

Conflict or Transformation?, National and Global Values in the Information Society (The Case of Uzbekistan)

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Abstract. This article examines the relationship between national and global values in the emerging information society, using Uzbekistan as a case study, and asks whether their interaction is better understood as conflict or as transformation. Adopting a qualitative, interpretive design grounded in digital anthropology, the study draws on a critical review of scholarly literature, analysis of statistical and media documents, and non-participant observation of publicly available Uzbek digital content. It examines how digital space, social media, artificial intelligence, and global platforms are reshaping family dynamics, national identity, cultural traditions, and spiritual values. The analysis identifies three interrelated patterns: (1) everyday friction between screen-mediated youth practices and the traditional family environment; (2) an emerging cultural hybridity through which young people repackage national heritage in global digital formats; and (3) structural challenges created by engagement-driven platform algorithms and an intergenerational digital-skills divide. The findings suggest that the interaction between national and global values is characterized less by outright conflict than by continuous negotiation, selective adaptation, and structural transformation. On this basis, the study proposes strategic directions for preserving national heritage, narrowing the intergenerational digital divide, and promoting local culture within globalized digital environments.

Keywords: Information Society, National Values, Cultural Hybridity, Family Environment, Digital Literacy

1 Introduction

As humanity progresses through successive stages of societal development, the current historical period is defined by the emergence of an information society, often described as the network or digital society [1], [2]. This transition is driven primarily by the widespread integration of digital technologies particularly smartphones, social media platforms, and algorithmic systems into everyday life [1]. From the perspective of digital anthropology, these technological infrastructures have become central to daily human existence, substantially reshaping everyday practices and cultural values. They also exert a strong influence on national values and their associated traditions, a dynamic closely intertwined with globalization. Indeed, globalization and digitalization are transforming not only the economic sphere but also the underlying “cultural code” of society, reshaping national self-awareness, inherited traditions, and ethical norms [2].

Scholarship on cultural globalization offers competing interpretations of this process. Homogenization accounts warn that global media flows erode local cultures, whereas other theorists emphasize that global cultural forms are indigenized and reinterpreted within local contexts [3]. Robertson’s concept of glocalization captures this simultaneous interpenetration of the global and the local [4], and Kraidy conceptualizes hybridity as the cultural logic of globalization [5]. In the Uzbek context, Ergashev and Farxodjonova examine both the positive and negative effects of globalization on national culture, arguing that culture must evolve alongside modernity while preserving national identity; to mitigate the adverse effects of globalization, they emphasize the importance of safeguarding national values, spiritual heritage, and tradition [6]. Through digitalization, national values are undergoing modernization and acquiring new forms of expression a development that makes this issue increasingly relevant today.

Within the digital society, traditional national values such as family cohesion, the institution of the mahalla (neighborhood community), respect for elders, and traditional ceremonial gatherings (to’y-ma’raka) are assuming distinctly modern forms. The rapid pace of digital adoption among young people is accelerating the interaction

between national and global values, and a visible tension has emerged between traditional collectivist values and the individualism amplified by digital networks, giving rise to diverse societal perspectives. Importantly, national values are not simply disappearing; rather, they are being adapted to digital formats and are undergoing structural transformation and re-creation [2].

Despite growing scholarly interest, much of the existing literature on Uzbekistan approaches globalization primarily as a threat to national and family values [6]–[9]. Comparatively little attention has been paid to the concrete digital practices through which young people renegotiate, rather than abandon, their cultural heritage, and few studies examine family dynamics, youth content creation, and platform algorithms within a single analytical framework. As a result, the question of whether the current interplay between national and global values constitutes conflict or transformation remains insufficiently answered.

Accordingly, this study addresses three research questions: (RQ1) How does the digital space affect everyday relations within the traditional Uzbek family? (RQ2) How do young people adapt global digital trends to express national identity? (RQ3) What challenges and prospects exist for preserving national identity in algorithm-driven digital environments? By answering these questions, the study offers a context-specific account of value change in a Central Asian society and derives practical recommendations for cultural policy, education, and content production. The remainder of this article is organized as follows: Section 2 describes the research method, Section 3 presents and discusses the results, and Section 4 concludes the article.

2 Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design informed by digital anthropology, which treats digital technologies as an integral part of everyday cultural life rather than as a separate “virtual” realm [1], [10], [11]. Such a design is suited to exploring meanings, values, and practices whose significance cannot be captured adequately by quantitative indicators alone.

Three types of sources were used. First, scholarly literature on globalization, national values, the family, and digital anthropology was critically reviewed, including Uzbek-language works on spirituality and family values. Second, documentary sources were analyzed, including international statistics on internet use [12] and Uzbek news and media reports on social, cultural, and digital developments [13]–[15]. Third, non-participant observation was conducted on publicly accessible Uzbek digital content on Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, and YouTube that presents national attire, crafts, music, dance, and ceremonial practices. Only publicly available materials were examined, and no personal data were collected.

The material was analyzed using thematic analysis [16]. After repeated reading and familiarization, relevant passages and content examples were coded inductively and then grouped into candidate themes that were refined against the three research questions. This process yielded three main themes, which structure Sections 3.1–3.3: (1) the digital space and the traditional family environment, (2) cultural hybridity among young people, and (3) challenges and prospects for preserving national identity. The interpretation of these themes was guided by the concepts of glocalization and hybridity [4], [5], and credibility was strengthened by triangulating scholarly, documentary, and observational sources.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 The Digital Space and the Traditional Family Environment: Everyday Friction and Interaction

The family environment is a foundational concept encompassing the socio-spiritual and ethical atmosphere within which family relationships and child-rearing take place. The family plays an irreplaceable role in shaping a nation’s distinct spirituality, worldview, and core beliefs [7]. It is the primary setting in which fundamental human virtues, moral values, and social perceptions take root from early childhood. Fostering a healthy socio-spiritual and ethical atmosphere within the family one that nurtures individuals with a rational worldview, innovative thinking, and well-rounded character therefore remains a matter of considerable public importance in Uzbekistan’s current period of reform.

Contemporary globalization, the information society, and their attendant demands have driven significant shifts in youth consciousness, perceptibly altering how young people approach family life, interpersonal relationships, and broader national traditions. These shifts have prompted widespread public discussion, debate, and institutional responses in Uzbek society. However, it would be premature to regard these responses as sufficient, because the transformative and at times disruptive impact of globalization and digital culture on family and national values is still unfolding. Global values, introduced into the social fabric through globalization and digital networks, are prompting the younger generation to question long-established family and national norms, including ethnic and sociocultural characteristics that have defined the nation for centuries [8].

Young people in Uzbekistan spend considerable time in front of screens, engaging with social media and television. This digital consumption can displace meaningful dialogue with parents and participation in extended family gatherings. Even when young people take part in traditional family events, their engagement is often superficial and lacks a deeper understanding of the cultural significance of these rituals. When absorbed by digital platforms, many individuals reduce direct communication with family members, thereby weakening inherited practices such as strong kinship ties and mutual intergenerational respect.

Furthermore, young people increasingly forgo seeking guidance from parents on personal matters and instead consult artificial intelligence tools and online forums. This shift implicitly questions the authority of lived experience and overlooks the fact that older generations faced comparable socio-emotional challenges, albeit in different historical circumstances. Intergenerational dialogue, which combines parental wisdom with modern knowledge, offers a more constructive framework for resolving contemporary problems within the domestic sphere.

In short, direct family relationships tend to provide deeper social and psychological support than the algorithmic advice of artificial intelligence, social media feeds, or television programming. While global concepts such as personal liberty, equality, and individual choice hold undeniable value, the interaction between national and global paradigms should be steered toward positive transformation one that adapts to modernity while safeguarding the core of national identity.

The largely unregulated freedom that young people exercise on social media also generates significant societal challenges. In particular, some digital content creators and opinion influencers shape youth consciousness in ways that undermine family and national values. Concepts such as equality, individual liberty, and personal autonomy, as promoted through these platforms, frequently collide with long-established family and collectivist norms. These human rights principles have intrinsic worth and are recognized within Uzbekistan's ongoing democratic reforms; at the same time, Uzbek society relies on historically rooted norms that have long ensured domestic stability, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence. Certain individualistic messages disseminated by digital influencers can disrupt the harmony of traditional Uzbek households and, as public debate suggests, may contribute in some cases to marital conflict and breakdown. Establishing the causal weight of such influences, however, requires further empirical research.

Historically, older generations regarded divorce with profound social stigma. Today, the uncritical adoption of certain global values is eroding traditional boundaries within the Uzbek family. Where family units are destabilized, children may grow up in single-parent households and experience ongoing disputes between separated parents circumstances that can adversely affect the psychological well-being of everyone involved. Upbringing in such circumstances further shapes children's socio-emotional development and may lead to greater digital immersion as a coping mechanism, which in turn reinforces abstract notions of absolute equality and liberty among young people.

In this process, a high level of social awareness among parents is vital for fostering balanced perspectives in children. Foundational norms, such as respect for elders and care for younger generations, must remain embedded in daily domestic practice [9]. This perspective remains highly relevant; however, the gradual weakening among young people of such fundamental family and national values including deference to elders and care for the young is contributing to a decline in social consciousness. This creates room for young people to be shaped less by traditional Uzbek moral upbringing than by a secularized, individualistic model of "modern moral education." This shift should be regarded as a critical warning sign: if respect for parents and spouses diminishes within the domestic sphere and guidance derived from religious and moral tradition is abandoned, the foundation of the family as a sacred institution may fracture.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which entered public discourse in Uzbekistan in early 2020 [13], left an unmistakable imprint on Uzbek society. During this period, a wide range of activities moved online: state enterprises, public organizations, and government bodies adapted to remote operation, and everyday social life adjusted accordingly. Cultural events and traditional rituals were modified; wedding ceremonies, for instance, were streamlined, and the number of guests was strictly limited during peak restrictions. This experience, in turn, encouraged parts of society to transfer traditional ceremonies, rituals, and social obligations onto digital platforms.

Today, platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram serve as primary channels for conducting everyday social practices. Notably, couples living abroad sometimes hold their wedding ceremonies remotely: while the banquet takes place at a local venue in Uzbekistan, the bride and groom observe and participate via live video stream from overseas. This practice raises a genuine sociological question about the authenticity and cultural substance of digitized rituals. Comparative ethnographic research nevertheless shows that the meaning of social media is shaped by local norms and uses rather than determined by the platforms themselves [17], which suggests that such practices may also be read as creative adaptations of tradition.

The digital society is clearly reshaping inherited customs and ritual practices within the Uzbek family. Young people's attitudes toward marriage and family formation are undergoing significant change a trend that may pose risks to social cohesion. This can be understood partly as an effect of the globalized ideal of "individual freedom" on traditional national values. While older generations often resist these technological adaptations, the pervasive

influence of the information society on youth consciousness calls for strategic measures that safeguard core national values through constructive cultural adaptation rather than through resistance alone. With respect to RQ1, therefore, the relationship between the digital space and the traditional family is best described as everyday friction accompanied by ongoing adaptation.

3.2 Cultural Hybridity: Young People Adapting Global Trends to National Identity

Global media content has achieved widespread dissemination within Uzbek society, exerting a tangible influence on the consciousness of the younger generation. Mastery of foreign languages plays a pivotal role in enabling young people to navigate this global information space an area in which they have made substantial progress. Young people use global content for diverse purposes: while some are drawn to its detrimental influences, others strategically use these platforms to popularize national values.

Rather than uncritically internalizing the negative elements of mass culture, many young people increasingly adopt its functional components, such as information technologies, digital environments, modern education, and intercultural dialogue. This selective engagement contributes to the recontextualization and refinement of the national language, domestic upbringing, inherited customs, historical heritage, and cultural values, transforming them into modernized and broadly accessible social phenomena. Digital media culture, transnational communication, and global consumer trends further expand young people's worldviews, and many actively direct these tools toward the promotion of national values. Even as young audiences consume global media television series, films, and advertising they tend to interpret and evaluate this content through the lens of national etiquette and family ethics. By selectively assimilating positive elements while rejecting those that conflict with local norms, they display an emerging pattern of cultural hybridity [5]. This pattern corresponds closely to what Robertson terms glocalization [4] and to the active, localized reception of global cultural flows described by Appadurai [3]. As a result, direct friction between global trends and national paradigms is giving way to a process of structural transformation and mutual adaptation.

Popularizing national arts, traditional crafts, attire, and cultural heritage through modern content creation has become a prominent trend on social media. This phenomenon manifests in the dissemination of localized content through visual formats, digital campaigns, and viral challenges that combine traditional dress and cultural motifs with contemporary videography. The observed content shows that global digital formats are strategically used to disseminate national values through practices such as the following:

- a. producing Reels or TikTok short-form videos that showcase traditional national attire;
- b. creating fashion-oriented "outfit" videos featuring modern garments made from traditional atlas and adras textiles;
- c. documenting the creative process of local artisans using "before/after" editing techniques;
- d. disseminating traditional Uzbek dance performances set to contemporary musical arrangements in flash-mob formats [18];
- e. recording performances of popular contemporary songs played on traditional musical instruments;
- f. creating "a day in the national style" lifestyle content that combines traditional attire, cuisine, music, and customs in a single digital post; and
- g. publishing multi-slide carousel posts and infographics that highlight historical figures, literary characters, and regional traditions.

A widespread view holds that the digital space alienates people from national values. Yet rather than eroding cultural heritage, the digital realm offers opportunities for national values to be preserved and expressed in new forms, facilitating structural transformation and adaptive integration. Crucially, the digital environment allows national heritage to function not as a passive "museum exhibit" but as an active, living social practice consistent with the understanding of intangible cultural heritage as something constantly recreated by communities and groups [19]. Whereas traditional customs, artisan crafts, national attire, and oral heritage were once transmitted solely through the family, the mahalla, and local cultural events, they can now reach broad audiences through videos, podcasts, social media stories, online exhibitions, and virtual museums. This technological shift allows cultural heritage to reach a far wider audience, particularly young people, through the media channels they use daily [14].

Within this dynamic synthesis of national and global values, global formats are actively being adapted to local cultural paradigms. Traditional songs are produced with contemporary arrangements, artisanal craft techniques are showcased in short digital videos, and national dress appears not only at traditional celebrations but also in high-fashion photo shoots, influencer campaigns, and online challenges. In this context, national culture merges with modern aesthetics and becomes increasingly accessible and relatable to the younger generation [15].

The digital society has also significantly enhanced the capacity to preserve national values. Cultural elements once maintained solely through oral tradition and local community practice are now moving into digital archives, databases, and multimedia platforms, offering vital opportunities to safeguard endangered crafts, rituals, and regional customs.

This process, however, is neither automatic nor unproblematic. Within the digital ecosystem, pressures associated with Western consumerism, superficial trends, and ephemeral media aesthetics remain prevalent. Protecting national values in the digital sphere therefore requires more than passive defense; it demands active recontextualization and modern formatting. With respect to RQ2, the digital space does not inherently sever connections with national heritage; rather, it provides a platform for reintroducing these values in renewed form provided that producers and consumers of culture engage with them constructively.

3.3 Preserving National Identity in the Digital Era: Challenges and Prospects

In the information society, the core challenge extends beyond accessing and filtering information; it critically involves the preservation and understanding of national values and cultural identity. Under these conditions, global platforms such as those operated by Meta, TikTok, and YouTube exert direct influence and systemic pressure on localized media content and traditional values, reinforced by their massive global user bases. According to DataReportal, approximately 6.12 billion people or roughly 74 percent of the world's population were using the internet in April 2026 [12]. On these platforms, the visibility of content depends less on its national or cultural substance than on algorithmic ranking and user-engagement metrics, which reward sensationalism and visual appeal [20], [21]. As a result, national and socio-spiritual content risks remaining marginal unless it is adapted into contemporary, visually engaging formats.

Digital content is typically evaluated not by its intellectual depth or educational value but by algorithmic signals such as watch time, retention rate, likes, comments, saves, and shares [21]. Contemplative, educational content centered on national values therefore struggles to compete with sensational trends, which helps explain the comparatively low view counts of traditional cultural media. The observation of Uzbek digital content identified additional factors that limit the reach of national heritage content on global platforms:

- a. the presentation of national art and tradition without compelling hooks, concise formatting, or visual dynamism;
- b. the failure of creators to condense complex historical and philosophical narratives, resulting in overly long videos; and
- c. the presentation of traditional values through formal lectures rather than accessible formats such as Reels, Shorts, live broadcasts, or interactive challenges.

This dynamic carries real structural risk most notably the superficialization of cultural content, in which sensationalism overrides substantive meaning and engagement with traditional values consequently declines. When algorithms are used strategically, however, they can create significant opportunities for localized content: traditional dance, craftsmanship, national dress, and literary heritage can all achieve wide popularity when presented through contemporary aesthetics. This suggests that the core issue lies not in the platforms themselves but in how content is structured and presented.

Creators of localized content can offset algorithmic pressure through specific strategic practices: concise and impactful hooks, strong visual imagery, clear conclusions, and strict fidelity to core cultural meaning. Streamlining historical and cultural narratives must not come at the cost of their substantive value. The most effective approach is not to subordinate national values to algorithmic imperatives but to use algorithmic mechanics to amplify their reach and resonance [14].

A central challenge of preserving national identity in the digital era is the capacity of domestic media producers and content creators to develop high-quality, substantive media. Key strategies include increasing the share of localized content, presenting traditional values through compelling visual language, designing engaging formats for younger audiences, and communicating history, culture, and spirituality through accessible narratives. These mechanisms are vital instruments for safeguarding national identity and promoting cultural heritage. Several further technical and structural tasks remain: portraying national dress, customs, and traditions aesthetically; producing short-form media videos, stories, Reels, and Shorts for social platforms; applying rigorous standards of screenwriting and direction to domestic media; and ensuring the dissemination of verified, factual information. Additional objectives include demonstrating the contemporary relevance of traditional values, digitizing and archiving cultural heritage, establishing online museums and virtual exhibitions, and using emerging formats such as podcasts, infographics, and animation.

It is no exaggeration to say that a significant digital divide has emerged between young people and older generations. Mitigating this divide requires accessible educational frameworks, user-friendly technologies, and the substantive presentation of national values within digital environments. Crucially, the root causes of this intergenerational divide lie less in physical infrastructure or internet availability than in disparities in digital skills, usage patterns, and material resources a shift that has been well documented in digital divide research [22], [23]. To narrow this gap, the following strategic measures are proposed:

- a. establishing accessible, foundational digital-literacy courses tailored to older adults, for example through mahalla centers and libraries;

- b. structuring hands-on practical training with repeated exercises to reduce anxiety about technology adoption;
- c. encouraging intergenerational mentoring in which young family members and community volunteers help older relatives use digital services, while older generations share cultural knowledge in return; and
- d. developing user interfaces and instructional guides in the Uzbek language that are adapted to the needs of older users.

Coleman emphasizes the importance of ethnographic approaches for analyzing online communities, digital practices, and the broader social consequences of digital media [10] a perspective closely aligned with the analytical framework adopted here. Such approaches make it possible to examine how national values are actually lived, negotiated, and transmitted in everyday digital practice rather than assuming that technology determines cultural outcomes.

Turning to the long-term prospects for addressing these challenges, preserving and advancing national values in the digital era is clearly a complex undertaking. As noted above, the intersection of national tradition and global paradigms inherently induces structural transformation; successfully safeguarding core values, however, yields several promising outcomes. First, digitizing cultural assets through virtual museums, electronic archives, and online platforms helps ensure that national heritage is preserved and transmitted intact to future generations. Notably, the primary purpose of virtual museums is not the meticulous replication of physical artifacts but the effective communication of a cultural object's overarching concept and significance [24].

Second, digitization facilitates the attractive and widespread dissemination of national narratives. Through short-form video, podcasts, animation, infographics, and social media, cultural values and traditions can be transmitted and preserved in accessible, high-impact formats.

With respect to RQ3, the prospects for preserving national identity in the digital era therefore remain positive, provided that the challenges described above are addressed deliberately. This process enables the digital archiving of cultural heritage, the creation of formats tailored to young people, the strengthening of the nation's cultural brand, and the effective synthesis of tradition and innovation.

4 Conclusion

This study set out to determine whether the interaction between national and global values in Uzbekistan's information society is better characterized as conflict or as transformation. The digital era introduces both challenges and opportunities into the system of national values, family dynamics, and social relations. On the one hand, global platforms, sensational content, rapid information consumption, and algorithm-driven media environments shape the consciousness of the younger generation and occasionally call aspects of national and traditional values into question. On the other hand, the same digital space offers considerable potential for recontextualizing national culture, adapting it to young people's preferences, and disseminating it to broader global audiences. The findings indicate that preserving national values depends not on passive protection alone but on their active reinterpretation, visualization, and popularization through modern digital formats. National art, traditional craftsmanship, attire, and spiritual heritage gain greater resonance when conveyed through short-form video, podcasts, infographics, online museums, and social media a strategy that safeguards national heritage in digital environments while expanding its sphere of influence.

At the same time, bridging the intergenerational digital divide remains an urgent task. Achieving this requires enhancing digital literacy, fostering intergenerational dialogue, designing accessible user interfaces, producing instructional guides in the Uzbek language, and strengthening family-centered educational frameworks; otherwise, digital alienation risks producing a break in cultural continuity. Ultimately, preserving national values in the digital age requires a sustainable balance between tradition and innovation, between domestic social environments and digital culture, and between local heritage and global opportunity. The study therefore concludes that the intersection of global and national values although initially a site of tension drives a process of structural transformation in which both value systems mutually adapt and continue to evolve.

This study has several limitations. It relies on a qualitative, interpretive analysis of literature, documents, and publicly available online content, and it does not include survey or interview data; its findings are therefore indicative rather than statistically generalizable. Future research could employ mixed methods such as surveys and in-depth interviews with young people and parents, systematic content analysis of popular Uzbek social media accounts, and comparative studies with other Central Asian societies to test and extend the patterns identified here.

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Author Contributions

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Data Availability Statement

No new datasets were generated in this study. All sources analyzed are publicly available and are cited in the References.

Ethics Statement

This study did not involve human participants, interviews, or the collection of personal data; it analyzed only published literature and publicly accessible online content. Ethical approval was therefore not required.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Statement

During the revision of this manuscript, the authors used Claude (Anthropic) to improve the English language (US style), clarity, and structure of the text and to check and format the references in IEEE style. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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