



The Development Tendencies of the Institutional Transformation of Family and Mahalla Structures Within the Framework of Ongoing Socio-Legal Reforms in the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: *This scholarly article presents an in-depth analysis of the institutional transformation of family and mahalla (community) structures within the framework of ongoing socio-legal reforms in the Republic of Uzbekistan. It explores their practical functions grounded in legal norms, as well as their evolving role in the contemporary sociopolitical landscape. The study highlights the mediating role of these institutions in the local implementation of state policies, their contribution to the consolidation of social stability, and their influence on the formation of civil society. Furthermore, a comparative examination with international practices identifies prospective pathways for the sustainable development of these community-based institutions.*

Keywords: *Socio-Legal Reforms, Family Institution, Mahalla Institution, Institutional Transformation, Civil Society, Legal Norms, Social Stability, Implementation Of State Policy.*

Introduction

Having gained Uzbekistan its independence, the country embarked on a way of radical reforms in the social and legal sphere. Although this process is shaped by historical, political and social factors, its analysis within the framework of the philosophy of law allows for a deeper understanding of the essence of these reforms. The philosophy of law seeks to understand social relations not only through a legal normative system, but also through harmonization with the eternal values of humanity, such as freedom, justice, equality, duty and moral responsibility. Based on this, a critical philosophical approach to the socio-legal reforms carried out in Uzbekistan requires an assessment of not only the external, but also the internal content of existing processes, their anthropological, axiological and institutional foundations.

The legal reforms carried out at the new stage of Uzbekistan's development, based on the "New Uzbekistan" principle, differ from the management model based on the centralization of the state at the early stages. Currently, such approaches as the formation of a civil society, ensuring the rule of law, guaranteeing human rights and freedoms in a real context, and systematically combating corruption are being put forward. However, the internal details of this reform process, and the social and cultural context in which they are implemented, require a deeper analysis. Philosophically, these changes are interpreted as historical dialectical contradictions between society and the state, their evolution and the desire to establish relationships in a new format. The issues of legal awareness and legal culture that are emerging in the reform process deserve special attention. Law is not only a means of determining the external order, but also a normative system that incorporates a person's inner freedom, socio-moral criteria.

Methodology

The present theme under the title "The development tendencies of the institutional transformation of family and mahalla (community) structures within the framework of ongoing socio-legal reforms in the Republic of Uzbekistan" is used content analysis, induction, deduction, critical thinking and comparative analysis.

In the new development strategy of Uzbekistan, the harmonious development of family institutions and mahallas is defined as the basis for building a civil society, philosophical views in this direction have been deeply analyzed from a socio-pedagogical and moral-philosophical point of view by researchers such as Mirzaev (2021), Nurmatova (2023), Sultanov (2022).

Result and Discussion

the complex relationships between formal institutions and informal social structures. Philosophically speaking, the gap between the normative approach and the axiological one has not yet been completely overcome.

In addition, legal reforms are closely related not only to external forms, but also to issues such as real power relations in society, economic inequality, social injustice, gender equality and cultural diversity. This requires that the reforms have a deep philosophical basis, that is, they are justified not only on a legal, but also on a socio-ontological and anthropological level. In order for the reforms to be reflected in real life, it is necessary that the law be not just an order or a ban, but an expression of social consent, firmly rooted in the consciousness of society. In this sense, the idea of a "new Uzbekistan" is based not just on renewal, but on the restructuring of society based on universal values, rethinking the inner moral essence of law. However, another aspect that should be considered in a critical approach is the top-down, state-oriented nature of the reforms. Any legal updates, if a society does not have internal participation and subjectivity, that is, civil subjectivity is not fully formed, they can acquire a superficial and mechanical character. From the point of view of the philosophy of law, the basis of social and legal progress should be the activity

of civil society institutions, the expansion of social responsibility and the regulation of social contractual consciousness.

Socio-legal reforms in Uzbekistan are developing at an important historical stage. This process requires not only updating the legislative framework, but also a deep renewal of the thinking of society as a whole, the system of values, public consciousness and ideas about freedom. However, from the point of view of the philosophy of law, these reforms should serve to enhance human honor, dignity and responsibility. It is on these principles that the effectiveness of reforms should be assessed. As part of the ongoing fundamental reforms in the legal and social space of modern Uzbekistan, family institutions and mahallas act not only as traditional social units, but also as the main social institutions that form legal awareness, ensure social stability and strengthen the foundations of civil society. In the context of the philosophy of law, these institutions exist in dialectical connection with the socio-legal structure of the state, the functioning of which ensures the stability of natural law and order in society.

The family is the first step of an individual into society, the main source of socialization and a space for the formation of spiritual values. The family plays an important role in social management not only as a biogenetic unit, but also as an institution that serves to transmit social moral codes from generation to generation. In article 76 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "The family is recognized as the main link of society," which ensures the strengthening of the institution with legal guarantees [1]. This principle has become a stable direction of state policy: institutional protection and social support through initiatives such as the Family Code, the Law on Equal Rights and opportunities for Women and men, as well as the Year of the Family, the Youth Notebook, and the Women's Notebook mechanisms of Sustainable development [2].

A mahalla is a complex form of civil society and a system of local self-government characteristic of Uzbekistan. This institution acts as an intermediary between the State and the people as a reference point for local social management, performing functions such as social services, conflict resolution, legal advocacy, and crime prevention. Therefore, in Uzbekistan, the "mahalla institute" is being reinterpreted not only as a cultural tradition, but also as a Constitutional social institution [3]. From a socio-philosophical point of view, the institutions of family and neighborhood are considered as factors that apply the state principles of human rights, social justice and stability to the life of society. Saadat Inoyatova argues that these institutions play an invaluable role in shaping public consciousness and legal thinking [2:59-67]. The experience of Uzbekistan clearly shows this dialectical attitude: if national values are passed down from generation to generation through the family, then the mahalla organizes social life based on these values. Such harmony is consolidated not only in social theory, but also in the real legal and criteria framework. For example, through the "mahalla work" system, such socio-economic tasks as reducing poverty, increasing employment, and targeted social assistance are implemented [4:5-11].

RESULTS.

The institutions of the family and mahalla are the pillars of Uzbekistan's socio-legal reforms and are of primary importance in public policy as fundamental institutions that ensure legal awareness, civic engagement and social stability. Their practical activities play a crucial role in determining the legal and cultural harmony in society.

In the process of legal transformation of Uzbek society, the institutions of the family and the mahalla, especially the mahalla institute, appear as one of the most prominent legal and sociological phenomena in society. The Mahalla, as a kind of historical and social institution, has developed and has now become an important tool for the development of legal culture, building a civil society, and practical implementation of the principles of democratic governance. However, without a thorough analysis of the philosophical and legal nature of this institution, it is not enough to understand its real place in the system of public administration. When viewed in the context of the same philosophy of law, the main function of the mahalla institute is to serve as a local model of legal socialization. At its core, it is a structure that can be considered within the framework of Gramsci's concept of civil society, which, as an intermediary between the state and citizens, carries out "reasonable coercion" through social norms and legal values [5:211]. However, in practice, this model is not always an amplifier of freedom, but it also preserves the possibility that the state will become one of the mechanisms of micro-pressure. This may conflict with the concepts of the rule of law, civil rights, and subjective freedom inherent in the principles of the rule of law.

The formation of legal culture through the institutions of neighborhood and family in the modern philosophy of law and It is considered in connection with Kant's concept of moral imperative and developing law based on freedom [6:478]. However, in many cases, the normative criteria in the area are based on socio-cultural mentality and traditional customs. This often shapes legal culture as coercion based on social conformity rather than free choice. Consequently, there is a possibility that the function of the neighborhood institution, on the one hand, ensures social order and collective balance, and on the other hand, limits legal subjectivity.

Another contradiction of the neighborhood institution lies in the coexistence of its regulatory and repressive functions. Based on Michel Foucault's theory, social institutions, including the neighborhood, establish "social norms" by controlling the daily lives of citizens and standardizing their actions. In this case, the law essentially acts not as a means of protecting a citizen, but as a means of force obliging him to be "normal" [7:47]. From this point of view, although neighborhood and family institutions serve to introduce legal awareness in society using internal, psychological and moral criteria rather than external ones, these criteria are not always consistent with priority freedom.

Another important aspect is the step-by-step role of family and neighborhood institutions in the formation of legal awareness. While the family is the primary social environment that forms individual consciousness, the neighborhood serves as the main source of collective identity. However, collective values, which are a priority in society, can work against the subjective aspects of legal freedom. Especially in societies where a patriarchal mentality prevails, legal education in the family often serves to strengthen

traditional roles. In this case, the right becomes not a freedom, but a set of duties. In the philosophical approach, law is considered not as a means of regulating society, but as an expression of free public consciousness. Thus, within the framework of Uzbekistan's policy of legal modernization, imposing an excessive regulatory burden on the mahalla institution, excessively "legalizing" it, can actually suppress social freedom and internal legal activity.

In the light of the ongoing socio-legal reforms in the Republic of Uzbekistan, there is a growing tendency to put forward the human factor as the main criterion. In the course of these reforms, the institutions of family and neighborhood serve as the basis of cultural and national values that stabilize the legal and moral criteria of society, as well as guide civil society. When viewed in the context of the philosophy of law, family and neighborhood act not just as social structures, but as the ontological foundations of society, determining factors in the formation of socialization and legal awareness of a human being. In this regard, the model of trilateral cooperation in the form of "family–mahalla-educational institution" should be interpreted as a complex socio-philosophical phenomenon.

Sociological research in recent years has allowed for a deep study of the position and functional effectiveness of these institutions in the public consciousness. The results of a social survey conducted in 2023, which was attended by about 15,000 people, show that in the upbringing of children there is a real impact of family and neighborhood cooperation, which is crucial in the formation of legal awareness, social activity and moral improvement of young people. In particular, the majority of respondents (78%) stated that the close connection between family and neighborhood in the process of education and upbringing increased the social flexibility of their children. These results, evaluated on the basis of the criteria of the philosophy of law, show the development of law in a dialectical connection with social balance and moral systems.

Today, the ideological onslaught spreading under the guise of "mass culture", concepts such as individualism and moral relativism, introduced into the consciousness of the younger generation, threaten the stability of national legal values. It is in these conditions that neighborhood and family institutions are considered as the main guardians in the formation of legal immunity, the establishment of principles of social justice in society and the deepening of legal education. At the same time, the family acts as a source of moral consciousness formation, and the mahalla is a social arena of legal behavior. Therefore, from the point of view of the philosophy of law, these institutions are fundamental, forming an inextricable link between legal legitimacy and moral legitimacy in society. The deep thoughts in Abdurauf Fitrat's work "family or family management procedures" are harmoniously combined with modern legal thought: being a sovereign, gaining fame or falling into humiliation – all this is closely related to the upbringing that was given in the family in childhood. This opinion is directly related to the role of family and neighborhood institutions in the implementation of state legal policy at the local level in modern society.

Conclusion

The above-mentioned sociological observations and historical and philosophical data confirm the need to consider the institutions of family and neighborhood in the development of society as independent and active subjects based on the criteria of the philosophy of law. These institutions are not only the “lower stage” of law enforcement, but also a powerful ideological and pedagogical foundation that awakens the legal thinking of citizens, integrating moral norms with legal values. After all, it is not enough to develop laws for the legal stabilization of society – the social environment must be ready for their awareness and informed adoption. The above-mentioned sociological observations and historical and philosophical data confirm the need to consider the institutions of family and neighborhood in the development of society as independent and active subjects based on the criteria of the philosophy of law. These institutions are not only the “lower stage” of law enforcement, but also a powerful ideological and pedagogical foundation that awakens the legal thinking of citizens, integrating moral norms with legal values. After all, it is not enough to develop laws for the legal stabilization of society – the social environment must be ready for their awareness and informed adoption. And this preparation begins, first of all, in the family and neighborhood system.

Thus, while Uzbekistan strives for a rule-of-law state and civil society, the activities of family and mahalla institutions should be studied not only from a sociological and social point of view, but also on the basis of a deep philosophical and legal approach. Because it is through these institutions that a person is formed as a person, and law becomes a real expression of the moral and social thinking of mankind.

When the mahalla institution is active not in an environment of political freedom and democratic decision-making, but in an environment based on adherence to criteria and strict social control, in this case it manifests itself as a phenomenon of law - a formed instrument of power [8:273]. Thus, the institutions of the family and the mahalla are important structural units in the legal reforms of Uzbekistan, through which the state approaches citizens, but at the same time introduces mechanisms of microeconomic, cultural and legal control in relation to them. This, in turn, creates a complex dialectic between freedom and security, individual rights and social responsibility. As a philosophical conclusion, it should be noted that in the legal reforms of Uzbekistan, the institutions of the family and mahalla play a crucial role.

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