

Discourse Analysis of Religious Authority and Gender Norms in Kazakh Social Media: Rizabek Battaluly's Patriarchal Views

Assyltay Tasbolat¹

Abstract

Gender equality and women's rights are among the most discussed issues in the context of Islam. In Kazakh society, perceptions of women's gender roles are historically and culturally influenced. Currently, religious discourse plays an active role in defining women's gender roles on social media in Kazakhstan. With the rise of social media, traditional views of conservative religious authorities regarding women are being actively retransmitted. This article analyzes the statements of Rizabek Battaluly concerning women through discourse analysis. Additionally, it critiques patriarchal religious discourse within the framework of contextual reading methods that offer egalitarian interpretations of Quranic verses related to women.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Kazakh Social Media, Conservative and Patriarchal Discourses, Women's Rights, Equality, Contemporary Islamic Thinkers, Egalitarianism.

INTRODUCTION

In our days, social media platforms serve a variety of purposes and objectives. The use of religious discourse in media is becoming increasingly common. The connection between religion and social media is becoming more evident. The interaction between religion and media is becoming institutionalized and is a topic of public discussion.

However, it is important to note that the implementation of religious discourse through social media significantly differs from its implementation in religious settings (such as mosques), both in terms of presentation and aspects like the target audience. As for the objectives of religious discourse, they remain consistent regardless of the sphere in which they are realized.

Religious discourse represents a distinct form of institutional discourse, aimed at engaging the audience with religion, the concept of God, and the moral doctrine of a particular faith. Discourse, in this context, is primarily understood as speech that is actualized through various linguistic means, contingent upon the communicative intent and the social sphere of its usage. When examining the phenomenon of religion within the framework of discourse theory, the research object is the meaning-making processes (communicative acts) that are directed towards conveying the experience of faith or integrating individuals into a system of religious beliefs.

In various years, Rizabek Battaluly, who has been involved in controversies over his conservative religious sermons on social media, has revealed his views on women, highlighting the stance of religious discourse on gender roles. Rizabek Battaluly's remarks on striking women, made eight years ago, are once again a hot topic of discussion on social media. The theologian stated that the whip, traditionally hung in the Kazakh household, serves to bring women to repentance, and mentioned that it is permissible to "lightly strike" a woman. In one of his widely circulated sermons from 2016, he suggests that men are created to be dominant and implies that women should be controlled.

"Strike them, our Prophet said, but only in a way that does not cause injury or break a bone. In the past, why was a whip hanging in a Kazakh household? When women saw the whip, they would repent because they had experienced its use. If you start deviating from the right path from the first day, they should know that this is the response they will get," he stated (Amangaliyeva 2014).

¹ Institute for Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies, Almaty, Kazakhstan; Nur-Mubarak Islamic University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, (Corresponding Author)

He was born on February 5, 1980, in the village of Aktasty, Tattimbet rural district, Karkaraly district, Karaganda region, into a large family. He began his religious education in Kazakhstan and pursued further religious studies at Al-Azhar University from 2007 to 2011. In 2014, he completed his master's degree at Nur-Mubarak Islamic Culture University. He is the author of books on Quranic exegesis and Aqeedah (Islamic theology). He is active on social media platforms such as Instagram and regularly publishes sermons and lectures on various YouTube channels.

We have taken this widely circulated sermon on social media as an example of the articulation of religious discourse. Analyzing such sermons through discourse analysis helps in assessing the impact of religious discourse on shaping gender roles. In this context, social media serves as the medium, and the religious discourse disseminated through media acts as a factor in forming specific religious moral stances.

In this article, the subjects of religious discourse are understood to include all participants in this type of communication. They can be divided into agents and clients: "Agents are those who play an active role in institutional communication, while clients are those who are compelled to address the agents and act as representatives of society in relation to the representatives of the institution. In the context of religious discourse, agents are religious authorities, and clients are the listeners.

When it comes to the implementation of discourse on social media, the circle of participants expands significantly. Thus, participants can be divided into three groups: agents, clients, and intermediaries. As in the religious sphere itself, agents are representatives of various denominations. Intermediaries are social media platforms. Clients, in turn, can also be divided into two categories: active and passive recipients. Active recipients are those who intentionally choose religious content for themselves. Passive recipients are those who partially unconsciously accept the information offered to them. This category of clients typically makes their choice unconsciously.

One of the first researchers to analyze religious content in Kazakhstani Islamic media was Professor Ulan Bigozhin of Nazarbayev University. He examined patriarchal-masculine discourses in the sermons of religious figures through the lens of contemporary anthropology (Bigozhin 2019). Wendell Schwab explores what makes Muhammedzhan Tazabek so popular and why he is an Islamic authority for many Kazakhs (Schwab 2022). Both researchers conducted their studies within the framework of socio-cultural anthropology.

We have chosen discourse analysis as one of our research methods. In the broadest sense, discourse analysis allows us to study how ideas transmitted through texts transform into real social actions. It is important to note that the notion of turning ideas conveyed through texts into public actions and movements appears in many classic works dedicated to discourse analysis of mass media and the formation of political discourse (Fairclough 2001). Teun A. van Dijk, as one of the founders of critical discourse analysis, examined this process in a very broad context, relying on traditional mass media. In contrast, we will focus on social media, which have become an integral part of our lives over the past decade, particularly on the YouTube platform.

Since the study of ideology and political discourse does not fall within our scope, we approach discourse analysis from the perspective of the impact of transmitted religious sermons on public opinion. The method of discourse analysis, along with other analytical methods, is applied within the paradigm of social constructionism. That is, if we consider social phenomena such as religion and culture as social constructs, then discourse analysis can help explain the historical and social conditions of religious discourse, its influence on public opinion, and the dissemination of this discourse through new types of media.

There are numerous methods of discourse analysis. L.J. Phillips and M.W. Jørgensen identified four characteristics that unify these methods:

A critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge;

The historical and cultural specificity of ways of understanding and representing the world;

The link between knowledge and social processes;

The link between knowledge and social action (Jørgensen, Phillips 2002).

The discourse of a religious authority serves as knowledge that has historically developed in the form of religious patriarchal discourse. Its gender views are considered a way of understanding and representing the world. The connection between knowledge and social processes or behaviors can be characterized through the sermons of religious authorities, broadcasted via social media. According to Teun A. van Dijk, the typical vocabulary of many scholars in the field of critical discourse analysis includes concepts such as power, dominance, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, race, discrimination, interests, reproduction, institutions, social structure, and social order, alongside the more familiar concepts of discourse analysis (Van Dijk 2001). In this article, we critically analyze the discourse of a religious authority on gender. Other concepts from this array will naturally accompany the text under consideration and be subjected to critical analysis.

Since our topic concerns gender and women's rights, we will use the position of a contemporary Islamic thinker like Fazlur Rahman as a critical foundation for our discourse analysis. He argues that the hierarchy in relationships between men and women described in the Quran is solely due to sociological context, while from an ontological perspective, men and women are equal and do not surpass one another. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with changing such a position (Rahman 1993). Additionally, we will consider other contemporary approaches that interpret Quranic verses related to women on an egalitarian basis (Ghafourina 2017). We believe that from the standpoint of the universality of human rights, this is very important.

From the above, it becomes clear that for the critical analysis of religious discourse in this article, we are conducting an interdisciplinary study that includes contemporary Islamic thought, gender studies, and sociological methods such as discourse analysis.

This article consists of four sections. In Section 2, we describe the gender role of Kazakh women as a historical-cultural construct and examine the conservative patriarchal religious interpretations that have emerged as a new discourse after Independence through religious authority. The perception of women's roles through religious discourse influences the construction of societal narratives about women. This religious perspective often shapes and reinforces gender roles within the cultural and historical context, impacting how women's roles are viewed and understood in society. In Section 3, we discuss Rizabek Battaulay's sermon about women as an example of conservative patriarchal religious discourse and examine its roots and context.

The Gender Roles of Kazakh Women as a Socio-Cultural Construct

In social studies, the gender order and the place of women in Kazakh society are noted to be reflected in three types of cultural-historical epochs. These are the traditional form (feudal-nomadic, agrarian), the image of the Soviet-era woman (socialist, industrial-agrarian), and the transformational image of the woman (capitalist, information-technological). Historically, this timeline covers three periods: the pre-revolutionary period (before the October Revolution), the Soviet era, and the period from the beginning of Independence to the present day (Shakirova 2005).

Despite the fading image of the Soviet-era woman in Kazakhstan, in family upbringing and educational institutions, parents and teachers who received Soviet education strive to instill in the minds of modern young women the ideals of the socialist era: to be active in social life (pioneer, Komsomol - Zhas Otan), and to study diligently. However, since our country gained Independence, traditional upbringing motives and the image of the emancipated woman of Western culture have increasingly manifested as gender models. This is associated with the revival of national culture in post-Soviet countries, as well as the development of the market economy, information technology, and the spread of the image of the free, Europeanized woman.

In traditional Kazakh society, the role of women was romanticized in historical chronicles and literary works, which displayed a respectful attitude towards them and depicted their free-spirited steppe image. This portrayal contrasts with the depiction of women in other Eastern countries. During turbulent times of enemy invasions, women were among the warriors and served as military leaders, such as Bopai Khanum. They participated in the governance of the country, exemplified by figures like Ulpan. Women who received European education, such as Fatima-Totash, the wife of Zhangir Khan, made significant contributions to the educational process. Thus, women in traditional Kazakh society were associated with prominent figures in Kazakh history. In contrast to settled peoples, Kazakhs lived in a clan-based society and adhered to a nomadic lifestyle, preferring

the steppe laws over Sharia law. This preference significantly shaped the social status of women. It is believed that in everyday life, Kazakh women felt much freer and held a higher position compared to the women of the settled peoples of Central Asia. Nevertheless, from a legal perspective (Sharia law), in matters of inheritance, Kazakh nomadic women were less protected than their counterparts who relied on Sharia norms (Stasevich 2011). This is particularly relevant to the tradition of levirate marriage (*amengerlik*). Among settled Muslim peoples, a widow has the right to a portion of her deceased husband's estate. However, a Kazakh widow, along with her children, was considered the property of the deceased husband's family. For this reason, family and kinship relationships, and the associated goals, were highly prioritized. The dominance of patriarchal and cultural norms in Kazakh society and the woman's place within it were viewed as an ethno-confessional religious phenomenon prevalent in this cultural context. This was the image of a woman embodying both Muslim culture and nomadic-kinship traditions. The everyday freedom of Kazakh women was romanticized in the collective memory, and their image was respectfully depicted in literary works, folk epics, and legends. This portrayal was also linked to the fact that Kazakh women did not wear hijabs or veils, hiding their faces from strangers. In essence, one of the indicators of this freedom granted to daughters living in a clan-based society is the tradition of prohibiting marriage to a girl within seven generations of kinship. In Kazakh villages, which consisted of a single clan, this prohibition (not to marry a girl related within seven generations) prevents a man from looking at a young girl with a hedonistic, penetrating gaze. Therefore, a young girl in such a village was considered a sister by every man. These and other characteristics that distinguished Kazakh Islam (pilgrimages to the tombs of saints, the Islamization of ancient traditions) were termed by Bruce Privratsky as "local contextualization of Islam." This local method of understanding Islam, its local mode of practice, is more accurately called not Sharia Islam but traditional Islam (Privratsky 2001).

Since gaining independence and to this day, alongside the model of the traditional Kazakh woman, the image of the orthodox Islamic woman has emerged. This is related to the process of sacralization, or religious renaissance, in Kazakhstan, which is also occurring in other post-Soviet countries. Recently, religious policy in Kazakhstan has been aimed at granting official status to the Hanafi madhhab, driven by the goal of preventing the spread of religious extremism (Omeliicheva 2011). It is difficult to say how inclusive and effective the "local" Kazakh Islam has been. Nevertheless, since the 1990s, specialists who received Islamic education abroad have sought to spread orthodox Islam among peoples who have adhered to the Islamic culture of settled nations for centuries (it should be noted that Hanafi Islam is also widely practiced among settled cultures and is sanctified in many commentaries).

Interestingly, representatives of orthodox Islam, as well as Kazakhs living in secular culture who consider themselves Muslims, often use the image of the traditional Kazakh woman in religious discourses regarding her gender role. Representatives of orthodox Islam argue religious dogmas on the pretext that our ancestors were Muslims, while secular Kazakhs, who prioritize traditional culture over religion, point out that Kazakh women never wore hijabs like the women of settled Muslim societies and walked with their heads uncovered, braiding their hair. Thus, they prefer the image of the traditional Kazakh woman over that of orthodox Islam.

Rizabek Battaluly's Conceptualization of Women: An Analysis of Patriarchal Foundations

On YouTube channel, Rizabek Battaluly, in his video titled "On a Happy Family / Rizabek Battaluly" (Ризабек Батталұлы «Бақытты отбасы туралы»), strives to argue the religious-patriarchal discourse on the traditional life of Kazakh women using the Quran and Sunnah. With distinct masculinity, assertiveness, and a loud voice, he declares:

"...in the Quran, Allah says this: With the Powerful of Allah, through His signs, He created spouses for us from our own kind [meaning human descendants]. So that you may find tranquility in them. Allah created us and created spouses for us. ...And He created mercy and love between spouses. When we create a family, get married, we desire to be happy. But here comes the question, do we consider the mechanism of how to be happy? Alright, you have come to a person and now this bird is in your hand [The phrase "qusyngdy qolynga qondyrdyng" can be translated to English as "you have settled your bird on your hand," meaning your beloved, the one you marry.]. We congratulate and wish them happiness. But no one talks about the mechanism of how to be happy. So, the guarantee of happiness, moreover its main principle, is the ability to elevate the man, that

is, the superiority of the man. We tell this to the young, but for those who are already married, it might be too late." (Battauly 2016)

If we consider what has been said so far, it is here with particular masculine exaggeration and patriarchal characteristics that the verse about marriage is interpreted, which from an ontological point of view does not grant preference or superiority to either woman or man, but merely speaks of a special feeling being sent to them and that they are created as support for each other. In other words, he (Rizabek Battaluly) grants men a special privilege as one of the mechanisms for being able to be happy. And there is no mention here that there should be feelings of love and mercy between woman and man.

In scientific research, the concept of gender order encompasses the role and responsibility, characteristics of women and men that manifest in a social environment. Therefore, in defining the concept of gender, in addition to the biological characteristics of women and men, it includes how society perceives them, how it understands them, what actions it deems necessary, as well as rules, values, needs, and their roles. That is, a gender role is a set of social norms that define what types of behavior are considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for a person depending on their gender, i.e., belonging to women or men (Staggenborg 1998). Overall, the available scientific data indicates that gender development is influenced not only by biological factors but also by cognitive and social factors. That is, the concept of gender includes the concept of gender roles. However, it should be noted that the potential of religious preaching to influence the gender role of women is quite significant. Especially conservative religious individuals strive to impose a model where the dominant role in family relationships is played by the man. For this purpose, religious texts and their traditional interpretations are very convenient. Rizabek Battaluly, in this video, further seeks to reinforce his patriarchal understanding with religious texts, despite the fact that the verse in question does not state the superiority of men:

"...in that case, when will these two people (spouses) be happy? One of the ways to this happiness is the superiority of the man and the submission of the woman. Moreover, this is the foundation and support of every family. But if this system is changed, it will never lead to anything good. If the man is not the head of the family, and the woman manages it, this will lead to the decay of society. This does not mean that a woman is a bad phenomenon. So, what does Allah say? [reads a verse in Arabic] The man should dominate the woman. Therefore, the final decision should always be made by the man. It is the man who should approve family matters. But unfortunately, we are losing this trait. We are losing it. Men are breaking down even before they create families, before they meet (a girl), and even more so, they are unable to maintain superiority in the family. This is the influence of the soulless Western culture, atheistic society. The man has become cowardly, timid, and powerless before the woman. As a result, the number of lonely people and orphans has increased..." (Battauly 2016)

Rizabek Battaluly believes that the moral and spiritual degradation of society is due to men's inability to dominate women. He attributes this to a spiritual ailment caused by the influence of Western culture, which, in his view, has led to an increase in the number of single people and orphans. Linking social problems to women's acquisition of freedom and the degradation of family relationships is a characteristic feature of conservative religious discourse. Viewing this issue as an influence of "spiritless Western culture" represents an expression of fundamentalist rhetoric.

The era of modernism became a period of conquest, colonization, and the hardships that Muslims endured during this time. If modernization was difficult for the Christians of Europe and America, it was even more problematic for Jews and Muslims. Muslims experienced modernity as an alien, invasive force, inextricably associated with colonization and foreign domination. They would have to adapt to a civilization whose watchword was independence, while themselves suffering political subjugation. This has given rise to religious fundamentalism and dogmatic understanding, which emerge when society faces social problems perceived as negative influences of the West and spiritual degradation.

In this video sermon by Rizabek Battaluly, there is a sense of concern that the traditional value system is collapsing in our time:

"He does not fear the Lord when he goes to her [his lover] for adultery, but he fears his wife and does not dare to take her as his second wife in purity before God. He fears his wife, but not God. He commits adultery, goes to his lover, visits prostitutes. Yet he cannot take the woman he likes as his wife, and he does not fear the Lord. This is what our society has become. We are afraid. But were our ancestors like this?! This is how we lose the dignity of our ancestors."

Karen Armstrong, speaking about the theological direction of fundamentalism, notes that it is primarily based on feelings of anxiety, fear, and panic (Armstrong 2000). Fundamentalists describe the image of the emancipated woman and the market-information era as godless, meaningless, and diabolical, considering the secular system to be destructive to traditional values. They use this to intimidate society and act accordingly. In this context, even if we do not consider Rizabek Battaluly as a fundamentalist, his opinion that women should not be given control, instead proposing a superior role for men, can be viewed as an expression of fundamentalist views, which have developed due to panic-driven sentiments and the loss of sacred concepts. He ties his viewpoint on polygamy to traditional Kazakh worldview:

"In our days, men ask whether they need to seek the first wife's permission to take a second wife. This implies that for him, the first wife has become the main authority. This needs to be resolved. Well, among Kazakhs, it was not like that. If he wanted to take another wife, he did. They [women] were not asked. At that time, society was happy, and women were respected and honored."

And of course, he supports this viewpoint in his sermon with religious texts. Moreover, he cites a verse from the Quran that mentions that it is permissible to beat a woman:

"He [Allah] says, 'Men, you must dominate.' ... So, what does the continuation of this verse say? [He reads the verse in Arabic] It says that there are such women. If they go beyond limits, do not listen to you, speak against you, and do not obey you. In such a case, you should not just sit idly. The Quran sets three conditions. A man has the right to take three actions against such a disobedient woman. The first is admonishment, the second is to leave her alone in bed, and the third, what does it say? It says, 'Beat them.'"

In modern times, different viewpoints have emerged regarding verse 4:34 of the Quran. In traditional tafsir (exegesis) of the Quran, it is stated that a man may "strike lightly without causing harm to her body." This interpretation is widely accepted among Muslims. However, some contemporary translations and tafsirs of the Quran interpret the verb *daraba* differently, suggesting meanings such as "separate," "send to another place," or "embark on a journey," among other senses. When issues accumulate between a man and a woman, and actions like admonishment and refusal of intimacy do not yield positive results, it is considered appropriate to take the next step towards ending the relationship. Instead of striking, it is suggested to expel the woman from the home as a last resort in their relationship. Moreover, there is an opinion that a Muslim, adhering to the Sunnah, should always remember that the Prophet Muhammad never struck his wives (Ghafourina 2017). Fazlur Rahman believes that men are in charge of women because they must support women. Thus, it is a functional rather than an inherent superiority and this functional authority can be further contextualized (Ghafourina 2017). From this, it follows that as the division of labor and economic systems evolve, the sociological and familial relationships between women and men can also transform into an egalitarian form. The key is to approach the Quran with a holistic method, understanding that ontologically, men and women are equal. Among equals, understanding is more appropriate than dominance, and respect is more fitting than violence. We deemed it necessary to draw attention to the patriarchal-masculine discourse and interpretation of the Quran by Rizabek, which is the subject of our discussion. He continues:

"What does our Prophet say: [recites a hadith in Arabic] It will never be a success for a nation ruled by women.' Kazakhs say, 'He who listens to a woman will end up with nothing.'"

And here, too, a viewpoint formed on a patriarchal basis is presented, relying on Islamic literature and additionally using a clear example—a proverb. Moreover, he notes:

"And if you humble yourself before her even before the wedding, calling her 'zhanym' (here, my honey, my sun), then tomorrow after the wedding she will not obey you. Kazakhs never called their wives 'zhanym'. But

what do we say now: 'zhanyim, kunim' [laughs]. Kazakhs call their children 'zhanyim'. They call their mothers 'zhanyim, my dear mother'."

Rizabek Battaluly uses the word "qiwamun" (guardianship) in an ontological sense from Surah An-Nisa, Verse 34, highlighting the superiority of men (God has given men advantage, superiority). In the traditions of tafsir, emphasis is placed on the last part of the verse: "because they support them from their means." Based on this, it can be concluded that he did not consider this ayah, which addresses the superiority of men, even within the framework of traditional tafsirs, let alone sociological research or the division of labor. We have already noted that in the Sunnah, which is the second most valuable source after the Holy Book, it is mentioned that the Prophet never beat his wives, was very kind to them, and lived in love and harmony with them. Considering all this, it should be said: the preacher's (R.B.) careless, hasty, and emotional judgments cast doubt on his theological knowledge.

Another example of how Rizabek Battaluly exalts men from an ontological perspective while belittling women is his statement that women were created from a crooked rib. This is also a widely held belief among Kazakhs. However, modernist Islamic scholars note that this was incorporated into Islamic texts through the stories of Christian and Jewish prophets (Isra'iliyyat). In the verses of the Quran, it is noted that men and women were created from a single substance. The concept, introduced into the traditions of tafsir and hadith that women were created from a rib, appeared due to the influence of Christian and Jewish culture, which spread widely through their tradition of religious narratives, developing in a patriarchal environment. It is no secret that, compared to the Quran, masculine discourses relied on medieval Islamic literature as an authoritative source.

Thus, the interpretation of Rizabek Battaluly's sexist viewpoint regarding women and the religious texts he uses are all rooted in patriarchal culture. Another example from his speech is as follows:

"Look at what our Prophet says: if I were to command anyone to be worshiped other than Allah, I would have commanded women to worship men. As soon as a woman submits to a man, there will be goodness."

Rizabek Battaluly expresses the opinion that it is permissible to beat a woman, justifying this with another hadith and Kazakh tradition:

"...So why did a whip hang on the shanyrak of a yurt in the past? As soon as she sees it [the whip], she immediately remembers repentance. Yes, he says, and he shows her [the whip]. Because she has already experienced it once. After that, she should think, since she has received it once. Therefore, there is a hadith of the Prophet which says: 'Let a whip hang in your houses.' Kazakhs did not take this from thin air. But now, even if you hang ten whips, it is useless. Because she does not fear you. Therefore, you need to be this way with a woman from the very beginning. From the very first day [shows the whip], this is yours. If you dare to go back and forth, if you start to wander around, here is my answer. Say this and hang the whip."

His words that our ancestors hung a whip to intimidate or beat a woman are based on a highly questionable hadith. In volume 3 of the encyclopedia *Kazakh Traditional System of Ethnographic Categories, Concepts, and Names* ("Qazaqtyng etnografialyq kategoriyalar, ugymdar men ataularynyng dasturli juyesi"), it is stated: "Travelers describing Kazakh life in their manuscripts note that in a Kazakh family, a colorful whip hangs in an honored place on the adalbakan, a pole with branches used as a household item and a coat rack in the yurt. Among overseas Kazakh groups, this tradition has been preserved to this day, and the cost of one whip is equated to the cost of one head of cattle." (Entsiklopediya 2012)

The function of the whip was strictly systematized—it was related to economic necessity, used in the skill of handling a shepherd's whip, and in legal relations, but nowhere is it indicated that it was intended for beating a woman.

Nevertheless, Rizabek Battaluly apologized to the people after the uproar caused by his statement on social media. In his address, the Islamic scholar asked for forgiveness from "representatives of Islam and the people of Kazakhstan" for his error in interpreting the thirty-fourth surah "An-Nisa" ("Women"), one of the most significant in the Quran. In one of its verses, it is stated that the man is the pillar of the family, and the woman

is the guardian of the home, playing a special role in the organization of the world. The scholar reminded that there is a punishment prescribed for women who have strayed from the righteous path.

"In cases where a woman refuses to fulfill her marital duties, the man should first try to understand her position, but if she does not reconsider, the verse states that it is permissible to raise a hand against her. Our Prophet noted that this should be done in such a way as not to harm her or leave any marks on her body," explained Rizabek Battaluly (Informatsionnoe agentstvo Fergana 2018).

At the same time, the theologian added that the mention of this verse does not mean that women should be beaten. "The Prophet never raised his hand against a woman," he emphasized, correcting his earlier interpretations: "I apologize for my previous words. In trying to explain this verse, I made a mistake. Succumbing to emotions, I provided examples that are not in the verse. The Quran does not say that women should be beaten with a whip. With these statements, I caused discord among the members of our society. Our Prophet urged us to love and respect women. All of us, including the Prophet and any imam, came into this world thanks to a woman." But there is an example of a folk saga recorded by Mashkhur Zhusup (1858-1931), in which the forefather Adam first used it by striking a woman.

The Brief Summary of This Saga is as Follows

Satan had a son named Hannas. When the father Adam was not at home, the accursed devil sent his son Hannas to tempt the mother Eve. When Adam returned, he saw Hannas circling around the mother Eve in the guise of some animal. Adam immediately grabbed his sword and cut him into pieces. The next time Adam left again, Satan revived his son and sent him to Eve once more. Seeing this, the enraged Adam grabbed a whip:

Jetip kep Adam ata qatwlandy,

Hawağa qaharlanıp qamshı saldy.

Bilseniz ashulanyp qatın urmaq,

Miras bop keyingige sodan qaldı.

(In anger appeared Adam,

And in his fury, he struck mother Eve with his whip.

Know that from this remains as a legacy

To beat a woman in rage.)

As a result, we can conclude that in patriarchal culture, women were originally considered the source of all that is bad and sinful.

It is well known that in the Christian world, the official church also viewed women as witches. In monotheistic religions with patriarchal cultures, the attitude toward women as secondary beings is very characteristic of the mythical consciousness of that time, as described in sagas, epics, and legends. Rizabek Battaluly also bases his viewpoint on discourses typical of medieval texts.

CONCLUSION

It is noteworthy that one of the scholars, PhD in Philology Omar Zhalel, in his sensational speech to schoolchildren compared girls to markers and reminded schoolgirls that their job is not to study but to give birth. "Girls should not become academics; they should give birth to academics. The purpose of girls is to give birth. It works like a marker. When it stops writing, it is usually thrown away," he said (Esquire 2020). This caused confusion among the public. Of course, we do not want to conclude that this is the result of narratives formed by believers on social media, but it is obvious that such notions are reproduced within the framework of ancestral traditions and the concept of traditional religion. Through discourse analysis, we observed that Rizabek Battaluly's religious views reflect a historically formed patriarchal religious discourse. The main objective of this article was to assess the impact of these views on public opinion regarding women. Additionally, we delved into the origins and constructs of this historically established religious discourse.

Through discourse analysis, we identified three distinct social constructs within Rizabek Battaully's religious views that reflect a historically formed patriarchal religious discourse. The main objective of this article was to assess the impact of these constructs on public opinion regarding women:

Patriarchal Authority: Rizabek emphasizes the concept of male authority within the family, positioning men as protectors and maintainers of women. This aligns with traditional interpretations that view *qiwamun asa* justification for male dominance. His discourse underscores the notion that men's superiority and control are essential for familial and societal stability.

Disciplinary Measures: He interprets *daraba* as a permissible, though regulated, form of physical discipline in cases where admonishment and separation in bed have failed. This interpretation echoes conservative views that regard physical discipline as a necessary measure for maintaining family order. By promoting this viewpoint, Rizabek reinforces the idea that patriarchal authority must be upheld through specific actions, even if they involve regulated forms of physical discipline.

Cultural and Religious Justifications: Rizabek frequently references cultural practices and historical contexts to bolster his arguments, suggesting that such measures were traditionally accepted and effective in maintaining societal stability and respect for women. He integrates cultural norms and historical precedents to legitimize his views, thereby framing them as both culturally and religiously grounded.

Through a detailed discourse analysis, this article has shown that Rizabek Battaully's religious views are deeply intertwined with a historically formed patriarchal discourse. These views, disseminated through modern media, significantly influence public opinion on women's roles. By emphasizing male authority, promoting regulated disciplinary measures, and invoking cultural and religious justifications, Rizabek perpetuates a narrative that upholds traditional gender hierarchies. This patriarchal discourse, while rooted in historical and cultural contexts, continues to shape contemporary societal attitudes, reinforcing traditional gender roles and impacting the perception of women's rights in Kazakhstan.

Funding information: This research was financially supported by the research grant provided by the Committee of Science, Ministry of Higher Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan, grant number is AP14871508 (Islamization within the Framework of Nation-Building in Kazakhstan: Integration and Disintegration Tendencies).

REFERENCES

- Akhmetova, Z. (2018, February 26). Qazaqtyn qyzdary turmysqa shyqqanğa deın basyna oramal taqpahan (Kazakh girls did not cover their heads with scarves before marriage). Qazaq uni. Retrieved from <https://qazaquni.kz/2018/02/26/81893.html>
- Amangaliyeva, A. (2024, April 27). Teologtyń aıeldi urúğa shaǵyrǵan eski videosy jelide qata talqylanyp jatyr (Theolog's old video calling for striking women is being discussed again on social media). NEWSROOM MNU. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.mnu.kz/teologty-jeldi-ru-a-sha-yr-an-eski-videosy-zhelide-ajta-tal-ylanyp-zhatyr/#:~:text=Қарағанды%20облысында%20туған%20Ризабек%20Батталұлы,айтып%2C%20әйелдерді%20басқа ру%20керегін%20меңзейді>
- Armstrong, K. (2000). *The Battle for God* (p. 392). New York: Ballantine Books.
- Battaully, R. (2016). Äyeliñiz sizge baǵınbay ketse: Er adamnıñ üş jolı bar. [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtAQepLHl-s&t=38s>
- Bigozhin, U. (2019). Where is Our Honor? Sports, Masculinity, and Authority in Kazakhstani Islamic Media. *Central Asian Affairs*, 6, 189-205.
- Esquire. (2020, March 5). Omar Zhalel sravnıl devushek s markerami i napomnil shkol'nitsam, chto ikh delo ne uchitsia, a rozhat'. Retrieved from <https://esquire.kz/omar-zhalel-sravnıl-devushek-s-markerami-i-napomnil-shkolynitsam-tchto-ih-delo-ne-utchitysya-a-rozhaty/>
- Fairclough, N. (2001). Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific research. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods in critical discourse analysis* (pp. 121-138). Sage.
- Ghafourina, N. (2017). Towards a New Interpretation of Quran 4:34. *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World*, 1-14.
- Jørgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (pp. 5-6). SAGE Publications.
- Kazahstanskij islamoved izvinilsia za sovet stegati zhen nagai'koi (Kazakh Islamic scholar apologizes for advising to whip wives with a whip). (2018, April 19). *Informatsionnoe agentstvo Fergana*. Retrieved from <https://www.fergananews.com/news/29566>

- Omelicheva, M. Y. (2011). Islam in Kazakhstan: a survey of contemporary trends and sources of securitization. *Central Asian Survey*, 30(2), 245.
- Privratsky, B. (2001). Muslim Turkistan: Kazak religion and collective memory (p. 238). Curzon Press.
- Qazaqtyn etnografiyalıq kategoriıalar, ŭǵymdar men ataularynyń dástúrli júesi (Traditional System of Ethnographic Categories, Concepts, and Terms of Kazakhs). (2012). *Entsiklopediia* (Vol. 3, p. 420). Almaty: RPK «Slon».
- Rahman, F. (1993). Status of Woman in the Qur'an. In G. Nashat (Ed.), *Woman and Revolution in Iran* (pp. 37-54). Westview Press.
- Schwab, W. (2022). Mukhamedzhan Tazabek and Popular Islamic Authority in Kazakhstan. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Muslim Religious Authority in Central Eurasia* (pp. 120-146). Sage.
- Shakirova, S. (2005). Zhenshchiny.SU - zhenshchiny.KZ: osobennosti perekhoda (Women.SU - Women.KZ: Features of the Transition). In S.R. Kasymova (Ed.), *Gender: traditsii i sovremennost. Sbornik statei po gendernym issledovaniyam* (p. 105). Dushanbe.
- Staggenborg, S. (1998). *Gender, Family and Social Movements* (pp. 1-3). Pine Forge Press.
- Stasevich, I.V. (2011). Sotsial'nyi status zhenshchin u kazakhov (Social Status of Women among Kazakhs) (p. 95). Nauka.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. E. Hamilton (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (p. 354). T.J. International.