to assume leadership positions in the professional field, self-realizing and self-actualizing. At the same time, less attention is given to the role of the contemporary woman in the family. We face the transformation of the traditional women's role; family foundation is postponed to an older age, number of children in the family decreases, while an alternative "child or career" is increasingly resolved in favor of a career. Woman's value is increasingly determined by her professional success. As a result, the current situation paves the way for role-personality conflict, arising because of combination of traditional woman's family role with professional career.

Younger cohorts show non-traditional views on the

woman's role in the family, as compared to the older cohort. Young men not only assign themselves the role of "breadwinners", and the young girls see themselves not only as a "homemakers" The data obtained suggest that younger cohorts perceive contemporary family as officially registered marriage, which results in the nuclear, egalitarian family, based on the mutual support, as well as emotional and psychological comfort.

Table 7. Statement that mother should only carry out her "natural" duties, i.e. take care of family, husband and children.

Mother should only carry out her "natural" duties	Respondent's age		Total
	18-35	36-63	
Absolutely agree	33	29	62
Agree	48	56	104
Do not agree	55	51	106
Do not agree at all	32	16	48
Total	168	152	320

Naturally, the above said leads to family crisis and change in the patterns of contemporary family life, reducing the importance and value of blood ties and inter-family relations, as well as to flippant attitude towards divorce and the fragility of family bonds, that is proved by Kazakh Statistical Agency.

At all times, the system of social values that forms the basis of life self-identity of an individual was assimilated by youth during the close interaction with the older generation, which transmitted their experience to the youth through the practice of personal life, as well as in the process of ideological work of state education institutions. But dramatic changes in social relations over the last decades caught the society at a weak moment, especially the generation of mature people, whose value system was put to the heavy test. As a result, the socialization of contemporary young people is taking place under conditions of higher self-regulation. This resulted in increased selective attitude of young people towards their socio-cultural heritage and the experience of previous generations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that in the culture of Kazakhstan the following basic values came to the forefront: family, labor and prosperity that gives ground to blur the boundaries between traditional and individualistic values. The peculiarity of contemporary Kazakhstan does not allow one to attribute this country to any particular type of culture; it occupies an intermediate position, to some extent reflecting the synthesis of two opposing value systems. New

values, characteristic to Western societies with market economies (individualism, pragmatism, the pursuit of high income) coexist in the minds of the young people with certain traditional historical and cultural features (collectivism).

The novelty of our research consists in implementation of a generational approach in sociology, which means, firstly, typological consideration of respondents as representatives of certain age groups, and secondly, determination of the characteristics of intergenerational differences (in terms of their degree) between Traditional and Secular-Rational orientations, the differences between the values of Survival and the values of Self-Expression.

Thus, we can conclude the following:

1) Changes in basic values of the Kazakh population are taking place towards creation of the industrializing type of society. They reveal a relationship with the processes of generations alteration, which occur gradually but pose along - term impetus.

2) Changing of life conditions and lifestyle causes transformation of values. Thus long-term period of economic prosperity contributes to transition from materialistic values to post-materialistic values, i.e. from the collectivist approach to individualism. Based on data obtained, we can conclude that the younger cohorts are more interested in personal competitiveness, career, success, entrepreneurship, rationalism and freedom of convictions (*under the conditions of social reforms, the emergence of new opportunities, increasing competition and demands for professionalism*) than the older generation.

3) Cultural trauma that resulted from reforms in the post-Soviet space, as well as the involvement of Kazakh society in the globalization process are significant factors in the development of intergenerational diversity in values. Depreciation of the societal values of the older generation associated with the rejection of communist ideology and contagion in society, especially among the youth, consumer-oriented attitudes became the basis for development of intergenerational diversity in values. At the same time, a rapid enhancement of intercultural contacts, IT penetration and computerization of the society, the development of global cultural and economic ties have led to the pluralization of values, creating thereby the impetus for the evaluative diversity of generations, commodification of value system of youth and cultural disintegration of generations.

4) The younger generation gives to secular-rational and self-expression values far greater importance than their older compatriots.

5) There is a process of depreciation of experience, accumulated by older generations, taking place in younger generation.

6) Conducted research has shown that currently individualistic values occupy a dominant position in the value system of contemporary Kazakhstanis (mainly the younger generation).

7) It is revealed that the contemporary Kazakh society is characterized by the lack of sharp contradictions between the older generation and youth. Intergenerational relationships do not possess the potential, enough for integration, which could help to overcome the natural tendencies of separation between "fathers'" and "children'" generations due to the relative mismatch of socialization conditions, as well as historical conditions in general. This potential depends on the intergenerational consensus in respect of the key values and reproduction of basic social traditions. The structure of the value hierarchy in general confirms traditionalist orientation of most contemporary Kazakhstanis. Top-priority in the value hierarchy of contemporary Kazakhstani older and younger generations occupy wealth-based values, as well as traditional values associated with the foundation of family and reproductive functions, though the latter strictly undergoes changes and loses its role that may result in loss of traditional value.

Analysis of the axiological aspects of interconnections and interrelations between generations is very important, as we are already seeing changes in the value system. The mechanisms of "social inheritance" and drive to self-affirmation of new generations undergo changes as well.

Today the youth gained greater self-dependence, including the choice of what they perceive from the past. However, the influence of material considerations and economic factors strengthened in determining youth's behavior. Former, mainly traditionalist, social inheritance mechanism breaks. Thus, the analysis of the intergenerational relationships in contemporary national society is a complex issue. It requires a comprehensive approach: the problem should be considered from philosophical, psychological, cultural and sociological perspectives.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Abdikakimov Mukhtar

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Department of Social Science, Yanushkevich Str., 6, Astana, 010008, Kazakhstan.

E-mail: muhtar.abdikakim@mail.ru

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