

# **A Comparative Study of Traditional Families in Korea and Uzbekistan**

by

Gulnoza Salikhova

## **THESIS**

Submitted to

KDI School of Public Policy and Management

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY**

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## **ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS**

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Uzbekistan, which became independent in 1991, is a young state with claims to an ancient past. Republic of Korea, that has been established in 1948, also counts thousands year of history with unique culture and traditions.

Unlike Korea which is one of the most ethnically and linguistically homogenous in the world and has a population of 48.4 million<sup>1</sup> and a small minority of Chinese, Uzbekistan has a population of 25.9 million<sup>2</sup>, seventy-one percent of which are Uzbek, 8 percent Russian, 5 percent Tajik, 4 percent Kazak, 2.5 percent Tartars and 8.5 percent other ethnic groups.

Moreover, Korea is an aging society with over 8 percent of population above 65 years old<sup>3</sup>, whereas in Uzbekistan 50 percent, with the high growth rate of population, is under the age of 16 and only 4.8 percent of retirement age for men and women 65 and 60 respectively.

Though Korea was one of the poorest countries over the past 30 years, its economic development has been spectacular. Half of the population in Korea actively practices religion. Among this group, 49% Christianity and 47% Buddhism 47% comprise Korea’s two dominant religions. Though only 3% identified themselves as Confucianists, Korean society remains highly imbued with Confucian values and beliefs. The remaining 1% of the population practices Shamanism (traditional spirit worship) and Chondogyo, ("Heavenly Way") a traditional religion.

Uzbekistan had been one of the poorest republics of the Soviet Union; much of its population was engaged in cotton farming in small rural communities. The population

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, April 2005

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, February 2005

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Source: U.S. Library of Congress

continues to be heavily rural and dependent on farming for its livelihood. The nation is 88% Sunni Muslims and 9% Eastern Orthodox and 3% of other religions. Uzbek is the official state language; however, Russian is the de facto language for interethnic communication, including much day-to-day government and business use.

Both countries' exclusive historical, cultural, socio-economic characteristics provide greatly appealing background for present research topic.

This thesis focuses on traditional and 'modern' families, social changes, economic development, influence of culture and religion on family aspects and its life concepts in two distinct Asian countries, Korea and Uzbekistan. Although in this analysis concentration is based on specific family interactions, the primary reference point will be given to the social and economic transformations in both cultures along with attempts of maintaining family values and traditions. Furthermore, from the standpoint of Confucianism and Islamic conceptions I will consider two somehow similar but particular societies and disclose comparable issues related to *family affairs* in Korea and Uzbekistan, where religious characteristics have impact on a set of family values and faces dramatic changes in contemporary socio-economic life.

In general, this study attempts to review the family history and treat in a concise and objective manner – the dominant socio-economic aspects of South Korea and Uzbekistan, where the magnificent population growth and the pressure of rapidly changing societies, adopting Western ideals becomes more important. Thus, influence of Western life style, its values on Asia will also be a matter of discussion.

Sources of information included books, scholarly papers, official reports of governments and international organizations, and numerous periodicals on Korean and Uzbek Family affairs.

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*Dedicated to my dearest Korean friends and families,  
who fully supported me during my stay in Korea.*

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Special thanks to those Korean families who accepted me as a member of their family and showed concern for me, for their invaluable and stimulating conversations and friendly help. Their extensive conversations around the topic of my research have been very helpful for this study. Obviously, due to this reason I could observe practical sides of Korean family life and affairs.

Being a member of family was of particular interest to me because of research in relation to Korean family matters. Having the first hand perspective, I felt and saw the process of my research. It is in fact those conversations with my Korean friends and families that drove me to write my thesis on this. I think that I learned more while I stayed in Korea after graduation. By living here longer I gained supplementary knowledge about Korea's history and culture and I was able to appreciate my time more. Also instead of concentrating on learning basic knowledge about Korean culture I really began to understand the nuances of why Koreans act the way they do. Here I would like to add Confucius's quote: "Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous" (Analects). I learned a lot thoughtfully from all whom I mentioned and to all these persons, I wish to express my appreciation for introducing me Korean culture, traditions, language and many other aspects of Korean life.

At last, I owe my loving thanks to my family in Uzbekistan. Without their encouragement and understanding it would have been impossible for me to study and finish this work.

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## **Preface**

*To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.*

*Confucius*

Family affairs, family relationships are kind of corner stone of any society. It usually bases the atmosphere in the family on sacrifice, love, loyalty, obedience. When we say “family” we mean the traditional definition of it, namely: husband, wife and children. Grandparents are also part of the extended family. Family, society and ultimately the whole of mankind is treated in some certain and common sense of ethical basis.

This comparative study is about Korean and Uzbek Families that have been transforming day-by-day, throughout the centuries. But how has it been changing and in general, what is the family? To answer this question I will try to go back, to have a look what was going on in the very past of family lives. It may also be asked here: how do Confucian and Islamic societies organize family relationships? To answer this I have to concentrate on husband-wife, parent-children relationships; here some certain family issues also should be discussed, for instance how kinship may be used in societies of varying complexity; and its relative importance in defining sets of relationships within a given society.

The nations of Uzbekistan and Korea stand at the continual crossroads of the rich legacy of the past and new ways of living. Words such as family, marriage, woman's property, etc. can have different meanings in different cultural contexts. The significance of the study lies in the comparison of two cultures – Korean and Uzbek, two religious concepts – Islam and Confucianism, customs and traditions of two societies.

The objectives of the study are to better understand and compare the changing contexts of families in Uzbekistan and Korea; to identify those environmental or

contextual factors, (historical, cultural, institutional, economic, political, demographic) that might explain differences and similarities in the ways two different countries of our discussion approach policy problems related to families; to draw tentative conclusions about the implications of diverse policy approaches for families in two different countries, particularly with reference to issues of social class, ethnicity, gender; consider whether and how such approaches are the same as or different from those in Korea and Uzbekistan.

The rationale of the comparative study is to better understand the nature of family-government interactions in two different countries and its implications for families and their well-being as the world in which we are living has become increasingly interdependent and interactive – how one country addresses family problems often reflects families in other countries, i.e., global competition, immigration, adoption, and so forth.

Keeping in mind fundamental aspects on which all moral/ethical values in the family are grounded, in this work I will analyze the stereotypes of two major types of family: traditional and modern, their significant problems and how they contrast with the realities of everyday family life. Besides, attention will be given to discussion of the significance of family structure and role relations within the family in terms of its impact on individual sense of identity.

Though the status of women in society is neither a new issue nor a fully settled one, I will touch upon the subject of a place of woman in Uzbek, Korean families and society in general, in the sense that would reflect their way of living, perceiving them as the socially important elements of both Confucian and Islamic worlds. In this research there is a brief description of the status of women in the society positioned by two singular beliefs, how similar or different is that position from “the spirit of the time,” and how would this be compared to the “rights”, which were finally gained by women in recent decades?

In addition I would like to analyze some similarities and distinctiveness of families’ influential factors on socio-economic life of the society, religion, ethical norms and principles. In this term the position of Islam and Confucianism on the issue has been among the subjects presented to the Western reader with the least objectivity. Since in the

Western culture and in cultures influenced by it there is a belief of human rights and sex disparities existence, there is more need for stating Asia's position on important issues in a clear way.

For that reason, the study is intended to provide a brief and authentic exposition of what Confucianism and Islam stands for in this regard. The teachings of Confucianism and Islam are based essentially on the ethical norms 'Canon' prescribed by Confucius in several books<sup>4</sup> and in the Qur'an (God's revelation) and Hadith (elaboration by Prophet Muhammad) respectively. Those teachings are properly and unbiasedly understood, provide the basic source of authentication for any position or view, which is attributed to Confucianism and Islam.

Analyses based on particular research will describe socio-economic, physiologic-psychological changes in contemporary society that have a huge influence on traditional family system from the view of modern science, as well as an effect of the family transformations on overall economic development of the Korean and Uzbek societies.

Lastly, an emphasis will be given to "traditional beliefs vs. modern sight on the family issues" and conclusions will be drawn on the basis of overall research results.

## **Chapter-I. Family as a Social System**

This chapter is aimed to present some common sociological issues of the family theory and historical background of two distinct Asian family types, based on cultural, religious, ethical aspects of the family living, its structure, values, interactions, evolutionary shaping through the centuries. Yet, this topic is so broad that I can only touch upon few general ideas.

### ***Theoretical Aspects of the Family as a Social Institution***

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<sup>4</sup> The Book of Changes (I Ching); the Book of Odes (Shih Ching); the Book of History (Shu Ching) the Book of Rites (Li Chi), the Book of Music (Yueh Ching) and the Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'un-ch'iu).

A family is a primary social group in any society, typically consisting of a man and a woman, or any two individuals who wish to share their lives together in a long-term commitment to one another, bring up offspring and usually reside in the same dwelling.

A purely sociological standpoint and understanding of the family, as with all social phenomena, begins with the fundamental definition and functions of the family. From the definition, most would agree that the family is a unit of people which serves some basic functions in society – reproduction, socialization, economic and emotional support, and a sense of belonging.

Basically, the Family is one of the society's main and arguably most important social institutions, as it serves to socialize individuals to be productive members of the society. We all look to our family for guidance, support, and a sense of belonging. Some believe that the Family is the most important social institution as it is our first encounter with socialization processes. From a sociological perspective, not only is the family viewed as an institution, but also as a social system and a social group. As with all institutions, the family has a set of norms within its boundaries, values, roles, which are organized to meet specific goals for the whole society and with those norm and roles in institutionalized form are designed to guide sexual activity and social relations within a sexual union of individuals<sup>5</sup>.

As a social system, the family is viewed as an entity which consists of various interrelated parts or statuses that perform particular functions and roles. Further, the family as a system is part of a larger system meaning society and contributes to the functioning of the society. Within the family system, the statuses and roles interact with one another to form a system of relations amongst the members who hold a specific status and perform a specified role. The operation of the family system is dependent upon the effectiveness of these status-role interactions. As a social group, the focus is on the individual members of the family in question. What each person brings to the family and how each person contributes to the relationships with other individuals in the family determines the reality within each family.

Whether we examine the family as an institution, system, or group, the interest of sociologists who study the family begins with a fascination of the family entity and the

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to Eshleman, J. Ross, 2000. *The Family*, Ninth Edition. Allyn & Bacon: Needham Heights

relationships within its boundaries. One of the big issues or challenges within family studies lies in its definition. Contemporary society is changing rapidly and we have seen many family forms increase in numbers and some relatively new forms emerge. The 'ideal image' of two biological parents and children living in harmony, as with most ideal types, does not present a very realistic framework for contemporary society. There are growing numbers of the so-called 'variant family forms', for instance in American society and throughout the world. If we are to arrive at a more accurate analysis of the family, from a purely sociological standpoint that is mentioned above, we must be willing to accept that the family has many forms, ranging from the two-parent family, single-parents, blended families, same-sex families, adoptive families, and the list goes on.

To understand the complexity of the sociology of family, one must begin with a discussion of the family definition. Accordingly, Science defined family as a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household and interacting with each other in their respective social positions.

Stephanie Coontz in her writing says that: "It is worth noting that the word *family* originally meant a band of slaves. Even after the word came to apply to people affiliated by blood and marriage, for many centuries the notion of family referred to authority relations rather than love ones. The sentimentalization of family life and female nurturing was historically and functionally linked to the emergence of competitive individualism and formal egalitarianism for men"<sup>6</sup>.

In this era of rampant divorce, reports of family violence, and dramatic change in family roles and role relations, many, mainly our parents look nostalgically back to 'the good old days' of family life when, supposedly, familial bonds were richer and familial processes were less likely to be 'dysfunctional'. Given the interrelationships between family structures and processes with broader socio-historical phenomena, past forms – even if true – are inappropriate for present times and might be dangerous in sense that these idealizations deny the diversity and flexibility of 'successful' family forms. Such idealizations can lead to false expectations and standards against which to determine our current family lives.

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to: 'The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap', pp. 43-44

Everyone should understand that the family systems, like biological organisms, evolve with time and circumstances. Moreover, the fact is that over the past two centuries the family has metamorphosed from being a unit of production to being a unit of consumption meaning that the family of the ‘pioneer farm’ was the basic **economic unit of production**. The level of self-sufficiency of the family meant that you almost had to have a husband-wife team as a minimum for survival on the farm. Not only did women cook, garden, did milking, feed chickens, sew up clothes, but also made tallow candles and preserved food for the winter. The loss of a wife or husband wasn't just a psychological loss; it threatened their survival because the families’ economic system was threatened with bankruptcy. Children also were engaged in meaningful productive work early in their lives. With economic development and industrialization, these basic rules are demolishing and family is becoming more and more the **economic unit of consumption**. If in the past unit produced essential goods for living and made the decisions about how to save the resources that were created through the hard work, nowadays, it shares food, housing, and other goods, not necessarily produced by unit, and thinks how to spend resources.

Besides, family is also transmuting from extended family form to nuclear<sup>7</sup>. However, the nuclear family form is found at both ends of the stages of economic evolution, predominating in societies with primitive hunting and gathering economies where food supply was uncertain and in modern industrial societies where the marketplace requires the geographical mobility of small, nuclear systems.

Nonetheless, whatever the family is and what times it is going through, basically, the values remain unchangeable and include such simple principles as to have good thoughts and good intentions, to love and care for those who we are close to and are part of our primary social group, such as children, parents, other family members and friends.

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<sup>7</sup> Also called elementary family in sociology and anthropology, a group of persons united by ties of marriage and parenthood or adoption and consisting of a man, a woman, and their socially recognized children. This unit was once widely held to be the most basic and universal form of social organization.

### ***Historical Background of the Korean and Uzbek Families. Comparisons and Essential Distinctions***

No one would argue the fact that the family is the basic institution in the formation of any society. Though, one may say that a happy and healthy family life cannot be guaranteed by any law whether this Confucianism or Islam. It is true that it depends so much upon the goodwill of all concerned that the best laws remain written phrases where this goodwill is missing. Here, however, as in all other spheres of the Confucian and Islamic Ways of Life, where ruling factor is that Islam and Confucianism are not religions in the Western sense of the word, but truly the ways of life for those adhering to it. In this sense Islam means on the one hand the complete submission to the Will of Allah and on the other, is the conscious acceptance of man's vicegerency on earth as ordained by Allah. As for Confucianism, literally speaking, it is difficult to classify it as either religion or philosophy. Rather, it is a collection of principles, precepts, axioms and adages to guide practitioners toward the “middle way” (tao) of living.

Family is the bedrock, cradle of human civilization. It is the foundation and basis of Muslim and Confucian societies. Family gives mooring, anchor, stability and tranquility among the close blood related and other members.

Islam penetrated the current territory of modern Uzbekistan in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and till our days most of the population is Muslims. Consequently the family life is perceived from the view of Islamic principles and set of norms stipulated in the Qur'an.

The conquest of Central Asia by Islamic Arabs, which was completed in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D., brought to the region a new religion and culture continue to be dominant. The new religion brought by the Arabs spread gradually in the region. The native cultures that in some respects already were being displaced by Persian influences before the Arabs arrived; in following centuries the destiny of Uzbekistan as an Islamic region was firmly established by the Arab victory over the Chinese armies in 750 in the battle at the Talas River.

Under Arab rule, Central Asian region and thus Uzbekistan retained much of its Iranian character, remaining an important center of culture and trade for centuries after the Arab conquest. However, until the tenth century the language of government,

literature, and commerce was Arabic. During the height of the Arabic Caliphate in the eighth and the ninth centuries, Central Asia and Mawarannahr experienced a truly golden age. Bukhara, the third major city of Uzbekistan became one of the leading centers of learning, culture, and art in the Muslim world, its magnificence rivaling contemporaneous cultural centers such as Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordoba. Some of the greatest historians, scientists, and geographers in the history of the Islamic culture were natives of the region.

As Islamic era begins, Uzbekistan's nation goes through 3 major historical phases: pre-colonization – the epoch of growth of Islam, Soviet period – 70 years of Socialism, and the days of Independence after the collapse of Soviet Union.

The pre-Soviet social status and lifestyle of Muslim family in Central Asia was guided by Islamic 'Shariat'<sup>8</sup> and 'Hadith'<sup>9</sup> based on the segregation of sexes and the isolation of women from social life, secular behavior is disapproved as being 'non-Muslim'.

Islam has two primary branches of belief, based largely on a historical disagreement over the succession of authority after Muhammad's death; these are known as Sunni<sup>10</sup> and Shi'ite<sup>11</sup>. Uzbek population of Muslims is Sunni and for Sunni Muslims, the sources of Islamic law are the Qur'an and the Hadith. In general, the firm structure of Uzbek family life rests on the following four pillars that make family values such enduring and enables them to outlive Western practices. They are based on the Qur'anic

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8 Shariat is sacred law - (Arabic شريعة also Shari'a, Shariah or Syariah) is traditional Islamic law. Like most religious cultures, Islam classically drew no distinction between religious and secular life. Hence Sharia covers not only religious rituals, but many aspects of day-to-day life. Wikipedia Encyclopedia.

9 Hadith (الحديث, Arabic pl. ahadith; in English academic usage, hadith is often both singular and plural) are traditions relating to the sayings and doings of the prophet Muhammad and his companions, or 'sahaba'. Hadith collections are regarded as important tools for determining the 'Sunnah', or Muslim way of life, by all traditional schools of jurisprudence.

10 Sunni Islam (Arabic سنة) is the largest denomination of Islam. Followers of the Sunni tradition are known as Sunnis or Sunnites, and often refer to themselves as the Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'h. Sunni Muslims constitute 80-90% of the global Muslim population.

11 Shi'a Islam (Arabic شيعي follower; English has traditionally used Shiite or Shi'ite) is the second largest Islamic denomination; some 10-15% of all Muslims are said to follow a Shi'a tradition. Shi'a is short for Shi'at Ali, a follower of Ali ibn Abi Talib, who was the prophet Muhammad's relative and cousin. Shi'as believe that Ali should have followed Muhammad as the leader of the Muslims. Sunni Muslims believe that Abu Bakr, the first caliph to hold power after Muhammad, held his office legitimately. This difference of opinion regarding an event in 632 C.E. may seem like a minor matter to some, but it has shaped two Muslim traditions which differ sharply in many of their beliefs and practices.



regulations and the traditions from the life of the Prophet Muhammad, handed down from generation to generation:

- Family life as a cradle of human society providing a secure, healthy and encouraging home for parents and the growing children.
- Family life as guardian of the natural erotic desires of men and women, leading this powerful urge into wholesome channels.
- Family life as the very breeding-place for human virtues like love, kindness, mercy.
- Family life as the most secure refuge against inward and outward troubles.

An ever valid and never outgrowing aspect of Islamic family life is, however, that the strength of all the four pillars is made up by the system. And it must not be forgotten, that the benefits of family life are extended not only to blood relations but encompass also the world-wide family of Muslims, the Islamic brotherhood. The family ties which must be maintained are general and specific. The general one is the relations of Islam. It is obligatory and commendable to maintain connections with them by friendly relations, advice, justice, fairness and fulfilling ones' obligations to them. The specific includes financially supporting family members, checking on their condition and overlooking their mistakes.

Religious and ideological beliefs are the part of the adaptive culture that evolves over time. The ethics and values espoused by one religion during a particular period and in a specific culture may differ from those of another imposing a unique set of principles and rules upon human activities. Those principles and rules regulate the behavior of individuals, the family, and the community in general.

East Asia, namely China, Korea, and Japan, with more than one-quarter of the world's population, over a long historical period have constituted a cultural sphere characterized by the use of Chinese and Confucianism. The term Confucianism is used here to refer to the popular value system of Korea, which is derived from the synthesis of the traditional cultural values espoused by Confucius and his followers; and subsequently influenced by elements of Taoism, Legalism, Buddhism and also Shamanism. Although Buddhism has had major impacts in East Asia along with Taoist traditions and certain aspects of Shamanism, Confucianism has been most influential in shaping the behavior

pattern and structure of the Korean family and the community. The central pillar of Confucianism is the family. Indeed, family cohesion and continuity are taken as the foundation for sustaining the human community and the state.

Confucianism, which has been a major philosophy in East Asia, came to Korea during the era of *the Three Kingdoms* (57 B.C.E.-668 C.E.)<sup>12</sup>. Confucianism achieved status as the major political ideology and social system when the founders of the *Chosun* dynasty<sup>13</sup> (1392-1910 C.E.) adapted Confucianism<sup>14</sup> as a new state policy. Although Confucian thought was formally rooted in people's lives only in the middle of the *Chosun* dynasty, after much government pressure, its influence was great throughout the *Chosun* dynasty and even afterwards. Confucian influence on women has been especially great.

Undeniably, Korea has a long-standing religious heritage. For the past two centuries, the values of Confucianism, if not Confucianism as a formal religious institution, have pervaded the consciousness of Koreans<sup>15</sup>. These values can be observed in Korean hierarchical social relations, such as those between ruler and subject, parent and child, husband and wife.

One unique feature of the Korean and Uzbek population is the consistency with the Confucian and Islamic values respectively, which is the pattern of universal marriage and childbearing.

There are common characteristics and similarities in the functions, structures, and patterns of the family and community, and these characteristics and similarities, especially in Confucianism, are reflected in government, corporate, and community institutions.

The values and traditional family system of Confucianism were given new drive during the late Chosun dynasty (1650-1910), although the origins of that belief system date back to the historical and social conditions of two millennia before. The ideal of male superiority within the patrilineal family became more prominent in the late Chosun

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12 The three kingdoms are Silla (57 B.C.E.), Koguryo (37 B.C.E.), and Paekche (18 B.C.E.).

13 This dynasty is officially known as Chosun, but it is usually called the Yi dynasty.

14 The Confucianism which the Chosun dynasty adopted is Neo-Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism began in the period of the Sung dynasty (960-1279) in China. It represents a departure from traditional Confucian learning.

15 Refer to Cho, Lee-Jay, Confucianism and the Korean family. (Special Issue: Families in Asia: Beliefs and Realities) *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*; 3/22/1995

dynasty than it had been during the early Chosun dynasty (1392-1650). The rule of “three obediences” – of daughters to their fathers, of wives to their husbands and mothers to their sons in later years – was observed, and the stem family began to be considered an ideal type. These later developments continued until just prior to Korean industrialization.

Buddhism, a more institutionalized religion than Confucianism, was introduced in Korea during the Early Kingdoms (A.D. 372) and adopted as a state religion for a millennium<sup>16</sup>. With its emphasis on rejecting worldly values and concerns - including the family - Buddhism delivered a message contrary to that of Confucianism. But Buddhism's influence was limited to the sphere of individual self-enlightenment and discipline, and it appealed principally to the ruling class because the majority of people, who lived at a subsistence level, had few material possessions to renounce, the self-abnegation and antifamilial monasticism taught by Buddhism thus affected relatively few in most societies strongly influenced by that religion. Moreover, during the late Koryo dynasty (918-1392) Buddhist practices in Korea became corrupt, constructing extravagant temples and observing rituals, thus losing their philosophical appeal<sup>17</sup>.

When the Chosun dynasty succeeded the Koryo in 1392, it adopted Confucianism as the familial and state philosophy, suppressing Buddhism. Confucian principles and rules were extended to all Korean subjects during the late Chosun dynasty (1650-1910). Today Confucianism is not a formal religious institution in Korea but rather, a code of concealed ethics and values that has profoundly influenced the society for nearly two millennia.

Confucianism posits the family as the fundamental unit of society, incorporating the economic functions of production and consumption as well as the social functions of education and socialization, guided by moral and ethical principles. In its teachings, Confucianism has traditionally deified ancestors, institutionalizing ancestor worship, and delegated the duties of ritual master to the head of the male lineage – that is, to the father and husband. In this respect Confucianism may be viewed as a familial religion, and it

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

seems that no other cultures have placed such emphasis on the family as have the Confucian cultures of East Asia<sup>18</sup>.

– *Institution of the Marriage and Customs*

Confucian social order reflects the principle ‘The adage that a man must first seek his own development and manage his family properly before he can seek to govern others’.

Under this system, Korean man has traditionally been given the responsibility of representing, supporting and protecting his family. If he cannot use this power and exercise his leadership role wisely, he loses face as the head of the family. Order at home is maintained through the principle of hierarchy in which children must obey parents, the wife the husband, the servants the master.

Opposite to Confucianism, in Islam the family system brings the rights of the husband, wife, children, and relatives into a fine equilibrium. It nourishes unselfish behavior, generosity, and love within the framework of a well-organized family system. The peace and security offered by a stable family unit is greatly valued by Islam, and it is seen as essential for the spiritual growth of its members. A harmonious social order is created by the existence of extended families and by treasuring children.

Moreover, as well as Confucian family, a Muslim family has its unique features, e.g. it provides a secure and healthy 'home' environment for all its members, it guards against passions of whims and desires and channelise them to wholesome and meaningful pursuit, it proliferates human virtues, such as, love compassion, sacrifice, justice etc. and it provides a refuge against any difficulty.

Since the family is the microcosm of a society, there are distinct roles for its members. Prophet Mohammad said: “Each one of you is a trustee (shepherd) and is accountable for that which is entrusted to him. A ruler is trustee and is accountable for his trust, a man is a trustee in respect of his family, and a woman is a trustee in respect of her husband's house and children”. (Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim).

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18 Refer to Cho, Lee-Jay, Confucianism and the Korean family. (Special Issue: Families in Asia: Beliefs and Realities) Journal of Comparative Family Studies; 3/22/1995

Nevertheless, in both, Confucianism and Islam, men have the leadership role in the family and in the family women have to be loyal to men.

Allah says in the Qur'an: "Men are the supporters of women, because Allah has stowed on the one more than the other, and for what they have to provide (for them) from their sources. So the righteous women are obedient and protect in the absence of their husbands that which God ordains to be protected.<sup>19</sup>" Leadership raises the question of responsibility, consultation and justice. As shepherd of the house women have responsibility over the house and children. Parents are to provide their children with basic human necessities, such as food, cloth, shelter, education and medical support. This is treated as an "Ibadah" (worship) for the parents. Also parents should provide their children with love, warmth, compassion, etc. As human being consists of body and spirit, parents must provide their children with the life skills and spiritual nourishment. Also there are many traditions regarding children's responsibility toward their parents. Children are to obey and serve their parents and be kind and decent to them. The rights and responsibilities within the family are inter-twined. One's responsibility is the other's right. Rights and duties of husband, wife, parents and children are inscribed in Shariat (God's Commands). No Superiority except in Piety.

What Islam has established is equitability in the role of sexes because of many factors, such as, physiological, physical, emotional, etc. Allah has no bias for or against men and women. No burden bearer can bear another's burden. For genuine economic reasons both the spouses might need to engage in financial activities. But rearing up and educating children cannot be compromised. There should be frank discussion and consultation between the spouses. Children need to be involved when necessary, in order to train them to become responsible in their lives.

Under Confucianism, the proper relationship between the genders was based on one of the five human relationships "o-ryun" – that of husband and wife. This system does not aim to subordinate women to men, but merely holds that both men and women have certain duties to perform and a set of ethics to observe vis-à-vis the other. In its

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<sup>19</sup> Qur'an (4:34)

practical application, this ideal, learned from an early age, affected not just husband and wife, but virtually all relations between the genders.

Similar to traditional Uzbekistan, in traditional Korea the typical family was large with three or four generations usually living together. Because infant mortality was high and a big family was thought of as a blessing, having many children was desired. Extended family with three to four generations under the same family structure helps Confucians and Muslims to acquire many social qualities, such as sacrifice, compromise, respect, affection, consultation etc. There is mutual support in case of needs. There may be some inherent difficulties in this arrangement, but, after all, children should also learn to live in the realities of life.

During the Three Kingdoms period and the Koryo period (57 B.C. - A.D. 1392), couples entered freely into marriage with partners of their own choice among commoners. In contrast, during the Chosun dynasty strict rules were imposed on marriage and the selection of partners. All marriages were arranged, the process involving four rites prescribed in the “Mungong karae” initial discussion between the fathers of the partners, submission of the marriage proposal from the father of the son to the father of the prospective bride<sup>20</sup>, the offering of gifts from the prospective groom to the prospective bride, and the greeting of the bride by her betrothed. The wishes of the prospective bride and groom were not considered in the process. Moreover, the marriages were forbidden between relatives having the same family name and the same domicile, between the upper class and commoners, between different factions, between officials and girls or women released from the court, and with the offspring of traitors. Thus, marriage outside one's own class was all but impossible<sup>21</sup>.

Furthermore, the subordination of women to men in Confucian teaching and the subsequent oppression of woman have influenced the marriage practices in Korean Confucian culture, and have contributed to unequal partnership in marriage between men and women. Divorce was rarely permitted, and then only in unavoidable cases. Divorce cases were subject not to a legal proceeding but rather to the Confucian custom of

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20 In Uzbekistan of ancient times only men were allowed to arrange marriages. Women started to be involved in this process after Russian colonization, when the women's right became more crucial.

21 Refer to Cho, Lee-Jay, Confucianism and the Korean family. (Special Issue: Families in Asia: Beliefs and Realities) Journal of Comparative Family Studies; 3/22/1995

weighing the seven reasons for divorce against three reasons for remaining married. Only men were allowed to petition for divorce during Chosun dynasty, and the husband's prerogative in seeking divorce was honored whereas the wife's interest was not considered. Except for theft, all of the seven reasons for allowing divorce were related to the maintenance of the family order and a male authority. Thus divorce was a means of protecting the feudal family system<sup>22</sup>.

The institutions of marriage and the family in Islam have been commended as the 'way of the Prophets' and is a part of Mohammed's Sunnah. He said: "Whoever runs away from my path is not from amongst us"<sup>23</sup>. In Muslim Uzbekistan the basic family formation is based on a solemn covenant of 'Nikoh<sup>24</sup>', which is pledged by a man and a woman on request of one of them and the acceptance of other of them in presence of two sane and mature witnesses. The validity of Nikoh depends upon the conditions that the woman who is the party to the pledge of Nikoh is neither bound by Nikoh with another man nor in probation period following a divorce nor in a probation period following the death of her husband. It is also necessary that the said woman is not from those whose Nikoh with him is forbidden due to that kind of kinship and family relationship that Islam forbids Nikoh between them.

Islam insists upon entering into the pledge of Nikoh and requires every Muslim not to avoid it and not to disregard it if there is not a reasonable obstacle for it. Those who can economically afford for Nikoh are required not to renounce it for any reason neither for the purpose of devoting more time for worship nor for the reason of abstaining from worldly pleasures. Accordingly, righteous Muslims of Uzbekistan obliged to build families and keep the faith in eyes of Allah.

As Holy Qur'an states that everyone should get married, also by Confucianism, in Korea there were no and could not be "old bachelors", "old maids". Only the poorest

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22 Ibid

23 Refer to Ibn Majah, Book of Marriage

24 Nikoh is a ritual similar to wedding ceremony in Christian world. Instead of Church couple goes to Mosque to get Allah's blessings for future happy family life. This ceremony, being simple, requires the presence of two witnesses from both sides. Bride and groom wear traditional Islamic clothes and head covered with veil in case of bride and special hat (depends on country's traditional head-dress) in case of groom. One specific detail is that it's thought to be rude and amoral for bride to answer "Yes" from the first time when Mullah, the person who conducts the ceremony, asks whether she accepts groom as her husband. Bride must keep silence when she is being asked and only after 3d time she should slightly bow showing her consent. (Ref. belongs to author).

Koreans, “the utterly destitute” may not get married, simply because they would not be able to take care of the families. For the majority getting married was kind of compulsory and was taken as natural, essential. Couple was chosen by parents and other relatives (sometimes using services of matchmakers), and opinion of the bride or groom, if they had any opinion, was the least thing anybody was interested in.

In many cases bride and groom from relatively rich and noble families met each other for the first time only in their wedding ceremony. If this fact had a place only in rich Korean families, that was a normal case in old Uzbekistan, to see each other during the first night after marriage ceremony. In both traditional societies ‘Couples’ were really young. By the Law of Dynasty Li, they were allowed to get married at the age of 14 (for men) and at 13 (for women), but with permission of Authorities they were allowed to get married even earlier. This kind of permissions was given easily and 12 years old married couple didn’t provoke any curiosity in society, didn’t surprise anybody. Not only was it common to Korean society, but also has been practiced in Tsarist Russia, and widespread along entire Asia. Only in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century average age for marriage rose up to 18-19.

Similar to Korea, most marriages in Uzbekistan are arranged. It is common for people today in the Western World to strongly reject the idea of arranged marriages and to consider them to be barbaric infringements on the “universal human rights” of young adults and especially of women. However, it is useful to suspend our own ethnocentric views on this matter in order to understand why arranged marriages continue to be popular in some societies. In addition to being integral parts of their cultural traditions, arranged marriages are usually seen as being better for the young people getting married and for the community in general because they are thought to result in lasting marriages, and they bring families together. In contrast, basing marriage selection on romantic love alone is often a socially isolating process. The intense romantic focus on one other individual can separate us from our families and friends. It is common for newly married couples in the Western World to set up their own independent household which may be hundreds or even thousands of miles away from family members, which are not typical to Asia, therefore among neighborhood people there is a word “maverick” – defining those who leave families and settle far away from homeland. This life apart is an appalling



prospect for people in traditional societies that practice arranged marriages. It is also an ethnocentric projection to see arranged marriages as being inevitably loveless. In societies that have them, married couples often become loving life-partners. Their marriages set them on a path of discovery to love. In the West, marriage is usually at the end of this path, but the destination is the same.

Arranged marriages have been very common throughout the world. This is due to two principal considerations. First, a marriage unites two families, not just two people. All of a family's members become obligated by the marriage of one of its members. In addition, marriages can be valuable tools in creating alliances and, therefore, must be considered carefully and even negotiated. Secondly, mate selection is seen as being too important decision to be left up to inexperienced young people, especially if they have had little contact with members of the opposite gender. Parents are presumed to have the experience needed to help their children find a mate who is appropriate for them.

In some countries, the legal system encourages arranged marriages. In Pakistan, for instance, the law prohibits women from marrying without parental consent. This is based on Islamic teachings in the Qur'an that require fathers to protect their daughters. This obligation has been interpreted as advocating arranged marriages. Specifically, it is seen as a father's duty to find suitable husbands for his daughters; however, he should not force them into unwanted marriages.

Uzbek women are expected to get married around the age of 18 or 19. If she is 20 years or older and not married, there is a lot of social pressure on her and the family. The neighbors will "mish-mish" (gossip) about how 'old' she is getting and why her parents haven't married her off yet. Girls begin to get proposals from boys' families at 18, and if she refuses too many boys, then they will stop calling on her and she is less likely to get married at all. At some point, the parents will pressure and force a marriage on a girl who is getting too 'old'. And right after they are married, the girl is expected to conceive the first born within a year. Alike traditional Korea, once married, tradition dictates that the "kelin"<sup>25</sup> (sister/daughter-in-law; wife) goes to live with the husband's family. From my observations, the *kelin* essentially becomes the house-slave. Most *kelins* are not allowed to continue with their work if they were employed before marriage. Though this is not a

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25 "Kelin" derived from word "keling" – which in Uzbek language means "come"

common rule in organizations and companies – they don't fire women when they are married – this is more an agreement between couples.

Confucianism is an extreme example of a social dogma that sharply separates the domestic sphere from the public; subordinates female to male. Stressing 'male' as the most important element of social organization, Confucianism has little to say about women. Women are assigned the status and duties that carry meaning only in relation to men. Women are pushed into the Confucian stereotype of daughter-in-law, wife, and mother. Their role performance is judged by their degree of compliance and social submission – the standards of womanly virtue<sup>26</sup>.

Family life, whether in Confucian or Islamic society, provides the most promising basis for our activities. A good and healthy family life grants us the right approach to life, helps us to see matters in the right perspective, gives us the most useful education not only as far as our future profession is concerned but also for the handling of life itself. When we are grown up, it gives us a safe home that enables us to take part in society life to its greatest benefit, and when we become old, it grants us our livelihood just as we used to grant it when we were still able to do so.

Applying to the family life the expression "submission to the Will of Allah" inborn in times of Islam's beginning, I would like to stress the meaning of this as: "accepting the desires inherent in man's nature and living up to them, mutual confidence, kindness, self-sacrifice and solace; uncles, aunts and all other relatives whom one can trust and who may either grant protection or be granted protection; the desire for a peaceful and fostering home; the desire for a good education; the desire for help in the hour of need; and the desire for doing good or receiving good, just as the events may demand", which kept relatively same significance for modern Uzbek families.

To people completely engrossed in the way of life prevailing in the West today, this may sound incredible. Why not leave children in the nursery and depend on their education at school – after all, what many taxes are paid for this purpose? Likewise, why feel responsibility for relatives in need or old family members since they certainly must

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<sup>26</sup> Refer to Mattielli, Sandra, ed. 1977. *Virtues in Conflict: Tradition and the Korean Woman Today*. Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society/Samhwa Press.

be insured against troubles of all sorts and there are homes for old people where they are neither disturbed nor can disturb...? There are so many and much more useful and lucrative things to do instead of looking after children and caring for old or sick family members.

Yet, incredible though it may sound – in the Muslim and Confucian Worlds these responsibilities still shouldered by the majority of families, due to the injunctions, which have not at all become obsolete in the course of modern techno-industrial developments, but taken quite seriously by these two societies up to this very day. And why is this so? It is so because Muslims honestly believe in their accountability for their conduct here on earth on the Day of Resurrection, because they are fully aware of their role as Allah's vicegerents, and because they feel satisfaction in fulfilling their religious duties, thus achieving Allah's good pleasure, which is the main aim of their very existence. It is so, because Confucius's teachings say: "If a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty, and applies it as sincerely to the love of the virtuous; if, in serving his parents, he can exert his utmost strength; if, in serving his prince, he can devote his life; if in his intercourse with his friends, his words are sincere – although men say that he has not learned, I will certainly say that he has"<sup>27</sup>.

If dangers for family and particularly matrimonial life could be overcome successfully in the West, they were the more unable to gain ground in the Asian World, where, family life with all its aspects concerning not only husband, wife and children, but all other relatives too is so firmly established by tradition as well as by religious law that it could not be affected seriously.

– ***Women in Confucian Society and Islam***

*We must always remember – the way the society treats women illustrates the level of culture, spiritually of the society, as well as the achievements of the society on the path of democratic transformations.*

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<sup>27</sup> Confucius, Analects

Islam does not consider women to be merely a means of satisfying the sexual desires of men. It wants men and women to be real partners in their walk through the life. They should be partners under a strict covenant that protects the dignity of men and women. The marriage covenant keeps men and women from becoming a commodity that may be bought on the street and could be discarded at will. Marriage requires from both parties to respect the covenant, carrying the requisite obligations and responsibilities honestly. Wives must be faithful and obedient to their husbands, so that means never to be in rebellion or having a feeling of contempt or even indifference against them and their admissible wishes and desires. There is one more interesting detail, according to Islamic Law women cannot be forced to marry anyone without their consent. The Qur'an thus states: "And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them, and men are a degree above them."<sup>28</sup>

Following marriage woman's responsibilities increase and get into a shape that without a hand from her husband she cannot properly carry them out. She in usual circumstances cannot singly respond the moral and material requirements of her children and cannot provide by herself them feeding, clothing and proper nursing as well as adequate attendance as she gives birth to one child after other following specific periods. These responsibilities get heavier when the woman is at later months of pregnancy. Even after the birth of child, the mother remains weak and uncomfortable for some times while her children need her attendance and nursing. They need at very early steps of life to learn initially the common courtesies and the norms that should be followed in life as individual persons and as members of societies. Further, the mothers are required to raise them from very beginning with senses of reverence and love of parents, brothers and sisters and to understand the expectations of family and society. In all of these cases, the husbands have the most needed responsibilities of attendance and nursing towards his wife and his children.

In the traditional Confucian family, "the woman is conceptually an outsider, brought into the household to provide services that cannot be provided by 'true' family

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<sup>28</sup> Qur'an 2:228

members”<sup>29</sup>. She did not attain more secure status as a member of her husband's family until she has produced a son to continue the husband's lineage; only then, with her duty fulfilled, she did “acquire the privileges and authority of motherhood”<sup>30</sup>. Even as a secure member of the husband's household, the Korean woman retains her natal surname (the surname of her father) while her children take on the name of their father and become his property. The wife remains symbolically an outsider, not only in her husband's family, but even, to some degree, while in her natal family. As Sorensen notes Korean women “have a marginal status both in their natal and marital households”.

The strict application of these rules resulted in severe restrictions on women, while relative freedom was allowed for men. Women's behavior was dictated by the law of the three obediences: obeisance to the father before marriage, to the husband upon marriage, and to the son after the husband's death. Female submission to male authority was not due to the perception of innate female weakness or inadequacy; rather, it had to do with the strict separation of social spheres in the organization of society. The woman's role was “within,” that is, within the home which was her domain to control. The man's role was “outside,” and his concern was limited to the affairs of the state and life beyond the confines of the home.

It was the woman's duty to care for the children, to help her husband with the farm work, to prepare family meals, to make the family's clothes, and to create an atmosphere of peace so as to better enable her husband to concentrate on the larger issues of society. The female role was firmly established within the confines of the home and women were expected to adhere strictly to that role.

Although strict observance of Confucian-inspired ideals is now a rarity, Korean men and women are still conscious of their positions as expressed not only in their behavior but in their speech as well. Love and affection between man and woman is rarely expressed openly, not even between husband and wife. Likewise, just as there are special words and honorifics for use between family members and friends, so there are a special set of words used just between husband and wife as well.

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29 Refer to Sorensen, Clark. 1983. *Women, Men, Inside, Outside: The Division of Labor in Rural Central Korea*. In Kendall, Laurel and Peterson, Mark, eds. *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room*. Cushing, ME: East Rock Press, Inc.

30 Refer to Deuchler, Martina. 1977. *The Tradition: Women during the Yi Dynasty*. In Mattielli, Sandra, ed. *Virtues in Conflict: Tradition and the Korean Woman Today*. Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society/Samhwa Press

While in her natal home, an unmarried girl or woman may be called a “ch'ulga oein” that means “an outsider who will leave the household”<sup>31</sup>. Korean culture is full of proverbs that demean women. In reference to daughters, one commonly hears such sentiments as, “Why should we spend money and educate her? We will just have to pay more to marry her off anyway.”

Comparing Islam world with Confucian, Islam states that the right of females to seek knowledge is not different from that of males and Prophet Muhammad said: “Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim”. (Al-Bayhaqi). Muslim as used here includes both males and females. In fact, the fundamental problem facing women in Uzbekistan is the predominant “mentality dominated by patriarchal values attaching a secondary role to women”.

Also among the sayings of Prophet Muhammad in this regard is the following: Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favor his son over her; God will enter him into Paradise<sup>32</sup>. Whosoever supports two daughters till they are mature, he and I will come in the Day of Judgment as this (and he pointed with his two fingers held together).

However in reality it might be argued. And in Muslim Uzbekistan, I would say that ‘in paper’ woman is better off. Shaped by time and some specific traditions of each society distinctive by regions, woman in Islam is often discriminated.

In old Confucian Korea, women’s position was even less attractive. For instance it wasn’t possible for widow to get marry after her husband’s death. People blamed second marriage even though there was no official restriction, and kids from second marriage considered with prejudice and were kind of outcasts in the society. It was accepted as correct when woman is faithful to the memory of her husband. Even those young Korean women who lost their future husbands before official marriage couldn’t get married anymore.

However, paradoxical thing is that Korean man could, except an official wife, have some mistresses (concubines). Number of mistresses wasn’t limited but having at least one was already something like luxury that only rich men could have, and 3-4 –

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31 Refer to Sorensen, 1983

32 Refer to Ibn Hanbal, No.1957

only “upper ten” of the society. In old times for ordinary Korean man concubine was reachable as in our days Rolls-Royce for poor Uzbek man.

Existing of concubines increased chances of having sons, however in many cases children from concubines were not equal and discriminated in noble society. Nevertheless, this discrimination was relative and mistress generally lived in noble’s house and children had life that ordinary peasant even couldn’t dream about. As time goes by, noblemen’s children from mistresses even established special social class ‘jun-in’. Having concubines didn’t change anything in hierarchical Korean family, elder and the only wife was the absolute hostess of the house.

So many similarities we have found among societies along Asia, for instance Arabic countries where by Islamic Law having 4 wives is welcomed as well as in old Korea having up to 3 unofficial wives is far from being forbidden. Although till these days some societies could have changed to more modern forms of living, some still remain a few elements from the past.

Unlike Islam society, where all wives are more or less equal, in Korea distinction between the main and the only one wife and concubines was well-defined. Law protected, first of all, wife’s interests and concubines had to obey to her implicitly.

Age-old Korean literature full of stories about refractory concubines who didn’t want to obey main wife and even were intriguing against her. However, since Korea is a Confucian society, authors in own stories always punished any amoral and unruly behavior.

Generally Korean family was and still remaining strictly hierarchical. For instance in Korean language there is no word similar to ‘brother or sister’ like in western countries, there are only elder or younger brother/sisters. Theoretically, wife obeys to her husband, but husband never deals deeply with home and family affairs, and in practice at the beginning young wife usually obeys to mother-in-law. This family related critical issue is quite similar to ‘bullying’ in Army (*untold rule - Junior Soldier obeys his Seniors*). When you are young and novice, your senior commands and orders whatever he needs. Then in one year you are becoming senior to the beginner like you were only one year ago.

Islam considers the woman a full-person, the spiritual equal of a male. Also, according to the Islamic Law, women have the right to own property, operate a business

and receive equal pay for equal work. The woman in Islam has total control of her wealth; she cannot be married against her will.

Moreover, the woman in Islam has the right to inherit property and unlike women of Confucian society she has the right to get divorced if she doesn't get good treatment from her husband, and can no longer stand her life with him (yet she has to have a good reason). Also, Islam does not look down on women nor consider them an “evil temptress”, and thus does not blame women for the “original sin”. Islam gives great respect to women and their vital role in society. Also, it is noteworthy that the Prophet Muhammad's mission stopped many of the vicious practices in regards to women that were present in the society of his time. For example, the Qur'an put an end to the pagan Arab practice of killing their baby daughters when they were born.

If women in the Muslim World today don't get their rights, it is not because Islam did not grant them their rights, but because of some alien traditions prevailing in many places that have come to overshadow the teachings of Islam, either through ignorance or through the impact of colonization.

The Islam's respect to the women is crowned with the *Hijab*<sup>33</sup>, the veil, considered by a lot of anti-Muslims a symbol of women's oppression and servitude. God ordered Muslim women to wear the veil (to cover the whole of their body except their face and their hands) to protect them. The Qur'an makes it clear through many verses that the veil is obligatory and not an option for Muslim women (as some misleading information state). “O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (jalabib) close round them (when they go abroad).” The Qur'an also shows how essential the veil is for modesty. Modesty is prescribed to protect women from molestation. Thus, the only purpose of the veil in Islam is protection. The Islamic veil is not a sign of a man's authority over the woman, nor is it a sign of the woman's subjection to the man; on the contrary it shows respect and care for the woman.

Before Islamic era, ties of blood were given importance in the “*jahiliya*” (life before Islam), but this didn't really include women – the “causes” or “links” in family ties. Girls were murdered for fear of them being captured by opposing tribes and being a source of shame. Wives were treated as goods and “inherited” by male relatives without

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33 Ankle-length dresses and closely fitted white scarves that surround the face and drape over the shoulder



having any say in the matter. Women had no particular property rights. Inheritance customs of the *jahiliya* dictated that the male relatives – those most capable of fighting and defending the family – took everything even if the deceased left a wife and children. They would be left with nothing at all.

Islam came and changed all this and while confirming the blood ties respected in the *jahiliya*, Islam put much more focus on the women and gave them their rights of property, inheritance, etc., prevented their murder and named family ties after them by using the word for “rahim” which means “womb”<sup>34</sup>.

In Soviet times, family life within its structure and roles, member relationships, based on Islamic perceptions of one’s being, have been altered with government’s interference in family life. Consequently, there had a place an equalization of sexes rights, employment for women outside the home existed alongside traditional family values such as obedience of wife to her husband. Uzbek women’s desire for independence was supported by the state, but suppressed in the family and community, for the sake of preservation of national and cultural identity. Because of the Soviet government policy, the level of women’s representation in administrative bodies and their professional qualifications and education, including in rural areas, increased considerably. However, at the same time, the deep influence of traditions sanctioned by religion also was preserved up to present days.

During the period of Soviet rule, the state promoted an admiring history of its own role in freeing women from what it viewed as the oppressive strictures of Islamic religious law and local custom. What is often excluded from this narrative, however, is the contribution of the movement for Islamic modernization known as the *jadids*, led by prominent members of indigenous society, which predated Soviet efforts to transform local society and the status of women by almost a half century. *Jadids’* approaches to the “woman question” focused on equality and secular education for women as a necessary step for the renewal and progress of the nation. They fought against the conservative elements in the society that, in reaction to the Imperial Russian conquest of the region in

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<sup>34</sup> The exact meaning of the word rahim is "womb". It is derived from the root raheem which means to have mercy on. Two of Allah's names - Ar-Rahmaan and Ar-Raheem - are derived from the same root.

the 1860s-70s, had tended to reinforce traditional forms of female seclusion and veiling<sup>35</sup>. *Jadids'* efforts to promote women's education and freedom created a constituency for the more radical measures put in place following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917<sup>36</sup>.

Time when values, within family is a principle, standard, or quality considered worthwhile or desirable for maintaining a set of customary standards, tend to be turned upside down, family life as the very heart of society was attacked just as much as many other handed-down traditions. Many people feared that this might mean the end of family life. Fortunately, even "Modernism time"<sup>37</sup> to live in "communities" didn't have such a big influence on family values. In the end, the overwhelming majority of young women still dream of having a wedding ring on their finger, living in a comfortable flat as "Mrs. So-and-so" and bringing up their children in an orderly home, just as young men prefer to introduce "her" with the words "This is my wife" instead of "this is my mate or comrade". Neither socialism nor any other "isms" were able to uproot what has been implanted into human nature from time immemorial.

As for Korean women of old times, at the beginning of the marriage life young Korean wife is being 'trampled' by any member of the family, Koreans say that for the happy family life daughter-in-law should be: first 3 years – blind; second 3 years – deaf; third 3 years – silent.

Time goes by and she gives a birth to a male heir and slightly raises her status in the family. After death of mother-in-law she becomes this 'senior' and remembering own youth she starts to rule over her daughter-in-law. Everlasting, cyclical process...

But of course it's not the case applicable everywhere, to each family. It's like in any society: there is always and goodness and wickedness. As a matter of fact, that warm and lovely relation between any daughter- and mother-in-law never is real, and the same is a fact for Uzbek society and family relations. The proof for this statement is Korean

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35 Refer to Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 222-223

36 Refer to Marianne Ruth Kamp, "Unveiling Uzbek Women: Liberation, Representation and Discourse, 1906-1929," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, June 1998.

37 The basic view of modernism (in all religions) is that: the religion should change according to the circumstances, and that it is not fixed. Refer to 'Modernism in Islam'. Jamal Zarabozo

proverb: “If you live long you may wait until death of your mother-in-law”, or “rice-cake always looks too big in daughter-in-law’s hands”.

Many Korean proverbs reflect the Confucian ethic embodied in the saying “respect man and despise woman.” The married woman's devaluation as a woman and a wife is accomplished in the proverbs by casting her as a deceitful creature with a potential for causing trouble and bringing bad luck. An unmarried woman is evaluated on the basis of her virginity, and she is admonished to keep quiet and mind her manners. The conflict between the daughter-in-law and her husband's mother comes through very strongly in the proverbs, as does the preferential treatment of the daughter over the daughter-in-law and the son-in-law over the daughter-in-law<sup>38</sup>.

Main task of married Korean woman was to deliver sons, who would later worship ancestors and continue the family line. In old Korea there have been so many ‘sings’ that had to be followed in order to have a son. Just for this issue – conceive a son not a daughter – Koreans devoted many treatises on sexual topics that remained until our days. Authors of these writings, unlike Western and Chinese colleagues, didn’t pay much attention to tender perception of love or some other ‘silly’ things, but only fulfilling main duty of Confucians – continuation of male heir.

In Korean noble’s houses tradition required that any contacts between female parts of house and surrounding ‘world’ should be minimized. It was considered that by this they could prevent unfaithfulness to husband – if this should have been happened ‘criminal’ was seriously punished.

In wealthy houses females’ and males’ apartments were separated by a high stone wall with small gate, even for male member of the family it was forbidden to visit female’s part without any serious reason.

In this kind of families, for woman walking in town by herself was out of question. Usually permission to go out of house was given only during evening time and only if woman wraps herself in special covering ‘chanyot’ (I assume this might be similar to Muslim Uzbek woman’s outfit ‘parandja’ – veil).

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38 Refer to Tieszen, Helen Rose. 1977. Korean Proverbs about Women. In Mattielli, Sandra, ed. *Virtues in Conflict: Tradition and the Korean Woman Today*. Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society/Samhwa Press.

Peasants, or lets say small merchants couldn't follow this rules, restrictions – simply because women had to work in field and bring water, and also look after selling goods in family stores. Though, in these families husbands should not have discussed any of his business issues without absolute necessity. Women also should not have involved husbands to their household chores they had to deal with by themselves. From this in Korean language follows the term for wife that determines her as “person of our house”. Tradition required from her to worship her husband as Heavens. However, I cannot judge the truthfulness of this statement, but I believe that the wise saying – husband is a head, wife is a neck: where she wants she turns – is applicable to many Korean families as well.

In noble families women almost never went out of their houses, but still if they sometimes went out – to visit relatives or Buddha's temple – then only with their servants.

In old Korea, boys supposed to be educated, though for peasant's families it was almost impossible and sons were educated only for 2 years in local schools, where young boys, apart from working in the fields, have been learning several thousands hieroglyphs and basics of Old Chinese language. Occasionally they were learning Korean reading and writings, and the fact is that until the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century all official documents and many books in Korea were published in Old Chinese language (Hanmun).

Actually, only children of noble families who studied in school for several years could read and write in 'Old Chinese'. But for girls – even from noble family – education was limited, because hieroglyphs and Old Chinese were not important for them. Instead they were taught how to cook, spin, sew, do and know many housekeeping stuff. If truth to be told, there were also really well-educated (even educated at home, not at school) women.

Reality shows that also in Uzbekistan, the different treatment of women starts in the family where boys and girls are socialized in different ways. As boys are typically allowed to do many things and activities that girls cannot do, girls are brought up to see themselves as less than the boys.

There is a little point in discussing how well or badly so called 'Islamic and Confucian countries' are living up to the teachings of Islam and Confucianism respectively, or why. First it is necessary to clarify all misunderstandings about those teachings.

Women are equal to men in the sight of God but they have in some respects different roles in life to men because of their different natures. They differ psychologically, physiologically, and biologically from men. This makes them more suitable than men for certain responsibilities and less suitable than men for others. Islam recognizes these differences. And an oppression of women is the result of removing their rights. As it has been mentioned above, Islam gives men and women rights that are different in some aspects to those they have in the western world. The principle difference in the way these rights came about is also important.

In the West rights became a part of the law only after women had gone through the great political struggles and also partly due to the necessity of women working in factories during wars. It is possible that this will be reversed in the future. In Islam, rights were given 'out of the blue' by God through revelation. They cannot be reversed by anyone's decision. There is considerable overlap of rights that now exist in the Western world and those which Muslim women have always had, at least in principle if not in practice.

– ***Respect for Ancestors and Ethical Aspects of Treating Parents***

Religious Anthropology studies the origins, evolution and functions of religions. The discipline researching religious beliefs and rituals comparatively with cross-cultural perspectives tries to enlighten the belief world of the mankind. Religion, as a term, can be defined as “believing as well as worshipping to the supernatural powers and/or beings by the individual who are emotionally or consciously devoted to them”<sup>39</sup> .

To the ancient belief of Uzbek communities, the life continued even after death and the spirits of ancestors remained on the earth affecting the living ones either in positive or in negative sense. As a result of this belief, there have appeared such prayers as worshipping the dead and other practices originating from the piety towards the ancestors in accordance with the dead cult. It is a fact that such identities, even a long time after their death, remained respected in public, thus earning them a position worth praying, sacrificing and worshipping gave birth to ancestors cult. They used to build a

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39 Refer to Ornek Sedat Veyis. Budunbilim Terimleri Sözlüğü. Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu yayını. 1973

tomb so called “kurgan” above the ancestor’s grave and sacrificed to please their spirits in rituals on certain days of the year such as “Qurban bayram” – national holiday in Islam world<sup>40</sup> – when people visit tombs and graves of their ancestors.

In many places of Uzbekistan, there are a lot of shrines and vowing places visited by Sunnis. Apart from visiting the shrines, Sunnis worship in diverse forms, such as performing ritual prayer (the namaz), fasting, pilgrimage, and giving ‘zakath’ (kind of charity), which are indicated in the Qur’an and applied by the Saint Mohammed. Visiting the shrines has a second place among their worshipping. In fact, mosques are their actual place of worship.

Today, beliefs and traditions performed at vowing places have commonly survived in rural regions of Uzbekistan. Our people believe that there is a grave of a Saint in the shrines. There are different sorts of vows such as reading Qur’an, performing ‘namaz’, buying new clothes, delivering various foods for a poor person. One of the most common vows is to sacrifice an animal lamb or sheep, etc. Sacrifice, an important section of the worship, is generally dedicated in the presence of Allah to make peace with supernatural powers and to thank them.

Worshipping ancestors remained from the ancient times of ‘Zoroastrianism’, during that time the current territory of Uzbekistan was a part of Persian Empire, and worshipping ancestors mainly characterized the ancient Iranian culture that has been transformed and adopted by Muslims all over the country even after Islamic era began.

Like in Uzbek families, among Koreans there is a strong bond between relatives and clan members. Adhering to traditional family-centered principles, the extended family in Korea is the first place to which people turn when they find themselves in trouble. Although such large families living under one roof together are rare these days, family members often reside in the same neighborhood and maintain frequent contact. Those who live far away tend to get together on special occasions such as a relative's marriage, the 60th or 70th birthday, the birthday of a child, and on traditional holidays. At such times everyone pitches in to assist with preparations for the ceremony.

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40 The 'Festival of Sacrifice', one of the most important days of the Islamic calendar, commemorates both the end of the Hajj pilgrimage and the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son for God.

In Islam, the ties of kinship and family are very strong and something that will always be present throughout our life-time. There are very serious consequences for someone who decides to break these ties. Allah says: "Then, is it to be expected of you, if you were put in authority, that you will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin? Such are the men whom Allah has cursed for He has made them deaf and blinded their sight."<sup>41</sup> The Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever severs the bonds of kinship will not enter Paradise."

Respect for one's ancestors is central to the Confucian family clan system; however this fact is becoming less meaningful in today's Uzbek-Islamic families. In Korea special memorial services for great-great-grandparents are conducted in the home on the anniversary of their deaths, between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. For the fifth generation or beyond, services are held once a year, on Ch'usok (the Harvest Moon Festival), the 15th day of the Eighth Moon, or on a selected auspicious day. On this day, descendants gather at the ancestral tomb to perform ceremonial rites. This memorial service is such an important event that even distant family members travel long distances to participate in.

According to Confucian belief, the heavenly spirits of ancestors know everything happening on the earth. Thus Koreans maintain a great reverence for their family history and meticulously record and update these genealogical records, which in many cases go back several dozens of generations. They also minutely record official ranks, achievements, royal citations, the localities of tombs and other information.

The ideal form in Confucianism – the large patriarchal family – in practice could be realized not that easily, since it's hardly believable that in one kitchen there could be not only two housewives, but several at the same time. Nevertheless, Koreans were striving toward these ideal families based on humaneness, and State was supporting it fully, giving different privileges for large, undivided families. If family divides, parents stay with older son, who (with his wife) has to care of and support them. As for humaneness – you want to establish yourself; then help others to establish themselves. You want to develop yourself; then help others to develop

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41 Refer to Qur'an 47:22-23

themselves. Being able to recognize oneself in others, one is on the way to being humane<sup>42</sup>.

Most important and best human's characteristics in Confucianism was "hyo" (or in Chinese "xiao") – term which we can translate as filial piety. People judge about person from his attitude towards parents. In contrast to European countries, implicit obedience to parents will was required even from adult sons (married daughters had to obey first of all to parents-in-law). Obliges of person to parents were above any duty to State, which was even unwillingly accepted by the State itself. Legends say that in old time when Confucius was serving as an official in a country Lu, he has forgiven numerous times people who committed crime for the sake of their lovely parents.

Sons and sons' wives should go to their parents and parents-in-law on the first crowing of the cock. On getting to where they are, with bated breath and gentle voice, they should ask if their clothes are (too) warm or (too) cold, whether they are ill or pained, or uncomfortable in any part; and if so, they should proceed reverently to stroke and scratch the place. They should in the same way, going before or following after, help and support their parents in quitting or entering (the apartment). In bringing in the basin for them to wash, the younger will carry the stand and the elder the water; they will beg to be allowed to pour out the water, and when the washing is concluded, they will hand the towel. They will ask whether they want anything, and then respectfully bring it. All this they will do with an appearance of pleasure to make their parents feel at ease.

In Islam, parents are also treated with gentleness and submissiveness. Cutting family ties, which should be maintained, has serious consequences in this life and in the hereafter. It is one of the worst of the major sins. Allah has ordered us not only to pray for our parents, but to treat them with ultimate compassion, remembering that when we were helpless children they preferred us to themselves. Pleasing the parents causes Allah's pleasure. Even if one's parents are polytheists, and they want him to follow them, he should refuse, yet continue to be kind and respectful to them.

When they reach old age, Confucian and Muslim parents are treated mercifully, with even more kindness than they were ever. According to the Confucian norms,

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42 Refer to the Sources of Chinese Tradition, 50 (Analects, 6:28)



concern for parents is the solemn covenant of one's, obligations regarding parents were always above obligations to the state.

The term *filial piety* refers to the extreme respect that Korean and Uzbek children are supposed to show their parents. It involves many different things including taking care of the parents, burying them properly after death, bringing honor to the family, and having a male heir to carry on the family name<sup>43</sup>. Practicing these ideals is a very important part of Korean culture. Therefore, one would expect that filial piety would be incorporated into the major religions of Korea as it has been. Confucius himself addressed the subject in the *Analects*: When your father is alive observe his intentions. When he is deceased, model yourself on the memory of his behavior. If in three years after his death you have not deviated from your father's ways, then you may be considered a filial child<sup>44</sup>.

According to Confucius, respect to one's father while he is alive is a given – something that even animals do. But, to be a filial child, one must respect his parents even after their death. Confucius goes on to cite further specific examples of what a filial son should do for his parents. Among them, children should never offend their parents, never speak badly of them, not travel far away without purpose, always be conscious of their parents' age, and protect them whenever necessary<sup>45</sup>. These things were not all that was required of a filial child. Rather, they were just a few rules that Confucius' disciples felt were important enough to be included in the *Analects*.

One interesting fact is, though parents are respected in both cultures, but unlike Confucius' sayings, Muhammad said: “Your mother, and again your mother, and once again your mother. After her, is your father, then that of your near relations and then of the relations next to them”.

In treatises “Nae hun”, Queen Soyehe (1475) characterized filial piety as following: ‘respectful son supports his parents, brings joy to the souls, eyes and ears of his parents, never opposes, keeps peace in their bedrooms, provides with food and

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43 See Brians, Paul. “Examples of Filial Piety”, 1998. Washington State Univ. 23 Feb 2003. Brians, Paul. "Examples of Filial Piety." 1998. Washington State Univ. 23 Feb 2003.

44 Refer to Confucian Teachings, 20

45 Refer to Confucian Teachings, 21

drinks”. These characteristics, kept till our day, define the core basis of relationships in Korean family.

Through the book of Analects can one discover Confucius’ notions of the virtues, i.e., the positive character traits to which should we aspire. When such virtue is cultivated in the home, it is supposed to carry over into one’s relations and in affairs of the state as well. Filial piety is the most important virtue that Confucius speaks of and its qualities overlap in the other virtues that we will discuss.

Goodness, the quality of being virtuous, is described by Confucius as having very similar characteristics to filial piety but with some added qualities. The relationship between filial piety and goodness can be witnessed by the Confucius’s example on goodness. The youth, when at home, should behave well toward his parents, and when abroad, respectfully to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the good. When he has time and opportunity, after doing those things, he should study the polite arts? This statement by Confucius gives importance to filial piety and expands it to the respect of not only ones parents and grandparents, but to all elders<sup>46</sup>. In goodness we should have respect for our elders as well as we should find love for all people. He refers to the polite arts as the etiquette that should be followed in order to show respect for other people. The importance of how we treat other people is emphasized in the Analects and is further expressed by Confucius: when abroad, behave to everyone as if you were receiving an important guest; treat people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice; do not do to others as you would not wish done to yourself. Thereby you will let no murmuring rise against you in the country, and none in the family...<sup>47</sup>

Confucius implies that by following this rule you can maintain harmony not only within the country but in your family as well. The idea of the Golden Rule is summed up in one word in Confucianism, ‘reciprocity’. When Confucius was asked by Tsze-Kung, is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one’s life? Confucius answered, this is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others? Reciprocity is a quality of goodness and a quality of a gentleman.

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46 Refer to Fukuyama, Francis. Trust; The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity. The Free Press, New York. 1995.

47 This may sound familiar to Christians, who know it as the Golden Rule “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”.

In filial piety, the importance of taking care of one's elders and learning from them can not be overstated. The elders are a great source for teaching the rituals that must be learned and passed down from teacher to student and from generation to generation in order to maintain harmony. Confucius believed that a hierarchy must exist and that hierarchy must be respected for the society to be in harmony. In order for people to find harmony in their lives they must believe in the governmental structure and have faith in their rulers.

## **Chapter-II. Spectrum of the Family Systems across Cultures and Time**

In this part, I attempt to examine Korean and Uzbek contemporary family systems in the context of the Confucian and Islamic traditions, as well as recent socioeconomic changes mediated by Western influence. In portraying changes in the composition, function and structure of the family of today, not only the discussion contrasts it with the recent past, but also with the traditional family in the process of industrialization, urbanization and demographic transitions in these Asian societies.

### ***Values and Characteristics of the Traditional vs. Modern Family. The Family 'Crises'***

In contrast to Confucianism, Christianity, specifically Protestantism, was introduced to Korea recently and from the West arriving with the expansion of European power and influence to Asia in the late nineteenth century<sup>48</sup>. During Japan's colonial rule of Korea (1910-45) and during the Korean War (1950-53), Korea's traditional culture, including its religious heritage, was seriously undermined. Moreover, since the 1960s, within a single generation, Korea has been transformed from an agrarian to an industrialized urban society. Not only the adoption of the Western science and technology, but also Western culture, has played a decisive role in bring about this

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48 Refer to Cho, Lee-Jay, Confucianism and the Korean family. (Special Issue: Families in Asia: Beliefs and Realities) Journal of Comparative Family Studies; 3/22/1995

transformation. Swept into the country on the tides of westernization, industrialization, and economic development, Protestantism has taken root and expanded its reach.

The increase in religious belief has been observed throughout the society, regardless of age, sex, and class, since the 1970s<sup>49</sup>. Although institutionalized religion, particularly in the form of Buddhism and Protestantism, has been restored, Confucian values and Shamanism continue to exist in contemporary Korea. As this diversity of permissive and dynamic value systems seems on the surface, it signifies chaos and intrinsic conflict between generations, the sexes, and social classes, even within individuals. Indeed, it has prevented Korean society as a whole from reaching a consensus beyond the basic social frame of reference, that is, familism<sup>50</sup>.

In Uzbekistan it can be considered to be a fact that the native Muslims of present day are strongly attached to their homeland and its Islamic culture. However, Islam does not unify the believers of this religion among the changes of the surrounding world. Muslims view the different interpretations of Islam between Sunni and Shiite as very important. In order to follow the Islamic belief, one must be prepared to have his or her entire way of life restricted, which is not possible after 70 years of Soviet Socialistic life style. Harmony is not a characteristic among religious and ethnic groups in Uzbekistan. Moreover it faces social, ethic, moral and religious disparities caused by influences of the recent past and western values of the global openness, democracy and human rights, which slowly but fully invading newly established country.

In order to understand what changes our societies undergo we should analyze current situation with a little glance on the latest times of yore.

Korea, which for several centuries was a hermit kingdom – characterized as a “Morning Calm” in the Orient, during this century has experienced a turbulent history of foreign occupation, an international war, separation of the country, a major civil war, and recently dramatic economic development and social change. The society and economy of Korea experienced great difficulties from the end of World War II in 1945 until about 1960. Its economy depended heavily on US aid, particularly after its near destruction in the Korean War. But since the 1960s the economy of the South Korea has recorded an

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49 Ibid

50 Ibid.

unprecedented expansion: whereas the standard of living has improved significantly, the economic expansion has been attributed to rapid industrialization, characterized by export-led industries that depend on low-wage labor.

While Korea has undergone tremendous transformation, although Uzbek nation didn't experience War and its dreadful destructions, changes in Uzbekistan were not less dramatic, yet quite distinct from those of Korea. Hereby, the descendants of nomads who lived in the mid-nineteenth century are now a majority of the people who live in the rural areas of present-day Uzbekistan. In the rural areas simple agriculture and animal husbandry imposed a low level on the knowledge and skills required of individuals and a relative simplicity in social organization. The few remaining nomadic peoples continued their way of life up into the twentieth century in southeastern Uzbekistan, the northern steppes and in the Ferghana Valley foot hill country. In these Uzbek regions, there were low expectations for advancement in educational aspects due to the demands of the nomadic culture.

Uzbekistan has also experienced foreign occupation of Tsarist Russia, which for 70 years brought to the Uzbek nation socialistic style of life. Besides, the various population groups of Central Asia were misplaced by the Soviet Union's national delimitation of 1924. This delimitation had left many inhabitants isolated from the republic of the nationality that included their group. Proper designation for these peoples is difficult due to the divisiveness of the area.

Going back to the discussion of the main issue – the contemporary family – it's noteworthy to mention that in Korea the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the country in the 1960s and 1970s were accompanied by an effective birth control drive, and the average number of children in a family has been dramatically decreased to two or less in the 1980s. To tackle the problem of male preference, the government has completely rewritten family-related laws in a way that ensures equality for sons and daughters in terms of inheritance. During the Chosun dynasty the rule of equal distribution of inheritance regardless of birth order or sex, stated in the 'Kyunggguk taejun' (Great Code of the Chosun), was not strictly observed.<sup>51</sup> Because women had no right to inherit the

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<sup>51</sup> Refer to Cho, Lee-Jay, Confucianism and the Korean family. (Special Issue: Families in Asia: Beliefs and Realities) Journal of Comparative Family Studies; 3/22/1995;

position of head of the household, they often lost out in the inheritance of property. The share of inheritance due to unmarried daughters was always given to the eldest son, who would pay for the daughters' weddings when they were married. In practice, then, women were given a share of the family property at the time of their marriage, but they were not considered in the inheritance and their portion was much smaller than the sons' share. This practice has been continued during the Japanese occupation of Korea. Indeed, until recently, women's right of inheritance was not recognized or their share was much smaller than men's even when the right was recognized. The basic Korean law concerning inheritance states that properties are to be distributed equally among the spouse and the children regardless of sex. But in fact the eldest son received one-half more than the others, and when daughters were married they received one-fourth of the other children's share.

A law reenacted in 1991, however, provides that if there is no will, the spouse of the deceased is to receive one-half of the property and the other half is to be distributed equally among the children regardless of their sex or marital status. With women's limited economic activity, the new inheritance system, which gives women economic independence, should have major social and economic implications<sup>52</sup>.

Islam decreed a right of which woman was deprived both before Islam and after it (even as late as this century), the right of independent ownership. According to the Islamic Law, woman's right to her money, real estate, or other properties is fully acknowledged. This right undergoes no change whether she is single or married. She retains her full rights to buy, sell, mortgage or lease any or all her properties. It is nowhere suggested in the Law that a woman is a minor simply because she is a female. It is also noteworthy that such right applies to her properties before marriage as well as to whatever she acquires thereafter. Her share in most cases is one-half the man's share, with no implication that she is worth half a man! It would seem grossly inconsistent after the overwhelming evidence of woman's equitable treatment in Islam, which was discussed in the preceding pages, to make such an inference. This variation in inheritance rights is only consistent with the variations in financial responsibilities of man and woman according to the Islamic Law. Man in Islam is fully responsible for the maintenance of

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52 Ibid

his wife, his children, and in some cases of his needy relatives, especially the females. This responsibility is neither waived nor reduced because of his wife's wealth or because of her access to any personal income gained from work, rent, profit, or any other legal means.

With regard to the woman's right to seek employment it should be stated first that Islam regards her role in the society as a mother and a wife as the most sacred and essential one. Neither maids nor baby-sitters can possibly take the mother's place as the educator of an upright, complex free, and carefully-reared children. Such a noble and vital role, which largely shapes the future of nations, cannot be regarded as "idleness". However, there is no decree in Islam which forbids woman from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it, especially in positions which fit her nature and in which society needs her most. Examples of these professions Uzbek women pursue are nursing, teaching (especially for children), and medicine. Moreover, there is no restriction on benefiting from woman's exceptional talent in any field.

Woman by Islamic Law, on the other hand, is far more secure financially and is far less burdened with any claims on her possessions. Her possessions before marriage do not transfer to her husband and she even keeps her maiden name. She has no obligation to spend on her family out of such properties or out of her income after marriage. She is entitled to the "*Mahr*" (dowry)<sup>53</sup> which she takes from her husband at the time of marriage. It is paid to the wife and to her only as an honor and a respect given to her and to show that he has a serious desire to marry her and is not simply entering into the marriage contract without any sense of responsibility and obligation or effort on his part. If she is divorced, she may get alimony from her ex-husband. An examination of the inheritance law within the overall framework of the Islamic Law not only reveals justice, but also an abundance of compassion for woman. There were different ways to share inheritance: *mahr* was by no means the predominant form of wealth transmission for marriages in Central Asia. Rather, *Qalin*, a transfer of wealth from the groom to the

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<sup>53</sup> When a Muslim woman marries a Muslim man, they sign a marriage contract. Part of that contract is called the mahr, a gift from groom to bride. Mainly 'mahr' is given as some part of the house that after divorce she has a full right to claim her part, or in order to avoid family clashes over material welfare, it is preferred to present only jewelry and article of luxury, or just money.

bride's parents<sup>54</sup>, seems to be the most common, while *mahr* was associated with communities that have a high degree of knowledge of Islam. In Uzbek society, which is plagued by poverty, men often can not afford enough *mahr* to offer as a marriage gift to a potential wife.

The ills of the society stemmed from the ills of the family. Many problems arose in marriage because the partners are not sure of their proper roles. In male dominant societies of Korea and Uzbekistan, women have to obey their husbands. For instance, a native Uzbek proverb states the evidence of the women's low value: "A man with a copper head is better than a woman with a gold head". It is generally believed by outside countries that a wife is considered a piece of property and a primary source of labor and heirs; and that the husband expressed a degree of scorn toward a wife although in fact he might love her deeply. However, the outside countries are not completely familiar with the religious ties of Islam. Islam does not permit the husband to be oppressive. It is stated in a Hadith, all of you are responsible for the women who are under your hand.

Not only was the extreme crowding in Korea in 1990 a major factor in economic development and in the standard of living, but also in the development of social attitudes and human relationships. More than most other peoples, Koreans have had to learn to live peacefully with each other in small, crowded spaces, in which the competition for limited resources, including space itself, is intense. Continued population growth means that the shortage of space for living and working will grow more severe. In accordance with the government's Economic Planning Board, the population density will be 530 people per square kilometer by 2023, the year the population is expected to stabilize.

According to Korea's National Statistical Office, a rise in individualism and a shift in priorities toward academic success have negatively impacted marriage. In fact, only 320,000 couples married in 2001, which accounted for nearly 14,000 fewer marriages than the year before. Divorce, on the other hand, soared to 135,000, well above the 120,000 who skipped out on their vows in 2000<sup>55</sup>.

In Uzbekistan, both the marriage and divorce rates have fallen since 1991. In 1991, there were around 13 marriages and 2 divorces per 1,000 persons. By 1998, there

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54 Qalin is given in a tangible form – animals: sheep or cow, valuable carpets, jewel and other precious things.

55 Refer to „Open Family Korea‟. <http://www.family.org/welcome/intl/korea/korea/a0022312.cfm>



were around 7 marriages and 1 divorce per 1,000 persons. The fall in the marriage rate is most likely due to the economic conditions and people deferring marriage due to the high economic costs involved. However, in some very needy families, the reverse is also true. Early marriage of daughters is a survival strategy meant to optimize both the families' and the daughter's well-being in an environment of limited educational and employment opportunities. In 1996, nearly 46 percent of young women below the age of 20 were married. (The comparative figure for young men was 8 percent.) In 1998, 45 percent of marriages were of women between the ages of 20 and 24 years and 6 percent of marriages were of women aged 17 years or below<sup>56</sup>.

Despite the fall in the divorce rate, there are some indications that the number of femaleheaded households may be increasing. This is related to increased out-migration of men looking for work. In addition, children born to officially unmarried women grew by 46 percent between 1994 and 1996<sup>57</sup>. There is some speculation that this may reflect an increasing occurrence of polygamy.

In general, the difficult economic situation and the resurgence of Uzbek nationalism following independence have tended to promote what may be called "traditional" gender relations within Uzbek families. The traditional Uzbek family is characterized by complex families (of more than one generation), patrilocal residence and patriarchal authority structures on the basis of seniority and gender. In such families, the father is the head of the family, followed by his wife, and then by their sons in order of seniority, and finally by the son's wives in order of seniority. The bride of the youngest son in such a family has the lowest status. Not only is patriarchy maintained by men in these families, but also by women and in particular by the hierarchical relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. For this reason many Uzbek women especially in urban areas seek to live separately from their husband's extended family. Such possibilities however are severely curtailed by the current economic difficulties.

Historical studies indicate that the nuclear (husband-wife) family constituted the majority of Korean families throughout the Chosun dynasty, although the stem family

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56 Refer to Women in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Country Briefing Paper, Asian Development Bank, 2001

57 Refer to "Women and Children," Ministry of Macroeconomics and Statistics, Republic of Uzbekistan. Tashkent, 1996

became the ideal type after the middle Chosun period. In a stem family, one married child stays in the parental home – in contrast to the patriarchal family in which the aging parents and their male, and sometimes female, offspring and their spouses and children stay together. The stem family structure remained the ideal until just prior to Korea's industrialization. However, the large, extended family that is characteristic of the stem family was only an ideal and the disparity between the ideal and actual family composition persisted until Korea became industrialized and the life expectancy prolonged.

Korea's industrial transformation has had profound effects on the family, substantially reducing the proportion of stem families – that is, patrilineal, three-generation families – as children left their parents in the countryside and started their own conjugal families. This trend has made nuclear households consisting of elderly rural couples more common as well.

Few countries have experienced such rapid economic and social changes as Korea. The industrialization of the 1960s, in particular, accelerated the regional relocation of the population. A baby boom followed the end of the Korean War, and by 1960 the population of South Korea was 25 million. By 1990 it had grown by 75 percent to 43.5 million<sup>58</sup>. By the year 2020, it is projected to reach 50 million, thus doubling in only 60 years.

Urbanization has accelerated as well as an increasing number of men and women have migrated to cities. The urban population has grown from 28 percent of the total in 1960 to 74 percent in 1990; by the year 2000, it is projected to reach nearly 81 percent<sup>59</sup>. If one reckons from the beginning of Korea's industrialization in the 1960s, these figures indicate that Korea has been transformed from an agricultural to an industrial economy within a single generation. Indeed, the transformation has been so swift that the generation can be said to have divided two different Koreas.

Noteworthy too is the rising proportion of single-person households in rural areas, which was higher than that in urban areas in 1990, 10.3 percent and 8.6 percent respectively. Observations by age reveal that in urban areas single-person households are

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<sup>58</sup> Refer to Korean National Statistics, 1991.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

overrepresented by young people under 30, whereas in rural areas they are overrepresented by older people – over 50.

Changes in family structure can be explained in part by changes in such demographic variables as age at marriage, fertility, mortality, and migration. Social and economic conditions, such as income and housing, also affect the family structure by influencing demographic trends.

Korea has experienced one of the world's most rapid fertility declines. A massive family planning program was launched by the government in 1962 as part of the Korea's first Five Year Economic Plan. The success of that program contributed greatly to the dramatic increase in the prevalence of contraceptive use among currently married women of ages 15-44, from nine percent in 1964 to 77.1 percent in 1988 – an almost ninefold increase in just 20 years. The total fertility rate has dropped precipitously – from 6.0 children per woman in 1960 to 1.7 children in 1990.<sup>60</sup>

The dramatic decline in fertility that has resulted from Korean women's acceptance of contraception has had major effects on individual families. The trend toward smaller family size, which has accompanied Korea's transformation from a rural, agrarian society to an urbanized, industrial one, has led to new interactions among family members.

In post Soviet Uzbekistan women make up more than half of the population (50.2 percent in 1999) and 50.3 percent of the female population is of childbearing age (15 and 49). Nearly 66 percent of women over the age of 16 are married and only 10 percent of women over 50 have never been married. The average age for women to marry is around 20, with 75 percent of women marrying between the ages of 20 and 24. About 23-30 percent of babies are born to young women between the ages of 20 and 24.<sup>61</sup>

In recent years the annual birth rate has slowed from 4.2 in 1991 to 2.8 in 1998, and this trend is expected to continue with projections of an annual birth rate of 1.3 percent by 2005. Population growth is higher in rural areas than in urban areas (at 3.0 percent in rural areas and 2.3 in urban areas). There are also ethnic differences. For

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60 Refer to Coale, Ansley J., Lee-Jay Cho, and Noreen Goldman. Estimation of Recent Trends in Fertility and Mortality in the Republic of Korea. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences. 1991

61 Refer to Women in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Country Briefing Paper, Asian Development Bank, 2001

example, in 1994 Russian women had on average two children. In part, this reflects the fact that more Russian women live in urban areas where the birth rate is lowest. It also suggests socio-cultural factors such as preferred number of children and socioeconomic status. The size of families remains large; however, with 57 percent of all families having five or more children. According to the Ministry of Statistics of Uzbekistan, the average family size in 1999 was 5.5 children (that is, 6.1 children in rural areas and 4.6 children in urban areas).

During social and economic modernization process within the Korean family and reflected contemporary interests, traditional Confucian values continued to be the dominant influence on the Korean family until the onset of industrialization. Though, the value of children – especially sons – as a means of continuing the family line has declined substantially among rural Koreans since the industrialization of the Korean society. With an access of women to a modern job market daughters were given a chance to provide the necessary succession, which for a quite long time has been a prerogative of sons.

The Confucian principles of family relationships, which were projected into the community and national life and given important social value, are perhaps as remote and strange to some of the younger generation of Koreans today as they are to Westerners. The Korean family during the premodern period, however, remained essentially Confucian as an ideal and in practice. Moreover, even after liberation, Korean family law emphasized the importance of blood relations and the authority of the male household head.<sup>62</sup>

Most of the studies done in the 1960s on the Korean family found that South Korea's rapid economic development and urbanization had not improved the social, political, or legal status of women. Despite certain obvious gains they had made in education and participation in the labor force, the notion of male superiority persisted within the family and throughout the society.<sup>63</sup> The father was boss and the mother his

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62 Refer to Cho, Lee-Jay, Confucianism and the Korean family. (Special Issue: Families in Asia: Beliefs and Realities) *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*; 3/22/1995

63 Refer to Jon, Byong-Je 1989 "Familism and Individualism for Modern Korean Women", in Christian Academy (ed.). *The Confusion in Ethics and Value in Contemporary Society and Possible Approaches to Redefinition*, pp. 91-98. Seoul: Wooseok

obedient assistant. Sons had priority over daughters in receiving food, clothing, and education.

Attitudes toward sex roles in the Korean family and the traditional concept of male superiority remained prevalent, even though women's social position has improved and their participation in social life has increased. Females lagged significantly behind males in post – middle school education, although progress has been made for both sexes. Education, however, does not tell the whole story and Korean women still have a long way to go in their struggle for equality. Many middle- and upper-class women with college degrees are inactive at home after marriage, often against their wishes. Although most working women take jobs out of economic necessity, their work status does not necessarily affect the male-dominant authority structure of the family. In the workplace, discriminatory practices against them in hiring, pay and promotion remain strong: few reach supervisory, managerial, or administrative positions. Upon marrying, working women are expected to retire from most corporate-sector jobs.

Rapid industrialization and urbanization have led to the change of sexual division of labor and improvements in women's education and labor force participation rate, but they have not fundamentally altered the economic status of Korean women or their economic role in the family.

Today customs governing marriage and divorce have undergone major changes. Young Uzbek and Korean women and men mingle freely in parks and streets, and a declining number of parents choose mates for their children. Among young people, cohabitation before marriage is becoming more common out of economic necessity. Eventually most of them had a marriage ceremony, in many cases with their children present. Children are sometimes a stabilizing factor in such marriages.

Despite these behavioral changes as well as changes in urban household composition, family type, and family size, attitudes of urban parents toward the selection of spouses for their children hardly changed during industrialization years. Although more permissive about dating and courtship practices, most parents still expect their children to seek their permission before marrying.

Son preference in Korea remains a deeply entrenched value because Korean women prefer sons to daughters, especially under the pressure of mother-in-law, and not

having a son is a source of severe emotional strain for women. A son is essential for securing status within the family, for economic support in old age, and for providing a successor for the family lineage.<sup>64</sup> In recent years, however, the value of children including son preference has been changing slowly.

In Uzbekistan patriarchal society has continued through the close family ties. Young newly-weds would often live close to their families in rural communities after marriage. Men expected their heirs to follow in the family trade and for this goal young men had to be prepared. The children of poor population would often suffer an unpromising future due to a lack of educational or economic support. The children that come from the poor population are restricted in the opportunities they are given. Sometimes, a young and poor Uzbek man would leave their paternal home for other pursuits and new family ties.

Family size and composition depended mainly on the place of residence-urban or -rural and -ethnic group. The size and composition of such families was also influenced by housing and income limitations, pensions, and female employment outside the home. The typical urban family consisted of a married couple, two-three children, and also included grandparents in the family structure, whose assistance in raising the children and in housekeeping was important in the large majority of families having two wage earners. Rural families generally had more children than urban families and often supported three generations under one roof. Families in Uzbekistan tended to have more children than families elsewhere in the Soviet Union. In general, the average family size has followed that of other industrialized countries, with higher income families having both fewer children and a lower rate of infant mortality.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, the Soviet government promoted family planning in order to slow the growth of the Central Asian indigenous populations. Local opposition to this policy surfaced especially in the Uzbek Republic. In general, however, the government continued publicly to honor mothers of large families. Women received the Motherhood Medal, Second Class, for their fifth live birth and the Heroine Mother medal for their tenth. Most of these awards went to women in Central Asia and the Caucasus<sup>65</sup>.

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64 Refer to Arnold, Fred. 1985. Measuring the Effect of Sex Preference on Fertility: The Case of Korea. *Demography* 22(2):280-288.

65 See the Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Factbook

In the Korean society in contrast to the rapid socio-economic changes taking place outside the home, within the family traditional Confucian values and roles persisted. Nevertheless, as the family structure gradually evolved into the nuclear form centering on the husband and wife, and as more women took jobs outside the home and women's rights became a prominent issue, the family's structure began to change from the husband-dominated type to a husband-wife type. The functional structure of the family began to change as well, from the traditional Confucian type to a more or less cooperative type. As for the decision-making pattern within the family, there is some evidence that it is becoming more democratic and less role-differentiated as Korean society becomes more urbanized and nuclearized. Moreover, in a majority of farm villages, the practical functions of kin in daily life – that is, mutual assistance and cooperation – were traditionally assumed by the father's relatives and traditional view considered by the yangban (noble) class that father's kin as more important than the mother's is no longer shared by the younger generation or the commoner class. The Confucian tradition of ancestral worship continues today, especially in rural areas, but the emphasis on honoring only the father's kin has weakened among the younger generation, especially in the cities. It is becoming increasingly common to honor the kin of both parents.

The deeply rooted preference accorded to patrilineal succession remains dominant, and there seems to be a limit to the tendency toward bilateral kinship relations. Regardless of whether separate households are maintained for the parents and the eldest son, the relationship between parents and children is based on mutual reliance and most children plan to rejoin their parents when the parents become too old to care for themselves. This trend indicates that although industrialization has caused urban families to evolve into the nuclear type, parents and their grown children still depend on one another to a great extent, in contrast to European nuclear families. However, there are signs that in urban areas family ties and the importance attached to kinship are gradually weakening.

As it has been stated before, most of Uzbek population is Sunni Muslims, who consider themselves followers of the Hannafi branch. Ten years following the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, the Soviet government wanted to liberate the women. Women were urged to publicly burn their paranjas (a form of Muslim robe a veil). Families and

communities who objected to this display became violent towards the women who took part in the burnings. After the campaigns ended, Soviet identification of the veil with ignorance, repression, and fanaticism remained.

Besides, in independent Uzbekistan there has been made advancements towards equality for women in the secular setting of patriarchal society and thus the year of 1999 has been declared as the Year of Women with further creation of special programs to improve legal basis for protecting interests of the women, maternity and children, for increasing the role of women in building the state and society, and so on. Yet, the program to aid advancement of women and other issues within the social division cannot develop due to a lack of both personal interest and capital.

The loyalty to the family, always taken as an untold rule, forces women to stay at home because no serious efforts are made on a social level to institutionalize the care of children and elderly members in the family. In a patriarchal family, that has been mainly women's work. Many people, especially male policymakers, think that the traditional family structure must be preserved at all costs. The model of the family invoked by Asian values is very often the one that characterizes social roles and division of labor which are highly oppressive for women as in a traditional society.

But the family as proposed in an ideal form is a myth even in such a conservative societies as Korea and Uzbekistan and will be even more so in the coming century. Though, situation is changing and divorce rate increasing, yet insufficient part of all households is headed by women. Confronted with changing social circumstances, we must adjust our narrow concept of the family to include various forms of living together. But excessive emphasis on the family as an institution keeps us from going in that direction and makes those people in non-standard family forms marginal and deficient, depriving their right to be happy as normal citizens. In the Korean society as well as Uzbek, divorced women and their children are among the most deprived people. Women, to pay respect to authority and consensus in a Korean Confucian patriarchy or even in Muslim Uzbekistan, must pay even higher price. As a woman in these cultures, especially in Confucian, 'the less you talk, the more virtuous you are'. Underlying is the assumption that a woman could not be an autonomous moral being who can make judgments on her own and be responsible for her own conduct.



Since the family remains patriarchal, and traditional culture strictly distinguishes between women's and men's places, between women's work and men's work, Asian values serve to limit equal opportunities for jobs. Various social institutions, like tax and social welfare systems, as well as social policies, like employment and unemployment policies, presuppose women to be housewives and often fail to count the female labor force as a real economic factor. For instance, during IMF period in Korea, the issue of women's right to work could not even be raised in the face of the massive restructuring that took place. Women were the first to be ousted from many workplaces. Even when the restructuring aims to make the company more competitive, the decision about who will be fired is made not on a meritocratic ground if it is a matter between two sexes. Women are reserve labor forces and always given less priority than men in job opportunities, let alone the discrimination in pay and promotion in their workplaces, simply because initial prerequisite based on woman's place is within the house.

Well, the family remains the most crucial stem of the society, despite all the changes it faces and here I should mention that the basic feature of character of the Uzbek and Korean families is hospitality and traditionally respectful esteem to the elders. Besides, Uzbekistan, as well as Korea, is a society where social networks are a highly valued resource, precisely because they help maintain civility.

In Uzbekistan, ritual ceremonies such as birth, circumcision, and wedding celebrations (known in Uzbek as beshik, sunnat, and Nikoh toi-i, respectively) are occasions for the exchange and reciprocation of material goods and the creation or maintenance of social ties. You invite those to whom you feel you owe a social obligation or whom you would like to obligate. This system of obligations became an extremely important strategy for social survival in the Soviet period where goods and services were tightly rationed and meted out by the state<sup>66</sup>. In reality, and perhaps especially in Central Asia, "the state" was nothing more than an enormous system of social networks and political status positions by means of which the economy functioned<sup>67</sup>. Thus, despite

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66 Refer to Kandiyoti, Deniz. 1998. "Rural livelihoods and social networks in Uzbekistan: perspectives from Andijan," in *Central Asian Survey* 17(4):561-578.

67 Refer to Katherine Verdery's "Theorizing Socialism: a prologue to the transition," in *American Ethnologist* 18:419-439, 1991.

ideological claims to the contrary, the formal and informal, red and black, official and underground economies, or however you wish to characterize them, operated in tandem.

By Uzbek government, in 1998 there has been issued a warning against lavish spending on social celebrations. This suggested that the tax official was accused of throwing an extravagant ritual celebration, thereby contributing to the aggravation of a national trend that for the majority of the Uzbek population was reaching crisis proportions. While it may seem incongruous, even patronizing how much people spend on their own weddings, the issue is actually of considerable social consequence for the health of the country's economy and its population's peace of mind. Most Uzbeks, indeed most Central Asians, use these celebrations to strengthen crucial social networks in the face of high inflation and scarce resources. Connections are often the only way to avoid paying prohibitive bribes for higher quality education, to obtain access to medical supplies, or just to turn a profit in a business venture. Many people cannot afford the escalating costs and expectations of these celebrations without going deeply into debt. To economize, however, is to risk losing one's status and social ties at a time of great economic uncertainty. Naturally, the standards for ritual celebrations are often set by those who already occupy a high social status in the society and possess considerable resources.

Social scientists have described the distribution of goods and services in Soviet society as being controlled by the central state<sup>68</sup>. In Uzbekistan, especially in the 'mahalla'<sup>69</sup>, this control was mediated by the *mahalla committee* or by its leader (referred to either *as rayis* in Uzbek, or *as predsedatel'* in Russian). For example, *the rayis* would often advise mahalla residents on the amount of food to prepare for ritual ceremonies such as weddings and funerals based on the number of people expected to attend. In this way, the local leader – wedding consultant might limit the accelerating conspicuous

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68 Ibid

69 'Mahalla' is Arabic word for 'place'. The word mahalla is used in reference to neighborhoods and informal neighborhood associations from Macedonia to Bengal and western China. It is more widespread and familiar to specialists of Islamic institutions. The local community as a form of social organization of a particular neighborhood has been around since olden days. It was known as the mahalla (mahalla means neighborhood, locality, or district) and was not only a territorial but also an administrative unit—the basic element of an urban or rural subunit. The mahalla in town and in village alike united people regardless of their social or ethnic backgrounds. The term "mahalla" has now been adopted in the republic to denote a local community. The mahalla is a form of neighborhood organization common throughout Central Asia.

consumption at such events which began to take off in the 1980s and which the Soviet government attempted to arrest. The *mahalla's* effect was to give bureaucratic institutions a 'human face'.

Generally, the mahalla, overlapped with kin and occupational networks, serves as a social foundation and framework for the formation of relationships of solidarity and trust. Its form has varied somewhat geographically and according to whether it was targeted as a political vehicle for social engineering, as tended to be the case in socialist countries. In the Soviet period policy makers and political activists tried to transform Uzbek *mahallas* into local administrative units by formalizing decision-making processes and appointing authority figures to committees accountable to municipal and republic-level governments. Despite these attempts, the mahalla continued to function, simultaneously, as a site where a range of social networks – familial, ethnic, and religious – could sustain themselves. People identified strongly with their native, or home, *mahalla* and drew on those collective ties to obtain many of the goods and services necessary to get by in life. This included access to everything from employment and education to building permits, welfare, food, and support for celebrating ritual events such as births, weddings, and deaths.

One of the ways in which mahalla solidarity was achieved (and it was by no means a perfect system) was through participation in holiday and life-cycle celebrations and through the distribution and circulation of food. For example, on the New Year holiday of Navruz<sup>70</sup>, when people throw celebration feasts and invite their neighbors. Since Central Asia came under Russian imperial and later Soviet rule, many Russians and people of other nationalities settled in Central Asia. Most lived in separate neighborhoods, forming their own communities and observing their own national, or Soviet, customs.

Since Uzbekistan became independent in 1991, and even earlier, thousands of non-Central Asians have emigrated abroad or to other destinations in the former Soviet

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70 In Persian, Navruz means "new day", or "a new day of the new year", to be precise. This day is celebrated on March 21st, which is on the day of vernal equinox, and it symbolizes the beginning of a calendar year in such countries as Iran, Afghanistan, in Kurdish regions of Iraq and Turkey, as well as in some countries of Central Asia. Following old traditions, Navruz is the day when people forgive each other's resentment; make it up with each other. Many people call on those who are poor, lonely or disabled, take care of them, and give them small gifts. In fact, the celebration of Navruz lasts the whole month. It was only after Uzbekistan became an independent state, that Navruz gained huge popularity.

Union. Nonetheless, many still remain and are finding themselves in increasing contact with Uzbek neighbors and Uzbek *mahalla* practices. The importance of at least symbolic collective participation and respect on the part of resident Russians is exchanged for material gifts or assistance from Uzbeks. This exchange helps maintain a sense of community and is manifested in social relations beyond the mahalla.

### ***Significance of the Marriage and Family through the Lens of ‘Winds of Change’***

In everyone’s life, both family and marriage play important roles in shaping a human being. Family is a very powerful tool, which is responsible for the influence on its members, while marriage is a fundamental bond that creates new families by expansion. However, these two vital institutions are constantly threatened by the influence of popular culture, contemporary values and progressive evolution of the societies.

Traditionally, the family has been defined as a group of individuals who are related by descent, marriage, remarriage, adoption, or kin. Also, it can be defined as one or more adults related by blood, marriage, or affiliation, who cooperate economically. It is complex to define a family, since every culture has its own way of defining this term. For example in Uzbekistan definition of those who belong in the family will extend all the way from one nuclear family to the additions of close kinship ties within. Alike Korea, families are really valuable for one in Uzbekistan, therefore it is usually common to see great strength in bondage between the so-called “distant relatives” and it is also common for a married couple to have as many children as are “granted to the couple by Allah”.

Unlike some Western countries, in Asia modern meaning of ‘Marriage’ denotes as a legally recognized union between a man and a woman in which they are united sexually; cooperate economically, and may give a birth to, adopt, or rear children. The union is assumed to be permanent.

As a result of socio-economic factors, all countries along Asia give more importance to the family rather than individuals. It is well-known that many rural-oriented Asian countries are poor and overpopulated. In such circumstances family

becomes the most effective means of endurance, and so individual learnt to combine own needs with family interests. For instance, in many cases poor family accumulates scarce savings to educate its most talented member, who in the future will help his/her family. Success, as well as obligations, is shared with family members and society, whereas obligations are taking care of children and elderly.

For the last 200 years, major revolutions have changed people's destiny. Firstly, American and French revolutions raised pennants of freedom, equality and sodality. These key events signalized beginning of monarchs' self-governance breakdown and laid foundation of human rights in the West. Second revolution started by Adam Smith and other apostles of free market, served as a launch of Human's economic liberty. When there is a political freedom, economic preferences, social responsibility and discipline, humanity has stable, progressive and sound society. Third great revolution is currently existing economic and political transformation in Asia, when overpopulation, scares of resources makes individuals work in group and gives excellent results like in case of Japan and Korea. Comparing to the West the future of the world will mostly resemble to overcrowded Japan rather than to the West that is abundant with resources and areas.

A likely result of these and other changes will be an erosion of Asia's social distinctiveness, which is already under blockade by a variety of factors. If the country wants to see some semblance of economic growth, it will have to expand its labor force, either through immigration or through allowing more women to work. Caught between these two choices, many Koreans for example would go for the latter, since immigration will be impossible. But this means that, over time, Korea too will begin to experience Western-style family disruption, and the social problems that grow out of it. The above quotation presupposes that when women go out to work and become economically independent, family disruption will take place. But it is the patriarchal family that will undergo disruption. Various forms of communal lives may come about and be experimented; though we do not yet know what kind they would be.

One of the core values, and perhaps the most obvious features of Islam and/or Confucian cultures, is family-centeredness and human relatedness. Uzbek and Korean societies consist of a tightly knit network whereas social relations are made exclusively through male relations; it is one of the biggest hindrances for women with a career or

entering the world of politics. The number of women politicians and bureaucrats as well as businesswomen is low in Korea, much lower than those countries with a similar level of economic development and I do not mention Uzbekistan where women's role in political governance is extremely modest. This means that women have few social connections and information to utilize and much more disadvantage in developing their potentialities. Human relatedness is a virtue as it reflects the inherently social nature of humans. But human separateness is as much a virtue because it also reflects the essential nature of human beings, that is, the integrity and the uniqueness of each individual who cannot be reduced to a simple role player in a well-defined role system. However, if our tradition could not provide what the contemporary women aspire for better lives, it's feasible to use of other cultural traditions and learn from them. That was the way we adopted democracy, its Western origin though. Likewise, feminism, though it is of Western origin in its form and ideals, can contribute to building new traditions in our countries that would open a new horizon for the good life to both men and women.

Nonetheless, the family, whatever forms it has: patriarchal, nuclear, extended, it makes society possible by producing (or adopting) and rearing children to replace the older members of society as they die off. Traditionally, production has been a unique function of the married family. This function is a whole purpose of building a family. Just like the animals, reproduction has guided two partners of the same species to team up and produce babies, which in turn grow out to be just like them. Naturally, family is built on the reproductive system, which in turn is built on the attraction of opposite sexes.

Every member of the family fulfills his/her social roles and these roles provide members with much of their identity. During our lifetimes, most of us will belong to two families: the family of orientation and the family of cohabitation. The family of orientation is the family in which people grow up, the family that orients them to the world. The family of orientation may change over time if the marital status of our parents changes. The family of cohabitation refers to the family person forms through living or cohabitating with another person, regardless of their marriage status.

It's acknowledged that the four important family functions are the provision of intimacy, the formation of cooperative economic unit, reproduction and socialization, and the assignment of social roles and status. Each family, as stated is a unit of economic

cooperation that traditionally divides its labor along gender lines. Although the division of labor by gender is characteristic of virtually all cultures, the work that males and females perform varies from culture to culture. In families there are usually no formal laws, but traditions that divide work among the members. Sometimes people can be “fired” from the family for conducting something unacceptable to the family traditions. However, many (if not all) cultures build their families based on traditional education, and once a child is being raised in the family where s/he is properly taught of his/her tasks, there is little chance that s/he will be forced out of the family. Economy in the families usually works “From each according to his ability; to each according to his need”, Marx states: “where usually those needs are earned with work”<sup>71</sup>.

We as humans continue to live in families for the following reasons. First, families offer continuity as a result of emotional attachments, rights, and obligations. Once humans choose a partner or have children, they do not have to search continually for new partners or family members, who can perform a family task or function better, such as cook, paint the kitchen, provide companionship, or bring home a paycheck. Humans expect their family members – whether partner, child, parent, or sibling – to participate in family tasks over their lifetimes. Second, families offer close proximity. Humans do not need to travel across town or cross-country for conversation or help. With families, humans do not even need to go out of the house; a husband or wife, parent or child, or brother or sister is often right at hand. Third, families offer an abiding familiarity with others. Few people know us as well as our family members, for they have seen us in the most intimate circumstances throughout our lives. They have seen us at our best and our worst, when we are kind or selfish, understanding or intolerant. This familiarity and close contact teach us to make adjustments in living with others. Fourth, families provide their members with many economic benefits. Various activities, such as laundry, cooking, shopping, and cleaning can be done almost as easily for several people as for one. As an economic unit, a family can cooperate to achieve what a single individual could not<sup>72</sup>. For

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71 See Marx, K. (19th century) The Marxian on the World Wide Web: <http://www.auburn.edu/~johnspm/gloss/communism.html>

72 Refer to Strong B., DeVault C., Sayad B.W., & Cohen T. (2000) “The Marriage and Family” (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth / Thompson Learning.

example if you cannot drive but know exactly what is needed to be bought, but your spouse can drive and has no idea what to buy, then you both can complement each other.

Discussing the kinship relationships, we must look at the extended family model. Not only does it consist of the cohabitating couple and their children, but also of other relatives, especially in-laws, grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins. In the majority of non-Western countries, the extended family is often regarded as the basic family unit. Earlier, I have mentioned that, in general, in Uzbek family, there are many relatives that are considered to be a part of the family, including the in-laws. I have personally witnessed how those families live, mourn and celebrate together.

From what have been summarized in this part, it can be concluded that every human being would be better off with some sort of a family. Not only, family will assign him/her roles and duties, family also will give this person an identity, emotional and economic support, and that is why even today, when it looks like our needs can be met outside of the family, we still continue to live in families. It also can be said that many of our needs cannot be met outside of our family, and that is why we continue to rely on and live in families.

### **Chapter-III. Socio-Economic Perspectives of ‘Changing’ Families**

In this chapter discourse will be given to the role of Confucian and Islamic economics in development of the modern Korean and Uzbek societies respectively. And here it is possible to draw together a number of agreed elements which the founders of Sociology believed would characterize a *modern society*: an industrialization of country, division of labor, urbanization, technology, mass communications, rise of bureaucracy, decline of community, decline of religion, rise of science, and the complete mastery of all areas of human life through science. I believe that all of these characteristics are presented in studied societies along with Confucian and Islamic traditional peculiarities.



### ***Role of the Social Institutions in Economic Development***

Traditionally, the community comprised four spheres of activity: economic, religious, ritual, and social. Throughout the 20th century in Uzbekistan and Korea, the relative importance of each of these spheres changed visibly. This transformation was shown in terms of economic distribution of resources among members of the society, thus women started to acquire more benefits and promote themselves as professionally shaped and skilled workers in rapidly changing job market, whereas societal prejudices of Asia such as men's predominance over women are moving backward.

Among many factors that made possible "Korean economic miracle", we should not forget of one important – Korean family. In fact, Korean family played a great role in transformation of one of the poorest countries into industrial power. When economists and historians state the reasons of economic spurt made in Korea and some neighbor countries during last two-three decades, they prefer to discuss that the chosen strategy was right, to value the role of lavish foreign credits and international influence itself. Certainly, they are right, but only partially. Korea to a greater extent obliged to its traditions that have been forming for thousands centuries. Among those traditions not less important role plays traditions that determine family structure and its way of life that I've described above.

Here I also should mention that Korean family in many respects differs from Western. Patriarchal family, that disappeared hundreds years ago in Western society, survives in Korea and Uzbekistan until these days.

It's also known that generally in Korea, unlike Uzbekistan, second marriage is out of question. People get married only once for the whole life, simply because it is kind of disgrace to get divorced – and Korea yields to US and ex-Soviet Union region approximately three times in the number of divorces. The reasons of these are: first of all Koreans are negative towards divorce, and by being divorced spouses condemn themselves to serious troubles. Divorced man may have some difficulties, and woman has no chance to ever get married again. Divorce in many cases serves like a barrier in making career, since in big companies or public organizations there is a perception like if a man couldn't manage his family life how he can manage this important work. That was

the case for the ex-Soviet Union region as well as Uzbekistan, divorce could significantly damage career for government official, political figure, and even how weird it seems but artist's career also might be harmed. Nonetheless, Uzbekistan slowly but surely changed habitual family values due to social norms' destructions and economic pitfalls challenging Uzbek families since 1990<sup>th</sup>. That's why in case of Uzbekistan for the last two decades second and even third marriage became very customary and accepted as a matter of fact.

Korean children live with their parents until they get married, and many of them stay in parental house. And it has been mentioned that later on kids should take care of parents, they are raised in the manner of absolute obedience to the parents and mother's word is the untold rule, law for the whole life. Probably you think what the matter with this is and how it's related to the overall economic growth in Korea.

We can actually compare Korea with other countries with the same economic level and you may find that in Korea the burden of different social payments like pension, stipend, and allowances are much less.

To the foreigner's eyes first visible thing is relatively low tax rate. For instance in US or Europe in last decades for the average citizen it's a norm to pay income taxes from 30 to 50% of the salary. It's obvious that there is no sense to work harder because anyway additional income will go to the 'pocket' of Tax Committees. Where these huge taxes are flowing? Nowadays, for instance in Uzbekistan, the huge amount of taxes goes to the social sector and first of all for paying social allowances, and supporting state programs on social security.

In Western societies there are lots of divorces, many 'single' parents with kids – as a result they should be paid quite huge amounts of allowances. Also since in the West it's accepted that kids live separately from parents and they don't take care of parents – governments should provide social support to this category of citizens and pay lots of money for pensions and keeping old-people's houses (in America for many years this became a very common thing).

Moreover, in the West children leave home at the age of 18-19, and they cannot count on parents' support anymore, state has to figure out different financial schemes in order to give these young people to acquire an education.

In Korea there is no need for it. Korea has to support Army, which is relatively huge for its population and also different Special Agencies. Despite this fact, Korea distinguishes by its low tax rates: even rich people pay no more than average Korean who pays 15-20% of the total amount of incomes.

Sound Korean Families relieves from the State lots of weight of care, letting by this to concentrate on the most important: defense, development of foreign relations, creating economic infrastructure. Meaning that, these characteristics of Korean family are just one out of many reasons of Korean economic successes, and of course far from being major, but you cannot forget about it.

Old patriarchic structure breaks apart, under western influence, but not only because of this. This process goes slowly, but it's already obvious, sooner or later Korea also will face the same problem in its social policy, as it's being solved in western societies. But there is still a long way to go...

Uzbekistan is having transition period from a centrally planned to a market economy. In general, the transition has resulted in a significant fall in living standards for most of the population. The transition period has been accompanied by a decline in production, an increase in unemployment, high inflation, decreasing standards of living, and finally increasing income differentiation and inequality. For example, the real average per capita income was halved from 1991 to 1996. High inflation is one critical factor here, where, according to the Ministry of Macroeconomics and Statistics, the annual inflation rate for 2000 was 26.5 percent. Unemployment is on the rise in Uzbekistan, with estimates of hidden unemployment as high as 30 percent. Aggravating this situation are the half a million young people who join the labor market each year.

During the Soviet era, the majority of the Uzbek population considered poor did not really suffer from absolute poverty as these days. Most of them had jobs or other sources of income, had adequate housing and enjoyed free health care and education. The decline in the level of government services such as child care, health and education over the last 10 years has in fact made the experience of relative poverty far worse than during the Soviet period. Besides, there are now more groups at risk of poverty than 10 years ago. 10-15 years ago there were only three distinguishable social classes – the poor, the middle class and the rich – with the middle class comprising 80-85 percent of the

population. And now people differentiate up to six social classes – including the new categories of the very rich and the destitute. While those most at risk of poverty are still largely rural people and vulnerable groups, such as single mothers and single pensioners, new groups of people are confronted by the problems of high inflation, cost of living and unemployment. For example, poverty occurs most frequently in families with a large number of children 38.3 percent of families have four or more children, and 19.6 percent of families have three children. And membership to what has been called “the new poor” now extends to formerly middle class professionals such as doctors, teachers, scientists and employees of enterprises facing financial difficulties associated with structural adjustments.

The family affairs in Uzbekistan are based on institutional countenance of life, traditions and customs and revolved within the neighborhood community that sustains the essential values of the whole society and here noteworthy to mention that the *mahalla* determines the whole range of social relations of an individual in daily life. It is not a vanishing institution, a simple remnant of the distant past, as is the case in many Muslim countries, but a living unit which even continued to flourish during the Soviet era. The mahalla appears to be a real group, which imposes certain obligations on its members and thus involves them into a web of mutual responsibilities. Every event in the family attracts neighbors, but on major occasions such as weddings or funerals, the whole community assembles. Inevitably this common activity means that all members of the *mahalla* are involved in material relations; a constant flow of gifts and services. Apart from reliance on personal assistance of neighbors, the family can count on the institutional support of the *mahalla* as a whole. Many valuable services are available within the *mahalla* itself. The motive "if something happens" is often used when people explain their loyalty to kinship or to the neighborhood community.

While the *mahalla* fits the notion of the typical Muslim community of a quarter, the community in the mid-1980s can equally be called a typical Soviet bureaucratic institution. It had a formally elected head of community, who was in fact appointed by the regional party committee. A head of a mahalla was assisted by the "mahalla committee", which was a Soviet creation, though it fitted harmoniously into the traditional form of communal organization. A number of specialized commissions with

perfect Soviet labels dealt with such matters as women's problems, veterans' problems, and the organization of family as well as civic festivals. The *mahalla* organized ideological campaigns, and lectures on the international situation. While in Soviet times the state was interested in only one aspect of communal life, the ideological one, the new Uzbek state tries to formalize even those aspects of life that usually escaped its control. The *mahalla* has always been a cell of society, but now attempts are made to make it a cell of the state as well. It is being created in an untraditional setting – in areas with multi-store buildings, and it trends to include even the non-Asian population, for whom this form is unfamiliar. A new unified structure, involving both the city and the village, is being created.

The economic function of the *mahalla* corresponds to major directions of the state economic policy. In the “*perestroika*” years, especially in the closing period, the *mahalla* committee distributed rationing cards for basic food stuffs. The distribution of goods was organized through local shops, serving the neighboring *mahalla*. Thus the *mahalla* authorities had control over commerce and could do something to remedy for the tendency to divert goods to the black market. When the state started to encourage cooperative enterprises, the *mahalla* was granted a right to set up its own production units, workshops, and to lease land and buildings to small enterprises. This stage, however, did not last long, as the privileges given to *mahalla* did not allow the state to tax the newly created production properly. With the end of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the local economy and the dramatic drop in living standards of the majority of the local population, the state organized large-scale distribution of social benefits through the *mahalla*. At present it is one of the most important functions of this institution and the one which gives rise to numerous conflicts. The *mahalla* committee is supposed to be mindful of the financial circumstances of different households and to distribute aid according to needs. This, however, turns out to be a very contentious issue. The *mahalla* is mobilized every time the state needs reliable information about the inhabitants of the quarter.

The local community was based on a number of fundamental principles and characteristics specific of eastern society: democracy, paternalism (respect for ruling authority, and the guardian-like attitude by its head toward the people), continuity, respect for elderly people and their moral values, care of future generations, and the high

status and social importance enjoyed by the family. All of these principles are deeply ingrained in Uzbek consciousness both on the individual and on the mass level. The specifics of eastern mentality include collectivism as a core element. An eastern person always sees himself (herself) as a member of a certain community, and herein lays its great value for an Uzbek.

The community proved viable, helping preserve the old way of life and customs and traditions. The Soviet regime had to reckon with that and use the community in its own interests – to prevent it from slipping out of control. The authorities' persistent struggle with the “legacy of the past” and the traditional Muslim way of life and their attempts to replace it with standards alien to the people only changed the traditional way of life on the purely formal level.

In the past, the community was a self-sufficient organism. In late 19th-early 20th centuries, Uzbeks typically lived and worked on the territory of their *mahalla*, their relations with other *mahallas* (especially among women) being at best random. Within such a community, a person was not an independent and autonomous subject but the part of a social group – a territorial community or a religious parish. Not only was he limited territorially, but also socially (subject to the rules of his community), on the other hand, his status in that world was relatively stable and protected by the social community.

The 20th century brought forth the need for new knowledge, leading to an expansion in the field of professional activity. New social norms and values were adopted: schools of general education, institutions of higher learning, a wide-ranging world of information and an appropriate network for its consumption. The *mahalla* began to evolve from an introvert to an extrovert setup, finding its niche in the new, post-industrial period.

There is a belief that the viability and adaptability of the territorial community to new socioeconomic reality is the product of the specific mentality of the Uzbek people, whose mass consciousness is dominated by communal psychology. The viability of traditional institutions stems from the fact that “collective consciousness has not been replaced with individual consciousness” and an individual's life is shaped not so much by individual will as by the will and decisions of familial and communal structures. At the same time, we are now seeing an individualization of values and value judgments among

some elements of traditional society. The community reacts fairly flexible to the aspiration for individualism, without either condemning or suppressing it, but putting an emphasis on compliance with the will of the majority. Collective consciousness is just beginning to be replaced with individual consciousness. The future of the community hinges on how dynamic this process will be. Another problem is whether the community is a hindrance to the manifestation of individual will and the pushes of a new way of life.

### ***Importance of Familism and Social Benefit***

Lately the rapid change of family structure in industrialized societies is being a major concern, because the family is the most important unit of society, it plays an essential role in fulfilling the emotional and physical needs of individuals, which is necessary for the achievement of economic and social development. Describing a situation of mutual dependence between the family and development, I have to stress that the advancement of families and education cannot, nevertheless, be achieved without economic development, poverty eradication and the enforcement of peace and security in the societies. In this term, families in Uzbekistan received special attention from the highest levels in the State. Special family programs are being promoted during the last decade and aim to protect the rights of the child and the welfare of mother and child. Besides educational and marriage counseling are being organized through lectures and the media, for the purpose of promoting best practices, as well as providing financial assistance and social support for young couples and troubled families. The Government had also passed laws to protect working women and to help provide balance between the demands of work and motherhood.

While Uzbekistan is struggling towards economic stability, the Korean society has successfully passed this through. Thus Korea had already implemented social development programs aimed at reducing poverty and generating employment opportunities. Korea's poverty reduction strategy was built on the concept of promoting broad-based economic growth, social development, good governance and programs for

social inclusion. Substantial progress had been achieved in increasing life expectancy and literacy rates. Besides Korea attached importance to the aspirations of youth and believed young people should be integrated in the development process by providing them with gainful employment opportunities. Korea was also committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of disabled persons and the elderly.

In Uzbekistan the Family Code passed in 1998 regulates marital and family relations, property rights and disputes. According to the Family Code, spouses enjoy equal rights; polygamy is illegal and only civil registration of marriage is recognized as legal. (Religious ceremonies, such as *Nikoh*, have no legal status). However, the Family Code does contradict with the provisions outlined in the CEDAW<sup>73</sup> where the age of marriage is set at 18. Another area of concern is how the Family Code which allows young women to marry at 17— and even at 16—will interact with the system of 12 years compulsory education. It is feared that early marriages may lead to young women not completing their secondary education.

In practice women's formal high legal status does not reflect women's legal status on the ground. Women's legal rights are frequently infringed upon. Lately, women are the first to lose their jobs, especially women with many children. Forced early marriages and the refusal to allow women to work outside the home also violate the rights of women. Families prefer to deal with – or more likely – hush up domestic and sexual violence against women and children. This makes it more difficult for authorities to prosecute and emphasizes the role that culture and lack of legal literacy play in the continuing violation of the rights of women and children in Uzbekistan.

In Uzbek society there is a perception *of the unmarried woman as an inferior creature and of childless woman as a monster* – many women decide to give birth, even if they are aware of potential damage to their health, for fear of being considered childless or infertile. The perceived need to bear a male heir also drives Uzbek women to bear “as many as God gives” without considering their own health, desires, or the family's economic situation.

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<sup>73</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women.



In correspondence with the physical composition and natural ambitions of a man who provides for the family, he is the family's spiritual leader, while a woman is the custodian of spiritual values which are subordinated to the man. This is where the essential difference between man and woman lies. It is for this reason that men dominate in the progress of their society, in its material production and its management. Women, due to their physical frailty and weakness, satisfy their needs with the help of men; they depend on and are subordinate to men. This is the essential foundation of the family. In some interpretations of the Qur'an, the central text of Islam, there is a statement: "Men dominate over women"... The family will be stronger as long as it observes this order<sup>74</sup>.

Moreover, in Uzbekistan there is a growing interest in both Islam and Uzbek cultural traditions, although it is impossible to separate Islam and "tradition" in this context as any exploration of Uzbek history, language and culture will necessarily include aspects of Islam. Popular discussions of the role of Uzbek traditions and Islam in an independent Uzbekistan can be found in the media and often emanate from government sources. One of the most visible signs of this renewal is the increasing number of women and girls wearing *hijab*. Although the Government is concerned that traditional and Islamic influences may negatively impact on economic development, the Government has deployed Uzbek cultural symbols to mark the transition from Soviet control to independent nationhood.

It is important that Islamic resurgence is not used to justify and reassert patriarchal gender structures. The Government has a crucial role in legislating and acting to protect women's equal access to and participation in educational and employment opportunities. Moreover, it is clear that women's participation in economic activities and continued involvement in higher and vocational education are important strategies in working against gender stereotypes that restrict women to the home. Such strategies are in addition economically important, given women's crucial economic contribution to their households during the current economic difficulties.

During the Soviet Union era, many earlier customs and religious observances were discouraged. Mosques were closed and religion brought tightly under the control of the State. Women were supported and encouraged to pursue public, political and

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<sup>74</sup> Refer to Markazzi *Asiya Madaniyati* (The Culture of Central Asia), No. 1, 1998

professional lives. A number of initiatives were introduced such as a female quota in government and legislative reforms and labor regulations designed to ensure equal rights and employment for women. These led to the emergence of female intellectuals, professionals and state administrators and the achievement of a near 100 percent literacy rate for women and men. This was ideologically buttressed by a view of the equality between men and women aggressively propagated in the Soviet mass media. While this remains central to the ideal male-female relationship in Uzbekistan, economic hardships and the renewed interest in tradition have “changed the contours of such equality.” The difficulties of the transition period in Uzbekistan negatively affected the system of health protection, social security, education, human rights protection.

More than 60 percent of the Uzbek population lives in rural areas. The economic crisis has had its most severe impact in rural areas, where the quality of health care is very poor, and hospitals and clinics lack equipment and medication. The situation is especially critical given the environmental degradation in rural areas: the Soviet-era use of pesticides and toxic defoliants in Uzbekistan’s cotton plantations harmed the environment and resulted in severe water shortages as irrigation projects diverted massive amounts of water to the field. Especially the Aral Sea region was affected, where the greater part of water is unsanitary.

As elsewhere in the post-communist world, the economic hardship after the demise of communism has led to disproportionate declines in women's status and well-being. Overall economic contraction in Uzbekistan has led to an upsurge in unemployment; although official statistics minimizes this problem.<sup>75</sup> Growth of women's unemployment in the state sector of the economy has been offset to some extent by rising employment in the informal sector and in agriculture. Women’s discrimination is based on age and family status. For instance, preference is given to younger women with less experience and fewer qualifications and to women without children over women with small children. Pregnant women are rarely hired at all. Male workers also tend to be promoted faster and their overall salaries and status are higher than those of women who have the same education and experience. Women are increasingly concentrated in low-

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<sup>75</sup> Refer to UNDP, Human Development Report: Uzbekistan, 1999, p. 23.

wage sectors of the workforce, and receive lower wages than men for the same work. However, men and women who occupy equal positions do receive equal pay.<sup>76</sup>

In case of Korean society that has undergone major social and economic changes – rapid industrialization, urbanization, and unprecedented economic expansion have occurred since the 1960s. The gross national product (GNP) grew at an average annual rate of more than 8 percent: during 1962-86<sup>77</sup>. An agrarian economy has been replaced by an industrial economic base characterized by export-led industries that depend on a comparative advantage in low-wage labor as a result of massive rural-to-urban migration. Whereas about one-fourth of the population of the South resided in cities in 1955, today more South Koreans live in cities than live in towns and villages.

Along with the rapid economic development, illiteracy has been virtually eliminated. Most Koreans complete nine years of formal education, and many continue through high school and college. A modern educated class dominates the economy and the society. The traditional class system, based on ascribed status, has given way to a modern stratification system based primarily on income, occupation, and education.

Notable among these changes is an evolution from the traditional stem family to the nuclear family – that is, a transition from three-and four-generation households to one-and two-generation households and from large to small families in both rural and urban areas. In previous chapter I have mentioned Korea is widely believed to be one of the most successful countries in reducing its level of fertility. This decline has had a tremendous effect on individual families – with higher income and fewer children raising the quality of the second generation. Consequently, more and more farm families, traditionally the predominant family group, are moving into the urban industrial sector.

Despite these sweeping economic, demographic, and social changes, Korean families still display strong, patriarchal characteristics inherited from their Confucian past, though these changes have not been accompanied by improved social, political, and legal status for women<sup>78</sup>. Despite obvious gains made by women in education and economic

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76 Refer to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Initial reports of States Parties, Uzbekistan, CEDAW/C/UZB/1, February 2, 2000, pp. 59-61

77 Refer Cho, Lee-Jay. Confucianism and the Korean family. (Special Issue: Families in Asia: Beliefs and Realities). *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*; 3/22/1995

78 Ibid

participation, like in Uzbekistan the notion of male superiority still persists within the family and the society. The father is boss and the mother is his obedient assistant; sons take precedence over daughters in meals, clothing, and education.

Contemporary urban family and social life in Korea at the start of the 1990s exhibits a number of departures from traditional family and kinship institutions. One example is the tendency for complex kinship and family structures to weaken or break down and be replaced by structurally simpler two generation, nuclear families. Another closely related trend is the movement toward equality in family relations and the resulting improvement in the status of women. Thirdly, there is a movement away from lineage and neighborhood-based social relations toward functionally based relations. People in the cities no longer work among their relatives or neighbors in the fields or on fishing boats, but among unrelated people in factories, shops and offices. Finally, there is an increasing tendency for an individual's location and personal associations to be transitory and temporary rather than permanent and lifelong, although the importance of school ties is pivotal. There is greater physical mobility as improved transportation facilities, superhighways, and rapid express trains make it possible to travel between cities in a few hours. Subsidiary transportation networks have broken down barriers between once isolated villages and the urban areas. Mobility in human relations is also becoming more apparent as people change their residences more frequently, often because of employment, and an increasing proportion of the urban population lives in large, impersonal apartment complexes.

During this century, Korean exposure to Western influence, including science, technology, and rationalism, has played a decisive role in the transformation of the country from an agricultural to a modern industrialized society. Despite these changes, the Confucian influence on the Korean family is still strong, as evidenced by the persistent deference by wives to their husband's status and role, son preference, and strong kinship bonds. Whether parents and their eldest son maintain separate households or not, the relationship between parents and their children remains strong, being based on mutual reliance, and many grown children plan to live with their parents when the parents grow old and require help. The wife's involvement in family decision making has increased but is still subordinate to that of the husband, particularly in financial matters.

The ethics and values espoused by the traditional Confucian influence of the past are changing slowly but surely.

In Korea today, as a result of the rapid transformation of the economy and society in recent decades, there appears to be a conflict between traditional values and the Confucian heritage on the one hand and Western influence through economic and social changes on the other. That conflict is being played out between parents and children, men and women, and superiors and subordinates as they attempt to apply, depending on their viewpoint, traditional Confucian values or modern egalitarian principles – in the family, in the workplace, and in their actions as individuals. This diversity is generating a great deal of tension and threatens social harmony and consensus in Korean society.

Contrary to the Confucian ideal, the nuclear family consisting of a husband, wife, and children is becoming predominant in contemporary Korea. It differs from the traditional “branch family” or “little house” (chagunjip) for two reasons: the conjugal relationship between husband and wife tends to take precedence over the relationship between the son and his parents, and the nuclear family unit is becoming increasingly independent, both economically and psychologically, of larger kinship groups. These developments have led to greater equality among the family units established by the eldest and younger sons. Whereas the isolated nuclear family was perceived in the past as a sign of poverty and misfortune, the contemporary nuclear family is often viewed as being a conscious choice made by those who do not wish their privacy invaded by intrusive relatives.

Economic relations between the generations of a single family changed radically in the transition from traditional rural to modern urban society. With the development of modern industry and services, however, each adult generation and nuclear family unit has become more or less economically independent, although sons might depend upon their parents or even their wife's parents for occasional economic assistance – for example, in purchasing a house. Because urban families usually live apart from their paternal in-laws, even when the householder is the eldest son, the wife no longer has to endure the domination of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law. In many cases, the family is closer to the wife's parents than to the husband's. The modern husband and wife often are closer emotionally comparing to the old family system. They spend more time together and

even go out socially, a formerly unheard-of practice. Yet, the expectation still remains – that elderly parents will live with one of their children, preferably a son, rather than on their own or in nursing homes. This expectation could change in the last decade of the century, however, with the expansion of health care and social welfare facilities.

Outside the nuclear family, blood relationships still are important, particularly among close relatives, such as members of the same ‘*tangnae*’, or mourning group. Relations with more distant relatives, such as members of the same lineage, tend to be weak, especially if the lineage has its roots in a distant rural village, as most do. Ancestor rites are practiced in urban homes, although for fewer generations than formerly: the majority of urban dwellers seem to conduct rites only in honor of the father and mother of the family head.

Industrialization of the country has made life more hectic and complicated. Young married couples have begun to separate from their extended families and start their own homes. Now almost all families are couple-centered nuclear families.

All these societal, structural changes are the plain evidence for Korea and Uzbekistan that move toward Western style of living from obsolete Confucian and Islamic traditions. From the Renaissance epoch Europe became what it is now: less-traditional, industrialized, modern society. By ‘paying tributes’ to the old traditions and her great history, Europe is transforming rapidly and now is farther from oriental societies like Korea and even much more ahead from Islamic society of Uzbekistan.

## **Conclusions**

The vast changes that have swept Asia and the rest of the world in the latter half of the 20th century have naturally been felt in the day-to-day lifestyle of every Uzbek and Korean citizen. Traditional customs have undergone a great deal of change due to the rapid modernization of the societies. Despite these changes, however, there are those who maintain that Korea – for all its high-rise buildings, those who maintain Uzbekistan – for all its secularity and openness in terms of religious beliefs, are still very Confucian and

Muslim nations respectively. The traditional ways of the past and the long-cherished customs continue to influence newly acquired modern ways.

In this regard, and also from the point of traditional view, values taught in the families ought to be the basic values from the Confucian and Islamic traditions, rather than secular humanism being taught in modern time. Therefore, traditional moralists would say that rather than subsidizing child care we should be implementing policies which would permit mothers to stay at home to be full time mothers and housewives. I suppose these defenders of traditional values are willing to support an idea that divorce laws have made divorce too easy and so we should support the new laws to make divorce much more difficult to obtain.

Traditionally, only a few decades ago, the eldest male of a Confucian as well as Muslim family was regarded as the source of supreme authority. All family members were expected to do what was ordered or desired by him. Strict instructions were to be obeyed without protest, especially by Confucian law, whereas it would have been unthinkable for children or grandchildren to place themselves in opposition to the wishes of their elders. Confucian obedience to one's superiors was deemed natural; in addition, filial piety in particular was viewed as the most revered of all Confucian virtues. On the other hand, it was understood that the patriarch of the family would be fair in all matters relating to the discipline of family members whether this is Confucian or Islamic family. Why was it so? For instance according to Islam, the head of the state is no mere figurehead. He leads people in the prayers, especially on Fridays and festivities; he is continuously engaged in the process of decision-making pertaining to the security and well-being of his people. This demanding position, or any similar one, such as the Commander of the Army, is generally inconsistent with the physiological and psychological make-up of woman in general. It is a medical fact that women often undergo various physiological and psychological changes. Such changes may occur during an emergency situation, thus affecting her decision, without considering the excessive strain which is produced. Moreover, some decisions require a maximum of rationality and a minimum of emotionality – a requirement which does not coincide with the instinctive nature of women.

However any fair investigation of the teachings of Islam and the history of the Islamic civilization will surely find a clear evidence of woman's equality with man in what we call today “political rights”.

This includes the right of election as well as the nomination to political offices. It also includes woman's right to participate in public affairs. Both in the Qur'an and in Islamic history we find examples of women who participated in serious discussions and argued even with the Prophet himself.<sup>79</sup>

Although not mentioned in the Qur'an, one Hadith of the Prophet is interpreted to make woman ineligible for the position of head – be it state or simply family. The Hadith is referred to roughly translate: “A people will not prosper if they let a woman be their leader.” This limitation, however, has nothing to do with the dignity of woman or with her rights. It is rather, related to the natural differences in the biological and psychological make-up of men and women as described above. Moreover, it is more logical to explain the present situation in terms of the natural and indisputable differences between man and woman, a difference which does not imply any “supremacy” of one over the other. The difference implies rather the “complementary” roles of both the sexes in life.

In its own way, we also should not exclude from consideration liberal point of view on family issues, whereas liberalists would not argue the importance of the family as an extremely important institution for the care of children and providing for the basic love and psychological needs of adults. However, they would eagerly support an idea of the contemporary societies – as societies change and evolve the family structures will need to change as well.

Although, the family has been recognized throughout humanity as an important and basic element of any society, it is not created by definition but must recognize the forms which the family is really taking in our societies. In Korea and Uzbekistan, it is regarded as a potentially powerful agent for political, economic, cultural and social change, as well as a potent vehicle for the care, protection and development of their members. Rethinking our family policy and recognizing that the single parent family is becoming a form of family in our societies, children from these families are often

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<sup>79</sup> See Qur'an 58: 14 and 60: 10-12



handicapped by the lower incomes in these families, and thus high quality affordable day care is an absolute necessity for these families. It is far more humane and cheaper in the long run for children to get a good start than to try to deal with juvenile delinquency and crime later on.

The major factor which has led to the big changes in the family of Korean and Uzbek societies has been that people feel like they cannot afford a middle class life style based on the income of one parent.

For all the talk about the problems of divorce and the neglect of children, the central problem at the core is insufficient income for the poor and the working poor to support a decent family life.

Until this basic problem is addressed, many families will struggle and fail to provide happiness for the adult members and well adjusted children for the society. Important fact is that practically the majority of Koreans and Uzbeks still live with their children, and foremost the rule of obedience didn't vanish till our days. However, Confucian rule stating that eldest son and his wife should take care of parents is not being followed in modern times; rather it depends on some family circumstances and not the age of the family members, as well as prescribed Confucian norms.

Yet parents, living separately can always rely on financial support of their children. In Confucian and Islamic traditions love and respect for parents are considered as an important virtue and this gives assurance that aged people will have an appropriate living.

In the past, several generations often lived together, and many children were desired for the future stability and security of the family. It was not unusual for the number of people sharing one house to total a dozen people or more. In recent years, however, the move to urban areas and popularity of new apartment-type housing has meant that newly married couples tend to live on their own instead of sharing quarters with other family members. This trend has given rise to an increasing number of nuclear families in studied societies.

Maintenance of steady family ties in Uzbekistan and Korea is an important social and economic force. In case of Korea strong family ties release the state from the necessity to support social welfare system and thus it keeps taxes at low rates comparing

to other developed countries. Indeed, despite common delusion, medical services and pensions, and not military expenditures, are the burden for the state budget of developed countries. Yet, Korea faces the same problem as the majority of developed countries – aging population. Birth rate is declining, youth population is slowly going down and by 2010 it has been predicted that birth rate will be equal to mortality rate, whereas average life expectancy will reach 76 (comparing to 70.8 in 1990).

As it is assumed, aging societies sooner or later will push developed countries to start wrapping excessively lavish pension programs, which have been started in 1960<sup>th</sup> during global economic boom epoch. And current pension reforms in Belgium are a plain example of such projections.

Korea, as well as Uzbekistan, takes different way, step by step creating pension system, though this is not clear how this system will influence on the family structure. Here it should be mentioned – the presence of a sound family allows families manage the life without pension support, additionally, the absence of developed system of social support strengthens the family, forcing parents to pay more attention to upbringing and education of the children – future backbone in the frosty years of life.

Over the period of 2-3 decades, Korea had achieved upright growth rates, the country had also embarked on a more aggressive implementation of policies aimed at addressing the most critical threats to macroeconomic stability and long-term growth and development. The development plans had thus provided a blueprint for sustainable socio-economic development and embodied the anti-poverty and overall development framework of the country. Social integration of disadvantaged groups had been promoted through policies and programs designed to increase an access to qualitative education, health, nutrition and reproductive healthcare. However, while many significant achievements had been realized, the work on social development remained a never-ending struggle. For that reason, Uzbekistan held the following areas, among others, to be priorities for action. Developing countries must address weaknesses in their macroeconomic environments and fiscal conditions; pro-poor growth must be pursued through programs promoting rapid economic growth, reduction in income inequality and increased access to resources and jobs; the quality of basic education must be improved;

and a credible and complete database for monitoring and formulating social development policy actions should be established.

The elimination of gender disparity in acquiring an education or employment opportunities was one of the most important goals of modern Uzbekistan, but it was not enough. It was not enough to achieve legal equality, as legal equality did not automatically lead to real equality between men and woman. Young women, living in rural areas, must be accorded the same opportunities in education and work as young men. Illiteracy in the rural areas is still mostly a problem of Uzbek girls and women and the majority of people living in poverty are women.

Considering all the abovementioned facts, I would like to conclude my research with the statement I started with – the family is a primary building block of the society, and here we should not forget the importance of the traditional family, the structure of which is one of the factors of Korean and Uzbek culture that made it great.

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