

# THE JOURNAL OF CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

Volume: 28 2021 ISSN: 0975-086X



Centre of Central Asian Studies  
University of Kashmir  
Srinagar, J&K, India

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Volume: 28 2021 ISSN: 0975-086X

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University of Kashmir  
Srinagar, J&K, India

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The Journal is peer reviewed, refereed and indexed in EBSCOhost and ProQuest. The Journal is also available online through EBSCOhost Database: Political Science Complete on [web.ebscohost.com](http://web.ebscohost.com); and on the University of Kashmir web page <http://ccas.uok.edu.in>.

**Scope of the Journal:** The Journal welcomes original papers on all aspects of Central Asia, preferably, contemporary problems and emerging regional issues.



Price: Rs. 1000 / \$ 25

Design  
Discover Srinagar  
8716 892 892

Published by  
Centre of Central Asian Studies  
University of Kashmir  
2022

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# US Withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban Resurgence Implications for the Central Asian Region

*Harmeet Singh\* & Divya Anand\*\**

## **Abstract**

*The geostrategic location of Afghanistan is such that it lies in the heart of South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. Afghanistan is at the intersection of major north-south and east-west trade routes. After the 9/11 attack on US World Trade Centre, the United States accused Osama Bin Laden of this heinous crime and the U.S. government demanded that the Taliban should hand over Bin Laden to the U.S. The Taliban group headed by Al-Qaeda rejected the U.S. demand and they refused to hand him over. Within a few weeks, the United States along with NATO forces began bombing and started its operation enduring freedom in Afghanistan against the Taliban forces. In its 20 years of War against Terrorism U.S. along with NATO forces established a democratic setup in Afghanistan by strengthening the structure of democracy and creating a strong Afghan National Security force (ANSF). The US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 has encouraged the Guerilla Taliban forces to retake its rigorous control and it will be disastrous for Central Asian countries including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, especially the Fergana Valley area of Central Asia because the Taliban resurgence has the potential to produce new security threats for the region. The expansion of instability and regional insecurity is the main cause of concern for all the Central Asian countries because this Taliban resurgence can harm these central Asian Countries in near future.*

## **Keywords**

Central Asian Republics, Security threats, Taliban Resurgence, NATO Withdrawal, US, Security Threats, Terrorism, Afghanistan etc.

## **Ethnic Rivalry and the Death of the Afghan State**

Afghanistan is one of the most impoverished and vulnerable nations in the world. It is the most devastated, war-torn, and beleaguered nation. Historically Afghanistan acts as the major civilization link between the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent. So Afghanistan is not a self-reliant ethnic unit, its national ethnicity is not uniform. It is made

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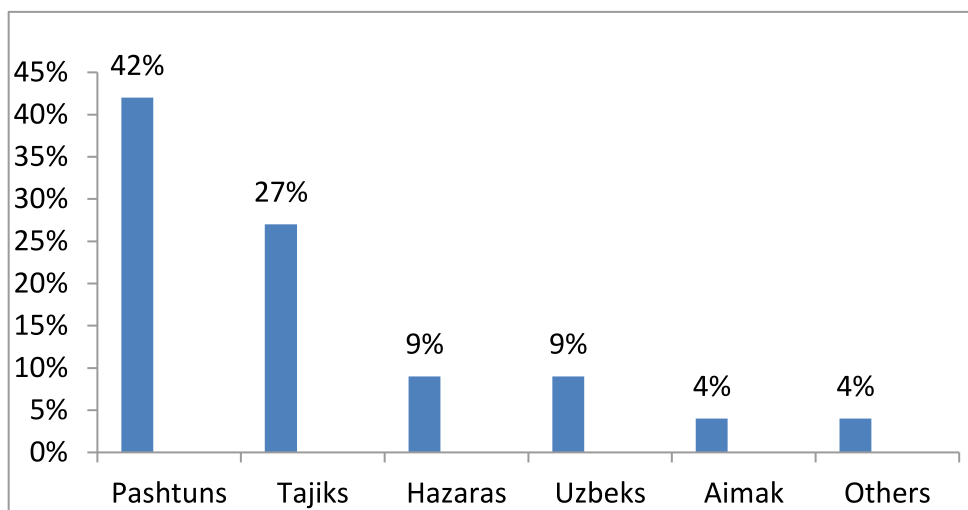
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up of many different nationalities because of the upshot of innumerable incursions and migrations. Afghanistan is a multiethnic society having a heterogeneous structure of its society. The geostrategic location of Afghanistan is as such it lies in the heart of Asia and its population is divided into a wide variety of ethno-linguistic groups. The prominent ethnic groups of Afghanistan are as follows; Pashtun<sup>1</sup> comprises 42% of Afghans. The

The Tajiks are the second largest ethnic group with 27% of the population, followed by Hazaras (9%), Uzbeks (9%), Aimaq (4%), Turkmen (3%), Baloch (2%) and other groups like Pashai, Nuristani, Gujjar, Arab, Brahui and Pamiri comprised 4% of Afghan population (Dupree 2010:55). The Pashtuns are the leading ethnic group in Afghanistan even today they are holding the largest enduring tribal society in the world. The Pashtuns are mostly residing in the South-West, North-West and Eastern part of Afghanistan. Despite the dominance of Pashtun tribes, there are numerous other significant minorities, these are the non-tribal minorities who speak the Ural-Altai language and have a combination of western and Central Asian physical traits. These include the Farsi-speaking 'Tajik' group which constitutes the second largest ethnic population of Afghanistan. The National anthem of Afghanistan mentioned all these 14 Ethnic groups. Ethnic rivalry was the prime cause of the death of the Afghan state (Dupree 2010:55)

### *Ethnic Composition of Afghanistan*



### **9/11 attack on US and Operation Enduring Freedom**

The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 killed around 2,996 people, and injured over 6,000 people, it caused 3 trillion dollars in damage to the U.S. The entire world was shocked to see the images of destruction and was overwhelmed with grief, fear and anger. They supported the Bush administration's declaration of war against terrorism, the Bush administration declared that this attack was masterminded by

Osama Bin Laden and carried out by Al-Qaeda. The international community fully backed the American decision to launch a global war against terrorism. The US demanded that the Taliban should immediately hand over Osama Bin Laden for this heinous crime and he should be tried outside Afghanistan for his act. But the Taliban rulers declined to follow the demand of the U.S., seeing all this on 19 September 2001, President Bush declared, "either you are with us or with the terrorists". The American role to put Osama on trial outside Afghanistan was endorsed by the U.N Security Council resolution 1373<sup>2</sup> on 28 September 2001. The resolution gave 30 days to the Taliban to hand over Osama. The resolution mandated by U.N. member states to deny support and sanctuary to terrorists and their networks. After this resolution, the three countries United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan deny their support to the Taliban network and the Taliban was completely isolated. Of the three countries that recognized UAE already withdraw its support, Saudi Arabia downgrade its relations and Pakistan was the last to disassociate from the Taliban and break off its relations with the Taliban (Mukarji 2003).

The Bush administration announced to the world that they launched a global war against terrorism, and this war will continue till terrorism itself is eliminated. On the morning of 7 October 2001, the US launched airstrikes in Kabul, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kunduz., the U.S. launched an operation enduring freedom with the full support of the Northern Alliance. The Northern Alliance or united front is the front composed of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and other minorities like Nuristanis and Turkmens; they came forward to wage a radical war against the Taliban. They had been fighting with the Taliban since the latter had grabbed their power and territories in Afghanistan. They have a stronghold over the Panjshir Valley rest they lost in the battles with the Taliban. In the below-mentioned Map, the stronghold areas of the Northern Alliance are shown in Map (Misra 2004).

*Areas under Northern Alliance before U.S Intervention*



*Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas\\_of\\_Afghanistan](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas_of_Afghanistan)*



The Northern Alliance<sup>3</sup> lost battle after battle because the Taliban army mainly recruited from the majority of Pashtun, was larger and better equipped with the armaments supplied by Pakistan. The US did not want large-scale deployment of its ground troops but understood well that the war in Afghanistan could not be won by the airstrikes alone. But the active support of the Northern Alliance influenced American policy and assured the alliance of a large share in the interim government. The Northern Alliance couldn't cope with the Taliban troops because their strength was quite meagre; the Northern Alliance had only 15,000 troops at their disposal whereas, and Taliban was commanding nearly 40,000 troops. The Northern Alliance depended for its armament and equipment on other countries like India, Iran and Russia and the U.S. They had been fighting with the Taliban forces since 1996. When the U.S. launched its Operation Enduring Freedom in September 2001, it got the support of the Northern Alliance in its joint mission to combat the Taliban forces. Later on, in 2003 NATO forces also joined the Operation (Misra 2004). One of the stated objectives of the U.S. war on the Taliban was the establishment of a democratic system of government in Afghanistan. For the fulfilment of this objective U.S. forces ousted the Taliban religious police and installed Hamid Karzai as head of the state. To legitimize his leadership Karzai convened the Loya-Jirgah a grand assembly in Kabul where elected representatives from different sections of Afghan society debated on the draft of a new constitution. Since the overthrowing of the Taliban U.S. and the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) forces failed to stabilize the country. But they tried to establish a government that is accountable to the public and large extent protects the rights of all the sections of society (RAWA 2015).

### **Security and Development in Afghanistan after Lisbon Summit (2010)**

In Afghanistan the international community's involvement in the development and reconstruction programme is a praiseworthy initiative, the international community's involvement especially the NATO-led operations for the progress and development of Afghanistan has reached a level to meet the people's needs. After nearly a decade of joint efforts by the government of Afghanistan and the international community to build the war-torn country, Afghanistan now entered a crucial phase where progress has been made on several fronts including governance, health, education, infrastructure development and institutional reform. It was, however, at the beginning of 2010 that the international community started to align its efforts behind the vision that was laid out by president Karzai in his inauguration speech for his second term in office. In his speech, he mentioned the five strategic goals: (Suhrke 2013)

1. Initiate an inclusive political process that provides opportunities for Afghans to reconcile and reintegrate into their communities and live in peace with each other.

2. Strengthen regional cooperation and international long-term partnership.
3. Improve governance at the national and sub-national levels through building human resources and fighting corruption.
4. Achieve Afghan sovereignty through the transition of responsibility to the Afghan forces and strengthen the capacity and capabilities of civil military institutions.
5. Provide increased investment opportunities in key sectors such as energy, mining, water, infrastructure, health, and education and promote private sector growth (Stanekzai, 2012).

The development agenda for Afghanistan was laid down at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010. It was the meeting of the heads of the government and the head of the states of NATO member countries. It was held in Lisbon (Portugal) in November 2010. In this summit, all the member countries reaffirm their commitment to the common vision and the shared democratic values on the purpose and principles of the United Nations charter. NATO remains the strong transatlantic framework for strong collective defence and the essential forum for security consultations and solidarity. In this Lisbon Summit of 2010, the NATO member countries adopted the 'Strategic Concept' which emphasized on to protect and defend the members against the full range of external and internal threats. In this address the alliance members chalked out the strategy to counter terrorism and attacks of militant organizations so that civilian causality should be avoided, the member countries agreed to develop a mutual missile defence system. The NATO member countries met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai regarding the undertaking of the group's operation in the country. They agreed to provide training and assistance to the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) and police. The NATO forces also planned to gradually withdraw from Afghanistan with the deadline of 2014. According to the official analysis of NATO countries, the year 2014 is of crucial importance as the security and economic impact of the drawdown can resurface (Nicoll 2011). The period between 2014 and 2024 will serve as the "Transformational Decade" to reach the goal of a peaceful and sovereign Afghanistan. Achieving the goal of a sovereign, democratic and peaceful Afghanistan requires meaningful progress in the five strategic areas outlined by President Karzai in the year 2009. There is a dire need to address the potential threats of the period up to and beyond 2014, some of the immediate measures include:

- a. Engaging the Afghans in constructive dialogue on several strategic issues could include efforts to promote understanding between the Afghans and the international security forces.
- b. Building public confidence is an essential step to move the peace reconciliation and reintegration process forward through extensive and sustained outreach efforts.

- c. Mobilizing the Ulema and the religious leaders across the country to promote the message of peace and stress that the continuation of fighting in Afghanistan cannot be justified and will not bring peace in the long run.
- d. Replacing the current violence with meaningful negotiations and overcoming the environment of fear and terror.

All these efforts will help in the proper functioning of the government and will contribute to the peace process in Afghanistan. Whereas, real success will be achieved, when the neighbouring country Pakistan stops interfering in its domestic affairs and support the peace process (Stanekzai 2012).

### **State Building and Reconstruction of Afghanistan in 20 Years**

The Afghan Constitution Commission was established to draft the new constitution after taking into consideration of all the Afghan citizens. The Loya Jirga elected Hamid Karzai as the interim head of the state in June 2002, Karzai constituted members of his own choice due to this the conflict erupted. Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir was assassinated by gunmen in Kabul. The U.S. air raid in retaliation killed 48 civilians in the local area most of them were attending a wedding party. In the meantime in September 2002, an assassination attempt was made against Karzai in his hometown in Kandahar. Karzai narrowly escaped the assassination attempt. Then clashes erupt between the Taliban fighters and the government forces in Kandahar leaving 49 people dead. All this deteriorated the security situation in Kabul and it got worsened to such an extent that by August 2003, the NATO<sup>4</sup> took control of security in Kabul. In the same month, the Taliban militants killed the local twenty people, including one police chief and two aid workers. In this entire security situation, the Pashtun factions welcome the agenda of the new government and new constitution. The final draft of the constitution was adopted by the Loya Jirga<sup>5</sup> in January 2004; it provides for all the logistical support to the convening of emergency Loya Jirga and the election of Hamid Karzai as the Interim President of Afghanistan. In January 2004 the Grand Assembly called Loya Jirga adopted a new constitution, which provides for a strong government institution. President Karzai announced the first post-Taliban elections in March 2004. This constitution approved by the Loya Jirga has full-fledged provisions of the Islamic Republic with Islam as the sacred religion of Afghanistan. It emphasizes the freedom of religion, gender equality, liberty free and fair elections so on. The constitution emphasized the Presidential form of government which is directly elected by the Afghan people. The new constitution also provided two houses of the Afghan Parliament, the house of peoples or the 'Wolesi Jirga' and the house of elders or the 'Meshrano Jirga' (Usha 2004).

In the post-Taliban regime, several political agreements were signed

between various Afghan factions and international organizations for Afghan reconstruction. The international community came forward and organized several meetings on Afghan reconstruction. *It includes the creation of a steering group of donor governments especially the governments of the European Union, Saudi Arabia, Japan and the U.S. participated in it. The national development program was initiated in the year 2002; it aims to focus on the three main pillars of development;*

- (A) Rebuilding the physical infrastructure of Afghanistan including the Afghan Parliament.
- (B) Enabling the creation of a private sector as the engine of sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- (C) Human development and security of the Afghan nationals. (Stanekzai 2012)

The reconstruction process of Afghanistan was started in the year 2002, with the assistance of 34 donor countries and the World Bank. The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) was established in the same year for providing coordinated financing to the Afghanistan government it also prioritizes national investment projects. In Afghanistan, there are more than 15,000 projects underway with the assistance and supervision of the World Bank. The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) spent almost 2 billion dollars on the reconstruction of infrastructure and development of Afghanistan. In this collection the pool fund of the 24 international donor countries including the U.S. is approximately 30 billion dollars, the largest amount of this share is from the USA. The major impediments in the development projects are corruption, lack of coordination and absence of sound planning in the implementation of these projects (Gaouette 2016).

The US government is emotionally attached to the development of Afghanistan and for this process of rebuilding they created the special post of Inspector General for the Afghanistan Reconstruction and this post was headed by John F. Sopko, "According to Sopko, the project of reconstruction and development is not an easy task, because the hilly terrain of Afghanistan is more acceptable to attacks and the area is completely insecure with dangerous roads, and sometimes the general staff took helicopters to supervise the development functions". In Sopko's report to the U.S. administration, he mentioned that more than 700 schools have been closed because of this insurgency phase and we need to restore all (Synovitz 2007).

Under the reconstruction aid programme the financing of Afghanistan's "Ring Road" is one of the major developmental goals, because the importance of this road is that it connects all the major cities of Afghanistan with the sparsely populated hilly terrains. The total length of this ring road is around 3,000 km. This project ring road was financed by the World Bank and it was described as the backbone of Afghanistan's development. It

is the building block of Afghanistan's economy because it provides the shortest distance for communication and transportation to far-flung areas. It connects major cities like Kandahar, Kabul, Delaram, Herat Province, Phul-e Khumri, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Maidan Shar etc. The extension part of this road connects Khost, Jalalabad, Zarang, Kunduz, Laskargarh and Islam Qala. It is one of the longest routes of the Asian Highway Network most of the work on this road is done by the Indian, Turkish and local companies of Afghanistan (Weinbaum and Frankelman 2007).

International efforts have also been taken to develop the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) through training, equipping and mentoring them. It is for safeguarding the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan. The NATO Training Mission (NTM-A) was designed for Afghan National Security Force (ANSF's) professional training, equipping, education and developmental activities. The training of the Afghan forces for the protection of Afghanistan was supported by UK servicemen and they played a very important role in the up gradation of these forces. The ANSF numbering is nearly 3, 50,000 soldiers of police and air force personnel they took the responsibility of protection across Afghanistan for its 30 million citizens. The ANSF training constitutes the specialized skill impartation and strengthening of the training institutional structures and processes. The training is carried out by the Afghan educated officers in two regional languages 'Pashto' and 'Dari', along with it the compulsory literacy training programme is also designed will impart professional skills to an advanced level. After equipping these ANSF forces the NATO troops reduced their strength and combat operations. The sustainment of the ANSF forces in the post-2014 period after the withdrawal of NATO forces is a cause of concern for the Afghan Government. But ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) took the responsibility in Chicago Summit of 2002 that in future they will work for supporting and sustaining the ANSF forces (Barry 2011).

### **U.S Withdrawal from Afghanistan under Biden Administration**

Afghanistan has been the focus of US foreign policy, since 2001. It is in the open domain the way the U.S. has responded to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, by carrying out a counter-terror coalition and intervening in Afghanistan with strict military action against Al-Qaeda terrorists and by dismantling the Taliban regime in power at that time. Tracing the success of U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in the last 20 years to deal with terror generating hub, is very much evident in the current inconclusive victory of the western powers plus the unbeatable retreat of the Taliban in Afghanistan as a political player.

The spate at which the US and its international partners are withdrawing their military presence from Afghanistan is a part of the complete withdrawal policy

announced by President Biden on April 14, 2021, amidst the rising Taliban attacks in Afghanistan. In fact, in February 2020, the Trump administration signed an agreement with the Taliban for bringing peace to Afghanistan. It committed to withdrawing military forces by May 2021, in return for the assurance that the Taliban would be committed to preventing other terror groups, including Al-Qaeda and would not be using Afghan soil to recruit, train, or fundraises toward activities that threaten the U.S. and its allies. It also mentioned the permanent ceasefire and intra-Afghan negotiations and political settlement in the agreement for bringing peace to Afghanistan.

Once the intra-Afghan negotiations began on September 12, 2020, in Doha, Qatar, it was considered a positive starter to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan. The hopes were washed away when the Taliban did not give up on its violent activities and talks reached an impasse. However, in January 2021, President Biden took over the US administration and a decisive announcement was made in April 2021 to withdraw all the U.S. troops from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021. Such flip-flops in U.S. Afghanistan policy are a reflection of the level of unease and saturation the U.S. has achieved in a misplaced war in Afghanistan. It is seen there is no focus on the agreement reached in February 2020, having talks about the political settlement and end of violence by the Taliban. On the contrary, the violence and spread of Taliban across Afghanistan have intensified creating an environment of fear among civilians and mistrust in the Afghan government (International Crisis Group 2021).

The United States military finally left over its strategic control in Afghanistan, i.e. Bagram airbase in the first week of July 2021, which has been until recently its main point since 2001, to dismantle the Taliban and to capture and kill the perpetrators of 9/11, the Al-Qaeda terrorist. The airbase located 50 km north of the capital, Kabul, having witnessed more than 100,000 US troops in the last 20 years, is successfully handed over to the Afghan National Defense and Security forces in its entirety (Hinman 2021). There is no denying that the US withdrawal in haste is leaving Afghanistan to face multiple crises including a dwindling and fractured economy, weak political dispensation, ethnic socio-cultural crisis, and a resurgent Taliban among others. There are reports clearly stating that the “Taliban movement now controls or contests more of the country's territory than at any time since 2001” (Witte 2021).

Looking into the current increasing instability in Afghanistan, almost on the verge of another civil war of the 1990s but having different nature (may be characterised as more chaotic and violent), the US administration has made an oversimplified assessment against the U.S. military engagement in Afghanistan. One narrative supporting U.S. withdrawal from the region is that the U.S. primary objective in Afghanistan has been accomplished and the threat from Afghanistan today is, in fact, smaller when compared to various other regions especially the Middle East and Africa (Brown 2021). It further

states, “threats from China, an aggressive Russia, North Korea, and Iran- as well as zoonotic pandemics—are more important strategic priorities” (Brown 2021). Such one-sided self-justifying arguments supporting the U.S., however, wrongly assume the threat of terrorism for the U.S. and the whole world is diminishing by underestimating the capabilities of Al-Qaeda and its militant allies.

The internal chaos in Afghanistan, having regional and global ramifications could have been prevented by strict implementation of a much harder bargain carried out with the Taliban in February 2020 i.e. conclusive establishment of Afghan-led and Afghan-owned government, putting a stop to the Taliban's violence along with simultaneous U.S. withdrawal. A consistent follow-up of the Doha agreement may have resulted in relative stability in Afghanistan and surrounding regions. However, the vacuum created by the haste withdrawal of the U.S. is a clear-cut signal to no conclusive end to an Afghan impasse being witnessed ever the two decades. It has rather spiked feelings of anxiety, vulnerability, and chaos among the Afghan civilian population facing the onslaught of the Taliban.

### **The Resurgence of Taliban in Afghanistan and the Central Asian Region**

The resurgence of the Taliban is not a recent phenomenon. Ever since the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, the Taliban on the surface was removed from political power but it never got fully eradicated. In the initial few years following the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, the military operations mainly hunted for Al-Qaeda militants, allowing the Taliban to cross over the porous border into Pakistan. The continued patronage provided by the Pakistani state<sup>6</sup> allowed the Taliban to establish its headquarters in Balochistan province and seek refuge in the FATA region and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The Taliban was regrouping and regaining its strength in Afghanistan with consistent support from Pakistan. In 2006, it is reported, "The number of suicide attacks quintuples from 27 in 2005 to 139 in 2006, while remotely detonated bombings more than doubled, to 1,677" in Afghanistan (Council on Foreign Relations 2021). Since the last two decades, the U.S supported faction-laden political dispensations of Hamid Karzai followed by Ashraf Ghani (and now in a power-sharing agreement with Abdullah Abdullah) have been too fragile to provide a strong Central government. Weak Corrupt political governments, and a fractured economy, marred with internal ethnic strife created the fertile ground for the Taliban to rise again but at the end of the last decade as a politico-militant group.

The recent decision of the Biden administration to not be a "strategic liability" in Afghanistan, and the going complete withdrawal process has further encouraged the Taliban not to reconcile with the Afghan government and to continue occupying many

districts beyond its traditional stronghold in South Eastern and Southern Afghanistan. It is reported, "The Taliban now control roughly a third of all 421 districts and district centres in Afghanistan" (India Today 2021). One could witness the Taliban's march to the Northern and North Eastern areas of Afghanistan, where the Taliban rulers have asked for the strict implementation of the *Sharia*<sup>7</sup>. Implementation of the regressive and outdated laws includes women's prohibition from working, attending school or leaving home without a male relative and men forced to grow beards or wear caps or turbans and a ban on music and other forms of entertainment (Khan 2021).

It has created a sense of fear not only among the civilians but also among the Afghan security forces as around 1000 of them fled into the Central Asian region (BBC News 2021). This is not to ignore what happens in Afghanistan will have repercussions at all levels including the neighbouring regions, mainly the Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, which have been on the frontlines of the war in Afghanistan. The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan may have security, economic, and ethnopolitical consequences in the Central Asian region. Recently, in a move to rapidly occupy areas in Afghanistan, Afghan officials acknowledged, according to some reports, the loss of the Torghundi border town—one of the two trade gateways into Turkmenistan, to the Taliban (BBC News 2021).

The Central Asian region has been a major space for global powers' contestation till the 1990s and continues to be so with new realities in the post-Soviet breakup period—contested borders, weak economic and political systems, and fractured ethnic groups. Three of the five countries of the Central Asian region share a porous border with Afghanistan, making possible easier flow and spread of militants to build new networks and alliances, technical and logistical support. Terrorism is a potent threat to the Central Asian region having the presence of local/regional Islamist militant organisations like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Islamic Jihad Union, and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement in connection with other regional/global terrorist organisations like Taliban, Al-Qaeda and the ISIS. The most lethal militant organisations in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan today have been the offshoots of IMU after the 1990s, having adopted lethal tactics such as suicide bombings (Sanderson, Kimmage & Gordon, 2010).

In the post-2001 period during U.S military operations in Afghanistan, key Central Asian Militants have located themselves in Pakistan (North Waziristan region) to carry out attacks in Afghanistan and the Central Asian region, keeping in mind the fluidity of the Afghanistan borders with the Central Asian region. Already existing interconnections between militant groups have further developed posing a potential threat to the security of the Central Asian region, where there may be similar demands for the establishment of the Caliphate and propagation of Al-Qaeda's global jihadist



ideology. A fertile area for mushrooming of militants has been the Ferghana valley<sup>8</sup> situated in the heart of Central Asia with a total population exceeding 11 million with different ethnicities. It has been a sprawling space for the development of mosques and madrasas in the 1980s during the anti-Soviet Jihad in Afghanistan and thereafter the headquarters of IMU (Alred et.al 2017). Now the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan can prove to be an advantage to local Islamist militants in Ferghana valley and a space to align with other global terrorist networks like al Qaeda and ISIS. It is very much evident in recent IMU's allegiance to ISIS and its increasing number of Central Asian militants fighting under the badge of ISIS<sup>9</sup> (Koparkar 2019). According to some reports, Ferghana valley has provided refuge to the ISIS militants, and a ground to re-emerge (Alred et.al. 2017), posing a threat to the Central Asian region. It is to be noted that the widening scope of militancy in Central Asia is bolstered by sustaining fundraising activities like drugs and narcotics trafficking through the region. It is estimated that around 30 per cent of narcotics flow from Afghanistan to Russia via Central Asia, mostly through Tajikistan<sup>10</sup> (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2011). The earnings from the drug trade and illegal activities will only give rise to organised crime and the long-term sustenance of militancy and illegal economic activities in the Central Asian region characterised by weak political and corrupt economic institutions. It is assessed that narcotics trafficking through Central Asia can contribute to the "fragility" of the Central Asian states (Alred et.al 2017). Such "Fragility" needs to be understood not just from a security perspective but also from furthering politico-ethnic fault lines. The rise of Islamist militants in the region may question the existing weak political governments of the respective Central Asian states, like the way in Afghanistan, creating the scope for rupture of weak political governments, back to the implementation of Sharia and stirring up ethnic conflicts between various groups.

## **Conclusion**

The striking aspect of the Taliban's re-rise is its rejuvenation as a major legitimate political player on the Afghan political chessboard and its recognition by the global and other major powers of the world. It signalled the failure of the external powers' direct intervention in Afghanistan in the late 1970s and 2001. The multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country has resisted foreign domination (to further their interest) in any form, earlier and even today. At the same time, not ignore the weakness of the Afghan political and military institutions and processes, fragile and dependent economy, ethnocultural clashes, fluid security situation, and the ever-present militant groups, thanks to the Pakistani patronage of non-state actors. Both domestic and external factors have contributed to the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan. It has created an environment of panic and fear not only within Afghanistan but also for the neighbouring Central Asian

region which stands strategically at the crossroads between Asia and Europe. The Taliban's rise in Afghanistan has reignited the militant networks across the local, regional and global levels. It is to say that further scope is created for terrorist organisations like the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, ISIS, IMU, JeM, LeT and others to pose a security threat to Central Asia. The Resurgence of the Taliban may also thrive transnational crime resulting in more momentum for illegal money-making activities like drug trafficking via the Central Asian Region. It would make the landlocked Central Asian region economically more fragile. Adding to it, most importantly, regions having proximity to the unstable and chaotic Afghanistan may fuel ethno-political clashes. The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan may create the possibility of a similar Afghanistan's 1990s civil war between different ethnic groups i.e. Northern Alliance (comprised of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras) v/s Taliban. It may result in re-emerging of the similar divisions in multi-ethnic Central Asian regions contributing to ethno-political wars. Such ethno-political wars may further weaken and can rupture the political systems of the Central Asian region, creating a vacuum to be filled by radicals and Islamist militants and more external powers' intervention. The fallout of the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan could lead to a more unstable and chaotic Central Asian region, not to be overlooked by global and regional powers.

#### **Notes**

1. Pashtun (also spelt Pushtun, Pakhtun, Pashtoon, Pathan) are people who live in southeastern Afghanistan and the northwestern province of Pakistan. They are one of the largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The Pashtun people are generally classified as eastern Iranians who use the Pashto language and follow Pashtunwali. In Afghanistan politics, this group plays a dominant role from the beginning and the estimated number of Pashtun tribes and clans ranges from about 350-400.
2. The UN Security Council Resolution no 1373 was adopted after the 9/11 attack on the US, it was adopted under chapter VII of the UN charter of collective security and it is therefore binding on all the UN member states. This resolution was aimed to combat terrorism and it announced a global war against terrorism. This resolution established a counter-terrorism committee in the Security Council. The UN member states were encouraged to share the information of intelligence agencies about the terrorist groups.
3. The Northern Alliance was a military formation that came to the forefront in the year 1996 when the Taliban invaded Kabul it was assembled by the key leaders Ahmad Shah Massod, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Abdul Rashid Dostum, Asif Mohseni and Haji Abdul Qadir. This united front of key leaders fought a defensive war against the Taliban government and they received support from Turkey, India, Russia and Tajikistan. It was dominated earlier by the ethnic Tajiks but later on, an amalgamation of Uzbeks and Hazaras was seen. The US forces with the help of the Northern

Alliance launched a joint war against the Taliban.

4. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance between 29 North American and European states based on the North Atlantic Treaty that was signed on 4 April 1949. It constitutes the system of collective security whereby its member states agreed to collective action against any aggressor. Three NATO members US, UK and France are permanent members of the UN Security Council. The NATO headquarter is located in Brussels, Belgium.
5. Loya Jirga is a grand Assembly in Afghanistan; it is a code of laws of the Pashtun people they mainly organized for the collective decision of Afghans in choosing the head of the state in case of sudden death, to settle the national and regional issues of war, for adopting a new constitution. It is mostly favoured by the Pashtun people. The Loya Jirgas have been reportedly organized since the 18th century when the Durrani and Hotaki dynasties rose to power.
6. The Pakistani state has always provided patronage to militant groups like the Taliban and its allies Haqqani network to fulfil its domestic (suppression of Pashtun nationalism) and foreign policy objectives (anti-India activities).
7. The word Sharia in Arabic means "the path to follow" and in jurisprudential context means "ideal Islamic law".
8. Ferghana Valley is rich in natural resources, extremely fertile and is the agricultural heartland of the region. High Population density, competition between various ethnicities (Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Kyrgyz), and scarce resources have led to ethnic conflicts and militancy.
9. According to one report, there have been around 500 fighters from Uzbekistan, 360 from Turkmenistan, 300 from Kyrgyzstan, 250 from Kazakhstan, and 190 from Tajikistan in support of the Taliban and ISIS in Syria and Iraq in 2014.
10. It is the weakest state in the Central Asian region having corrupt political institutions and facing a severe economic crisis resulting in its dependence on the Opium trade from Afghanistan

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# Socio- Cultural legacies of Central Asian Tuzuk -I- Baburi

*Rukhsana Iftikhar\**

## **Abstract**

*Zaheer-ud- din Muhammad Babur (1493-1530) the first Mughal who invaded India in 1526 A.D and laid down the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India. Babur was pushed down towards India by the enemies of his hometown in Central Asia. Babur had no future in his land, so he searched for another land as his Kingdom. Babur remained nostalgic about Central Asia during all his years spent in India. He was central Asian by heart and followed all norms, and traditions of Central Asia either in his political life or in his personal life. This paper attempts to highlight first his autobiography as the main source of Babur's history and then the Central Asian legacy of Babur which he particularly mentioned in his diary.*

## **Keywords**

Tuzuk, Farghana, India, Architecture, Administration.

## **Introduction**

Zaheer -ud -din Muhammad Babur is regarded by many as the founder of the Mughal Empire in the Indian sub-continent and a lot of academic work was devoted to him than just to pay homage to Mughal ruler. "In Ramadan 899 (June 1494) at the age of 12 I became the ruler of the province Farghana," Babur wrote in his autobiography, one of the most remarkable works in the Chaghtay-Turkish language. He was born on 14th Feb 1482, but his date of birth is missing in the historical records. His father Umer Sheikh Mirza was the decadent of the great Amir Timur. All Mughal rulers maintained a strong connection with their ancestors in Central Asia. Babur's mother was the daughter of tribal head Yunus Khan, a decadent of Chingaz Khan. Babur's life is true deception of failures. He fought for his kingdom and was defeated thrice. Babur wandering in Central Asia ultimately provoked him to search for a new land in or across Kabul. Babur's victory over India opened new doors for him and his Mughal lineage. But the man who was behind this victory could not defeat his destiny. Babur died on 26 December 1530 at the age of forty-six. It was the end of Babur's life, but it was the beginning of the glorious chapter of Mughal rule in the Sub-continent.

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The Babur Nama, the autobiography of Babur keeps the memory of his conquests alive. He opens his soul with frankness and lack of inhibition. The Babur Nama is a history, a family chronicle, a diary, a collection of nature notes, a gazetteer and a book of advice for a concerned father to a slightly hopeless son. Babur gave us the detailed description of geography, principalities, climate, and many other facets of Farghana in his early days. *Babur Nama* is divided into three sections. The first section tells the story of his childhood and the adolescent failures that led to the loss of his patrimony. The second section contains the story of his early twenties, and the time he spent homeless and wandering beyond the Oxus. This is followed by the capture of Kabul, which he thus uses as a base to rally his exiled and scattered Timurid relatives. The third section has the story of his final years and the conquest of India, a triumph tainted in its author's eyes by the ever-present pain of exile and loss. History may remember him as the first Mughal Emperor, but in his own eyes, he was always a failure and a refugee. Throughout his memoir, we are admitted to Babur's innermost confidence as he observes and questions the world around him. He compares the flora and fauna of India and Afghanistan with Central Asia. He records his impressions of falling for men or marrying women or enjoying the differing pleasures of alcohol and opium.

*Babur Nama* is the climax and culmination of that Islamic autobiographical tradition as much as the Taj Mahal is the climax of architectural legacy in India. It is not just that the autobiography is so very long and fabulously written in detail: it extends to 600 pages in Turki critical edition, although 15 Afghan years of the Babur's life were missing and lost forever. This means that Babur's life is more fully documented than any other figure in the entire pre-colonial Islamic world. It makes this book stand out and remain relevant in history and moving today is its universal humanism. Its unusual honesty, sensitivity and self-understanding are lasting (Grewal 2015). As his latest scholarly biographer, Stephen Dale puts it:

Babur transcended the narrative and historical genres of his culture to produce a retrospective self-portrait of the kind that is usually associated with the most stylishly effective European and American autobiographies. No other author in the Islamic world—or pre-colonial India or China—offers a comparable autobiographical memoir, a seemingly ingenuous first-person narrative with self-criticism as well as self-dramatization and the evocation of universally recognizable human emotions (Dale 2018).

As generations of readers from different cultures have found, *Babur-nama* is an unusually charming text: a warm-hearted, romantic, and deeply engaging record of a highly cultured and honestly self-critical man: “His literary work delivers to us everything,” writes Jean-Paul Roux, the French historian of the Mughals (Roux 2017).

Babur's love of nature is visible throughout the text of this autobiography and the

fineness of his descriptive eye is immediately apparent as he tries to evoke his lost homeland, the *Farghana* valley. Pages are devoted to the different varieties of multicoloured tulips growing wild in the Hindu Kush or to the smell of holm oak when used as winter firewood, "blazing less than mastic but like it, making a fire with plenty of hot ashes, and nice smell, the aroma of this was bliss for his soul. Above all, Babur loved books. His first act after a conquest was to approach the library of his opponent and raid its shelves. Whenever he invades a new city, he would prefer to go to poetry meetings and listen to the verses being recited by its poets, joining in where appropriate, and criticizing whenever he disliked a particular verse. Inappropriate poets were a constant source of irritation for Babur (Collier 2016).

The sensibilities of Babur were sharpened by wide reading. Babur had a great gift for producing these witty and often piquant word portraits of his friends and foes. His father he described as: "...short and stout, round-bearded and fleshy-faced . . . He used to wear his tunic so very tight that to fasten the strings he had to draw his belly in and, if he let himself out after tying them, they often tore away. He was not choice in dress or food . . . In his early days, he was a great drinker, and later on, used to have a party once or twice a week. He was good company, on occasions reciting verses admirably.." (Askri 1982).

Much of the text is a record of Babur's restless energy and ambition towards literature, his struggles in a world that are inevitably profoundly unexhausted military, and feudal: fighting, riding horses, playing polo, drinking wine, swimming opposite to river *Ganga*, fishing and hawking occupies many pages than more peaceful pursuits such as playing chess, painting, calligraphy, romance, versifying his family life. He gives as much space for battles lost as he does to battles won. He takes full responsibility for his youthful failures: "These blunders," he writes, "were the fruits of inexperience." (Beveridge A., 1921).

He is also frank about his capacity for depression and grief. He opens up about the great tragedies of his life, in this way he brought about the darkest moments of his life into the light. He writes with the feeling of great pain about his mother's death from fever, and the death of his comrades-in-arms: "His death made me strangely sad," he writes at one point, "for few men have I felt such grief; I wept unceasingly for a week or ten days." Overall remarkable picture, this autobiography provides of an extraordinary man, the athlete Babur boasted of having swum across the Ganga with only thirty-three strokes in each direction indeed of having swum across every river he had ever encountered. A few in history are those who combined dexterity with both sword and pen. It remains, no doubt, one of the greatest memoirs, in any language and of any age and it presents one of the most complex, complete, and satisfying self-portraits in the world of literature. Babur's narration about the flora and fauna of Hindustan, fruits and vegetables, speciation of time, and revenue details gave the idea of 16<sup>th</sup> century India.



Return a hundred thanks, O Babur, for the bounty of Merciful God Has given you Sind, Hind and numerous Kingdoms. . Babur was very proud of his ancestors, and he followed all traditions of Central Asia.

### **Literary Pursuits of Babur**

Babur was multi-lingual. He knew Persian but patronized Turkish (his mother tongue). He praised the poet Ali Sher *Nawai* very much in his *Tuzuk* to whom he was in correspondence. He was very good in *ghazel*, *masnavi* and *rubai*. Babur's memoirs are in the Turkish language. Mirza Haider, his closest companion wrote about Babur, in the composition of Turki poetry he was second to Amir Ali Sher. Babur's love for painting is visible in his diary. He took the painting of *Bahzad* when he ran away from Central Asia and established the *Bahzad* school of painting in India. *Bahzad* associated with Babur for a short time, and he considered him one of the best painters of Sultan *Husayn's* court (Schimmel, 2004). Babur also achieved great distinction in prose writing. According to Mirza Haidar, his reputation as a prose writer is visible in *Baburnama*. Babur was a calligrapher. One of the styles of calligraphy is associated with his name Khat-a *Baburi* (Yaqeen 2005).

### **Spirituality:**

Babur's spiritual attachment to Abid ul *Aharai* Naqshbandi saint remained with him throughout his life. The saint died when Babur was only seven. Babur claimed that the saint helped him in the time of his crisis. Babur translated his work named *Risala Walidya*, a work on Sufi ethics in Chagatai Turki verse in 1528-1529. Mughal emperors considered themselves the devotees of Central Asian *Naqshbandi Shaikhs*, following the steps of Babur whose Muslim name Zaheer- ud-din had been given to him at the time of the birth by this Sufi saint Ubaid Ullah *Aharar*. Babur visited the tombs of *Hazrat* Nizam-ud-din *Ayliua* and *Hazrat* Bakhtiyar Kaki after his success in the battle of Panipat like a conqueror from Ush of Central Asia. Babur mentioned a meeting with the mystic Muhammad Ghaus *Gwaliari*, whose brother became the advisor of Humayun. Babur said in his autobiography

Though I be not related to dervishes  
Yet am I their follower in heart and soul  
Say no to King is far from Darvish  
I am a king yet the slaves of Dervishes

### **Architecture**

Babur had a great vision as architecture and builder. He hired the services of 680 people

and 1491 cutters for construction of buildings in Agra, *Biana*, *Dholpur*, Gwalior and Koil. He ordered to develop gardens in India as he was inspired from the gardens of Timur in Samarkand. He ordered to build *Charbagh* which included fountains and Hammam, a typical Islamic bath which was unknown to India. In *Bagh-a-Wafa* he introduced the cultivation of vines and melons around Agra, they were as good as they were grown in *Turan*. Among the pupils of *Mimar* Sinan Isa and Yousaf came to India to serve Babur. Babur ordered to construct a large tank, with an enclosure and large audience hall and a private apartment for himself with hot baths. Babur was very much troubled by three things in India; its heat, wind, and dust and to protect himself, he ordered to construct a bath where the dust storm had no effect. Babur ordered to construct a chamber well like Central Asia in Hindustan.

### **Flora and Fauna**

Babur was very particular throughout his diary to describe the Flora and Fauna. He was not a scientist but his love for zoology and botany was very visible in his memoirs. Babur has given a detailed description of fruits, flowers, birds, and animals. It was very common for early Mughals to observe nature. His great-grandson emperor Jahangir inherited the legacies of Babur in horticulture.

### **Women**

Babur was very respectful towards the ladies of his family. He followed the guidance of her grandmother, Ahsan Daulat Begum, in the deserted days of his family. *Qutluq Nigar* Khanum, Babur shared in his *Tuzuk* that she was the only wife of *Umer Shiekh* or with whom he had good relations. In central Asian tradition, the regency of women was very respectful. Babur gave the same respect to his mother and grandmother. Mahim Begum enjoyed an extraordinary position not only in Babur's life but also in his harem. He came out of Agra to receive the ladies of his family even after becoming the King of India. Babur paid respect to all ladies of the harem and his wives in a very gentle way as in his memoirs. When I bend down to earth to kiss her foot I feel my head is in heaven

### **Army**

In his military expeditions, Babur followed the rules and etiquettes to be observed at the time of setting out for a campaign, he adopted the title of “Khaqan” in imitation of Mongol Khan. He adopted the same customs while invading India. *Tatkh -a-Baburi* in Pakistan was the place where Babur stood to provoke his soldiers to attack. Babur regarded himself as a sovereign in his own right and did not require any authority above

him to legalize his authority as Amir Timur. It was a matter of pride for Babur to follow his ancestors. Even he followed the idea of warfare inherited from his Central Asian region. The management of his battles and equipment of the army were central Asian. The use of gunpowder was not local technology in the 16<sup>th</sup> century which he used in the battle of Panipat (Kahan, 1981)

He divided his army, under the Mongol fashion into Tumans, each Tuman had 10,000 men. Babur's soldiers were equipped with a helmet, a *jaushan* (a coat of mail), cuirass, a *jiba* (a coat which covers four plates from the front), a mace, a lance, a sword, an axe, a dagger and with arrows and bows. In addition, the army included firemen, arque buses and guns introduced by Ustad Ali Quli Khan, an ottoman Turk who entered the services of Babur in 1514 and Mustafa, another Ottoman who was employed by Babur from 1520 to 1525. The firemen whom he brought from central Asia were the major factors in winning his wars in Hindustan. The deceive role of cavalry in Babur's army was his central Asian training.

Babur arranged his army in the traditional formation of Mongols and Timurid Style-Right-Right, Left, Left and centre. Babur gives all details of the ceremonies in his diary that Mongols performed before marching to the battlefield. To train his troops and maintain discipline he paid great attention to the army commanders and their men trained and disciplined. His war in central Asia had taught him the use of *Tulguma* in which the Uzbeks were experts. Babur wrote in his *Tuzuk*, another of their practice is to advance and charge in front and rear, discharging their arrows at full gallop". Babur used these two tactics in his battles in India.

### **Babur's Administration**

Babur admired the structure of the government of Amir Timur. His executive, Judiciary and military had prominent, Mongols and Indian nobles whose advice he took for the decision making. Like other *Timuri* rulers, he appointed Sheikh-ul-Islam as the head of the Judicial department. The orders of Babur bore the seal of the emperor inside and outside this order the name of his ancestors was written. Babur adopted the title *Padshah*. After the death of Sultan Hussain *Baiqara*, he was the most senior person in the house of Timurid, but this title created no difference in his political life. As his ancestors claim that Timurid were sovereigns by the claim of their rights. They did not require the legal sanction of any Caliph as Sultans of Delhi practised earlier in India. He had been addressed as PADSHAH throughout *Farghana* and Samarkand. So, by adopting this title he followed the same Timurid tradition as he was the sovereign in his own right as his grandfather, Abu Said Mirza said, "I am Padshah in my own right." (Hibbul Hassan 2021)

Babur introduced coinage and established mints in Kabul, *Badkshan*, *Jaunpur* and later in Lahore. The silver coin followed the central Asian *Dihram* in weight and form and

was called *Shahrakis* after the name of Shah Rukh the son of Amir Timur. Babur established the same idea of measuring the distance between Agra to Kabul as it was in his hometown. He was required to construct a turret every 18 miles for the rest of the postmasters, couriers, and grooms. It was called YAM and in India a DAK CHAWKI. Babur wanted to establish it in every *Khalisa* to provide payments of salaries to the postmaster and its administrative staff. Babur laid down the foundation of monarchy in India which was the legacy of his great grandfather Amir Timur. To what extent Babur followed YASA *Chingaz* Khan he wrote in *Tuzuk*, "My forefather and family had always sacredly observed the rules of *Chingaz* khan. In their parties, their courts, their festivals, their entertainments, in sitting down, in raising they never acted contrary to the institution of *Chingaz*." Babur also followed the rules of the great Mongol chief to meet their relation and in the ceremonies at the time of expeditions and setting campaigns.

On Provincial level, most of Babur's Hakim and Shiqdars were either Turks or Mongols and Uzbeks who came to India to seek refuge and fortune. Babur knew the loyalty of his Turk and Mongol nobles that he was depended on. His experience to appoint natives to different posts was not successful. Assignments made under the sultans of Delhi were called *Iqta* but Babur used the term *Tiyul* which can be traced back to the Seljuq period. For the allowances of provinces, he followed the traditions of his ancestors.

### **Conclusion:**

Babur ranks among the national heroes of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. He followed the tradition of Amir Timur to develop the administrative structure of his government, arts, and architecture in India. Babur was a literary man of his age. Babur's Persian poems became the folk songs of Central Asia. Babur was largely responsible for fostering the culture of his ancestors in India. From ancient times to Middle Ages central and south Asia have had close relations. Central Asia has contributed significantly to religion, philosophy, medicine (Khawaja *Khawind* had learned medicine at Shiraz and came to join Babur, the court at Agra), astronomy (*Samarkandi* school of astronomy was flourish under the patronage of *Mughal* in India), and mathematics etc. Babur's reign produced great scientists, scholars, saints, and poets. Sufis who migrated to India got their education from Samarkand. Babur's legacy was continued in the period of other Mughal rulers even his successor tried to conquer their home in Central Asia in the period of Shah Jahan as Mughals were always nostalgic about their ancestor's home.

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# India -Central Asian Relations Emerging Socio-Cultural Dynamics

*Anisur Rahman\* & Waseem Ahmad\*\**

## **Abstract**

*India and Central Asia have civilizational linkages which have been considered to be two great centres of oriental civilization connected through the silk route since medieval times. India reframes her foreign policy concerning dealing with the new Central Asian Republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmen Uzbekistan, notably after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. In the 21st century, the socio-cultural ties were further strengthened by signing several agreements and high-level visits from both sides. Our relations with the region are based on robust political, economic, Socio-cultural, and technical partnerships. India's soft power is playing a significant role in strengthening bilateral relations. In the Central Asian region, there is an enormous interest in Bollywood films, Indian classical dance, music, literature, Yoga, and other forms of culture. India usually arranges cultural events in these countries and also encourages exchanges of academics, scholars, youth delegations, and civil society to get the core knowledge of each other's cultures. Scholarships for study in India by young men and women from these countries are also provided. The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) is a valuable programme through which young professionals in these countries endure training and personality development. This scheme allowed the youth of these countries to contribute not only to India's economic progress but also to its civilization and heritage. ITEC has particularly contributed to social and economic development for these countries, which forms part of its objective of India to strengthen the diplomatic and socio-cultural ties with the Central Asian countries. The natural cover-up of the whole Central Asian states attracts thousands of tourists from across the world every year. Indians visit these states for tourism as well as for cheap medical education. However, these visits have been marred due to the ongoing pandemic globally. This is true that the mobility of Indians to the central Asian states is scanty, but many emerging realities are reshaping India's existing cultural relationship with them. The main aim of this paper is to highlight the emerging socio-culture relations between India*

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*and Central Asia countries. How economic and trade relations would be strengthened has also been discussed in this study. To make India's relationship stronger with the region, exchanges of visits from both sides have been given special attention in this paper.*

## **Keywords**

India, Central Asia, Region, Historical Connections, Socio-Culture, Bilateral Relations, Tourism

## **Introduction**

Historically, both India and Central Asia have a continuity of cherishing shared cultural heritage while people-to-people contacts, trade and commerce have further strengthened mutual ties. Ancient silk routes had been a link between the East and the West. And the cultural transition from India to Iran and vice versa has been taking place for a long time. The silk route provided goods and services and shared cultural affinities, ideas, religion, and philosophy. Further, religious pilgrimages such as Buddhist and Abrahamic religious entities offered trust-building opportunities. They shared beliefs, which subsequently provided ground for developing the cradle of cooperation and cultural exchange. The enormous cultural influence of India in Central Asia has been deeply rooted in Afghanistan, wherein thousands of Buddhist Monks came as Indian traders and settled permanently. In this connection, Ptolemy, a roman geographer, defines a city namely 'Indikomandana' which is also called a 'city of Indians' situated north of the Amu-Darya in Uzbekistan.

Moreover, there is evidence that large commercial and religious colonies of Indians existed in Western Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. It is pertinent to mention that the trade and commerce relationship between Indian and Central Asian countries was prominent during the medieval period. The Ghorī Empire paved the way for the first comprehensive socio-cultural dynamics with central Asian countries, which were later carried forward by the slave dynasty. However, the Mughal Empire under Akbar, the great, had set up extensive trade and commerce activities in Central Asia. The Mughal emperor Jahangir had a weakness for central Asian fruits – a weakness that he inherited from his venerable ancestors, i.e. Babar, who had founded the Mughal dynasty, considered that "better than the Andijan<sup>1</sup>*Nashpati*, there is none<sup>2</sup>". This definitive statement from the Babar-Nama has probably revealed some nostalgic feelings of Babur towards his lost homeland. Subsequently, three generations of the Mughal empire were so passionate. However, the nostalgia might have receded towards a distant region such as central Asia. It was quite a challenge for Jahangir, who took pride in receiving melons from Karis and Grapes and Apples from Samarkand (Alam 1994). By the early

17<sup>th</sup> Century, Indian and Central Asian countries' trade flourished at a relatively high pace due to the ardent movement of traders, soldiers, poets, Sufis and others, which along with Iran and the Ottoman empire, established a strong domain of circulation, an ecumene with a shared culture, values and symbols (Alam & Subrahmanyam 2007).

During British rule in India, the East India Company developed and imposed colonial rule, which gave birth to a new pattern of trade. The colonial rule was prominently the exporter of raw materials and imported finished goods from England. There was a monopoly of Tea, Tobacco and Jute trading, which was imported as raw material from Asian countries to England through the ancient Silk route/Central Asia. However, the independence of many countries from colonial rule in Asia sought to develop industries of their own as a substitute for their former imports. This trend persisted in both socialist and non-socialist countries. The impact of industrialisation brought anxieties and disappointments among the labour class and oppressed people globally. The link between sociocultural dynamics and industrialisation was nurtured during the cold war era, in which socio-cultural bonds had proved as salvation in times of distress. Chores such as music, dance, movies and literature become a tool of deliverance whereby Indian culture and the Bollywood industry came to the rescue. It was noted that Indian film stars such as Nargis, Raj Kapoor, Mithun Chakraborty, etc have made a special place in the hearts of people in the Central Asian region.

It is further witnessed that political relations grew with frequent visits and exchanges of important personalities from both sides. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Almaty, Tashkent and Ashgabat was the first Prime Minister of India to bring India closer to the countries of the region in 1955. The break-up of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991 led to the establishment of five Independent Central Asian Republics in the East European region, namely Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Geographical location and historical evidence have shown the landlocked Central Asia region, with Afghanistan in the south, Russia in the north, China in the east, and Turkey and Iran in the west and south. It is seen that Central Asia has emerged as a unique region in Asia due to its strategic significance and civilizational history. This region is endowed with large hydrocarbon reserves and natural gas hence, it has become the attention of many international players. For India, this region is also very significant because of its energy and other natural resources.

### **India's Central Asia Policy**

India's Central Asia policy is conceived as a collection of ever-widening concentration circles around the central axis of historical and cultural units. In the first few years of his freedom in 1992, Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited four newly independent countries namely Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan.



Given this country's strategic significance, India attempted to reap the benefits of this region with limited success. One move in this approach was the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) programme started by the Trade Minister to promote trade links with the region. India's external policy to the countries of Central Asia was developed to safeguard and advance India's national interests in the region, with considerable worry, concern and reservations for Central Asian countries. Mutual interests are based on three primary areas: the defence of territorial integrity and sovereignty and, with diverse economic methods, strengthening the people's economic and social well-being.

India's policy of 'Connecting Central Asia' is built on mutual interests and advantages for everyone. It encompasses political, economic, safety and cultural interactions. During the first India-Central Asia Dialogue in 2012, E. Ahamed, India's Foreign Minister, underlined the importance of India's Central Asia strategy. He discussed all major elements of India's 'Central Asia Connect' policy: India has been consistently strengthening political and cultural ties by exchanging high-level visits from both sides. India is also pursuing a coherent strategic posture with various Central Asian countries. This involves military training, cooperative research, coordination of counter-terrorism and close talks on the Afghan situation. More importantly, Indian cooperation in recent years has considerably contributed to the achievement of numerous Geo-economic goals with the help of a few forums such as SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), the EEC (Eurasian Economic Community) and the Customs Union. India has already agreed to a Comprehensive Agreement for Economic Cooperation. India's desire for energy and its imports from Central Asian energy-wealthy countries further reinforce India's links with the world's valuable resource-rich region.

Furthermore, Central Asia has massive agricultural tracts. India sees enormous agricultural potential in these areas since India could offer profitable crops throughout this broad swath of Central Asian arable soil. India and Central Asia are also establishing a Central Asian e-network in India for all five Central Asian countries to provide Tele-education and Tele-medicine connectivity. India's ability to develop world-class structures in the construction business at economic rates is well acknowledged. Central Asian countries, particularly Kazakhstan, have nearly unlimited iron ore and coal stocks and abundant, inexpensive power. India can help build several medium-sized steel rolling mills and manufacture its specialised product requirements.

Regarding land connectivity, the International North-South Transportation Corridor (INSTC) was revived on both sides; attempts were also made to examine means of bridging missing connections in the corridor as soon as possible and to link other parts along the route. Air connectivity was improved from India to all Central Asian countries. Indian banks can enhance their footprint if they sense a favourable political environment. In recent years, Central Asian countries have developed desirable tourist and Indian film

industry holiday locations that love to show exotic foreign places in their films. India is in fact, one of the largest outbound passenger markets that were roughly estimated at USD 21 billion in 2011. Many countries in India have created tourist bureaus for Indian tourists. Finally, both sides emphasised exchanges between young and future leaders in India and Central Asia (Ministry of External Affairs Government of India 2012 June).

### **India's Ties with Central Asian Countries**

Though the relations between India and Central Asian countries were limited to economic and cultural spheres in Soviet times, they now have to strengthen their relations with diplomacy, as India's security was concerned. Kazakhstan is the most economically advanced of the five countries in the region. Its economy is mainly based on natural resources and agricultural resources. Its enormous steppes sustain the grazing of wheat fields and cattle. India imports mineral products, leather and raw materials from Kazakhstan; whereas exports chemical items, drug products, vegetables, plastics, tea, woollen goods, machinery and equipment. In February 1992, President Nazarbayev's first visit to India created diplomatic affairs between India and Kazakhstan followed by a visit in 1993 by Indian Prime Minister Shri Narsimha Rao, which provided incentives for bilateral cooperation. In 1992, 1993, 1996, 2002 and 2009, President Nazarbayev visited India. He was the Chief Guest during the Indian Republic Day celebrations in January 2009. It is found that several Indian former leaders such as Shri K.R. Narayanan, Shri Hamid Ansari, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Dr Manmohan Singh had visited. These visits have provided a strong basis for creating friendly relations (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2016 July).

In 1993 the Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) was founded and it is the principal institutional framework for bilateral development cooperation on commerce, economics, science, technology, industry and culture. The Indian Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the Kazakh Minister of Energy are co-chairs with their ministers. In June 2015, the 12th IGC meeting took place in New Delhi. Joint Working Groups and Subcommittees on counter-terrorism, information technology, economic and trade cooperation, hydrocarbons and textiles were formulated. Furthermore, a new Joint Connectivity Working Group was recently constituted during the 12th IGC meeting in New Delhi.

Yoga, Indian films, dance and music play an important role in bringing India closer to Kazakhstan. In this connection, it is worthwhile to mention that Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre in Astana is engaged in various cultural activities, including dance, music and yoga classes, and the celebration of Indian festivals. There is a provision for scholarships in various disciplines under the ICCR Scholarship programmes in India for students from Kazakhstan. There are 15 slots allocated to Kazakhstan under the

Scholarship Scheme under ICCR. The courses offered include i) Agriculture, Food and Fertilizers, ii) Artificial Intelligence, iii) Banking, Finance, Accounts and Audit, iv) Cyber Technologies, v) Education, vi) Engineering and Technology, vii) Hindi Language, viii) Environmental and Climatic Changes, ix) Government Function, x) health and Yoga, xi) Human Resource Development and Planning etc. which are conducted by reputed institutions in India. While the mission nominates the candidates through an online portal, the final selection is done by the University/Institute. The Study in India programme by the Govt. of India under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Resources Development in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs is being provided in CIS countries including Kazakhstan. The programme involves a partnership with 100 premier education institutes in India including IITs, NITs, IIMs and premieres private colleges of India (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2017 August).

The Uzbek economy mainly depends on agriculture and farming and is an important cotton manufacturer and exporter. It also extracts gold and claims the world's largest open mine. The country possesses significant strategic mineral, copper, gas and oil deposits. India during the Soviet era maintained significant contact with Uzbekistan by visiting Tashkent from several Indian Leaders. The most significant exports from India to Uzbekistan include tea, plants and machines, pharmaceuticals, surgical products and services. In contrast, imports from Uzbekistan include cotton, wild silk, non-ferrous metals, machinery and equipment. After the independence of Uzbekistan, contacts were raised to the embassy level by signing a Diplomatic and Consular Protocol on 18 March 1992. In 1993, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Dr Manmohan Singh visited Uzbekistan on 25-26 April 2006. In 1991, 1994, 2000, 2005 and 2011, President Karimov made State visits to India. Bilateral ties are governed by a solid structure, including a joint Commission to supervise trade and economic cooperation. The agreements/MOUs/Protocols/Joint Statements have been reached between Uzbekistan and India in fields including commerce, investment, education, civil aviation, tourism, science and technology, telecommunications, agriculture and IT (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2016 February).

The Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture, which was created in Tashkent under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in 1995, is a household name for its cultural activities in Uzbekistan. In addition to conducting seminars on Indian culture, the Centre offers regular workshops on Kathak, Yoga, Tabla and Hindi. Three Uzbek schools, nationally, support Hindi language study at both the primary and postgraduate levels. In 2012, Uzbek Radio finished 50 years of Hindi radio. Indian films and serials are often shown on Uzbek TV networks. A Protocol on Mass Media Cooperation was signed in October 1992. Following this, another Protocol on Cooperation in Information and Mass Media was signed during President Islam Karimov's visit to India in May 2000.

This protocol provided cooperation involving journalists' visits, radio and TV staff visitors, exchanges of TV programmes etc. Some of the training areas include planning for small businesses, sensing, banking and hotel management, IT, English, Management, journalists, and diplomacy. Additionally, there is a provision for 25 bursaries that are usually awarded to Uzbek students for various courses in Indian universities and one bursary in Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra for the study of Hindi Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2017 August).

Tajikistan has large plum, mercury, gold, iron, tin and coal reserves, whereas its rivers are primarily an unused hydroelectric power production resource (CIA World Book of Facts 2011). Traditionally, the relationships between India and Tajikistan have been friendly and cordial which can be attributed towards the official diplomatic visits, which have established bilateral strong links. India exports items such as medicines, chemicals, tea, coffee, linens, toiletries, cars, leather and woollen goods to Tajikistan, while cotton is the only significant commodity imported to India from Tajikistan. Tajikistan President Rahmon had visited India several times in the recent past. India and Tajikistan have increased bilateral relations to the level of 'Strategic Partnership' and included collaboration in various fields, including politics, economics, education, health, the development of human resources, military, counter-terrorism, culture and tourism. In addition to dealing with private Indian companies, bilateral agreements/MoUs were negotiated on (1) textile, (2) culture, (3) education, (4) sports, (5) health and (6) employment. (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2016). Tajikistan is one of the largest recipients of the ITEC and ICCR scholarship programmes outside SAARC: 150 ITEC and 25 ICCR scholarships every year. Further, there is a deep-rooted predilection in Tajikistan for Indian films and culture, where Indian films are customarily shown on local TV channels. The embassy has a Cultural Centre, where a Tabla Teacher and a Kathak Dance Teacher have been deputed by the ICCR; additionally, Hindi and Yoga classes are held regularly at ICCR. ICCR-funded cultural event "Namaste Tajikistan" took place in April 2016 (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2017 August).

India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with Kyrgyzstan after the independence of the Republic of Kyrgyz in 1991. Both countries share specific interests in terrorist threats, radicalism and drug trafficking. The two nations signed various Framework Agreements after establishing diplomatic relations in 1992, notably in connection to Culture, Trade Economic Cooperation etc. The economy of Kyrgyzstan is mainly based on agriculture, which contributes more than one-third of its GDP. The main products include potatoes, beets, sugar, tobacco, cotton, vegetables and fruits. Kyrgyzstan and India enjoy moderate trading relations. The principal items that India exports are leather goods, tea, cotton, wool, manufactured fibres, pharmaceuticals, optical

equipment and medical instruments. The trade and commerce relations between Indo-Kyrgyz had grown on account of a strong relationship between both countries. (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2017 August).

It is said that about 4500 Indian students are studying medicine in various medical institutions in Kyrgyzstan. A few businessmen are engaged in trade and services in Kyrgyzstan. In general, there is an appreciation of Indian culture. The Centre for Indian Studies set up at Osh State University in 1997 has been useful in providing exposure to Indian culture and civilisation to academicians and intelligentsia in this country. The Chair has been discontinued since 2010 owing to unrest in Osh. However, the mission on its own established an India Study Centre in the prestigious National Library of Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek on 14 November 2014. The Centre is running with help of volunteers and imparts training in English and Hindi languages, Yoga and Kathak dance. Another centre has been opened in Kara Balta a city at a distance of 80 km from Bishkek (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2017 August).

India's relations with Turkmenistan are intimate, amicable and historic. The 'Turkman Gate,' built in the 1650s in Delhi, gives witness to their alliance. Soon after the Independence of India, the first Prime Minister Nehru visited Ashgabat in 1955. It is noted that Indian Films, Dance, and TV series are found to be popular amongst the people in Turkmenistan (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2015 July). The economy of Turkmenistan is dependent on gypsum, coal, magnesium, sulphur, calcareous salt, and its considerable oil and natural gas reserves. In 1995, India and Turkmenistan signed the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement. In 1996, the Indian CIS and the Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry inked an agreement to fortify collaboration between both countries' economic, commercial and financial organisations. In 1997, another agreement was made on avoiding double taxation and preventing tax evasion. Since 2000, the trilateral agreement between India and Iran and Turkmenistan has been in place to provide a legal framework for the multi-modal flow of commodities to Turkmenistan via Iran and the other CIS Member States that may become parties to that agreement. Since the TAPI Summit, which was held in Ashgabat in December 2010, the TAPI gas pipeline project (Turkmenistan – Afghanistan – Pakistan – India) has made steady progress. The project was planned to be operational in early 2017 but it is stalled due to an ongoing pandemic. If it starts, it is said that it will build bilateral links to a strategic relationship (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2012 June). It has been stressed that cultural exchanges played a vital and constructive role in developing full cooperation between the two nations, where the successful festival of Turkmen Cultural in India in 2014 and the Namaste Turkmenistan Indian Cultural Relations Council (ICCR) festival were significant events. It has been recognised that the scholarships granted by the Indian Centre for Cultural Relations (ICCR) for Turkmen

students are important for building deeper relationships at a popular level. Opening a Yoga and Traditional Medicine Centre in Ashgabat has been advocated and appreciated and marks the beginning of a new chapter in cultural links between India and Turkmenistan. The Leaders highlighted Yoga's universal relevance and its practical and holistic health perspective. The leaders saw that traditional medicine would help the Indians and Turkmenistan to merge traditional medical knowledge and techniques to help the people. The present Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov for the support he had shown in the United Nations to declare 21 June International Yoga Day (IYD) and the massive IDY ceremonies in Ashgabat. The leaders applauded the launch of a Mahatma Gandhi bus in Ashgabat, which further symbolised their commitment to working together to create a peaceful world order. In 2017, the Sports agreements were implemented which took place in 2015. This has been done to promote sports and culture in both countries (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2015 July).

### **India's Soft Power Diplomacy with the Region**

The historical and cultural contacts between India and Central Asia go back to the very dawn of history. Since the early times, there has been a constant flow of culture and commerce between the regions. They contributed to the rich tapestry of Indian life and culture. This was reciprocated by Indian missionaries and merchants who transmitted our religion, arts and merchandise to that region (Pandey 2007). India's influence as a soft power has also increased manifold in shaping the values, beliefs and attitudes of a wide cross-section of the world population which is also known as 'cultural diplomacy' in the foreign policy sphere.

India's cultural and spiritual heritage like Yoga, Buddhist and Sufi influence has played a key role in building strong links with the Central Asian region. And the way of political and ethical inheritances, among them the philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru also have helped to build the links with the region. Gandhian concepts like non-violence and non-cooperation have a worldwide following today with two key names in this respect being Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. Both followed Gandhian principles during their respective struggles. The Non-Aligned Movement of which Nehru was a leading light showed the way forward to the entire developing world to solve conflicts through peaceful means. Besides, Bollywood does a lot of the heavy lifting for average people's perceptions of India across the world, and Central Asia is no exception. Indian movies first became popular in the Soviet Union in the 1950s, and people who grew up watching classics like *Shri 420* or *Disco Dancer* remember the plots and songs fondly. On a visit to Tashkent, India's External Affairs Minister SushmaSwaraj was shocked when an older Uzbek woman approached her on the

street to sing a classic from a well-known Bollywood film. External Affairs Ministry spokesman Raveesh Kumar posted a clip of the interaction on Instagram, writing, "Bollywood knows no boundaries, more so in Uzbekistan where Raj Kapoor and Nargis are household names. "Contemporary Indian movies and soap operas continue to attract fans. Satellites bring dramas like *ZhenskayaDolya* (Kumkum Bhagya) and *LyubimyiZyat'* (Jamai Raja) to TV screens every morning. Even families without access to Russian or Indian channels could watch *Kelin* (BalikaVadhu), a soap opera depicting the lives of two generations of child brides, as the show was dubbed in Kazakh and Kyrgyz and broadcast on local TV channels. After five years, *Kelin* stopped airing, but fans have kept up with the show by trading ripped DVDs sold in bazaars across the region.

As India's TV and film industries churn out pop culture gems, the government also organises several cultural and educational exchange programs. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations funds the translation of Indian poems into Central Asian languages, co-sponsors cultural festivals, and funds dance and musical troupes' tours around the region. Central Asian states have benefited from the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Program, which offers training and cooperation between the two regions. Since the 1990s it is noted that a large number of people from central Asia had come to India for their professional development and training at Indian universities. Even Turkmenistan, known for its isolation, sends 20 young professionals to India every year through ITEC. India doesn't only take in students from Central Asia, however; educational exchange has gone in both directions, as thousands of Indian students came to Central Asia to pursue medical degrees. In recent years, the number of Indian medical students in Central Asia has shot up impressively. As of 2018, embassies in the region estimate anywhere from 900 students in Tajikistan to 4,500 in Kyrgyzstan. Exact numbers are difficult to pin down, however, given the poor enforcement of enrolment caps and monitoring of approved campuses (Wood, 2018).

Medical tourism over the years has gained a lot of ground. Health tourism or Wellness tourism are other terms for it on a broader side. Asian countries like India and China attract a lot of tourists who come for some sort of treatment here. The reasons are many. Increasingly growing medical tourism at a reasonable cost is another benchmark in India's relations with Central Asian states. Medical tourism has also gained momentum because communication getting easier with the help of technology. Many nationals of Central Asian countries who visit India for medical and health purposes, also enjoy low-cost benefits and other facilities (easy visa) and become a destination for medical tourism. Improvement in medical care especially with advances in bariatric, cardiac and neurosurgery, as well as laser eye surgery and transplant surgery aims to keep more locals at home and bring in medical tourists from outside (Gupta 2016).

## **Conclusion**

We can conclude by saying that there has been a steady development of ties between the countries of Central Asia with India since the end of the Cold War. Both India and the region are aware of the benefits of economic and strategic partnerships and have been working towards strengthening ties at various levels. While conflict-ridden Afghanistan remains a problem for developing land and air routes of communication, both India and Central Asia have left no stone unturned to ensure safe passages of communication that can be elaborated into trade, economic and cultural routes. It needs to be re-emphasised that it is not just the energy supply from the region that makes it a favourable partner for India's strategic relations, but the fact that India provides as much a gateway for Central Asian republics in South and South-East Asia as does the region for India. The benefits of recognising and strengthening the potential for a two-way relationship cannot be missed. Laying a foundation in history and cementing socio-political and economic partnerships is a mutually beneficial solution. Although India's relations with the Central Asian States are wavering, India's trade and cultural relations are redrawn in present times. The regional political instability and turmoil further limit India's reach to these five Central Asian states. The commitment from both sides is also visible to provide a great synergy in India's existing relations with Central Asia. Now both sides agree to tackle all the pitfalls without fail.

## **Notes**

- 1- Andijan, the largest town of Ferghana valley, was Babur's birthplace.
- 2- Zahiruddin Muhammad Babar, Babar-Nama, Translated by Annette Susannah Beveridge.

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# Historical Overview of Islam in Kazakhstan: From the Arab Islamization to Soviet Oppression

*Bilal A. Malik\* & G. N. Khaki\*\**

## Abstract

*After the fall of the Soviet's 1991, Kazakhstan underwent widespread socio-political transformations affecting people's lives individually as well as collectively. Scholars refer to this transformation as conscious integration of 'continuity' (of the Soviet legacy) and 'return' (to pre-Soviet historical-cultural legacy). One such notable transformation, inter alia, was the replacement of Soviet "oppression of religion" (de facto imposed atheism) ensuring freedom of religious practice. Subsequently, Kazakhstan witnessed the emergence of an 'Islamic revival' phenomenon. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan's version of "Islamic revival" was a relatively different version. It neither aspired for an Islamic statehood nor demanded a radical shift in the socio-political conditions of the society. The Kazakh version of "Islamic revival" seemingly supported the Sovietological narrative- a kind of orientalist attitude- that Kazakh Muslims are "superficial Muslims" since Kazakhs had a "loose historical bond" with Islam. The narrative of "loose historical bonding" has been softly taken and frequently used by non-native researchers, mostly Westerners, working on different socio-cultural aspects of Kazakhstan. To understand the present "discursive discourse" of Islamic revivalism in Kazakhstan, it is quite important to place the Islamic tradition of Kazakhstan in its historical context. In this context, this paper intends to present a brief historical overview of Islam in Kazakhstan. It takes into account different historical periods, from Arabs upto Soviets, to examine the arrival and development of Islam in Kazakhstan.*

## Keywords

Islam; Conversion; Kazakh Steppe; Godden Horde; Kazakh Khanate, Suppression

## Introduction

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The recent works, on and around 'Islamic Revival in Kazakhstan', have rendered a misleading notion that “Kazakhs became Muslims yesterday” (Oraz 2018: 11). Nevertheless, different historiographical accounts divulge the fact that this assertion is untrue and bereft of comprehensive historical analysis. The available historical sources affirm that Islam reached Central Asian lands, including the steppes of Kazakhstan after Muslims defeated Sassanids- the last Persian imperial dynasty at Merv in 651. After the death of the last Sassanid monarch Yazdegerd III, killed by some unknown assassin, Iran submitted to Arabs and Muslims soon crossed the river Oxus (*Jayhün*, modern Amu Darya) (Gibb 1923:1-29; Litvinsky 1996: 444; Hasan 2001: 154, 169; Starr 2013: 105; Golden 2011: 58; Derbisali 2016: 2018). The Oxus was the actual boundary line between Iran and Turan (Gibb 1923: 3). The Arab conquest was an important development in the history, culture and civilization of Central Asia. Referring to the importance of Arab Muslims in Central Asian history, Geoffrey Wheeler has remarkably put it, “[the peoples of Central Asia] can hardly be said to have a history before the Arab conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries” (Wheeler 1966: 25). By the middle of the tenth century, Islam, after moulding diverse tribal communities into the socio-political concord of *the ummah* (ideal Muslim community), had become a dominant religious, cultural, and political factor in the entire region, making Central Asia a prestigious part of the Islamic civilization. The historical development of the Islamic civilization in Central Asia left innumerable and inseparable imprints on the attitudes, values, and culture of the Central Asian people (Derbisali 2016).

The first major raid into Transoxiana<sup>1</sup> was carried out by the Umayyad governor of Khurasan namely ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Ziyād in 673 (Jalilov 1996: 452). However, the larger part of Transoxiana finally came under Umayyad Caliphate during the reign of Walīd I (r. 705-715) due to strong coordination between the directive genius of Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafī and the military ability of Qutayba ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ Muslim Bāhilī (Gibb 1923: 29). Gibbs has divided Qutayba's conquests into four periods: (i) 86/705: the recovery of lower Tukharistan; (ii) from 87/706 to 90/709: the conquest of Bukhara; (iii) from 91/710 to 93/712: consolidation of the Arab authority in the Oxus valley and its extension into Sughd; and, (iv) from 94/713 to 96/715: expeditions into the Jaxartes (now Syr Darya) provinces (Gibb 1923: 31). Besides military victories, Qutayba, displaying his administrative genius, consolidated his power by settling Arab families amongst non-Muslim locals who would persuade them to accept Islam and leave resistance (Jalilov 1996: 454). He built many mosques (*māsājid* plural of *masjid* in Arabic) to strengthen the Islamic influence and also to introduce the Islamic faith to locals (Mirbabaev 2000: 32-33).

Muslims initially faced stiff resistance, however, by the end of 715, they ruled over prominent Central Asian cities such as Bukhara, Samarqand, Kashghar, Khawarzm,

Farghana, Tirmiz, Tashkent, Nishapur and Khojand. They ruled the entire region from the kingdom of Khurasan, which covered today's western Afghanistan, northern Iran and Turkmenistan, however, the capital was established at Merv (Mary, in modern Turkmenistan) (Rashid 1994: 12; Jalilov 1996). The conquests were, subsequently, followed by the activities of Muslim missionaries who engaged with the local populations to spread the message of Islam. The Muslims and non-Muslim populace interacted most directly and as a result of this “peaceful engagement”, locals came to know more about the Islamic spiritual beliefs and “Islamic way of life”. The “spiritual message” of Islam was a *call* to build a new universal civilization (*ummah*) based on the principles of justice, equality, and brotherhood. After coming out of the “war phase” understanding of Islam, locals, both sedentary and nomadic people, found the ethical, spiritual and humanistic teachings of Islam very impressive and appealing. Moreover, Muslim rulers of the region, who hardly restored to the forcible conversion or Islamization of locals, also did their part to encourage the conversion process<sup>ii</sup>. They publically encapsulated converts in the formula “rights and obligations in equal measure” and also offered them certain privileges (Kolesnikov 1996: 464). For example, promises were held out that converts would be exempted from the payment of *the jizya* (poll tax) (Jalilov 1996: 545). As a result, conversions took place in mass numbers (Barthold 1928: 187; Hasan 2001: 179).

The initial conversions mostly happened in the sedentary parts of Central Asia including prominent cities such as Bukhara, Khurasan, Khawarzm, Farghana, Tirmiz, Tashkent, and Samarqand. Over the next two centuries, these cities became architectural, intellectual and “knowledge production” centres of the medieval Islamic civilization. The region produced some of the most important Muslim personalities such as Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī (780-850), Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī (810–70), Abū ‘Īsā Muḥammad at-Tirmidhī (825–92), Abū Maṣū‘r Muḥammad al-Māturīdī (853-944), Burhān al-Dīn Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Marghīnānī (d. 1197) and Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī (872-950/51). These stalwarts of the “Islamic knowledge tradition” contributed to the development of *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Quran) *ḥadīth* (traditions of the Prophet), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *kalām* (Muslim philosophy) sciences (Rashid 2007: 25).

The Muslims, continuing their military expedition of Central Asia under Abbasids, marched northwards and crossed the Oxus River (*sayhūn* in Arabic). In 751 they met the army of Chinese Tang forces (led by the general Chinese Kao Hsien-Chih), reinforced by the Ƙarluq (Qarluq) mercenaries (a Turkic Central Asian tribal confederacy), in the Talas<sup>iii</sup> River region for the “first and last time” (Millward 2007: 36). The Muslims defeated the Chinese in the "Battle of Talas" also known as the "Battle of Atlakh” (Arabic: *m'arakah al-nahr al-Ṭalās*) (Gibb 1923; Barthold 1928: 195-96; Golden 2008: 343-365). The eminent Sinologist L. Carrington Goodrich called it "one of the decisive battles of history". According to prominent Muslim historian Dhahabi, Muslim

armies, under the commandship of ZiyādibnŞāleḥ (appointed by the Abbasid general Abū Muslim Khurāsānī), numbered more than ten thousand and the battle lasted for a whole day (Dhahabi 2003). The victory of Arabs in Gibb's words, “[was] actual deathblow to the tradition of Chinese overlordship in western Central Asia” (Gibb 1923: 97). The battle set a landmark event in the history of Central Asia. One of the important consequences of the battle was the beginning of the "Islamization process" of central Asia (Barthold 1928: 180-196; Hoberman 1982; Derbisali 2016: 165). Since the battle was fought on Kazakh land, therefore, Kazakh nomads came under the direct impression of the growing Muslim power in the region. It is certainly true that the nomadic tribes of the steppes (*Dasht-i Kipchak*), particularly Kazakh steppes (*Dasht-i Qazaq*), did not all immediately convert to Islam. They had their own culture and legacy of religious traditions in the form of Shamanism, Tengrism and nomadic *cult* practices (Krivets 1999: 6-19; Kaynar & Zada 2016). Since the religious traditions of Kazakhs had evolved in a typical “nomadic setting” concordant to nomadic behaviour, therefore, arrival of new faith namely Islam, having an organized system of belief and practice, was not welcomed so warmly. The resistance was intended to preserve the historical distinctiveness of nomadic religious tradition; a "lose fusion" of culture, belief and everyday practice since the conversion implied the adoption of a "compact fusion" of Islamic rules and rituals for the individual as well as collective life (Favereau 2018: 13-26).

Nevertheless, the local resistance against Islam eventually lost its effect. According to historian Peter B. Golden, “conquest[s] provided the groundwork, but conversions, usually voluntary, often had a mix of motives, spiritual, political, social, and economic” (Golden 2011: 61). Having come across different historical sources, four major reasons could be construed to describe the conversion process. First, Muslims became a dominant political authority in the region and their armies were increased by local *mawālī*(pl. of *mawlā*, new converts to Islam). Second, Muslim missionaries, simultaneously, reached out to the locals, engaged with them and communicated the social message, based on the principles of justice and equality, of Islam. Third, to escape taxation (*khirāj/zijya*) and seek equal benefits. Fourth, Kazakhs found *ḥanafī madhhab* (juristic school of *sunni* tradition) tolerant and accommodative vis-à-vis their cultural norms and popular tribal customs (Salmorbekova & Yemelianova 2010: 211-243; Oraz 2018)<sup>iv</sup>. Nevertheless, the roots of “nomadic tradition” were profoundly deep that Kazakhs, who embraced Islam, could not completely disentangle from the “pre-Islamic” beliefs and practices (Yemelianova 2013). For example, Kazakhs understood the concept of *Tengri* (deity) in new monotheistic conditions and gradually began to identify *Tengri* with Allah. Similarly, Kazakhs preserved the pre-Islamic religious nomenclature by identifying and applying those names to the Islamic concepts as a result, as pointed out by K. M. Baipakov and B. E. Kumekov, "the dual concepts of 'Tengri–Allah' (for God), 'Tin–Arwah' (for spirits) and

'Martu–Shaytan' (for the devil) came into popular use (in Kazakh religious language)” (Baipakov & Kumekov 2003: 107-8).

The early *Islamization* or *Islamification*<sup>v</sup> process in the Kazakh steppes laid down the basis for a new *syncretic* religio-cultural tradition that was neither exclusively Arabic nor nomadic. Nevertheless, the civilizational characteristics of Islam dominated the expression and form of religiosity of Kazakh Muslims (Debisali 2016: 202). Some scholars have termed the “syncretism” process as the local *contextualization* of Islam (Privratsky 2001: 15). The Kazakhs even after remaining to cling to their pre-Islamic traditions, not only embraced Islam but also made a significant contribution to its development in the region (Derbisali 2016: 206). In the course of decades-long evolution, the prominent medieval cities of *Dasht-i Qazaqs* such as Almaty, Balasagun, Merke, Kulan, Taraz, Sayram, Otrar (present-day Farab), Sutkent, Sauran, Syganak, Zhent, Barshynkent, Turkestan and others were built or rebuilt under the Muslim rule. These cities, alongside gradual transformation from a *nomadic* way of life to *sedentary* development of trade and craftsmen, became the prominent learning centres of knowledge and spirituality. The emphasis on “education”, “doing science” and “critical thinking” in the Islamic knowledge tradition, imparted a new scientific zeal to the local intellectual dynamics.

After becoming part of the *dār al-Islām* (abode of peace, the region in which Islam has ascendance), the region produced distinguished Muslim scholars and thinkers such as Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī (872-950/51)<sup>vi</sup>, Shaikh Aḥmad Yasavī (1093-1166), Abul Qāsim al-Fārābī (1130-1210), Qawwām al-Dīn al-Turkestānī (1286-1356), Ḥibattul Allah ibn Aḥmad at-Ṭarāzī (1271-1333), Ḥissam al-Dīn ibn 'Alī as-Syḡānākī (d.1314), Tazh al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Umar al-Dzhendī (d.1301) and Yūsuf Ḳāṣṣ Ḥājeb Balasāgunī (1021-1075) (Derbisali 2016: 40-74). It is worth mentioning here that, the contribution and integration of Kazakh Muslims in the Islamic civilization debunk the notion, mostly expressed in the Sovietological and post-Soviet Western writings on Kazakhstan, that Kazakhs have historically followed their Islam “very lightly” and Kazakh Islam is just a “superficial” expression of identity. Scholars like Devin DeWeese, a prominent expert on the Islamic history of Central Asia, have systematically criticised the narrative that the Islamization of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, in effect does not matter. While questioning and presenting a critical assessment of such an unsubstantiated conclusion, DeWeese writes: “Such a view, that Islamization in effect did not matter, is not only clearly flawed by a remarkable misunderstanding of the nature of Islam and of the indigenous religious conceptions that preceded Islamization, but is at the same time patently uninformed by any of the conceptual tools developed over the last century for the humanities and social sciences by the field of religions Wissenschaft (DeWeese 1994: 9).”<sup>vii</sup> As mentioned earlier that for obvious cultural reasons, the Islamization of Kazakh nomads was relatively slower than their sedentary neighbours. It was not a one-step

process, rather it followed the principle of “social graduality”<sup>viii</sup>. That means, it happened in various phases and each phase has its socio-political context. Although, historical records are mentioning the conversion of "amir (king) of Taraz" during the period of Samanid ruler Isma'il (d. 907) in 893 and the presence of over 1,000 Islamized tents of Oghuz and Karloqtribesmen living in the pasturages between Farab (Otrar, southern city of modern Kazakhstan) (Golden 2008: 343-365). Nevertheless, historically three major periods namely the Karakhanid period, Golden Horde period and Kazakh Khanate period are considered profoundly important in the Islamization process of Kazakhstan. These three periods of *Islamization* are followed by the two other periods which are equally important to understand the past and present situation of Islam in Kazakhstan. The first period is known for the "categorization" of Islam into "official" and "unofficial" Islam and also for the so-called "institutionalization" of "official" Islam under Tsarist rule. The second period is referred to by many names such as "suppression of Islam", "elimination of Islam" and "Sovietization of Islam" under the communist Soviet state.

### **2.1. Islamization of Kazakhstan: From Karakhanids, Golden Horde upto the Kazakh Khanate**

The Ilak Khans or Karakhanid dynasty (*Qara Khan* in Old Turkic; *Kāqāniya*[the *Kāqān* house]in Arabic; *Āl-e Afrāsiāb*[the house of Afrāsiāb, the king of Turān] in Persian) was the first Muslim confederation of Turkish tribes that ruled Transoxania between 999-1211 (Hasan 2001: 413-414; Lotha 2015). The SatūqBoğrā Khan (r. 915-955), who became *kāqān* or Kaghan (supreme Khan) in 942 is believed to be the first Karakhanid ruler who adopted Islam and took *ʿAbd-al-Karīm*as his new Islamic name (Barthold 1928; 254-56; Rona-Tas 1999: 256). After conversion, he allowed Islamic missionaries to propagate Islam in his domain and built a mosque in the village of Artush (in modern Xinxiang) which continues to be a site of pilgrimage even today (Shaw 1878; Frye 1998: 237; Soucek 2002; 84; Golden 2008: 357; Oraz 2018: 18). During his rule, Islam began to gradually influence the animistic and shamanistic beliefs of Turkish and other peoples of the steppes, including Kazakhs. He favoured the honorific title of *ʿAbdullah*, meaning servant of Allah (God), to be added with his name that manifests his deep religious transformation. After SatūqBoğrā's death, the Karakhanid dynasty was succeeded by his grandson Ḥasan ibnSulaymānBoğrāKhan (or HārūnMusā Khan). He declared Islam to be the official religion of his tribal confederation in 960 and, following a traditional Islamic pattern, adopted honorific titles “*šehāb-al-dawla*”(Light of the Empire) and “*zahīr-al-daʿwa*”(Support of the Summons to the Faith) (Barthold 1928: 257). Under Karakhanids, a considerable number of Kazakh tribes accepted the *ḥanafī madhhab* and the *māturīdī* theology. According to historians Z.Kitapchy, V.Klyashtorny, and T.Sultanovs, the conversion trend was so fast that "on one day more than ten thousand people embraced

Islam" (Oraz 2018: 18). Among the Turkic ethnic tribes, the Karakhanids were the first dynasty that was respectfully received within the Islamic orbit and *ulama* recognized Karakhanids as orthodox Muslims worthy of rule. The Karakhanid rulers also began to use Arab titles such as *sultān* and *sultan al-salātīn* (king of kings) (Davidovich 2013). It is worth mentioning that Karakhanids did not manoeuvre Islamic faith to seek political legitimacy, but rather the principles of faith were recognized as necessary and binding on the ruler's conduct as well (Barthold 1928: 305-6).

As a result of the formal integration of the nomadic Kazakhs within the Islamized Karakhanid dynasty, Kazakhstan, like other Transoxanian cities, experienced a "civilizational shift" producing a unique blend of culture, crafts and knowledge. The southern cities of Kazakhstan such as Sayram-Asfijab, Taraz, Otrar, Shymkent and Turkestan, between the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, witnessed a period of expansion, growing urbanization, craftsmanship, and trade. This was the beginning of a new civilizational era in the steppes of Kazakhstan. One of the major aspects of the Karakhanid social history was the enlargement and strengthening of the relationship between nomads, including Kazakhs, and their sedentary neighbours which resulted in the commencement of the urbanization process and agricultural growth. The *sedentarization* of the nomadic tribes, on the political and military level, helped the Karakhanids to achieve a balance between nomadic tribes and settled populations (Barthold 1928: 254-260; Biran 2004: 621-28). The Karakhanids produced some rulers who did significant religious literary works. For example, Naṣr ibn Ibrāhīm Ṭamgāč (Ṭamgāj) Khan (1067/8-80) besides being an able ruler was a religious scholar (*'ālem*) too. He copied manuscripts and dictated *ḥadith* (traditions of the Prophet Mohammad) to his students. Similarly, the last western Kaghan Ibrāhīm ibn Hussāin (1178-1203) copied the Qur'ān (*muṣḥaf*) in his handwriting. Karakhanid rulers namely Boḡrā Khan and Ṭamgāč-Khan Ibrahim were distinguished by a rare expression of piety (Barthold 1928: 311). This is probably why scholars such as Bahā al-Dīn Muḥammad Zāhīrī Samarqandī, author of *Sindbādnāmā*, and Mājid al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Adnān al-Sorḳakati, author of *Aḳbār-e Torkestān*, applauded and dedicated their books to them (Biran 2004). Owing to their religious commitment, Karakhanids built mosques and minarets in the cities such as Bukhara, Kashgar, Sayram-Asfijab, Taraz, Otagand, Otrar and Balasagun and also established *madrāsas* (a formal institution for the learning of Islamic sciences) entrusted with official endowments for their upkeep (Derbisali 2016: 163-180). The production of Islamic-Turkish literature, from the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, is yet another contribution of Karakhanids toward the development of Islamic civilization in Transoxania. The two most celebrated works of this period are the *Kutadgu Bilig* (Wisdom of Royal Glory) of Yūsof Kāšḡarī and *Maḥmūd Kāshgarī's Dīvān al-logat al-Turk* (Compendium of the Turkic Dialects),



compiled in Baghdad in 1074 (Biran 2004). In the Karakhanid period, Sufism (*tasawwuf*) began to play a growing role in the religious and social life of Kazakhstan. The most celebrated Kazakh sufi of that period was, of course, none other than the *Pīr-i Turkistān* (spiritual mentor of Turkestan), the founder of Yasāwiyya or *Yeseviye* order (*yasāwīsilsilā*), Khojā Aḥmad Yasāwī<sup>ix</sup> (1093-1166) born in Sayram (Asfjab, South Kazakhstan). The young Yasawi learned *ḥanāfīfiqh* and became a sufi master like his murshid (mentor) Shaykh Yūsuf Hamadānī (Zarcone 1990; DeWeese 1999: 507-530; Oraz 2018: 19-27; Sala 2018). He made extensive peaceful efforts to spread the message of Islam throughout the Kazakh steppes. He practised and taught the sufi (mystic) way of life, more permeable and compatible with Kazakh nomadic tradition, and had more than 10000 students and around 100000 followers (*murīdīn*, singular *murīd*) from all across Central Asia. After his return to Yasi, he founded around 40 special palaces called *khānaqah-chillāhān* for the 40 days of spiritual training (*tarbīyah*) of the devotees of the *Sufi* path and transformed the city into a major centre of learning and spiritual culture (Shahpuri 1988: 319-20; Sala 2018). His religious explanations and exhortations in the poetic description (hymns) created a new genre of religious folk poetry, a valuable Turkic literary treasure that has inspired prominent Kazakh scholars, poets and literary heroes such as Abay Kunanbay, Shakarim Kudayberdi, Shalkiyiz Tilenshiul, Shal Kulekeuly, Maylikozha and Turmagambet, who later introduced such Islamic ascetic culture to Kazakh people. The collection of Yasāwī's poems, quatrains with lines of 7 or 8 syllables, called *Dīvān-i-ḥikmet* (Book of Wisdom) contains philosophical, religious and mystical content. It also gives valuable information related to the early culture, literature, and history of Turkic nomads of Kazakhstan (Melikoff 2003, Oraz 2018: 19-27; Tikkanen 2019). The first direct disciples of Khojā Aḥmad Yasāwī named Ḥakīm Sulaymān Bāqirghānī (Ḥakīm Atā), Muḥammad Dānishmand, Mansūr Atā and Shopān Atā continued the legacy of their spiritual master and diffused the *yasāwīsilsilā* among the Turkic tribes of Transoxania (Sala 2018; Turumbetova 2018). The mausoleum of Khojā Aḥmad Yasāwī was later built on the site of his grave by the Amir Timur (Tamerlane), the founder of the Timurid Empire, in the city of Turkestan in 1385. The mausoleum continues to remain a sacred place for Kazakhs and a site of pilgrimage (DeWeese 1999: 507-530). The Kazakhs owe their spiritual master and feel proud of doing so. Here, I quote four lines of Saylaubay Sauranbaev that reflect the impact of *Pīr-i Turkistān* on the religious life of Kazakh people (Privratsky 2001: 66-67):

*Qoja (Khoja) Ahmet Yasawi, you are my master,  
I worship (praise) and bow my head to your spirit.  
On your sacred ground, I have walked,  
O Turkistan, the witness of the centuries.*

The early 13th century marks the end of the Karakhanid rule which lasted for more than 200 years. The western Khanate was annexed by the Khawarzem Shah and the eastern Khanate was extinguished by the Mongol occupation (Hasan 2001: 414). The next period, after the end of the Karakhanid dynasty, which is remarkably important so far in the spread and development of Islam in Kazakhstan is concerned is the Golden Horde period. The Golden Horde, according to DeWeese became, “firmly and self-consciously a part of the *dār al-Islām* (Abode of Islam)” (DeWeese 1994: 67). After the “Otrar Catastrophe” xii the entire Transoxania was conquered by the Mongol forces under the leadership of, the Great Khan, Čengīz (Mong. Chinggis), also spelt as Genghis Khan (Barthold 1928: 393-400; Hasan 2001, Vol. II: 1-2). Genghis Khan (1182-1227), born in Temüjin in north-eastern Mongolia, following a typical nomadic style, apportioned vast territory of Kazakhstan among his sons. The large territory covering the northern part of Semirechye and the entire Central, Northern and Western Kazakhstan including the lower Volga was given to Jöchi Khan, the eldest son of Genghis Khan (Allsen 2001: 18). After Jöchi's death, his second son Bātu Khan (1207-1255) became head of the Jöchi Ulus and founder of the Golden Horde or sometimes called the Qepčāqor Kipchak Khanate since the subjects were mainly Qepčāq nomads increasingly under Muslim cultural influences. He built the city of Sarai (the Persian word *sarāy* means “palace”) on the traditional Islamic pattern. The city was near the river Volga (near present-day Leninsk in Russia) and made it the capital of his empire (Burgan 2009: 29; Atwood 2004: 36-7). Bātu was succeeded by his brother Berkāy Khan (1209-1266). Berkāy Khan, after accession to the throne in 1257, was the first Mongol king who officially introduced Islam in the Mongol Empire (DeWesse 1994: 3). About the conversion of Berkāy Khan, there is a dominant historical narrative that a Bukharan Sufi Shaykh namely Saif al-Dīn Bakhrāzī played a significant role in his religious transformation (DeWeese 1988, 1994: 83-84; Vasáry 1990: 235-248). It is also believed that Berkāy Khan had already converted to Islam in his youth after having detailed conversation with the two Muslim merchants, who had come from Bukhara to Sarai with a trade caravan, about the Muslim faith. Hearing their answers, ūwas convinced to embrace Islam and soon he became a devout Muslim and remained so all his life (Saulat 2012: 201-208). During Berkāy's reign, Golden Horde Khanate experienced widespread changes favouring the “conversion process” among masses of Sarai and Kipchak, including nomads of Kazakhstan. He also persuaded several of his brothers and *emīrs* (governors) to accept Islam and invited *'ulāmā* (religious scholars) from Iran to Egypt to propagate the teachings of Islam. Subsequently, many *emīrs* converted to Islam and each maintained a *mu'adhdhin* (one who calls for prayer) and *imām* (one who leads the prayer) in his service (DeWeese 1994: 84). Historically, Berkāy Khan also became the first Mongol ruler to acknowledge the institution of the caliphate (Abbasid Caliphate) based in Cairo and issued coins minted on Islamic patterns (Favereau 2018: 13-

26). He challenged the Mongol authority which began the disintegration process of the Great Mongol State (*Yeke MongholUlus*), a joint defence and political confederation between four Mongol *uluses*<sup>xiii</sup>, after allying himself with the Egyptian Mamlūks<sup>xiv</sup> against Hülegüor Hulagu Khan (1218-1265), the founder of Ilk Khanate (Aabadi 2004: 328-329; Allsen 2001: 24-5; Amitai 2004: 621-628). Berkāy Khan was enraged by Hulagu's destruction of Baghdad as he had suggested his intermediation to reconcile for peace between Al-Mut'asim (1213-1258), the last Caliph of Baghdad, and Hulagu Khan<sup>xv</sup>. According to Muslim historian Rāshid al-Dīn Hamadānī (1247-1318), to register his protest and express his anger, Berkāy Khan sent a message to Möngke Khan (1208-1259) mentioning:

"He (Hulagu Khan) has sacked all the cities of the Muslims and has brought about the death of the Caliph. With the help of God, I will call him to account for so much innocent blood (Nicolle& Hook 1990; 119; Blair 1995)".

As mentioned, although Berkāy Khan was instrumental in bringing the changes favourable to the Islamization process of the Golden Horde, Islam yet did not effectively continue as the state religion until the coming of Özbeg Khan, also spelt Ozbek (1282-1341) on the throne after the death of his uncle Tüktā Khan, also spelt as Toqtogha (r. 1291-1312) (DeWeese 1994: 90). Ozbek Khan was the longest-reigning Khan (r. 1313- 1341) of the Golden Horde and because of the wide-reaching political, economic and cultural developments, his reign is considered the "golden period" of the Golden Horde (Sinor 1969; 178; Saulat 2012, Vol. II: 21). The conversion of Ozbek Khan, who acquired the title of *sultān* (king) and took Giyās al-Dīn MoḥammedÖz Beg as his new Islamic name, is ascribed to a *wāli* (friend of God) of Yasāwī*silā* known as Syed Ata. It is believed that they met in southern Kazakhstan. After conversion, Ozbek Khan not only became a staunch Muslim in a personal capacity but also the first Mongol ruler to Islamize the administration of the state, publically expressing a new social identity and source of collective political solidarity (Manz 2010: 129-169). He enforced the Islamic *ṣarī'ah* instead of the Mongol *Yāsā*(Mongol constitution) and brought the "people and realm" (*el vaulus*) of the Golden Horde into the religion of Islam (DeWeese 1994: 103; Hasan 2001: 106; Saulat 2012, Vol II: 22).

The Islamization process intensified during the Uzbek Khan's reign to such an extent that, according to Mu'in al-Dīn Naḩānzī, 15<sup>th</sup>-century Persian historian and author of *Muntakhib al-Tawārīkh* (Selected History), "*Desht-i Kipchak*" "became an abode of worship" (Oraz 2018: 53). According to Devin DeWeese, a contemporary historian of Central Asian Islam, the Golden Horde witnessed "definitive Islamization" at both individual and institutional levels (DeWeese 1994: 94). It was under Ozbek Khan's state patronage that many buildings for pious endeavour (*biqā-i Khayr*)and places for

devotional practices (*mavāzi-i 'ibādāt*) such as *masājids*, *madrasas* and *khānqahs* were built in the Kipchak steppe to serve the emerging Muslim communities. Also, as Islam spread, political and cultural ties to other Muslim regions blossomed (DeWeese 1994: 117; Izmailov & Usmanov 2010, Manz 2010: 129-169; Saulat 2012, Vol II: 23; Zilivinskaya 2018: 54-70). As noted hitherto, although Islam had arrived on Kazakh steppes long back, however, during Uzbek Khan's reign almost all Kazakh tribes embraced Islam which is testified by a famous regional saying, equally famous in Kazakhstan, that “*din ozbektenqaldi*” meaning “religion (Islam) has remained from Uzbek” (DeWeese 1994: 90; Oraz 2018: 52). Through a gradual process, Islam expanded and grew stronger in the Kazakh steppes, insofar as the voice of *adhān* (Muslim call for prayer) replaced the voice of *ozaan* (Shaman religious songs) (DeWeese 1994: 104). In the historiographical sources, the accounts of Islamization of the Kazakh steppes primarily concern the reigns of Berkāy Khan and Uzbek Khan because these two Khans were instrumental to make Islam a central element of the state affairs and social setting<sup>xvii</sup>. The other Khans, who succeeded Uzbek Khan, especially his son Jānībeg Khan, also spelt as Janibek Khan, (r. 1342-1357), continued the tradition and legacy of the Golden Horde, nevertheless, they were not able to bring any major transformation vis-à-vis further Islamization process.

The second decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of the Golden Horde's decline and disintegration. Subsequently, the Golden Horde split into separate Khanates: Tyumen Khanate, Khanate of Kazan, Khanate of Crimea, Nogay Horde, Kazakh Khanate, and Khanate of Astrakhan. The Kazakh Khanate claimed succession of the Golden Khanate and ruled from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century (DeWeese 1994). Although, Mirzā Moḥammed Haidar Duglātī (1499-1551), a prominent Central Asian ruler and historian, considers the formation of the Kazakh Khanate in 870 of the *hijrah* (i.e. around 1465 – 1466) but, for the exact dates he further adds, “God knows the best” which means he is not certain (Dulati 1898). After breaking away from Abū'l Khayr Khan, the Jochid ruler of the eastern Kipchaq Steppe, Girāy Khan (or Kerei Khan) (r. 1465-1473) and Janibek Khan (r. 1473-1480) founded Kazakh Khanate originally on the territory of West Zhetysu which corresponds to the south-eastern part of modern Kazakhstan. However, historically it is believed that Qāsim Khan (r. 1512-1521), Buyunduk's successor, centralized and unified the Kazakh Khanate. Turkestan became the capital of the Kazakh Khanate and Khans maintained the role of the city as a prominent centre of Islamic learning. In the era of the Kazakh Khanate, between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Islam became the official state religion and a fundamental factor in shaping Kazakh society and culture. The Kazakh *sultāns* were respected as Muslim kings throughout the Muslim world. They established new religious seminaries, and *masjids* and encouraged religious scholarship explaining Islamic teachings and venerating Allah and His messenger, the Prophet Mohammad (Baipakov & Kumekov 2015; Olcott 1995:

7-8). Alongside state patronage, according to FaḍlullāhibnRuzbihānIsfahānī, the author of *Mihmn-nāma-i Bukhārā* (Notes of the Bukhara Guest), merchants played a vital role in the “further Islamization” of Kazakh nomads. He wrote:

“Kazakh merchants study the precepts of Mohammedanism... and now their khans and sultans are Muslims. They read the Qur'an, say their prayers and send their children to school” (cf. Baipakov & Kumekov 2015).

However, on the social stratification level, the pastoral nomads were fewer practising Muslims than those who lived in the cities. Since the cities were more sedentary and remained always attractive places for Muslim merchants and missionaries. The *sharī'ah* was an indispensable part of the Kazakh Khanate law even during the seventeenth century. The two significant developments in this regard are the "code of Qāsim Khan" and the “code of Tauke Khan” (r.1680-1715). Qāsim Khan's code contained the collection and assimilation of legal norms of Kazakh social life which included *sharī'ah* and the “rules of *jargā*(ancestors)”. Similarly, Tauke Khan's code, also called *Jety Zhargy* (Seven Charters), the first effort towards the formalization of Kazakh customary law (*'ādat*), shows the predominant presence of Islamic laws vis-à-vis family issues, criminal issues and other civil issues (Olcott 1995: 7-9; Kuat *et al.* 2015: 121-128; Oraz 2018: 74-75). The integration of Islamic laws into the nomadic setting regarding a wide range of socio-cultural and economic matters had a profound impact on the further development of the Kazakh *'ādat*, making it more relevant to the changing demands and constraints of *transforming* Kazakh society. Thus, the generalized notion that Kazakhs, at the societal level, never accepted Islamic *sharī'ah* is historically a miscalculated conclusion.

The method of storytelling proved yet another significant factor in the propagation of "popular Islam" during the Kazakh Khanate period. The storytellers such as Sayf Saray, Zhyrau Sypyr, Asan Kaygy, Dospanbet, Kaztugan, Shalkyiz, Aktamberdi and Zhirau Bukha (*zhyrasy*), who had deep acceptance in the nomadic ethos and equal access to masses, worked with this soft attitude and "culturally accepted" method of preaching and, as result, the Kazakh learnt and began to obey Islam. The Kazakh poets, who were associated with Khans, produced the poetic tradition of Kazakhstan which would express their inclination towards the spiritual message of Islam. To generalize the whole socio-cultural equation of the Kazakh Khanate, it is historically evident that Kazakhs had become practising Muslims to a level that they would not miss the daily five-time prayers (Oraz 2018: 57-68; Olcott 1995; 21). The Kazakh Khanate could not remain a stable centralized state and, subsequently, it became a confederation of three powerful *jüzs* (Hordes in Russian), *ŪliJüz* (the Great Group or Horde) in south-eastern Kazakhstan, *OrtaJüz* (the Middle Group or Horde) in central Kazakhstan and *Kishi(Kichik) Jüz* (the Little Group or Horde) in western Kazakhstan (Soucek 2000: 164; Baipakov & Kumekov

2015). Despite the division into three *jüz*s or hordes, the Kazakhs were "one people" with a common lineage, language, culture and economy. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup>, soon after Tauke Khan's death, political disunion, mutual competition among the hordes, and lack of an internal market weakened the organizational makeup of the Kazakh Khanate and gradual loss of its sovereignty (Baipakov & Kumekov 2015).

## 2.2. Suppression of Islam: Kazakhstan under Imperial Russia and Communist Soviets

The disintegration of the Kazakh Khanate marked the advance of Russia into the territories of Kazakhstan. The Khan of the Little Horde, Abu'l Khayr signed a protectorate agreement in 1730 with the Russian Empire and thus became the first Mongol Khan to accept the Russian overlordship (Olcott 1995: 31; Kundakbayeva 2016). In 1731, Semeke Khan of the Middle Horde, on the mediation of Abu'l Khayr, submitted to Russian Empire and affixed his seal. The Great Horde, without any remarkable resistance, followed the precedence of "willing submission" set by the other two hordes and finally accepted the Russian suzerainty (Baipakov & Kumekov 2015). Russia began to build lines of defence in Kazakhstan, along the rivers namely Yaik, Irtysh and Ishim and, by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Kazakh people's traditional statehood, which took the form of the Khanate, was wiped out and Kazakhstan was completely transformed into a Russian colony (Nurpeis 2005). The annexation of Kazakh steppes changed the entire socio-political milieu of Kazakhstan. The Russians, on the pretext of the so-called "civilizing mission" of nomadic Kazakhs, introduced radical socio-cultural reforms and implemented their political mechanism into the Kazakh territories. The purpose behind such reforms, alongside rapid sedentarization, was to replace the Kazakh culture, the real strength and bond of Kazakh nomads, through *the russification* process. The agenda of *russification* was not just about linguistic dominance but it also had serious cultural implications. Since being imperial, Russia's policy towards the subject religious communities, particularly Muslims, was based on the *colonialist* policy of controlling the "collective religious activism" –a potential threat to the colonial establishment. Therefore, in the immediate years after colonizing Kazakhstan, as it did to the entire region, Russia established the punitive policy of eliminating "manifest indicators of the Muslim culture" through the closure and destruction of many *madradas and masjids* (Frank 2001).

The imperial administration traumatized the "Kazakh's customary way of life"- Kazakh *'adat*- through excessive sedentarization and restricted the power of Kazakh Khans, *beys* (dignitaries) and *qazis* (Islamic judges) to safeguard its colonial establishment (Frank 2001). The state encouraged the Christianization campaigns and converts to Christian Orthodoxy (mostly Muslims) were given various material and legal

benefits. For example, Peter I (r. 1682-1715) offered a three-year tax break, freedom from the military draft and work in state factories (Bobrovnikov 2006). There is numerous evidence of forced conversions during the reigns of Anna Ioanovna (r.1730-1740) and Elizabeth Petrovna (r.1741-1761) which further worsened the conditions of Muslims under the Russian Empire. Whatever extent of “Islamic functioning” Russians allowed, was just, as is rightly put by Allen Frank, “to subdue other Muslims” (Frank 2003).

Nevertheless, during the reign of Catherine II (r.1762–1796), Russia's relationship with its Muslim subjects changed, intending to create an alternate "domestic within the empire" version of Islam (Crews 2009: 33).<sup>xviii</sup> The empress, manoeuvring confessional politics, formulated a "soft engagement" policy to instrumentalize the "Muslimness" of Kazakhs to have the state's deep-down political objectives achieved (Khalid 2007: 36). Catherine's introduction of the new law on “Toleration of All Faiths” adopted in 1773 allowed Kazakh Muslims to engage in a broader array of religious practices (Fisher 1968). Enabling the state's “civilizing mission” of, as is put by Brill Olcott (1995: 47) "wild and unpredictable" Kazakhs and constructing a "church for Islam",<sup>xix</sup> Catherine, along with her elites, worked on two significant parallel projects: the *institutionalization* of Islam and the *organization* of Kazakh Muslims. The *institutionalization* of Islam involved the construction of numerous mosques and *madrasas* in settlements along the Kazakh steppe, while the *organization* was done with the support of Tatar *'ulamā* who would justify the legitimacy of the Russian Empire (as *dār al-Islām*).<sup>xx</sup> Nevertheless, after having created institutional structures of the "Russian version" of Islam, Catherine's so-called "Islamization of Kazakhs",<sup>xxi</sup> on one hand, proved a supportive project to refashion and streamline the “Muslim behaviour” concurring to colonial political context (Frank 2003). But, yet, on the other hand, it produced otherwise consequences, expanding "Muslim consciousness" among Kazakh nomads and finally culminating in "organised protest" against the state's interference in the practice of Islam (Olcott 1995: 111).<sup>xxii</sup> The mosques constructed during Catherine's reign became centres of "imparting Islamic knowledge" and also attractive sites for trade and merchandise dominated by Muslim merchants. After Catherine, the Russian state policy toward Islam and Muslims changed from "regulated toleration" to "suppression", a new administrative mechanism to control the influence and application of Islamic laws. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russians had begun to view Islam as a "hostile code not only for our religion (Orthodox Christianity) but for our entire culture" (Oraz 2018: 85; Bobrovnikov 2006, Vol II: 202-223).

Nevertheless, by now, a large number of Kazakh religious intellectuals, who had got educated in the traditional *madrasas*, in corporation with secular nationalist intellectuals,<sup>xxiii</sup> who were educated in the Russian-Kazakh schools, had begun the first wave of “decolonial discourse” that is, a simultaneous process of criticism of “colonial

mechanism” and concern for the progress of the ethnic Kazakhs in the Russian Empire (Olcott 1995: 101)? And, by now, Kazakh understanding of Islam had changed, considering Islam not only as the source of spiritual ethos and moral normativity but also as an inseparable factor shaping "social orientation" along the lines of collective culture and ethnic identity (Kovalskaya 2015). For example, prominent *zarzaman* (Time of Trouble) writers such as Shortambai Kanai Ulī (1818-1881), Dulat Babatai Ulī (1802-1871), Murat Monke Ulī (1843-1906) and Abu Bakar Kerderī (1858-1903) venerated Islam for preserving their culture and identity. The Kazakh devout Muslim intellectuals such as Aqmollā Muḥammadiar Ulī (1839-1895), Abū Bakar Kerderī (1858-1903), and Mashūr Zhasup Kopeī (1857-1931) accepted the Tatar reformist method known as *jadidism* to inculcate progressive thinking and promote scientific education among Muslims.<sup>xxiv</sup> The *jadidism* methodology of teaching Islam originally emerged in the 1880s in Crimea and the Volga-Ural region and soon spread throughout the whole of Central Asia. Responding to the technological superiority of Russians, Jadidist intellectuals underlined their internal weaknesses in terms of scientific and material progress. The discussion, for example, "How could a Tatar ox-cart compete with the Russian locomotive?" was central to the concern of survival for Jadidists. It is worth mentioning that the Jadidists, products of Qurā'nic and Muslim theological institutions, were practising Muslims who wanted to seek a solution to Muslim problems from "within" the Islamic tradition. The underlying principle of *jadidism* movement was that without applying a new method of teaching (*usūl-i jadīd*) to introduce educational reforms in the curriculum of *maktabs* (elementary religious schools) and *madrasas*, there is the least possibility of social progress and scientific development in the Muslim communities of Central Asia (Khalid 1998; Taheri 1989: 70-73).

The Jadidist's postulated that to resolve the "decrepitude" of Muslim life in the Russian empire, it is imperative to liberate Islam from both, the *external* influences i.e. Western domination and *internal* corruption i.e. *qadimism* (conformation to age-old unscientific traditions and interpretations) and revive the institution of *ijtihād* (scientific reasoning in the light of textual evidence) (Soucek 2000: 206; Ashurov 2005; Abdurakhimova 2005). The *Jadidism* movement became one of the most remarkable religious modernist currents in Kazakhstan and its significance extended far beyond education, eventually raising debate over cultural and political issues. The political events that took place in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century encouraged "joint resistance" from religious and secular nationalist intellectuals. The culmination of nationalist ideas into a movement namely *Alash Ordā*, despite having a quite contrasting position on the understanding and application of Islamic sharī'ah, spoke for the cause of Islamic culture and Muslim intelligentsia spoke for the cause of nationalistic ideas of liberation.<sup>xxv</sup> For example, 'Alī Khān Bukeikhanov (1869-1935), the founder of the *Alash Ordā* liberation



movement, urged protests against the state's interference in Islamic matters. It was under his supervision, along with Aḥmad Baitursynov (1873-1937), the petition of 1905 was written and presented to Tsar (Oraz 2018: 100). Similarly, the nationalist Islamist gazette *Ai Qap*, published between 1911-1916 in the city of Troitsk, North Kazakhstan, under the editorship of Muḥammadjān Seralin (1871-1929), the second largest Kazakh publication after *Qazaq* (official of the organ of *Alash Ordā*), advocated for the adoption of Islamic laws and religious education of Kazakhs, however, together with critical thinking and progressive scientific knowledge (Olcott 1995: 117-118; Kendirbaeva 1999). From the religious circle, GumarKarash (1875-1921), the first Kazakh *qazī* and the first member of the Muslim Spiritual Assembly of the Eastern Part of the Russian Empire, joined Alash Party and justified the party's nationalist objectives. He wrote for both Kazakh gazettes namely *Ai Qap* and *Qazaq*. He was acquainted with the reform methodology of Egyptian Mohammad Abdu and Jammal Al-Din Afghani (Oraz 2018: 124-126). The alliance of nationalists and religious intellectuals was going well. Nevertheless, the two revolutions of 1916, popular Kazakh bloody uprisings against Russians, followed by the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, changed the whole scenario and both, Muslim intellectuals as well as secular intellectuals, of Kazakhstan, were pushed to the wall (Olcott 1995: 118-130). The news of the February 2017 revolution was celebrated by all Kazakhs, that is, peasants, religious scholars and nationalists alike, with a hope of living in a new "free Kazakhstan". The abdication of Tsar (Nicholas II, r. 1894-1917), as Adeb Khalid writes, was expected to give birth to the "dawn of liberty" (Khalid 2007: 52). The breakdown of Tsarist autocracy vented a massive disorder in the entire region of Central Asia, shaking the orientation of societies from centre to periphery. The immediate response to the crisis was sought out in the form of the provisional government of Russia. In the new provisional government, Jadidist Muslim intellectuals of Central Asia, enjoying a sense of freedom, brazenly entered into the post-revolution political dynamics and affirmed their determination to lead the democratic process in the region (Radjapova 2005: 150).

To centralize the diverse social forces of Muslim populations of Central Asia, Jadidists established the institution of *shūrā-i islāmiya* (Islamic Council) in March 1917 in Tashkent. The *shūrā-i islāmiya* not only recognised the provisional government but also endorsed its programme. In the post-February situation, socio-political trends in Kazakhstan developed along very similar lines. According to Olcott, Kazakhs supported the formation of the provisional government and many young Kazakh intellectuals such as AḥmadBaitursynov (1873-1937) and MīrYāqūbDulātov (1885-1935) presented the idea of "autonomous independent Kazakh state" in the first congress of *Alash Ordā*<sup>xxvi</sup> held in Orenburg in April 1917 (Rashid 1994: 110-113). However, the party endorsed 'Alīkhan Bukeikhanov's (1865-1932) proposal of territorial autonomy within the federal republic

of Russia, giving Kazakhstan autonomy with equal rights and interests (Khalid 2007: 54; Oraz 2018: 116). Nevertheless, the euphoria ended and optimism of having an autonomous government shattered off soon as the provisional government was overthrown and the Bolsheviks ceased the democratically elected constitutional convention in the Bolshevik Revolution of 2017 (Suny 1998: 57).<sup>xxvii</sup> Although initially Kazakh intellectuals, both religious elites and secular nationalists, resisted but eventually, by the end of 1919, they felt forced to accept the Bolshevik rule (Olcott 1995: 129; Rashid 1994: 113-114). It was a catastrophe and an unpleasant choice as AḥmadBaitursynov quite aptly remarks:

“The Kazakh-Kyrgyz received the first revolution (February 1917) with joy and the second with consternation and terror [...] The second revolution was accompanied in the borderlands by violence, plundering and the establishment of a dictatorial regime ... In the past a small group of Tsarist bureaucrats oppressed us; today the same group of people or others who cloak themselves in the name of Bolsheviks perpetuate in the borderlands the same regime” (Rashid 1994: 114).

The rise of the Bolsheviks, having a zeal for Marxist-communist ideology, caused dramatic changes in the religious landscape of Kazakhstan. Soon after grabbing power, the Bolsheviks coercively expressed their "anti-religious ideological objectives" through several declarations reducing the social functioning of religion in the society. Having been influenced by the atheistic ideology of Karl Marx and Frederic Engels who considered religion as "the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions" and "opium of the people", Bolsheviks disbanded every kind of "religious activism" and controlled every space and institution where "public manifestation" of religion was possible (Marx 1970: 131; Marx & Engels 1967: 42). As regards Islam, initially Bolsheviks adopted a tolerant and much more liberal approach toward Islam, which of course was a politically motivated decision. In a situation, soon after coming into power, when proletariats of Poland, Finland and Ukraine withdraw their support to the "cause of revolution", Muslim sympathy, who also wanted liberation from Russians, became a political requirement for Bolsheviks (Rahman 1979: 28-46). Through the mechanism of a "seemingly tolerant approach" the Soviets wanted to break the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church and also penetrate the effects of revolution into the Near East, Iran, Arab countries and Turkey through, what was called the Muslim East. Moreover, "Muslim force" was seen as an important ally in the war against the internal enemy, "the Whites" (Broxup 1992: 40). Muslims, enjoying the early "honeymoon phase", were guaranteed freedom to practice their faith and this freedom was ensured by none other than Lenin himself. In his appeal to Muslims, Lenin said:

“Comrades and brothers [...] Muslims of Russia, Tatars of Volga and the Crimea, Kirghiz and Sartes of Siberia, and Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of Transcaucasia, Chechen and Caucasian mountaineers- all of you whose mosques and shrines have been violated by Tsar and oppressors of Russia!... Henceforth your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are decreed free and inviolable [...] Therefore, support this Revolution and its authorized government” (Tewari 1984: 72-74).

The initial "honeymoon phase" for Muslims however did not last long as by the mid of 1920 Bolsheviks changed their policy towards Islam from "tolerance" to "attack" with a lesser zeal. The actual havoc fell on Islam between 1928 to 1938 when, under the supervision of the League of Godless Militants, a vindictive campaign to exterminate Islam was intensified, leading to the institutional collapse of Islam (Wilhelm 1971: 44-48). In Kazakhstan, like other neighbouring states, Islam met with the same fate. In the first vicious drive several *masjids* and *madrasas*, sources of acquiring spiritual transformation and communication of religious knowledge in Islamic tradition, were robbed, destructed and closed, mainly in the regions such as Almaty, Zhezkazgan, Kyzylorda, Mangyshlak and Taldykorgan. For example, out of 45 mosques in western Kazakhstan before 1920, only one mosque survived. Similarly, out of 200 mosques in southern Kazakhstan (Turkestan) before 1920, only one mosque survived. By the end of 1962, there were only 25 mosques throughout the country. Facing the soviet wrath, mosques in smaller cities were turned into modern educational institutions, clubs, shops, residential houses and stables, which according to the Soviets was better "social use" of these buildings. For example, KalzhanAkhun mosque and madrasa located in southern Kazakhstan (in the lower Syr Darya region) were initially, between 1920-1937, used as a boarding school but later converted into a yard for pigs. The same fate befell the *'ulamā* and *imāms*. They were humiliated, persecuted and allegedly incriminated of participating in anti-revolution activities and sent off to labour camps where many died or were killed. The Shari'ah courts were ceased and Kazakh Muslims were not even allowed to visit the local "sacred places", let alone the *hajj* pilgrimage to Makkah. Some of the "sacred places" were raised to the ground by using tractors and their bricks were used in the construction of pubs and bars. The *waqf* administration was abolished and all its property was confiscated and nationalized. The thousands of copies of the Holy Qur'an and other religious books in Arabic were set on fire and the use of the Arabic language was related to "Muslimness" and hence replaced with first Latin and then Russian alphabets (Oraz 2018: 130-135; Khalid 2007: 72-73; Taheri 1989: 108; Conquest 1968: 71; Rahman 1979; Karen 1994: 111; Poliakov 1992). The *Jadidists* were denounced and called many names such as "nationalist bourgeoisie" "pan-Islamists" and "pan-Turkists". In short, to put it in

Adeeb Khalid's words, "[all] the patterns through which Islam had been transmitted in Central Asia were largely destroyed" (Khalid 2007: 73).

The Soviets eventually realized that the "older order" could only be replaced with the new "Soviet order" and the project of producing "homo Sovieticus" would be materialized only if they succeed to uproot Islam, both as religion and culture, from the Central Asian societies, including Kazakhstan. The new "Soviet order" would be ushered by the "Party Objectives" vis-à-vis rebuilding family structures, and social relations and dealing with issues of morality and ethics. To create the basis for "Soviet order", the Soviets chose a strategy of so-called "Soviet enlightenment" and that "Soviet enlightenment" was communicated through different propaganda agencies. For example, *kommunisticheskaya Revoliutsiia* (organ of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee), while introducing "Soviet enlightenment" was proposed to:

- i. Induct natives into reconstructed agitprop cadres;
- ii. Print anti-religious literature in native languages; especially popular literature;
- iii. Write better materials, based on concrete situations;
- iv. Explain the role of religion in class exploitation;
- v. Use schools and Komsomol cells to teach atheism;
- vi. Do a better job of distributing the journals *Antireligioznik*, *Bezbozhnik*, and *Fen em-Din* (Science and Religion, in Tatar) (Keller 1992: 25-50)

In an attempt to "Sovietise" Kazakh Muslims, the Soviets targeted key social institutions such as education and family. They used education as an "agent of socialization" and the basis for the construction of socialism. Initially, as mentioned above, religious seminaries were systematically closed down but later some madrasas were reopened after having registered through Commissariat for Interior Affairs. Through primary school education, the Soviets wanted to counter the influence of traditional and parental authorities. The government established Red Caravans and made it an obligation for each district-level administration to send its Red Caravan to visit Kazakh auls and deliver lectures on communism (Olcott 1995: 171-172). Similarly, the government introduced the *kolkhozes*, the new villages established in the collective farm areas. The creation of *kolkhozes* was part of a broader "Sovietisation project" intended to alienate the established Kazakh Muslim communities from their traditional lifestyle, characterized by clans and large extended families. The purpose was to produce new "public identities" and establish new communities based on the absolute equality of the sexes, having no ties to social and religious traditions, and with the capability to compete with their Russian counterparts to speed up the growth of socialism (Bennigsen & Chantal 1967: 184).

Women were encouraged to challenge the family hierarchy, put men on the higher side, and participate in productive labour after saying goodbye to two things; "slavery of the kitchen" and "obligation of the veil" (Khalid 2007: 73-74). Stalin's policy of "Great Terror" against Islam reached its apogee in 1938 (Kerim 2003: 111).

During World War II (known in the Soviet Union as the Great Patriotic War), Moscow changed its policy toward Islam, from "violent suppression" to "controlled reconciliation". Stalin (1878-1953) being worried about the coming of German fascists, started to treat Central Asian Muslims with sympathy, who otherwise suffered because of his anti-Islamic policies. Moscow, again having served its political objectives, began to "display" special attention to Islam. Thus, the Soviets in 1943, politically instrumentalizing Islam, allowed Central Asian Muslims to establish a central religious organisation, the Spiritual Administration of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (*Sredne-Aziatskoe Dukhovnoye Upravleniye Musulman*, Russian acronym SADUM), which would have the right to publish religious materials, propagate Islamic teachings and train *imāms* under the state direction. Allowing Muslims to establish a religious board is the best example illustrating how the Soviets invoked doctrinal considerations of Islam to gain some sort of legitimacy and provoke religious emotions of the Central Asian Muslims. The first *qurultāi* (congress) of SADUM was conducted on 20 October 1943 at the house of Shaikh Eḥsān Bābākhān ibn Abdul Majīd Khan (1863-1957) in Tashkent. The congress was attended by one hundred and sixty *imāms* and Islamic scholars from around Central Asia. The Kazakh delegation was headed by Abdul Gaffār Shams al-Dīn (1884-1953), who was appointed as the first *qazī* of Soviet Kazakhstan (Oraz 2018: 146-151; Olcott 1995: 197). After its formation, SADUM urged Central Asian Muslims to fight against their enemies, the fascist Germans. The SADUM made an emotional appeal in writing and circulated it throughout the region. The appeal was: "Our dear brothers and sons!

We, Muslim scholars on behalf of all Muslims of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan are announcing an appeal! Fight like the lion against the enemy [Germans]. The sons of all the nations should fight side by side and put the end to the terrible fascists. Do not let [them] trample every inch of our earth and strengthen your ranks. We ask all believers to pray to Allah, asking for help and victory" (Oraz 2018: 148).

It was a "relatively tolerant" phase for the general Muslim life of Central Asia. Some mosques and madrasas (for example Mīr-i 'Arab Madrasa in Bukhara) were returned to the Muslim community. Similarly, some "sacred places" were reopened for local visitors. The local *imāms* started performing religious rituals and services openly. The *kaziyāt* or *muftiyate* of Kazakhstan, like neighbouring *muftiyates*, under Soviet directives, attempted to convince Kazakh Muslims that Islam is compatible with

modernity and “capable of co-existing with Marxism-Leninism” (Ro’I 1990). It was asserted to them (Kazakh Muslims) that they could be loyal to the Soviets and loyal to Islam at the same time without undermining either source of affiliation. Thus, from a colonial perspective, the Kazakh *muftiyate* became institutionalized religious legitimacy for the endurance of Soviet rule. The *muftiyate* communicated only that “politicized interpretation” of Islam that stood in concordance with the state language of the Soviets. It gave birth to the dichotomization of Islam into “official Islam” and “unofficial Islam”. The state’s patronage of “official Islam” further led to the institutionalization of so-called “official Islam”. In the words of Malashenko, *the muftiyate* had become “part of the [Soviet] politico-administrative machine” that would guide Muslims “on the path of Islam and socialism” (Malashenko 1993: 165). Nevertheless, having a limited capacity (financial, educational, and institutional) and almost negligible share in the “power structure”, *muftiyate* had practically become a dysfunctional and ineffective institution, giving space for the clandestine functioning of “unofficial” Islam (Ubiria 2016: 182-183). The role of *muftiyate*, from 1943 to 1991, actually became unidirectional i.e. “Sovietization of Islam” which, subsequently, resulted in the categorization of Kazakh Muslims into the followers of “official Islam” and “un-official Islam” (Tasar 2017). The “relaxation policy” that *the muftiyate* enjoyed in the 1940s in no way implied the Soviet’s policy of “encouraging Islam”, but rather a new strategy to promote “scientific atheism”, which remained relatively unchanged until the end of the Soviet era in 1991, including the period of *perestroika*,<sup>xxviii</sup> whereby the ultimate elimination of Islam was to be achieved through “propaganda and indoctrination” rather than through purges and executions (Ubiria 2016: 184). Nevertheless, one cannot skip to mention that during Mikhail Gorbachev’s reform projects of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, ascertaining openness and restructuring the entire Soviet economy and polity, Islam became visible in many aspects. For example, the secret mosques started operating openly, old disused mosques were reclaimed and many new mosques were built (Khalid 2007: 119).

The overall result of the Soviet atheistic secularization policy and its negative impact on Islam in Central Asia did not meet the Party’s expectations. The regime did not succeed to achieve its ultimate goal i.e. “eliminating Islam”. Although the Soviets offered a variety of “worldly rewards” to Soviet Muslims in their lifetimes, such as free education and health care, it was incapable of providing them with a “spiritual direction” and alternative to the concept of the “afterlife”. The Kazakhs, who believed in “spirituality” and the “afterlife” from times immemorial, would still need faith to deal with their “spiritual quest” and to gain the rewards of the “afterlife”. In other words, the Party’s “communist worldview” could not provide a complete substitute for religion to those who still needed God (Froese 2008: 197). The communist regime, however, certainly succeeded to reduce the influence of Islam as a social and political force upon the Central

Asian Muslims, including Kazakhs. The development of secularization through education, cinema, literature, media and other anti-religious propaganda agencies was central in bringing about the secular transformation of the social lives of Kazakh peoples that affected their traditional, religiously grounded values and beliefs. For example, the consumption of alcohol, which is strictly banned in Islam, became quite widespread among native Kazakh Muslims from the 1950s onwards. This noteworthy secularising trend among Kazakhs (especially among urban-educated circles), nevertheless, did not necessarily imply their total departure from Islam. Most of the Kazakhs would regard themselves as Muslims even if they did not practise it at all. More importantly, Islamic rituals, which had imbibed many Kazakh customary practices, remained almost unaffected. Similarly, many of the customs, such as *Kalym* (bride money), inheritance practices, funeral and wedding rites, and tradition of circumcision continued to be widely observed throughout the Soviet era (Ubiria 2016: 185; Olcott 1995: 197). In the countryside, the network of *imāms* and preachers connected with so-called “unofficial Islam” continued their religious practices. The only difference between the Muslimness (*musulmonchilik*) of these later generations of Soviet Kazakhs as compared to their (pre-1917) ancestors, to put in Grigol's words, was that “for them being a Muslim was primarily equated with identification with their cultural background and not necessarily with *Allah* and/or *ummah* (the universal Muslim community)” (Ubiria 2016: 185).

## **Conclusion**

The paper debunks the notion, after having overviewed different historical periods, that Islam has weak historical roots in Kazakhstan. In the light of historical references, the paper draws out that Islam came to the Kazakh steppe in the seventh century and in the next few centuries Kazakhstan was part of *dār al-Islām*. Islam remained the state religion of Kazakhstan during Golden Horde and Kazakh Khanate period which testimonies the fact that Kazakhs, after gradual conversion, had not been only ritualistic Muslims but also *sharī‘ah* abiding Muslims. Similarly, the struggle to survive their faith and culture during russification and Soviet oppression outline the deepness of the relationship between Islam and Kazakh Muslims. Both primary and secondary sources have been used in the development of this paper. Primary sources were consulted through authentic translations while the secondary historical sources were crosschecked with the narrations of prominent Urdu histories on Islam in Central Asia. It must be mentioned that the paper is not based on the methodological analysis of historical narratives. Nevertheless, it offers an overview based on profound historical evidence taken from numerous histories written on the principles of historical methodological analysis. The study provides a base for further historical research on Islam in Kazakhstan while focusing on particular historical periods. Moreover, sociological and anthropological

researchers can use the historical context provided in the paper to investigate the present religious behaviour of Kazakh Muslims.

### Notes

1. The region was known to Arabs as *māwarā an-nahr*: literally, “that which is beyond the river [Oxus]”. The name Transoxiana was given by Europeans. Ancient Iranians would call this region Turan. Geographically, it covered the area between Amu Darya (Oxus River on the South) and Syr Darya (Jaxartes River on the north).
2. Richard N. Frye (1998: 201-203) has denounced the simplistic narrative of “convert or be killed” and “Islam or sword” generally ascribed to the conversion process in the Central Asian region. He writes, "Arabs came from the desert (to Central Asia) with one message "covert or get killed" is far from the truth". He further writes, "the Arabs brought not only a new religion, but also a social message of equality, the end of classes, and solidarity of belonging together in a great family of Muslims- the ummah".
3. Taraz, also known as Talas, was a prominent city built on the historical Silk Road. The city was located near the Talas River. Presently this area is the border area between Taraz city (in the Jambyl region of Kazakhstan) and Talas town (in north-western Kyrgyzstan).
4. The same opinion is held by Haji Sheikh Abdsattar Derbisali, the former chief mufti of Kazakhstan.

I interviewed Sheikh Derbisali in November 2017. While responding to one particular question on the historical relationship between Islam and Kazakhs, he said, "In the *ḥanafī fiqh* (jurisprudence) there is something called 'urf (customary practice). This juristic tool ('urf) allows Muslims to accept the local customs of a place until there is no violation of the fundamentals ('*aqāyēd*) of religion. He continued, “under this principle (principle of 'urf) some of the popular nomadic cultural traditions were legitimized (or Islamized we can say) which attracted more Kazakhs to accept Islam”. To read more about 'urf please see, Gerholm, Tomas, Mubarak, and Hadia. (2009). *Urf*. In Esposito, John L. (Eds.), *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Islamic World* (pp. 491-495), Vol. 5, New York: Oxford University Press.

5. The process of 'Islamisation' or 'Islamification' has different connotations in different contexts. Here, I use it in its simplest form which is "to (when a society) accepts the Islamic rules, practices, and social rituals that organise a Muslim community".
6. The most famous Muslim scholar of the Middle Ages, who was born on Kazakh soil is none other than Al-Farabi. By virtue of his contribution in the area of philosophy, logic, music, astronomy and others he is also known as 'al-mu'alim al-thani' (the second master) after Aristotle.
7. It is worth mentioning here that DeWeese is not alone in having this opinion, there are other scholars such as Paul Werth (historian), V.V.Radlov (orientalist) and R. Karutts (ethnographer)



- who also disagree with the narrative that Islamization of the Kazakhs was a late phenomenon.
8. I propose that "social graduality" is a process that accepts the principle of "social change" based on gradualism. It advocates the proposition that people, as a society, tend to change towards a progressive culture, however, the nature of the change is gradual, giving them (people or society) the required time to understand and adopt the new culture.
  9. The honorific title *khoja* is ascribed to the family that is believed to have descended from the lineage of Hazrat Ali, the fourth rightly guided caliph and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad.
  10. The role of the Karakhanids in the development of Islamic civilization is undoubted of great significance. However, unfortunately, the brevity of the information that has come down to us in various historical sources such as Tabari, Ibn Athir, Ibn Kathir, and others on this period makes it impossible for us to trace the exact situation of Islam vis-à-vis socio-political milieu of that period.
  11. The Golden Horde is an English translation of "Altyn Orda" which is a combination of two Turko-Mongol words that is Altyn (which means "glitter" or "shining (like gold)" in Turkish) and Orda (which means "palace tent" in Mongolian). The top of Batu Khan's tent would shine because of the golden decoration which is why it became distinguished from the other tents and acquired the name "Altyn Orda". The other two names of the Golden Horde that have historically come down to us are Ulu Jochi (People of Jochi) and Ulu Orda (Great Orda).
  12. According to Muslim historical sources such as Juzjani, Juwayni and Nasawi, in 1218 Genghis Khan, after Muhammad Khwarazmshah consented to make a treaty of peace with Genghis Khan, dispatched a trade caravan of 450 people in a caravan of 500 camels accompanied by his envoys. When the caravan arrived at Otrar, the governor of Otrar Ghaiyr Khan Inalchuq (Qayir-Khan) confiscated their goods and executed them. On hearing this tragic news, Genghis Khan sent another embassy to register his protest and to demand the extradition of Ghaiyr Khan, but the Khwarazmshah not only refused but ordered to kill of the ambassadors. This treacherous attitude of Muhammad Khwarazmshah was the reason for the Mongol conquests and the destruction of the Muslim civilization of Central Asia.
  13. The four Mongol uluses that were separated geographically but remained politically and economically linked are: the Yuan (ulus of Qubilai), the Ilkhanids (ulus of Hülegü), the Golden Horde (ulus of Jochi), and the Chagatayids (ulus of Chagatay).
  14. The Mamluks were soldiers of slave origin who were converted to Islam, trained and disciplined. Over time, Mamluks came to hold key posts in the Muslim army and even some attained the title of sultan (king). They established their dynastic rule in India (from 1206-1290) and in Egypt (from 1250-1517). The Mamluk armies defeated Mongol Ilk Khanate in the battle of 'Ain Jalut that took place in 1260.
  15. The fall of Baghdad in 1258 was the saddest event in Muslim history after the martyrdom of Imam Hussain. It marked the end of the golden period of Islamic civilization and became a turning point

in the downfall of the Islamic world.

16. Read also DeWeese's *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* to find the detailed analysis of the narratives that have developed around Uzbek Khan's conversion and have historically come down to us.
17. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that there is a scarcity of historical sources providing detailed and deeper descriptions about what was the impact of Islamization on the nomadic population of Kazakh steppes at the individual, family and public levels.
18. To give her policy a practical shape, Catherine set a decree on 22 September 1788 to set up the Orenburg Assembly (its full name was Orenburgskoemagometanskoedukhovnoesobranie or OMDS) In non-official usage it was also called muftiate (the religious counsel). The Kazakh steppe was also placed under its jurisdiction from 1788 to 1868. Please see; Bobrovnikov, Vladimir. (2006). *Islam in the Russian Empire*. In Dominic Lieven (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Russia* (pp. 202-223), Vol. II, UK: Cambridge University Press.
19. The notion behind creating a "church for Islam" was to introduce a churchlike organization among Muslims so that 'ulama promoted by the Empire are positioned and accepted on top of the "Muslim hierarchy". Such state-baked 'ulama or "pro-Russian elites" would, in turn, engage with the masses and persuade them to accept the legitimacy of the Russian Empire on religious grounds.
20. For example, Mukhammed Mukhamedov, licensed imam of the Tsar, took oaths on the Qur'an from Kazakh elders, binding them as "loyal subjects" to the Tsar. In the post-Soviet literature, Catherine's reign is believed to be the "final stage of Islamization of Kazaks", however, this description is the outcome of a vague analysis that gives a quite simplistic historical view of Islam in Kazakhstan. It also lacks a referential framework when it comes to giving meaning and discussing the scope and contents of the "Islamization" process. In my observation, Catherine's policy was just a "soft" but effective socio-cultural strategy to manipulate the "Muslimness" of Kazakhs and integrate them into the Russian imperial system. Her approach had more to do with normalizing the "colonization" rather than promoting "Islamization".
21. Here, as an example, one could mention the meeting of around 14500 Kazakh Muslims from 31 volosts in Kuiandinsk market of Karkaralinsk in 1905 who drew up a petition to the Tsar registering their protest against the official prohibition of mosques, denial of permission for the hajj pilgrimage, and transfer of family matters to the civil courts.
22. Although the list of Kazakh secular intellectuals is long, however, three voices namely Chokan Valikhan (1835-1885), Ibrahim Altysarin (1841-1889) and Abai Kunanbaev (1845-1904) represent the most articulate secular expression of Kazakhstan
23. Jadidism was a modernizing social and political reformist movement founded by Isma'il Gasprinsky (1851–1914). He expressed his ideas in the *Terjuman* (Interpreter), the reformist newspaper. According to Adeeb Khalid, Jadidists were basically "those individuals who

took part in efforts to reform Muslim society through the use of modern means of communication (...) and new forms of sociability". The issues raised by Jadidist scholars touched on very important spheres of the life of society – socio-economic, political, cultural, and so on. For a detailed description of Jadidism and its impact on Central Asian discourse of Islam, please check AdeebKhlalid's book "The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia".

24. The Alash political party was founded in 1917 at the first Kazakh congress organized at Orenburg. The congress was attended by representatives such as Ali Khan Bukeikhanov, Ahmad Baitursynov, Mir Yaqub Dulatov, EldesGumarov, EsengaliTurmukhamedov, Gabdolkhamit Zhundibaiev and from Akmola, Semipalatinsk, Turgay, Ural, Zhetisu, Fergana regions and Bukey horde.
25. The Alash Orda, named after Alash Khan, the legendary founder of the Alash people (Kazakh tribes would call themselves Alash Altı), was the first party that sowed the seeds of nationalism in Kazakhstan.
26. The Bolsheviks (Bolshevists in English), founded by Vladimir Lenin and Alexander Bogdanov, was a faction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party which split into two factions (Bolshevik and Menshevik) on the occasion of its Second Congress in 1903.
27. According to Shirin Akiner(2003), in the second 1980s the Russian government began to adopt a softer attitude towards the Muslims of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan. According to Akiner, this softness was a response to two major concerns. One was to contain the spread of an "unofficial" Islamic threat and the other was to tackle the problem of corruption, fraud, and other malpractices by bringing in Islamic values and moral principles.

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# Post-Soviet Minorities Experience in Kazakhstan

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## **Abstract**

*Kazakhstan is the most diversified region in its cultural and ethnic dimensions. Kazakhstan is also a land of more than 130 ethnic groups. It is one among those countries where the Ethnic 'core' was not in majority during the time of independence. The majority of the Russian population is in the Northern region of Kazakhstan and its high demographic proportion was also perceived as a source of political turmoil in the newly formed state. According to the Kazakhstan government Russia's demands for recognition, and autonomy will aggravate the secessionist activities in the northern region. The government merged the region dominated by the Russian population with the Kazakh ethnic population. They justified this action based on 'administrative rationale'. The alteration of capital from 'Almaty' to 'Astana (Present Nur- Sultan)' technically from Russian dominated region of Kazakhstan to the south was also an effort to abate the Russian demographic dominance in the north. At the institutional level, the Kazakhstan government is trying to accommodate the minorities at the nominal level on the advice and efforts former President of Kazakhstan (Nursultan Nazarbaev). The People of the Assembly' formed which consists of 300 members at the centre, in the same way working at the regional level aims at the betterment, recognition, and representation of the minorities in Kazakhstan. This paper will delineate the experiences of three distinctive minorities group i.e. Uyghur, German and Korean. German ethnic group have their historical homeland (Germany State). However, German and Korean ethnic groups have historical homeland states and Uyghur's was stateless among the three. Secondly, this paper will interrogate how the Kazakhstan state responded to the diverse demand of these minorities group and how these ethnic minority groups adapted to the new political and social environment. Moreover, this paper will also probe the exclusionary nature of Kazakhstan towards its minorities.*

## **Keywords**

Minority, Ethnic Group, Post-Soviet, Recognition, Exclusion, Language.

## **Introduction**

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The multi-ethnic character of Kazakhstan in the Post-Soviet time is the result of various authoritarian policies during the Soviet period. After independence in 1991, the high proportion of the Kazakh population is the result of the emigration of the Russian population and immigration of the Kazakh population from different parts of the world. Though the challenge of maintaining harmony among more than 130 Ethnic groups in Kazakhstan is difficult the State is ineffective in managing this herculean task. There is an absence of Kazakh public policies for inclusion as it is countries like Canada and Australia which have well-framed policies for accommodating diversity. Kazakhstan has attempted to experiment with Multiculturalism at the institutional level but it has failed in many instances which resulted in the outflow of the non-Kazakh ethnic population. On the lines of former Soviet Russia, the independent Kazakh state is also trying to resist the Russian population to be in majority in the northern region of Kazakhstan through its statist policies. The State authorities consider these state policies as pertinent to the national interest and integration. The institutional accommodation of minorities can be seen in the institutions like 'The people's Assembly'. The Office of the President uses the public institutions undemocratically to strengthen its position which further strengthens its power for ruling the country. The paper is an attempt to analyse the institutional design of Kazakhstan to accommodate minorities.

The people in the assembly are nominated on the advice of the President. The president is also the chairperson of the assembly. Bhavna Dave calls it an 'assembly without the people' because many of the small ethnic groups have no representation in the assembly (Dave 2007). 'The People Assembly' lacks legal judicial and legislative bindings. 'Kazakhstan is a multinational state in terms of its ethnic composition, but lacks any federal, institutional or power-sharing arrangements for providing an institutional mechanism for minority participation in public life or even for facilitating decentralization'. Kazakhstan has been following the theory of civic level just on the name or only we can say mimicking civic citizenship which regards all citizens as equals in the eye of the law (Dave 2007). Article 14 of Kazakhstan states that:

1. Everyone shall be equal before the law and court.

2. No one shall be subject to any discrimination for reasons of origin, social, property status, occupation, sex, race, nationality, language, attitude towards religion, convictions, place of residence or any other circumstances. This paper will focus on three distinct minority groups i.e., German, Korean and Uighur. German ethnic group have their historical homeland (Germany State). However, Germany has eased the emigration of German ethnic to their historical homeland. Korea like Germany has a historical homeland (South Korea) but South Korea did not facilitate the emigration process for ethnic Koreans. Uighur is the stateless minority in the group. The nature of Kazakhstan towards the diverse demands of these minorities is an important question. According to

Bhavna Dave, minorities in Kazakhstan were reduced to the level of diaspora.

### **History of Uighurs in Kazakhstan**

Uighur is the ethnic Turkic Muslim population that largely resides in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Province (XUAP) which is also the largest province in the People's Republic of China. They speak the Uighur language and have a distinct ethnic identity. They follow Islam as their religion and adhere to the Islamic way of life. Islam provided them as a unifying force among their other Islam follower by adopting Islamic symbols, performing prayers and reading the holy Quran, Islamic food habits etc. (Yakazyuvaz 1995). The history of Uighurs in Kazakhstan can be traced back as far as the year 1871.

*On 17 June 1871, Sultan Abiloghly was resettled by the Russian administration to the vicinity of the town of Verny (modern Almaty) (Moiseev 1996, p. 104 cited by Kamalov, 2012). The Taranchi Sultan with his relatives and followers founded a village which became known among the Taranchi Uyghurs as Sultanqorghan, literally 'founded by the Sultan'. When the Russians returned the occupied territory of the Ili Sultanate to the Qing Empire following the St Petersburg Treaty of 1881 (Hsu", 1965), they encouraged the mass migration of the Taranchi population from China to the Russian Semirech'e (Kamalov 2012).*

Later, Russian authorities' administration made a settlement for the living of Uighur which further led to the inflow of Uighur in Russia. The turning point came in the history of Kazakhstan due to the policies of Collectivization under the Stalin regime during the 1930's they fled to their historical homeland (Kamalov 2012). The independence of the Republic of China crushed their long demand for a separate country which was followed by the migration of Uighurs to Central Asian countries. This process of migration was active even in the 1960s when bitterness came with its relation with the USSR (Bovingdon 2010). The process of migration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was very active.

### **Demand for Uighuristan**

The economic prospect for China has always been an important factor in engaging the countries in the same way China started engaging the Central Asian countries. Uighurs in Kazakhstan have their historical homeland in the Xinjiang region which is the largest province of Kazakhstan. Strategically, the Xinjiang region is very important for China it is bordered by eight countries *i.e.* Afghanistan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, India and Pakistan. Uyghur comprises in the Xinjiang region comprises 47% of the total population of the province. The Xinjiang region is also having a big potential for oil and other natural resources which can provide a boost to the energy sector of China. This region also produces wool, Copper, Gold and other resources.

**Table-1: Changing Ethnic Composition in Xinjiang 1949, 1995 and 2002**

<b>Ethnic groups</b>	<b>1949</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2002</b>
Han	7%	38%	40.61%
Uyghur's	75%	48%	47%
Kazak	10%	7%	5%
Kirgiz	2%	1%	1%
Hui	3%	4%	4%
Mongolian	1%	1%	1%
Other	2%	1%	1%

The Chinese assimilative policies for national unity see all other Ethnic nationalism as a threat to the national unity of the country. Their nationalism revolves around Han nationalism they want every ethnic group to be fitted into their broad category of nationalism. The Chinese are trying their level best to assimilate the Uighur in that broad category. The change in the composition of the population and the large influx of the Han population can be seen as a strategy from the part of China to suppress the demand for succession (cited by Wang 2001).

The demand for a separate state for Uighurs has been a long-standing demand from the Uighurs for their homeland of Uighuiristan. Their voice for their homeland is not as popular as the demand for the Tibetan province. Uighur academicians and political scientists who are living in Central Asian countries and their colleagues have a diversity of opinions and they argue that the formation of the eastern Turkestan as an independent state has been their long standing demand. They have a different way of living which has more resemblance to the Turkic Muslim population than the Han population. The Turkic Muslim identity along with ethnic consciousness and Chinese suppression led to the Ethno- religious conflict in the Xinjiang region. After the attack on World Trade Centre and the declared war against terrorism along with the Chinese blur distinction between terrorism makes the Xinjiang province difficult to survive. The Chinese authorities in the Xinjiang region put pressure on and restrict the common people from following the basic teaching of their religion and culture in the Xinxiang region. Uighurs were also deprived off to perform their religious rites, fasting and even keeping long beard. Chinese authorities force them to follow atheism.

### **Kazakh – China relation and Uighur Problem**

Kazakhstan has always been an important partner in the Central Asian region. It

has good relations with China and Kazakhstan in recent times has become an important trading partner with China and the largest exporter of gas to China. China is investing huge ransom amounts in Central Asian countries with two purposes one for economic gains and strategic depth in the region. Kazakhstan is also an important member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an organization which was formed in the year 2001 with its members including Russia, China Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It was formed to deal with any kind of regional tension and border-related issues. During the meeting of the Shanghai convention, 'The Shanghai convention on the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism' was signed (De Haas & Van der Putten 2007).

The growing influence of China in Kazakhstan is a great problem for people who were living in exile in Kazakhstan which led them to feel insecure. Kazakhstan, where most of the Uighur large numbers reside, is committed to China to deal with any kind of Separatism. 'Although members of Kazakh diaspora from Xinjiang are automatically entitled to citizenship, these rights are not extended to Uighurs whose families fled from Kazakhstan to China during the Soviet period (Clarke 2010, 2011).

The close ties with China constrain Kazakhstan to create a condition to create a favourable environment for Uighurs living in Kazakhstan based on familial ties. Kazakhstan is a multicultural place where opportunity is provided to all its ethnic groups to settle their research centre to develop their unique culture. But with Uighurs, the situation was different as legal restraints were put upon them. They are not allowed to use this space for the promotion of their independent demand of Uighuristan. Even there is stereotyping of Uighurs and alleged as potential terrorists or separatists (Dave 2007). The repressive policy of China on Uighurs led them to think of Uighurs as a troubling element for peace and harmony. The close relation ties between Kazakhstan and China create an inhospitable environment for Uighur.

China is using its strong economic and strategic position to persuade the Central Asian countries to have the upper hand and to support China in the Uighur issue at bilateral and multilateral levels through SCO. Although China is getting the support of Central Asian countries in Uighur's strong position won't help to maintain cordial relations with western democratic countries and other peace-loving countries. The Uighurs in Kazakhstan are leading a life comparable better than those in China but they enjoy minimal freedom without taking part in the politics of the country.

### **Role of Kazakh Government in Promoting Uighur Interest**

The disintegration of the USSR led to the formation of states on an ethnonational basis. The core 'Nation' was centred the nationalist debates, and Kazakhstan also followed the same path (Brubaker 1996). The pressure put other ethnicities to form Kazakh

centered history under the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan in the process of revivalism started the reinterpretation of history on their lines to glorify their history. The politics of symbols also began and this process led to the other reinvention of History of their own started and Uighurs were no exception to this. They started to reconnect with their homeland in Xinjiang. 'In the wake of the Soviet collapse and Central Asia's Islamic revival in the early 1990s, many Uighur-Kazakhs actively sought to reconnect with Xinjiang'. The Uighurs in Kazakhstan are facing a lot of marginalization from the part of the government as they are residing in Kazakhstan as refugees; Uighurs are a stateless minority in Kazakhstan. They are living in the geographical Margins of Kazakhstan and on the outskirts of cities. However, there are many grievances from the side of Uighur against the Kazakh government as they are not duly represented in the employment and public arena. They are some places in Kazakhstan where Uighurs are in substantial numbers but not represented in their proportion. There are further governmental restraints that are put upon them and they also suffer from stereotyping. Two of their organizations are branded as terrorist organizations in the year 2006. The first is the Party of Eastern Turkestan and the second one is Eastern Turkestan Liberation Organization.

China's concern for security was aggravated as the disintegration of Soviet Russia led to the formation of the central Asian countries. China shares its border with Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Securing the border issues for peace has always been on agenda in china. China while maintaining cordial relation with these countries always asserted that their home should not support the elements which aim in destabilizing China's sovereignty. 'A central principle elucidated in this statement was that 'the two sides should not engage in any hostile action against the opposite side, and neither side should allow a third country to use its territory to impinge upon the sovereignty and security of the other'(Clarke 2011).

Independent Kazakhstan was also a home for a large chunk of the Uighur population. The people of Uighur ethnic identity in Kazakhstan were calling for freedom, self-determination, and democratic, and human rights for the Uighurs in the Xinjiang region so this also led China to develop relations with the central Asian countries. The growing holds of Uighur Political parties in Central Asian countries and their growing popularity led the Chinese authorities to a potential threat to its sovereignty. This led to strains in the relationship between Central Asian countries and China. Economic relations China is a big partner for Kazakhstan which Kazakhstan never wanted to lose at any cost. Kazakhstan always has a friendly relationship with Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan has the compulsion to look after the activity in the homeland which is against the interest of China (Clarke 2011).

### **The Koreans in Kazakhstan**

The Koreans' migration to Russia and adjoining areas in Kazakhstan can be traced

from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The exploitation faced by Koreans under the foreign yoke of Japanese colonial power in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century led them to migrate to Russia. The geographical proximity, large farmland and tolerant Russian government were among the reasons which led to their settlement in those areas. The Korean population in U.S.S.R according to the 1989 census was 439 thousand. At present, the number has reached more than 5 million Korean living outside Korea.

The term 'Soviet Korean' was used for the people who were living there in the Soviet Union but the term 'KoryoSaram' became very popular and popularized after the disintegration of the USSR. Koreans in Kazakhstan have a long history of discrimination and exclusion. Their citizenship, their loyalty came into question many a time the advance of Japanese armies which led to the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) changed the Russian perception of Korea. Thereafter there is a change in the citizenship law in Korea. Thereafter the 'Slavophile movement' led to the penetration of more Russians into the areas of Korean areas of the Far - east. The Koreans who arrived before the year 1884 were only given the right to have citizenship (Diener 2006). From the initial year, Korean migration was there but they were living a very secluded life speaking their native language and performing their native culture. In 1917 revolution united the Korean people with the workers; many Korean sacrificed their life. They also supported the Russians in the war against the Japanese with the hope that it will also free them from Japanese rule (Kim 2010).

In the 1930 Koreans started developing their place in Soviet Russia. After establishing their settlement, they started to develop their culture and tradition; they also started taking interest in government offices and acquired important governmental positions. The Korean culture flourished, and theatre, radio and educational institutions were established. Their intelligentsia also flourished and many youths took admissions into prestigious universities (Kim 2010). Resettlement policies of Stalin led in the year 1937 most of the Koreans was transported to the Central Asian countries. The Koreans were the partners against the imperialism of Japan but they always remain under the suspicion of spying for Japan as they are seen as Asian.

Their Korean culture get a setback under the deportation by the Soviet government as most of the people died and lost their cultural centres. The central Asian countries and Almaty city became a hub of the culture of Korean people (Um 2000). The change in the life of Korean can be seen after the End of the Stalin era. Thereafter they developed their culture and language, many changes can be seen in the liberal atmosphere provided which was not visible during the Stalin era. The organized demand from the side of Korea even can be ignored at this stage. They formed and turned themselves into a well-organized strong voice. There is a great transformation in the life of Koreans under Soviet



rule. The immediate need for Korean is to integrate to enjoy a better life in the social and political sphere and the need here is also to keep alive the distinctive cultural ethos (Oh 2006).

The need to check the Sovietization was felt in the check the dominance of soviet culture over Korea. In the late '80s and '90s under the perestroika and Glasnost, the liberal atmosphere promoted the attempts from the side of ethnic Korean for their language which was losing its identity and significance in the life of ethnic Korean in Kazakhstan. The Koreans started reviving their language. The Korean language was taught in the academic circle. In the year 1991 'The Center of Education of the Republic of Korea' was established which provide training to the teacher in learning the Korean language. Koreans were very good at the Russian language (Kim 2010). Koreans are mistakenly considered a homogenous group but not. The Koreans in Kazakhstan can broadly be categorized into three types. The group can be categorized as the Koreans who came from Far East Russia, the second one from the Sakhalin region and the third group who are less numerous in speaking Korean.

### **Post-soviet Kazakhstan and Koreans**

Koreans after the disintegration were one among the country which selected to remain within or under the Kazakhstani identity and civic identity rather than migrate to their historical homeland (Diener 2006). The Koreans have rather no option like other Ethnic groups like Germany and Russian was having. Their Kin state like others has not provided many opportunities to come back to their Historical homeland. The Kin state had shown no interest in accepting the Koreans from Kazakhstan they remain indifferent to them (Roste 2005).

Historical experiences show one characteristic feature of the Korean diaspora—their special ability to adapt to new ecological, economic, and socio-cultural conditions. The 'KoryoSaram' adapted several times in Russia and Central Asia, in all cases achieving considerable success in creating opportunities for themselves. Koreans from historical experiences are considered as best to adjust to the new environment compared with other ethnic groups, they are considered very hardworking. A small Korean diaspora is in the U.S.A and they have shown great progress. Korean never enjoyed a place in academic circles. They never had even given their due attention to developing their own culture.

Koreans are among the people who are fluent in Russian which was language official language of Kazakhs S.S.R. Russian language was considered the language through which one can rise and touch the highest echelons of the state, but after the disintegration, a gradual shift came in the policy of Kazakhstan. Kazakh was chosen as an official language and Russian was reduced to the language of inter-ethnic communication.

The Koreans are the most Sovietized among other ethnic groups in Soviet Russia as most of them speak Russian very well. Russian was then not only considered as a language of community but status attached to it and the Russian language open the space to rise in USSR. The important official appointments and in civil services Kazakh must require language. This led to the language barrier which is faced by the Koreans in Kazakhstan. At present, the Koreans in Kazakhstan have well-adjusted in the social economic and political environment but the newer generation have not so much aware of their culture and many of them do not speak their native language.

In the words of Kim, he suggested:

*“In Central Asia urban life is more ethnically integrated, leading to an ever-increasing tendency for Koreans to marry non-Koreans, with the intermarriage rate over 40 per cent at present.<sup>12</sup> The problem of the lack of cultural cohesion among Koreans in Central Asia is exacerbated by the increasing tendency to genetic integration as well. Many young Koreans of mixed parentage may be classified as Korean on their passports but do not have strong cultural or biological ties to KoryoSaramas as a group. The survival of KoryoSaramas a distinct national group is dependent on cultural cohesion as well as on biological ties, and at present, there is a danger of losing both(Kim 2003).”*

### **Ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan**

The Germans in Russia and/or in other central Asian countries have a long history from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan have their roots in the year 1763 in which year Catherine II announced in her manifesto that the foreign settlers are invited under some provision in which they will be given some right if they would take up residence in Russia. They were provided with maximum rights from freedom of expression and religion to other rights. They were also exempted from some tax revenues for some time. These rights were only specifically provided to Christian foreigners. The condition of a friendly atmosphere remains only for one century.

The arrival of Russians has had adverse for Germans. Russia was also influenced by 'Slavophile Nationalism'. The growing contestation was also rooted as the region occupied by the Germans was more productive in agriculture in comparison with Ukrainians and Russians. Their better positions and expectations did not last so long. Under the 'Slavophile' nationalism they were considered an enemy of Russia, which led to their migration. However, the Russian revolution brought a change in minorities as they were given due importance (Pohl 2001). Their continuation of settlement in Russia continued to buy land until 1914. They were living near the Volga region. Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was an autonomous region was formed by USSR. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the Germans were deported to the northern region of

present Kazakhstan under the land reform plan. During the attack on U.S.S. R in the year, 1941 by the Nazi Germans, the ethnic Germans who were living there were transferred under the suspicion that they might help the German forces and deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia. Moreover, Stalin also disbanded Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Thereafter a large number of German was transferred to Kazakhstan and Serbia, many of them died on routes and many of them were sent to the factories in the Ural region. A large number of German ethnic groups compelled the German government to engage U.S.S.R. In the year 1957 Western German Federal Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer opened up diplomatic relations with Khrushchev and an agreement is signed between them. It simplifies the immigration policies of Germany particularly for the Russian population of German origin. Within the year 1955- 1970, the number of Germans who migrated to West Germany was more than 20,000. After the disintegration of the U.S.S.R., the process of migrations kept pace. The process of migration to Germany is still in progress.

### **Causes of German Migration**

The migration of Germans from Kazakhstan poses several questions about their choice to live in Kazakhstan than migrate to their historical homeland. This was the phase when Kazakhstan was also passing through the phase of forming or consolidating a Kazakhstani identity. Many people are migrating to their historical homeland on the counterpart the Kazakhstan government is trying to make an effort to call all ethnic Kazakhs to their homeland (Dave 2007). The population of Germans in Kazakhstan has declined drastically since its independence of Kazakhstan. There would be several factors which led them to migrate in masses to their 'Imagined homeland', this phenomenon cannot be categorized under the broad categories of push and pull factors. Kazakhstan as the nation was going through the process of Nationalization of the State on the 'Ethnic Core' of Kazakh nation. The fear of being marginalized under the newly formed Nation State and the location of Germany in the centre of Europe had a great potential in providing an opportunity to the migrants in Germany of the 'German ethnic' group. 'In 1989 there were 946,855 recorded in Kazakhstan. In 1999 there were 353,441. Germans had been the largest ethnic group after the Kazakhs and Russians with 5.8% of the population, but they came to comprise only 2.4% of Kazakhstan's shrinking population and have been eclipsed by both Ukrainians and Uzbeks (Brown 2005)'.

The choice to settle in their historical homeland was not so much easy as most of the people who migrated to Germany as the people have no such command of the German language which was very important. They have started ghettoising the areas where people of the same status live. There was emerging some kind of friction between the original dwellers and the migrated. It took a quite long time for them to be socially accepted. They

utilized the economic opportunities which are provided to them by German and the citizenship laws were very democratic. In the initial stage of the migration, the ethnic German was provided with good opportunities, even the unemployed people of German descent were getting a handsome amount of money to settle best in a new environment which new for them. The newly emerged Kazakhstan has not so many opportunities in the economy as the emerging economy. In the rhetoric, Kazakhstan was following the policy of inclusiveness, and ethnic-coexistence plurality but the reality was different as it was tilted towards the ethnic core. The higher institution, education, and government have negligible representation of other minorities

### **The German Government support ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan**

The Kazakhstan government is trying so as not to lose German anymore, as that will be a great loss to the country. The German government had come forward to support the ethnic population of Germans ethnic who are facing marginalization. They had opened many doors for their coming into their historical homeland or creating conditions and negotiating with the government for any promotion of the interest of the German-origin people. They provided aid to the Kazakh government to support the life of Ethnic German people who were living majorly in the northern part of Kazakhstan so that they can live a respectable life. The money they gave will be supported to create new job opportunities in Kazakhstan.

### **Problems of Ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan**

The Kazakhstani identity is the civic identity which is based on territorial identity, but the identity based on ethnic lines is important for them and the Civic identity will penetrate with time. The Germans are many a time were considered to be the people to be aligned with the enemy which do not let them fit into their notion of Soviet broader national identity (Diener 2006). The German ethnic group at present in Kazakh is very less most of them selected to migrate to Germany. The German in Kazakhstan is facing a lot of difficulties they are the victim of the discriminatory policy of the government which promote the interest of Ethnic Kazakh. The state language policy is one of the major impediments to their growth, the German ethnic people and fluent in Russian rather than in Kazakh. Most Germans are not fluent in the Kazakh language which has become a necessity to rise in government. Fluency in Kazakh has become imported for many official posts. After independence maximum focus is given to promoting the ethnic core culture. The German language was also taught in many schools during the soviet era but these schools were shut down. The representation of the German population in legislative bodies is very minimal. Institutions like the Assembly of Kazakhstan aren't able to look at the demands of the minority who are fewer in number. The Germans in Kazakhstan are not

provided with a favourable atmosphere for preserving their unique culture and practices. The German language is not promoted in academic circles. There are very few schools that taught the German language.

## **Conclusion**

Among the central Asian countries, Kazakhstan has the largest population of Uighur population. Comparing it to the Russian population and there is no such outmigration that can be seen from the side of the Uighur population. Within a small period, most of the Russian population has migrated to Russia. The Russians in the Northern region of Kazakhstan have resisted the assimilative policies of Kazakhstan. In the initial years, they were demanding more autonomy and Secession from the Kazakhs. The change in language policy along with the wish to live in the newly formed nation in with the people of the same nation was the major drive behind their migration. Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Province is one of the administrative regions of the People's republic of China in which the Uighur lives in large proportion. Their long-standing demand for their separate East Turkestan was very old but it has been under suspicion by their continuous suppression, torture and crackdown by the Chinese authorities. The economic linkages between Kazakhstan and China also put pressure on the Kazakhstan government to suppress dissenting voices from Kazakhstan. As Kazakhstan has become a member of various organizations based on economic cooperation and security linkages which also compels Kazakhstan to suppress the demands from the Kazakhstan land. As an active member of Shanghai Cooperation, Kazakhstan is committed to maintaining security and peace in the country. China also compels the central Asian countries that their soil should not be used for activities which are disruptive to their security.

Korean is also one of the important minorities of Kazakhstan which have long history German Kim has given the name 'KoryoSaram'. Koreans are one among the community which were very adapted to the soviet environment and culture. They enjoy high ranks in government offices. They mostly live in urban areas. They have a different way of living in comparison to Korean in South Korea. They had the Korean population select to settle rather than migrate to their kin state. Besides, the change in the policies after the independence largely favours the ethnic core population, by the installation of nationalistic agenda which is exclusive. The change in the language policy was a setback for Korean as they are not so much fluent in the Kazakh language. South Korea has not shown any kind of interest in the Ethnic Korean return to South Korea as Russia and Germany have supported.

The experience of German ethnic groups in soviet Russia was very full of ups and downs, on the invitation they were invited in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and get were granted several privileges. 1917 was suspicious of spying but under the 'Slovophile' nationalism

condition become unfriendly for them. Then the turn came in Germany also tried to maintain friendly relations with Russian even in the cold war era as they large of German origin were in the Soviet Union. German is one among the population which selects to migrate in masses rather than to settle in the transition period after the independence. In the initial years of independence, the Germans started migrating to their kin countries as the country's resettlement policy largely favoured ethnic Germany to return to their historical homeland

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# The Cool Kazakh Wave: Bir Toqsan and Ninety One as New Directions in Kazakh-Language “Patriotic Content”

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## **Abstract**

*This paper focuses on the “cool Kazakh wave,” i.e. the recent development of high-quality Kazakh-language music and television in Kazakhstan. Historically, the quality of Kazakh-language content has lagged behind its Russian-language counterpart, given its low budget and predominantly ethnic/national (i.e. Kazakh) themes, which many youths, its primary consumers, find unrelatable. As a result, several domestic channels prefer Russian-language shows and music, many of them not domestically produced, in a challenge to the political policies of Kazakhization. Here, however, I contend that this state of affairs is slowly changing thanks to the “cool Kazakh wave,” most evidently with the emergence of the genre of Q-Pop (and its most famous musical act, Ninety One) and Korean-drama-inspired series such as Bir toqsan, both of which are of notably higher quality than their predecessors. They also, however, largely eschew discussion of “national” topics and feature more relatable content and authentic Kazakh dialogue, consequently encouraging greater consumption of Kazakh-language media.*

## **Keywords**

Kazakhstan, language policy, post-Soviet, nation-building, Central Asia

## **Introduction**

A quick scroll through Kazakhstani YouTube will give the user an idea of the sheer variety of online entertainment in the country today: Gakku TV, the Kazakhstani version of MTV, features songs, videos, and, most recently, web series by Kazakhstani performers; JUZ Entertainment, the Kazakhstani record label managing a variety of popular musical acts, has music videos and concert recordings; and domestic television channels such as Astana TV and Khabar regularly upload their TV series to their YouTube channels. In comparison to just a few years ago, the Kazakhstani media market seems to have exploded – but especially in the Kazakh language, as we can see on the aforementioned YouTube channels. Russian-language content has been popular since Kazakhstan's independence, but this recent explosion in its Kazakh-language counterpart

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is a recent phenomenon which I will henceforth call the “cool Kazakh wave.”

Although Kazakh-language content has existed since the nineties, its quality has been dubious— and its content is often a tool for government support or demonstrative of “national,” i.e. ethnic, overtones. I believe that such content falls into the canon of “patriotic content,” an expanded definition of “patriotic entertainment,” which Laruelle (2015:323) has defined as an “entertaining version of Kazakh history, adapted from reality shows, to discover national heritage through a combination of patriotism and entertainment”. As I will define it here, however, “patriotic content” goes beyond reality TV shows' presentation of “entertaining Kazakh history” to include any media which supports government policy or promotes national history, culture, or pride.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, much of the new content produced by channels such as Gakku TV and JUZ Entertainment is of noticeably higher production quality than most Kazakh-language content produced up until this point and features far less overt “patriotic content” than its predecessors — which helps to motivate Russian-speaking and Kazakh-speaking Kazakhstanis alike to consume more Kazakh-language content (Danabayev & Park, 2020). Understandably, the content in the “cool Kazakh wave” is especially appealing to younger Kazakhstanis, who are likely driving the demand for such content by virtue of their consumption habits.

### **Theoretical Considerations and Framework**

In this case, it is helpful to consider the three phases that Brassard (2017) outlines in the development of post-Soviet Russian sitcoms, as this process is also representative of the general change in production quality of post-Soviet media from low-quality to high-quality content (in some cases even exported globally): localization, hybridization, and “cultural odorlessness.” Localization is the process during which foreign forms of content are “formatted... to local tastes,” i.e. when creators take an established format and “fill” it with local content, humour, plot, etc. (Brassard 2017: 707). Hybridization, however, is the process during which “a text [or format of content] enters a foreign culture and is transformed by blending with certain aspects of a local culture” (Brassard, 2017: 710), with the example of Russian sitcoms undergoing hybridization by meeting “cultural expectations of Russian audience[s] and tell[ing] Russian stories rather than globally adaptable ones but within the accepted norms of the global sitcom” (Brassard, 2017: 710). The last phase in this process is “cultural odorlessness,” a process that Iwabuchi (2004) describes as removing all elements that point to the product's culture of origin, making it easy to export (as cited in Brassard 2017). Any Kazakh-language content will be difficult to make “culturally odourless” or conform to globally accepted norms of any media if it is both low-quality and overtly patriotic in content.<sup>3</sup>

I argue here that the “cool Kazakh wave” mostly represents high-level hybridization with some potential for “cultural odorlessness,” i.e. a higher level of

blending and integration of internationally popular styles with Kazakh sensibilities. In this paper, I will trace the development of the "cool Kazakh wave" in both music and television/web series, determine its characteristics, and describe its role and relevance in contemporary Kazakhstani society and its mediascape. I have chosen music and television/web series because I believe that these are the areas where the "cool Kazakh wave" is most visible, but also because these two areas are less well-researched in comparison to, say, Kazakhstani film.<sup>4</sup>

### **History of Patriotic Entertainment/Content**

This history of Kazakhstani and Kazakh-language television and music as "patriotic content" goes back to the Soviet era, working in concert with the state ideology of socialist realism.<sup>5</sup> As discussed by Clarke & Seksenbayeva (2018: 267), some of the earliest screened material in the Kazakh SSR was newsreels which often concerned national topics, such as "the construction of the capitals of Kazakhstan, Kyzyl-Orda (1925), and Alma-Ata (1930)," in addition to the traditional ideologically loaded topics of Soviet construction and industry.<sup>6</sup> Yessenbekova (2016: 5) also finds that many late Soviet television broadcasts, such as the 1980s-era *Kokpar Show*, were related to Kazakh national traditions, extending the tradition of screened media, in this case, television series, as a medium for discussion of national topics. The goal of the *Kokpar Show* in particular was to "inform the current generation about the immortal heritage of our [i.e. Kazakh] people," taking its name from the traditional Kazakh sport, *kokpar*. But discussions of "national" themes and political ideology in Kazakhstani television extend well into the post-Soviet period (Asanova, 2007; Rollberg, 2015), most notably in shows such as the Russian-language mini-series *Astana - My Love*, described by Rollberg (2015: 349) as a "dramatization and visualization of ideological and cultural officialdom".<sup>7</sup> The post-Soviet phenomenon of "patriotic content," however, is hardly unique to Kazakhstan: Novikova (2010: 282) writes about how post-Soviet Russian series function similarly, i.e. "support[ing] the Russian government .... [by] rehabilitat[ing] the Soviet past through the use of recycled old Soviet myths".

Kazakhstani (or, in some cases more accurately, Kazakh/Kazakh-language) music also has a long and illustrious history of "patriotic entertainment." Abdirakhman (2018: 103) writes that the early Soviet period of Kazakhstani musical development was characterized by a "new style of Kazakh mass song... form[ed] by synthesizing nationally characteristic intonations with the European logic of tonal reorganization", an early hybridization of sorts between Soviet ideology and Kazakh music.<sup>8</sup> This creation of a national music style does not in itself mean that it was a vessel for "patriotic entertainment," but it does demonstrate that the national music of the Kazakh SSR was fundamentally designed to display national characteristics and themes -- a key part of

nationality policy, which was particularly relevant to Central Asian republics, where such ethnic consciousness was recent (Fierman, 2009). Abdirakhman (2018: 103) goes on to write that eventually “the marching-and-patriotic... symbolism of Kazakh Soviet songs officially broadcasted and raised to the level of 'standard' became massively popular among amateurs as well”, demonstrating that “patriotic content” had become standard in Kazakh music of the era and reached the masses. Indeed, throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, “the guidelines of official broadcasting and organized performances changed and began to purposefully appeal to Kazakh folklore... and national hits of the Soviet era”. This would explain, for example, the rise to fame of the Soviet Kazakh *estrada* singer Roza Rymbaeva, who came to prominence in 1977 after singing the song “Aliya” about Aliya Moldagulova, a Kazakh WWII martyr who died in combat at age eighteen, with the words of the song referring to Kazakh landscape and native land (Adams 2011).

After the fall of the USSR, the Kazakh language and Kazakhstani music more generally continued to be a front for “patriotic content.” Since independence, Kazakhstan's state-building processes have included “governmentally enhanced stimulation for the elevation of traditional Kazakh culture, especially in the traditional Kazakh environment” (Abdirakhman 2018: 111). Rancier (2009: 388) confirms this: “several music videos by contemporary Kazakh artists have appeared to reenact historical nostalgia [i.e. historical symbols of pre-Soviet Kazakh culture] through their use of historical Kazakh imagery, bridging the problematic gap between pre-Soviet, traditional Kazakh cultural symbols and the contemporary (often urban and Westernized) Kazakh population”. She also mentions such musical acts as Urker (an ethno-rock group), singer Batyrkhan Shukenov, and others as mixing traditional Kazakh music with contemporary styles, with Johnson (2006) demonstrating that just over 60% of Kazakhstani music videos in 2006 contained some sort of “national” or “patriotic “imagery.”” This post-Soviet model of “patriotic content” in music and music videos is hardly unique to Kazakhstan, however: Adriaans (2016) discusses this in contemporary Armenian music and music videos, which also focus on overtly “national” themes, while Ismayilov (2012) discusses the inclusion of Azerbaijani themes into contemporary Azerbaijani music (and the commercial success of non-“national,” i.e. “culturally odourless” music in such venues as the Eurovision Song Contest).

### **Contemporary Kazakhstani series and music**

Despite its prevalence, “patriotic content” is not always well-funded. Laruelle (2015: 328) quotes Arman Shurayev, a director at Kazakhstan's KTK channel (which tends to feature domestic programming), as saying that “to produce one hour of programming, one can easily spend \$200,000 in Russia... Here in Kazakhstan, for the

same hour, I can spend maximum \$10-15,000”, making for consistently low production quality (Ryssaldy 2011).<sup>10</sup> As a result, certain Kazakhstani channels, such as Eurasia One, have historically broadcasted content from Russia (Laruelle, Royce & Beyssembayev 2019)— with many other domestic channels preferring domestic Russian-language content<sup>11</sup> to Kazakh-language content. Even if Kazakhstani society has become increasingly Kazakh-speaking since the fall of the USSR (Fierman 2005; Kuzhabekova 2019; Smagulova 2006; Smagulova 2008), the vast majority (71%) claims to speak Russian fluently, while only 59% claim to speak Kazakh fluently — with 11% claiming not to speak it at all (Laruelle 2015; Sharipova 2019), making Russian-language programming more profitable (and thus, often higher-quality). Even after a series of laws mandating that Kazakhstani channels broadcast in Kazakh at least 50% of the time, most channels broadcast their mandated share of Kazakh-language programming at night in the hope of garnering greater ad revenue during the day (Aksholakova & Ismailova 2013; Fierman 2005; Laruelle 2015; Ryssaldy 2011; Smagulova 2006).

The low budgets allocated to domestic programming, especially in Kazakh, in combination with the popularity of Russian-sponsored media among Kazakhstanis, show the Kazakhstani government's “relative lack of investment, until recently, in television as a soft power tool to communicate with [its] citizens,” especially the growing Kazakh-speaking segment of Kazakhstan society (Laruelle 2015: 322). Nevertheless, a “general disinterest” in using television as a political tool does not mean a complete lack thereof: Laruelle (2015: 328) notes that Kazakhstani programming, when produced, has been “largely regime-controlled and promot[ional of] official policy”. Nevertheless, there is relatively little of it, especially in Kazakh (Laruelle 2015; Ryssaldy 2011): a weakness amidst state policies of Kazakhization (Smagulova, 2008). Although this state of affairs is slowly changing (thanks in no small part to the “cool Kazakh wave”), the attendant bad acting, scriptwriting, and production quality endemic to Kazakh-language content have not disappeared. For one, the Kazakh language used in contemporary scripts is often unrealistic, likely due to the poor post-Soviet development and translation of Kazakh, which I have also encountered anecdotally (Akanova, 2017; Matrekov 2016; Smagulova 2008). These unrealistic Kazakh-language texts are also likely related to the fact that such series often concern themes that are overt “Kazakh” or patriotic, likely necessitating a “purer,” if also more stilted, version of the Kazakh language.<sup>12</sup>

The same issues are present in Kazakhstani music, especially in Kazakh-language content. Danabayev & Park (2020: 93) write that although there has been a fair number of Kazakhstani musicians releasing Kazakh-language music on patriotic themes, none of their videos has been particularly popular among Kazakhstanis: the production quality is low and the music is “more of a traditional and classical style,”

which would be unappealing to youth (but be squarely in the canon of “patriotic content”). Otan (2019: 72) also continuously compares Kazakhstani pop music to K-pop in terms of “quality,” with the former being consistently higher quality than the latter, even referring to an interview in which a popular musician from the “cool Kazakh wave” said that “not long ago, youth rarely listened to Kazakh songs”.<sup>13</sup> Domestically produced music, then, naturally becomes less appealing to Kazakhstani youth as they are increasingly exposed to western music (Abdirakhman 2018) and often consume it in English. Kazakh-speaking Kazakhstani youth consume more music (mp3s) in English than they do in either English or Russian, hinting at their desire for high-quality content, most of which is coming from westernized countries, if not from the west itself (Kuzhabekova 2019).<sup>14</sup>

Unsurprisingly, then, Kazakh-speaking youth prefer Russian-language media more broadly, i.e. when watching television, listening to the radio, and surfing the web, due to its wider availability and higher quality (Kuzhabekova 2019).<sup>15</sup> Russian-language content, much of which is from Russia, continues to dominate the Kazakhstani mediascape thanks to its “high quality of... media, especially cinema, miniseries, entertainment shows, etc.,” largely helped by the “relatively low quality of Kazakhstani state-sponsored media,” in addition to, perhaps, the inaccessibility of “patriotic content” to contemporary Kazakhstani, Kazakh-speaking youth, per Danabayev & Park (2020). (Laruelle, Royce & Beyssembayev 2019: 228).<sup>16</sup> *The “Cool Kazakh Wave” as a New Direction in Domestic Programming: Music.*

Laruelle (2015: 328) writes that the lack of domestically produced series, especially in the Kazakh language, has recently “led to a more active state policy in producing ‘Made in Kazakhstan’ programming”. I suspect that this policy extends to music, too, as it suffers from the same issues as series do, i.e. low-quality and overly “patriotic” content. This new state policy has helped lead to the “cool Kazakh wave,” an explosion of new media that abandons previous conventions and production standards. This media development is particularly relevant to the current generation of Kazakhstani youth, i.e. large consumers of television, music, and online materials (Umbetaliyeva, Rakisheva, & Teschendorf 2016)

Although it is hard to pinpoint, the beginning of the “cool Kazakh wave,” at least in music, lies in the work of Galymzhan Moldanazar (commonly known as Moldanazar) in the early 2010s, as he “began to develop an atypical Kazakhstani genre of indie music in the national language [i.e. Kazakh]... His music found a great response among young listeners, and Galymzhan's music videos set the bar for many Kazakhstan [sic] performers,” showing the move toward globally popular styles (indie) and high production quality (Danabayev & Park 2020: 91). Likely the most recognizable product of the “cool Kazakh wave,” however, is the group Ninety One, which took the

internationally recognized brand of K-pop to create Q-pop, its Kazakhstani, Kazakh-language equivalent. Founded in 2015, Ninety One has become one of Kazakhstan's most popular groups (albeit not without its fair share of controversy) (Danabayev & Park 2020; Mikkonen 2017; Oryn, n.d.). In an interview, Dulat Mukhamedkaliev, one of the members of Ninety One, explained the group's success: "it's Eurasian, Kazakh pop music that meets all global standards" (James & Tavener 2021). He goes on to note that "the main goal of Q-pop was to make the Kazakh language into a trend. And for youth to finally be able to consume content in their native language" (James & Tavener 2021). Indeed, Oryn (n.d. 34) quotes Yerbolat Bedelkhan, the CEO of JUZ Entertainment, Ninety One's record label, as believing 'that [Ninety One's] popularity reflects the demands of Kazakhstani youth, [i.e.] 'our music industry lacks high-quality modern or hip-hop music with texts in our native language; that's why the guys took the audience easily". In this way, Ninety One and the broader genre of Q-pop do not aim to be "culturally odourless" (despite having some popularity outside of Kazakhstan): they aim to create hybridized music, i.e. in Brassard's words, "merging the cultural expectations of the Kazakh-speaking audience and sings Kazakh music rather than globally adaptable ones but within the accepted norms of K-pop," in essence creating a product for a specifically Kazakh-speaking audience within a globally understood, high-quality, and popular format, which, for the most part, precludes the inclusion of "patriotic content."<sup>17</sup>

This need for high-quality Kazakh content is recognized far beyond Ninety One and its record label: Gakku TV's former producer Timur Balymbetov has said that "now even Russian-speaking musicians write music in Kazakh. They know that the public specifically wants to listen to pop in Kazakh" (Mikkonen 2017). And the channel's goal, like that of Ninety One and JUZ Entertainment, is no less patriotic: "our goal is to give the youth Kazakh music. And this is gradually taking place," here in the form of a hip TV channel with high-quality Kazakh-language products with less "patriotic content" than before (Mikkonen 2017). Notably, the Q-pop group remarked that it was inspired to create the genre after comparing the existing Kazakhstani (or, more specifically, Kazakh-language) music market with MTV — whose role Gakku TV has unofficially taken on for Kazakhstan, at least in the domestic arena. In promoting both high-quality Kazakhstani and Kazakh-language content, however, Gakku TV is not aiming to create a "culturally odourless" product, but a well-produced one that Kazakhstani – not necessarily global – audiences are eager to consume, especially in Kazakh.

Indeed, Gakku TV was created specifically to air content created by Kazakhstani performing artists (Blinova 2014), which now has over 2.5 million YouTube subscribers and features widely popular music, videos, and now web-series (to be discussed shortly), in Russian and Kazakh both. A growing proportion of its content is in Kazakh (Mikkonen 2017), following the greater need to create content for Kazakhstan's Kazakh-speaking

population.<sup>18</sup> But GakkuTV features relatively little of the Kazakh music that once dominated Kazakhstan's screens: for the most part, it does not feature *overtly* patriotic or national messages and distinctly prefers modern musical styles (Danabayev & Park 2020). Instead, one sees artists such as Ziruzha (who also falls into the Q-pop genre), Moldanazar, Argonya, and many others.<sup>19</sup> These artists, as varied as they are in their genres, have one thing in common: they take internationally popular ones and perform them in Kazakh. Instead of belonging to the traditional canon of “patriotic content,” the performers featured on Gakku TV, Ninety One, and others make the Kazakh language into a trend by following “global standards,” whether they be Korean or Western and adapting them to the needs of the Kazakh-speaking audience, which increasingly demands high-quality content.

The acts of the “cool Kazakh wave” come in contrast to artists such as Ernar Aidarand Kairat Nurtas who rose to prominence in the mid-2000s, and whose music bears a clear resemblance to the standards of Russian pop.<sup>20</sup> Danabayev & Park (2020) write that the beginning of Kazakhstani pop music was inspired by Russian and Soviet music (although Nurtas only became popular in 2008). The contemporary “cool Kazakh wave” could also be put in contrast to musical acts such as ABK, SazOtau, Roksonaki, and Ulytau, which rely heavily on Kazakh traditional costumes and instruments, despite being defined as rock groups (Adams 2011). Interestingly, one of the members of Ulytau describes its founding principle as similar to that of Ninety One: “I formed the group Ulytau to awaken the genius within the soul of young people, which comes to us in the blood of our ancestors... The dombra has a lot of drive, and it makes the music move like loud foreign music that our youth is accustomed to hearing” (Adams 2011: 39). This goes to show that “patriotic musical content,” i.e. ethno-groups, can be a way of trying to reach youth audience or create a new brand of Kazakh music, although Danabayev & Park (2020) have mentioned that this was not particularly successful.<sup>21</sup>

### **The “Cool Kazakh Wave” as a New Direction in Domestic Programming: Music**

It seems that the Ministry of Culture has understood both the need and demand for high-quality Kazakh-language series as well: Mirat Miyatov, one of the screen writers of the web-series *Bir toqsan* (One semester/term), notes in an interview that the Ministry of Culture asked for the creation of a “such a series about school” (Gakku TV 2020). *Bir toqsan*, Gakku TV's first-ever web series, is also part of the “cool Kazakh wave” with its clear incorporation of global production standards and hybridization.<sup>22</sup> In this specific case, Miyatov writes that he was inspired by another series that followed global standards, i.e. the Argentine series *Rebelde Way*, an internationally popular 2000s Argentine soap opera about an elite private school. I suspect, however, that *Bir Toqsan* was, at least in part, inspired by K-dramas, which have become increasingly popular in Kazakhstan (Koh &

Baek, 2020; Oryn, n.d.), with *Boys Over Flowers*, also a high school drama, broadcast on Kazakh television (Uatay, Reid & Lee 2018). Given the success of Q-pop, it would make sense to create a “Q-drama” if the goal is to create popular, high-quality content for Kazakh-speaking Kazakhstani youth, who already consume a great deal of Korean media (Danabayev & Park 2020). Uatay, Reid & Lee (2018: 55) even note that, in Kazakhstan, “various attempts have been made to experience and imitate Korean culture, particularly among young people,” much like the target audience and actors of *Bir toqsan* itself. Notably, Gakku TV and other channels have even specific sections of their sites devoted to Q-pop (Danabayev & Park 2020).

*Bir toqsan's* plot is, in fact, fairly banal for a high school drama: a handsome, Western-educated history teacher, Samat, is hired as the homeroom teacher of a particularly unruly class. Over time, he courts the school's English teacher, Raushan, while putting up with the class' pranks, antipathy toward him, and lack of motivation as they prepare for graduation exams. Meanwhile, there is plenty of drama between the students themselves. For example, the best student in the class, Zarina, is repeatedly ridiculed by her peers: the jock/popular guy of the class, Aman, accidentally throws a basketball that lands in her eye, and one of the popular girls, Merey, falsely accuses her of writing a love note to Samat to hide her guilt. Other subplots include Arslan's pursuit of Aneli, a popular girl who consistently rejects him, as well as the toxic relationship between Zarina and her friend Luisa, who uses Zarina to reach her own goals and even tries to attract the attention of Aman, who eventually develops feelings for Zarina.

The series culminates in the students taking the UNT (Unified National Testing), the standardized test for admission to Kazakhstani universities, and attending a graduation dance, where Aman confesses his love to Zarina, Aneli confesses her feelings for Arslan, and Samat confesses his love to Raushan. At the urging of the class, which has come to like Samat, he decides to remain at the school. The series ends, paving the way for *Tagybirtoqsan*, which tells the story of Samat and Raushan's next class of students, and *Lovonter*, which tells the story of Zarina, Luisa, Merey, Aneli, Arslan, and their friends as they continue to university.

Despite the banality of its plot, in the words of Ninety One, *Bir toqsan* functions as a “Eurasian, Kazakh web series content that meets all global standards,” giving Kazakh-speaking, Kazakhstani youth content high-quality content in their language *that they are eager to consume*.<sup>23</sup> And even if *Bir toqsan* is modelled mostly after *Rebelde Way*, this still suggests that high-quality Kazakh-language content is taking its cue from other shows that meet “global standards” and have been exported across the world, whether from Korea or Argentina.<sup>24</sup> The goal of *Bir toqsan*, then, is not to create a “culturally odourless” product but instead to create a high-quality product that follows international standards and is relatable to young Kazakh speakers, who, as such, necessitate a sort of “cultural



odour.”

This situation is slightly reminiscent of the highly popular Russian sitcom *Kukhniia* (Kitchen), which owes its success, at least in part, to an “upgraded budget... [which] allowed them to produce a program that in many ways is visually comparable with Western... situation comedies,” similar to *Bir toqsan* (Brassard 2017: 714). Brassard (2017), however, believes *Kukhniia*'s success is due to its nature as a “culturally odourless” product, i.e. one that has removed “significant cultural markers that would ultimately have signalled it as being specifically Russian,” precluding any “patriotic entertainment,” while simultaneously necessitating a high production quality. While *Bir toqsan* does not remove all cultural markers (e.g. teachers encouraging students to cheat on tests, as is common in the former USSR; mixed Kazakh-Russian dialogue, etc.), it does remove most overt “patriotic content” in a sort of step toward “cultural odorlessness” and features vastly higher production quality than in other Kazakh-language series, proving how such a media transformation is possible on a post-Soviet market, much like the way *Kukhniia* did in Russia.

Given the specific circumstances surrounding Kazakh-language series and media more generally, however, *Bir toqsan* distinguishes itself as bearing little similarity to previous forms of “patriotic content,” Soviet and post-Soviet alike: it focuses on high school friendships, romance, and drama, containing relatively few references to Kazakhstani nation-building, patriotism, or Kazakh “national” themes. This caters to the preferences of Kazakhstani youth, for whom it is far more important to be “someone who values friendship and friends very highly” than “a patriot of Kazakhstan” (Umbetaliyeva, Rakisheva & Teschendorf 2016).<sup>25</sup> Other Kazakh-language series, most of which are not part of the “cool Kazakh wave” (and are often broadcast by state channels such as Astana TV or Khabar), still features an abundance of patriotic themes: *Kenesshiler* (2014), for example, concerns itself with the drama between the workers of a public service centre in Nur-Sultan, often displaying their upstanding character (e.g. inability to take bribes) and the idealized efficiency of Kazakhstani bureaucracy and *Zholserik* (2021) is about the adventures and ethics of a group of train attendants working for Kazakhstan's national train company, *Qazaqstan Temir Zholy*.<sup>26</sup> *Korshiler* (2015), a series about various families living in an apartment building, features one family of ethnically Russian characters who speak exclusively Kazakh and has fashioned their apartment into a mini-yurt.

*Bir toqsan* has instead made the decision to focus on the lives of attractive, relatively affluent city youth who run Instagram blogs, pull pranks, and listen to music in Kazakh: these young urbanites, who know Russian fluently (and speak it at times throughout the series), are not pushed to be more Kazakh or abandon their urban ways. Rollberg (2015: 349) writes that ‘this choice of the milieu of the [relatively] rich and beautiful’ is typical both for producers and regular audiences of television miniseries

worldwide, allowing the viewer a temporary distraction and relief from annoying everyday banality and trivial problems, be they social or financial, justifying the focus on interpersonal issues: love, trust, hatred, ambition, competition, and betrayal”. Notably, in creating a stratum of beautiful, affluent, Kazakh-speaking urban youth, *Bir toqsan* creates an imaginary world that Kazakh-speaking youth want to relate to (and is fundamental to the continued success of the “cool Kazakh wave), as such youth are generally portrayed as Russian-speaking shows. Indeed, *Bir toqsan* focuses instead on the plotline of high school drama, rather than on themes of patriotism or pride in the Kazakh language or culture, allowing for the existence of “cool” content in Kazakh *itself* to allow for pride in the Kazakh language and culture. The characters are not discussed in terms of their being Kazakh; this is implicit in the fact that they inhabit a Kazakh-speaking environment that Kazakh-speaking youth can (and want to) relate to. This is a move toward “cultural odorlessness,” a trait often found in high-quality productions, even if the show in question is not designed for export (and even if all of *Bir toqsan* is not actually “culturally odourless”).

With the show portraying the life of “cool” Kazakh-speaking urbanites rather than promoting the Kazakh language or culture or serving as a clear vector for state ideology, *Bir toqsan* can afford to feature remarkably realistic Kazakh dialogue. Until recently, relatively few modern books were written in the language, few TV shows/movies produced, and few songs recorded, giving it less of a chance to develop (Smagulova 2006) — which it sorely needed following the Soviet period which inhibited its growth (Fierman 1998; Fierman 2005; Fierman 2006; Smagulova 2006; Smagulova 2008).

While *Bir toqsan* is not the first Kazakh-language TV show to feature realistic Kazakh, it is among the first to do so in combination with high production quality and a lack of “national content” in favour of a more realistic plot. Indeed, the characters often move between Russian and Kazakh, even blending the two languages to use expressions such as *tupit' etu*, meaning “to be stupid,” coming from the Russian word *tupit'*. This is an example of a Russian word fitting a Kazakh linguistic pattern, but sometimes the two languages are woven together into one sentence. A particularly striking example is when after learning that she will be going to the movies with another boy, Arslan says to Aneli, “qasyndazhigitkorse[m] [in Kazakh], ia za seb[ia] ne otvechaiu [in Russian] bar ghoi [in Kazakh]” (if I see [another] guy next to you, I'm not responsible for my actions) (Gakku TV 2019). This is a stellar example of the kind of Kazakh-Russian codeswitching that is common, if not standard, in Kazakhstan (Jankowski 2012).

Significant Russian language use, even if partial, is common among young urban Kazakh speakers like the high schoolers portrayed in the show (Kuzhabekova 2019), yet most Kazakh-language shows, especially ones within the category of “patriotic content,” use full-fledged Kazakh words instead of ones borrowed from Russian to support state

policies of Kazakhization or the purity of the language of the titular ethnicity.<sup>27</sup> It is important to note, then, that the “cool Kazakh wave” does not necessarily mean “only Kazakh,” linguistically speaking, in rejecting the stilted, non-realistic Kazakh used in other Kazakh-language series, *Bir toqsan* is automatically making itself “cooler,” i.e. more accessible and more relevant, to the Kazakh-speaking youth of today, who *do* mix Russian and Kazakh (Fierman 2006; Kuzhabekova 2019).<sup>28</sup>

*Bir toqsan* is among the first shows of its kind, although it has spawned two sequels on Gakku TV and *Synyptastar* (classmates), a “copycat” series (of notably lower production quality) on another YouTube channel. Given *Bir toqsan*'s success among Kazakh speakers and Kazakh-speaking youth in particular, however, I suspect that it will not be long before Gakku TV creates other such series or before other competing channels do the same.

## **Conclusion**

*Bir toqsan*, then, may represent the next phase of “patriotic content” in Kazakh, spreading a sense of national pride in the same way as Ninety One. Recall that Gakku TV's aim is to promote content by Kazakhstani artists, many of them part of the “cool Kazakh wave.” In doing so, it has created a massively popular Kazakh-language web series that has abandoned many of the negative stereotypes associated with its counterparts, whether online or on TV, much like Ninety One has abandoned the stereotypes of low-quality Kazakh-language ethno-rock/pop. Given its international standing, such music, as documented by Danabayev & Park (2020), has motivated both Russian-speaking Kazakhstanis and foreigners to learn Kazakh, while simultaneously encouraging Kazakh-speaking Kazakhstanis to consume more content in their preferred language. (*Bir toqsan* has not been around long enough to be able to make these evaluations, although I suspect that the same claim holds, at least about Kazakhstanis.) In this way, then, the “cool Kazakh wave” has patriotic intentions, even if it does not feature overtly “patriotic content.” And these patriotic intentions are often the reason behind the creation of such content, as Ninety One and Moldanazar have said about their music, and as MiratMiyatov has suggested about *Bir toqsan*.

Both *Bir toqsan* and Ninety One are representative of a larger cultural movement to break free of the template of series and song as an overt tool for nation-building through “patriotic entertainment,” instead creating content that the already-established nation, and within it, the youth, asks for and looks forward to seeing as a representation of a more relatable — a “cooler” — reality onscreen that will make them both prouder of their language and culture and more eager to consume Kazakh-language, Kazakhstani content (Ryssaldy, 2011).<sup>29</sup> In other words, Kazakh speakers are looking for “hybridized content” that both follows globally popular, high-production-quality standards but caters to

Kazakh-speaking audiences and is authentic to contemporary Kazakh-speaking youth.

This does not mean that the Russian language will die out or that Russian-language media will stop being produced: Gakku TV features Russian-speaking musical acts as well. But the “cool Kazakh wave” will work in tandem with the state policies of Kazakhization which have struggled to come to fruition for years, in large part due to the lack of available high-quality content in Kazakh. Kazakh and Russian-speaking youth alike will not only gain greater exposure to the Kazakh language through the sheer increase in the availability of content but will also be more motivated to do so as Kazakh-language series and music become a serious competitor to the Russian-language content they've consumed for years, even on domestic TV.

### Notes

1. Unless specified otherwise, “nation,” “national,” and all other associated words should be taken to loosely mean “ethnicity,” “ethnic,” etc., per their post-/Soviet definition.
2. In my experience, this has usually meant the idealization of the Kazakhstani government and its bodies and the inclusion of national themes, even if they are not historical, in all sorts of media.
3. It is critically important to note that the notion of “cultural odorlessness” is Eurocentric, as it has historically been imagined to describe content whose national character has been diluted to appear Western. I will not be examining this notion further in my paper, but it does merit mention.
4. Although I do not discuss Kazakhstani film in this paper, it is worth noting that it, too, has largely been dominated by “patriotic content,” with blockbuster films like *Nomad*, which turned out to be a commercial failure (Issacs, 2018; Norris, 2002). Norris (2002) even quotes Kazakhstani film critic Grigorii A fonin as saying that “Kazakh directors should have filmed genres that people found popular, ... not[ing] that 'while many speak about a new boom in Kazakh cinema, these movies are not known for their variety in terms of genre,' suggesting the Kazakhstani media market's saturation with “patriotic content” and the consequent need for other content. (p. 397)
5. I would be remiss not to mention the scholarship on “patriotic entertainment” within the canon of post-independence Kazakhstani film. Isaacs (2014, 2018) and Norris (2012), among others, have written extensively on the topic, demonstrating the weighty role of cinema in Kazakhstani (Kazakh-language nation-building).
6. Because many of the newsreels have been destroyed, Clarke et al. cannot comment extensively on the theme of “national” content in early Soviet-era Kazakhstani media, but I suspect that it made up a substantive portion as it was fundamental to Soviet policy and propaganda, especially in Central Asia, where national identities were only recently constructed (Fierman, 2009).

7. It is worth noting that contemporary Kazakh textbooks also focus on "patriotic values" through the exploration of "national" heritage (Asanova, 2007). Asanova claims that many of these patriotic values, most notably "love of the Motherland," are traceable back to the Soviet era of textbooks.
8. I would remiss not to mention the changes that the Soviet government made to Kazakh music outside of the sheer promotion of "patriotic content." Traditional Kazakh music was "blended" with Western-style music (Abdirakhman, 2018; Kokisheva et al., 2016).
9. There has been some clear pushback against "patriotic entertainment," as cited by Kudaibergenova (2018) in her discussion of the alternative rapper Takezhan, who has used his music videos as a form of protest.
10. KTK (Kommercheskiitelevizionykanal) is a private Kazakhstani channel, although 83.34% of it is owned by the Foundation of the First President of Kazakhstan (Protokol No. 1). I would also like to note that the idea of Kazakhstani content being inferior to Russian content was present in the Soviet era as well, during which the quality of Kazakh-language television was also not particularly high (Fierman, 2005)
11. It is also worth noting that Russian programming is often more popular and more competitive, due to its higher production quality, intelligibility, and availability on satellite TV (Aksholakova et al., 2013).
12. This "pure" version of the Kazakh language has been necessitated by policies of Kazakhization, which have, among other things, called for the establishment of a Kazakh Terminological Commission, which creates Kazakh terms for words usually used in Russian, even within Kazakh speech (e.g. gharlysh for kosmos, which means "space" in Russian) (Zhakupov, 2009). It is also worth noting that these TV shows exist in the same internet space as popular Russian-language movies, such as Kelinka Sabina, Kanikuly Off-Line (Vacation Off-Line), Akim, and Kazakh-Style Business in Korea, which, too, often feature overtly patriotic or, in the Soviet sense of the term, "national" themes (Isaacs, 2018).
13. A recent interview with a member of the Q-pop group Ninety One expressed this idea well, as he distinguished between music popular in Kazakhstan and relatable to Kazakh culture (toi genre) and music that could be popular outside of Kazakhstan (Balymbetov, 2021, 26:00).
14. Please note that this only refers to mp3s – and not music consumed on, say, Spotify or YouTube, which are streaming platforms.
15. The study in question did not ascertain whether students were consuming Kazakhstani Russian-language content or Russian Russian-language content. It is important to note, however, that while the percentage of Kazakh-speaking youth who prefer to listen to music (mp3s) in Kazakh and Russian is equal, the percentage of Kazakh-speaking youth who prefer to surf the web in Russian is far higher in the percentage of Kazakh-speaking youth who prefer to surf the web in Kazakh. Note

that this study was conducted among students in Kazakh-speaking Astana, a highly urban area.

16. Although radio lies beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to note that Russian-language content (some of which is from Russia) has historically dominated the Kazakhstani radioscope as well (Ibrayeva et al., 2012).
17. I acknowledge the fact that, in terms of gender, for example, Ninety One has defied the cultural expectations of Kazakh speakers.
18. It is interesting to note that Gakku TV filled a major gap in the Kazakhstani market. According to Mingisheva (2013), just before Gakku TV was created, an overwhelming majority of respondents said that their most-watched music channel was MuzTV (a Russian music channel), followed by MTV, RU TV (another Russian channel), and finally MuzZone, a Kazakhstani music channel which features both Kazakhstani and international artists. It becomes relatively clear, then, that the market was “ripe” for a high-quality Kazakhstani channel that could both overtake its Russian counterparts and promote music by local artists (and in the local language). Incidentally, this study also showed that Kazakhstani youth greatly preferred Russian musical artists to Kazakhstani ones, although the situation has undoubtedly changed since then.
19. I would argue that Ziruzarepresents localization rather than hybridization in some cases, as some of her songs, like "S.O.S.," for example, copy K-Pop songs closely, in this case, CL's "Hello Bitches" (Danabayev et al., 2020).
20. Per footnote 13, this falls into the toi music genre.
21. It is important to note here that although groups like Ninety One are not devoted, per se, to “patriotic content,” some of their music has patriotic themes (Danabayev et al., 2020). The band's name, for example, is Ninety One, in a reference to the year when Kazakhstan gained its independence. Songs like “Men Emes” do touch on national, overtly Kazakh themes.
22. By "hybridization," I mean here that the show successfully merges global standards of web series (Korean and Argentine both; see below) with the cultural sensibilities of Kazakh viewers without "copying and pasting" from a particular program.
23. It may be interesting to note the difficulties in dubbing Disney films into Kazakh, i.e. taking Kazakh-dubbed films to a "global standard." Finding good voice actors is difficult — and writing good translations is even harder, especially with little government funding (which is the case for Ninety One as well) (Elorda.info, 2020).
24. This supports Danabayev et al.'s (2020) claim that “Q-pop has mixed features with Western pop culture as well as Korean pop culture” (p. 97).
25. There are, of course, some references to the world of "patriotic entertainment" – students in the show spend much of their time studying Kazakhstani history, and Samat, who comes to the school, is a history teacher. The first part of the theme song shows clearly that the show was "ordered" by the Ministry of Culture and Education. And in a somewhat "meta" scene, the students attend a

- showing of the movie *Nomad*, a clear example of “patriotic entertainment” (Isaacs, 2014, 2018; Laruelle, 2015).
26. *Kenesshiler*(2014)was originally aired on the *Khabar* channel, a government-owned TV station, and *Zholserik*(2021) was originally aired on *Talim TV*, which appears to be a branch of the *Asyl Arna* channel, which is a Kazakhstani Muslim station. *Talim TV* itself, however, does not have a website, but has over one million subscribers — and its Instagram handle, for example, is *@asylarna*.
27. I am reminded of a Kazakh-language TV show I once watched where one urban-dwelling teenager said to another that she had many “ghalamtordagyдостар,” i.e. online friends. This is an incredibly artificial construction, as
28. And, consequently, may be more likely to enjoy songs like *Luchshii*by Raim and Artur or *Kokeby Irina Kairatovna*, which mix languages.
29. I believe that *Bir toqsan's* popularity has led to the creation of other similar web series, such as *Synyptas*(*Classmate*), which aired in 2020 on the YouTube channel *kakbudto*. Despite its noticeably lower production quality, its first episode garnered over four million views. (Noticeably, its next episode has two million fewer views.) I would also like to note that the need for high-quality Kazakh-language content is particularly relevant in light of a youth that is proud of its Kazakhstani identity and Kazakh language (Sharipova, 2009).

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# Climate Complexity, Melting Glaciers and Changing Hydrography in Central Asia: Impact and Vulnerabilities

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## **Abstract**

*Trans-Himalayan glacial ranges - Hindu Kush, Kunlun, Pamir and Tien-Shan function as water towers providing water to millions of people through much of Asia, and serves as a lifeline for the landlocked economies of the region. Central Asia boasts an ethnically and linguistically diverse population of almost 70 million people but has already shown signs of significant climate change. Expected climate change indicators include increases in temperature, extreme weather events, and glacial melt, while likely impacts include continued expansion of deserts and arid areas, accelerated glacial melting rate and increasing instances of floods. Climate complexities particularly affect water processes including glacial and snow melt, precipitation patterns, temperature and changing weather dynamics. These factors will change downstream water availability, increase volatility and affect water resources as the volume of water stored in ice caps and permafrost decreases. The consequences for water access and food supply are immense and a vital concern for poorer, agriculture-dependent communities. Additionally, climate changes will likely affect local and regional economies, as overexploitation and lack of resources are projected to impact key industries such as agriculture, energy, and other water-dependent activities. The present study will therefore examine the micro to meso-scale dynamics unleashed by climatic complexities, the magnitude of glacial melt vulnerabilities exposed and their resultant implications on the hydrographical profile of Central Asia.*

## **Keywords**

Climate Change; Glacial Melt; Hydrography; River Flow, Food Security; Water Management

## **Introduction**

Central Asia has been exposed more severely to global climate change in the past two decades than at any other time in recent history. It has challenged the intricate hydrographical structure of the region, eventually increasing the vulnerability of rural

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agricultural producers, domestic users and industry. As temperature and precipitation are two important indicators of climate change, both these variables have shown considerable deviation from the normal.

Temperatures in Central Asia have increased steadily over the last 50 years, with a more pronounced impact during winters, and in the valleys and plains, (Unger-Shayesteh et al. 2013). Compared to the climatic conditions from 1950 to 1980, temperatures are projected to rise by 2.5°C-6.5°C towards the end of the century, (Unger-Shayesteh et al. 2013). The exact outcome depends on the global greenhouse gas emission pathways, which range from robust mitigation reducing emissions almost to zero to a relaxed attitude leading to rapid and steady climate warming, (Reyer et al. 2017). Changes in precipitation in Central Asia vary by topography and locality, but the lack of consistent monitoring limits the analysis. Projections suggest that south-west portions of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan region may become drier owing to increasing desertification; while north-east regions and the neighbouring western China hinterlands may become wetter, thanks to their increasing glacial melt (Evans & Webster (2008)

The glaciers in Central Asia are retreating at different rates in different areas. The shrinkage is most pronounced in the Tien Shan and at lower elevations of the Pamir-Alai Mountains (Sorg A, et al, 2014). Many small glaciers have already disappeared. Glacier mass balance measurements show losses close to 30 per cent since the 1960s, with an accelerated glacier mass loss since 2000 similar to many other regions worldwide, (Huss & Hock 2018). In the Tien Shan Mountains, for instance, about 3000 km<sup>2</sup> of glacier area was lost during this period, (Kato, Nkon 2012). In the northern Tien Shan (Kazakhstan), glaciers have been collectively losing 2 sq. km of ice (0.7% of their total mass) per year since 1955, and the Tuyuksu glacier has receded nearly a kilometre since 1923, (Anthwal, Joshi, Sharma, & Anthwal, 2006). Glaciers in the Ak-Shirak Range (Kyrgyzstan) have lost 23% of their area since 1977, similar to area losses in the northern Tien Shan (29% from 1955-1990) and the Pamir (16% from 1957-1980) (Anthwal, Joshi, Sharma, & Anthwal 2006).

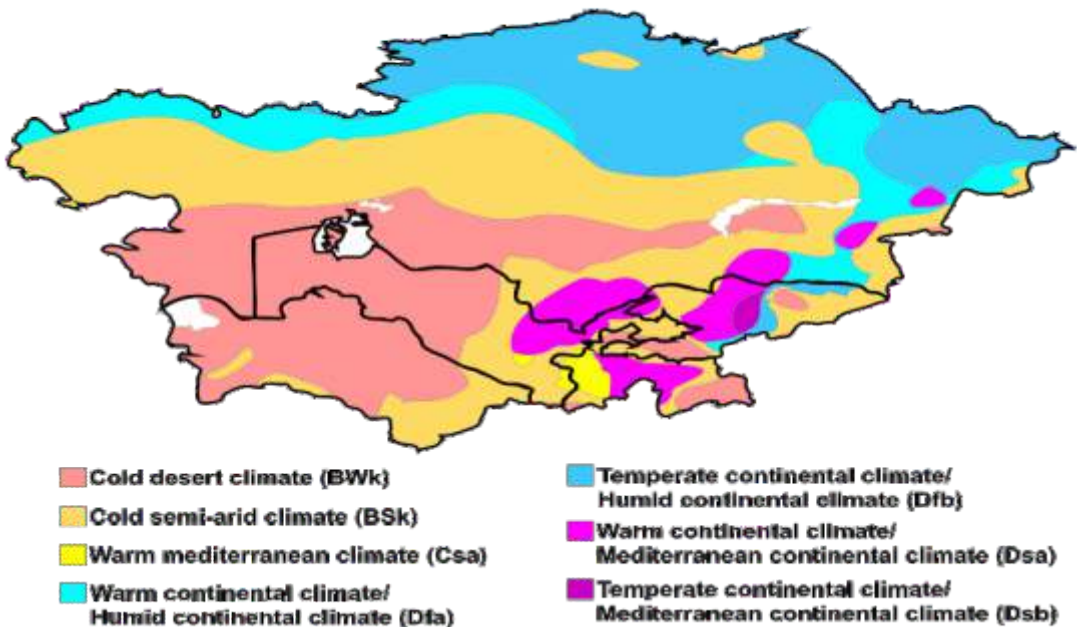
The future melting rate of glaciers in Central Asia will vary by altitude, but more than 50 per cent of the current glacier mass is expected to be lost by the end of the century, (Huss & Hock 2015). At this melting rate, coupled with precipitation change, river flow variability may increase, bringing about a substantial change in the hydrography of the region, (Krutov & Spoor 2003). This has in turn increased the frequency of droughts during the past two decades, causing serious damage to the livelihoods of the rural population in semiarid and arid regions of Central Asia. Droughts in 2001 and 2008 damaged more than a third of the cropping areas in Tajikistan, (Genina, Breitner-Czuma, Umirbekov, Issayeva, Musagazhinova & Dolgikh 2011). Furthermore, rainfall is getting heavier and increasing frequency of floods in mountainous regions of Central Asia and the

impact is hitting the poorest population the hardest. Rural populations, most importantly agricultural cultivators downstream, are already suffering from the increasing sequence of extreme events, and projections show even more changes in the future. Climate change-related hydrographical response in Central Asia may be strongest in the second half of the century, as glaciers shrink and the extent and duration of snow declined considerably toward the end of the century, (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2013). Temperature increases in Central Asia are projected to exceed the global climate policy target, and combined with glacial changes may seriously affect water and other natural resources as well as weather-dependent sectors such as public health, hydropower and agriculture, (Glantz 2005). The socioeconomic implications of the projected climate and glacial changes are considerable, as lives and livelihoods hang in the balance and the region needs to strengthen its climate and glacier monitoring and assessment and take diverse adaptation measures to respond to the risks.

### Climate complexity in Central Asia

Central Asia falls within arid, semi-arid and sub-humid zones between 35°-55° of latitude and 46°-87° of longitude, with great diversity in physiography and climatic conditions. The vast landscape is covered by steppes, deserts, woodlands, high mountains and thousands of glaciers along with several lakes, inland seas and glacier-fed rivers. The

Central Asia map of Köppen climate classification



climate of the region is highly continental, characterized by temperature fluctuations with freezing winters and scorching summers and low precipitation, (Baymagambetova 2009). Much of the precipitation is received in the form of snow, particularly in high mountainous regions. During winter high amounts of precipitation are received in the southern parts i.e., Karakoram and Hindu Kush, while in spring maximum precipitation is received in Pamir and Tien Shan (Gerlitz, Steirou, Schneider, Moron, Vorogushyn & Merz 2018).

According to Koppen's Climatic Classification, the vast region of Central Asia has wide-ranging climatic regimes, i.e., Cool Desert Climate (BWk), Temperate Continental Climate/Humid Continental Climate (Dfb), Cold Semi-Arid Climate (BSk), Warm Continental Climate/Mediterranean Continental Climate (Dsa), Warm Mediterranean Climate (Csa) and Warm Continental Climate/Humid Continental Climate (Dfa). There are significant contrasts observed in temperature and precipitation both within and across the region's countries. The summers are warm to hot (20°C to 40°C) and winters are moderate to cool (-3°C to 20°C). The temperature can rise to 50°C in deserts in summer and can drop as low as -45 °C in high mountainous areas during winters, (USAID, 2018). Precipitation is highly uneven, which has resulted in floods in some parts of the region, and deserts are also relatively common, (USAID 2018).

### **Koppen’s Climatic Classification**

Area	Climate type
North and North-East	Temperate continental climate/Humid continental climate (Dfb)
Parts of North-West	Warm continental climate/Humid continental climate (Dfa)
Centre and Western Parts	Cold Semi-Arid Climate (BSk)
South-western, Western and Centre Parts	Cold Desert Climate (BWk)
South-Eastern	Warm continental climate/Mediterranean continental climate (Dsa)
Eastern	Cold Semi-Arid Climate (BSk)
Parts of South-Central	Warm Mediterranean climate (Csa)

**Note:** *Divisions in the table are based on the Map*

According to various observations, the main feature of the climatic complexity in Central Asia is the significant increase of the temperature, i.e., 0.26 °C/10 years in Kazakhstan (1936-2005), 0.08 °C/10 years in Kyrgyzstan (1883-2005), 0.29 °C/10 years

in Uzbekistan (1950-2005), 0.10 °C /10 years in Tajikistan (1940-2005), 0.18 °C/10 years in Turkmenistan (1961-1995), (Baymagambetova 2009). Temperature changes are maximum and more pronounced at low altitudes than at higher elevations. The region experienced a significant rise in surface air temperature during 1979-2011 and areas experiencing cooling are rare, (Hu, Zhang, Hu & Tian 2014), except in some low-altitude areas where a lowering of temperature is observed. In the last ten decades, the temperature of the region has shown an increasing trend of warming at the rate of 0.18 °C/decade which is largest than the global average and twice the warming rate of the Northern Hemisphere, (Huang, Zhou, Zhang, Huang, Zhao & Wu 2014; Chen Wang Jin, Zhang, Li & Chen 2009). Most rapid rates of temperature increase are experienced during the winter months in most parts of Central Asia, (Baymagambetova 2009).

The climate of the region is influenced by westerly circulation patterns and precipitation during the cold season mainly occurs due to mid-latitude disturbances originating from the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, (Gerlitz, Steirou, Schneider, Moron, Vorogushyn & Merz 2018; Bothe, Fraedrich & Zhu 2012). The mean annual precipitation during the last century has ranged between 60 mm to 1180 mm across different localities in the region, (Mirzabaev 2012). The region receives less than 100 mm of precipitation in southwestern parts, 200-400 mm in northern areas and more than 1000 mm over mountains in the southeast, (Mirzabaev 2012). Precipitation changes occur unevenly throughout the year and through the season as well. The trends vary but unlike temperature, mean precipitation has remained somehow unchanged during the last decades. There have been no major shifts in seasonal patterns of precipitation in most of the region. Generally, the variability and intensity of precipitation have increased in the region significantly during the winter and spring seasons. In overall conclusion, the precipitation seems to have increased in most parts of the region over the last 100 years, (Mirzabaev 2012).

The volatility of climate in many parts of Central Asia, i.e. irregularity in precipitation and increase in air temperature, have led to negative impacts on the region in the form of increasing aridity, frequent droughts, inadequate soil moisture, soil erosion, rapid evaporation etc. The region is likely to experience an increased incidence of drought, and the higher temperatures will increase evapotranspiration which will lead to lengthened dry spells even if precipitation does not change, (USAID 2018).

### **Accelerating Glacial Melt**

Since the 1992 Rio Summit, the importance of the Glacier Mountains as sources of fresh water has increasingly become the focus of political attention. The UN General Assembly in 2008 also recognized the global importance of mountains as the source of the earth's freshwater by adopting Resolution 62/196 on Sustainable Mountain Development

(Kohler, & Maselli 2009). Central Asian mountains are often referred to as water towers and glaciers act as the source of freshwater supply during summer in the densely populated, arid lowlands in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, (Sorg, Bolch, Stoffel, Solomina & Beniston 2012). The region has some of the largest glacier reserves in the world. The glaciers are distributed equally through countries of the region, i.e. Kyrgyzstan has 8,200 glaciers occupying 4.2% of the territory with a total surface area of 8,169.4 km<sup>2</sup>, and Tajikistan has 14,509 glaciers about 8% of the country's territory with a total area of 11,146 km<sup>2</sup>, (Khamzayeva, Rahimov, Islamov, Maksudov, Maksudova & Sakiev 2009). In the Amu-Darya Basin, glaciers cover 15,500 km<sup>2</sup> (2% of the area) and in the Syr-Darya Basin 1,800 km<sup>2</sup> around 0.15% of the area, (Asian Development Bank 2012). The Tien Shan Mountains which are 2500 km long and 250 to 350 km wide, feed the majority of the area's rivers through both ice and snow melt and are considered one of the most important glacier mountains in the world. The energy and mass balance of the glaciers of the Central Asian region has undergone considerable changes owing to the effects of global climate change.

The retreat of glaciers from mountain valleys is one of the most visible signs of global warming. Glaciers are retreating throughout Central Asia and the Caucasus as a response to rising global air temperatures, (Demenge, Jumaeva, Schmid & Maselli (2019). There is an intensive reduction in glaciers in the region due to an increase in temperature and changes like precipitation. Sources show that during the period 1956-1990, the glacial reserves of Central Asia have reduced by more than three times, and they continue to be reduced at an average rate of 0.6-0.8% a year, (Khamzayeva, Rahimov, Islamov, Maksudov, Maksudova, & Sakiev 2009; Seversky & Tokmagambetov 2004). According to some studies, the surface area of the glaciers in Central Asia has reduced by 30-35% in recent decades. Glacier reserves are not stable in high-altitude areas of the Pamir, Tien-Shan, Gissar-Alai and other mountains due to rising temperatures, which has resulted in the widespread retreat of glaciers, i.e. small glaciers disappear, and larger ones divide into parts. The glaciers of Tajikistan, on average have decreased by 20 - 30% and Afghanistan by 50-70% during the 20th century, (Baymagambetova 2009). In comparison to the 1970s the rate of glacier retreat has accelerated in recent times, (Bajracharya, Mool & Shrestha 2007). The glaciers in the Tien Shan and Pamir are retreating and the largest retreat rates have been observed in the Northern Tien Shan at 30-40% during the second half of the 20th century. Syr-Darya basin has lost 14% of its total glacial volume over the last 60 years and the Amu-Darya basin has shrunk by 13.1% from 1957 to 1980, (Asian Development Bank 2012).

Increased glacier melt strongly affects the quantity and seasonal distribution of runoff in glacier-fed watersheds, (Sorg, Bolch, Stoffel, Solomina & Beniston 2012). The greatest vulnerability to glacier state and dynamics occurs in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan,

where melted waters from glaciers comprise the river flow of Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya - the lifelines of the Centre Asian region. According to some assessments, the glaciers of Tajikistan have lost more than 20 km<sup>3</sup> of ice in the 20th century, (Khamzayeva, Rahimov, Islamov, Maksudov, Maksudova & Sakiev 2009). Changes driven by climate change on glacier-fed drainage systems have adverse implications on the freshwater supply, irrigation hydrological regimes and overall water resources and may lead to major negative impacts in future.

### **Changing Hydrography**

Climatic change has a considerable influence on surface water flow. As the melting rate of glaciers increases, run-off in the river basins will also increase until the glacial mass is reduced to such an extent that run-off starts to decline, (Demenge, Jumaeva, Schmid & Maselli 2019). Changes in glacier volume due to climate change affect the mass balance of glaciers, river flow in high latitudes, and the general water content of rivers. Glacial melt in Pamir and Tien Shan mountains continues to threaten water resources in Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya river basins and increases the risk of flash floods by the formation of moraine-dammed glacial lakes with the possibility of outbursts, mudslides and river bank erosion, (Hayes & Dobias 2010). The Amu-Darya basin will be more adversely affected than Syr-Darya due to its higher glaciated area, (Demenge, Jumaeva, Schmid & Maselli 2019; Alford, Kamp & Pan 2015). The increase in the water content in the Syr-Darya and Amu-Darya rivers since 1975, coincides with the increased growth of the temperature, (Savitskaya 2010).

The current analysis shows that inflow into the downstream areas will decrease by 22-28% for the Syr-Darya and 26-35% for the Amu-Darya by the year 2050 (Asian Development Bank 2012). Due to the decrease in glaciers and snowfields, the additional water income from melting will become impossible because there will be no significant glaciers for melting. Climatic variability is a potential risk factor for a decrease in run-off, increases in volatility, and seasonal shifts in the river flow. In Tajikistan, the temperature rise by 2-3°C with that of the present will cause considerable glacier degradation and a catastrophic decline in the water content of the rivers by 30% or more, (Khamzayeva, Rahimov, Islamov, Maksudov, Maksudova & Sakiev 2009).

The same concerns are confronted in Kazakhstan. With further temperature increases, the water resources of the country may be reduced by 30-40% in the coming decades and significant declines in the annual water supply. The rate of glacier melting will increase with the increase in global warming in the coming decades in comparison to the 1970s. This may increase the risk of flooding and changes in river flow may have adverse effects on ecology, agriculture and water users.



## **Impact and Vulnerabilities**

The increased frequency and intensity of glacial melting and changing hydrography driven by global warming has not only disrupted the normal course of life of affected communities in the Central Asian region but has also halted development efforts. The region is exposed to a variety of hazards ranging from droughts and floods to glacial lake outbursts in the Tien Shan and Pamir. Natural hazards frequently transcend national boundaries because the countries in the region share common geological formations and river basins. The rivers which originate in the mountain ranges of Pamir, Tien Shan, Hindu Kush, Alai Range, Altai, TalasAatau etc. carry huge volumes of high sediment water into the plains of the region and given their size and sediment levels, the rivers are difficult to manage and can cause significant flooding. The intensity of floods, droughts and rainfall over short periods have serious consequences on the agricultural and economy of the Central Asian countries. Heat extremes, precipitation extremes and changes in seasonal snow cover are likely to increase stress, considerably on human populations, livestock and crops as well as enhance drought impacts. Considering the long-term climate forecasts and their possible impacts, the hydrological regime in Central Asia's rivers is likely to change.

Climate change will have catastrophic impacts on agriculture particularly on irrigated agriculture that consumes more than 90% of the water resources of the region. The high water demand for irrigation has already led to the drying-up of the Aral Sea. Agriculture provides a considerable economic benefit, employment in the rural areas, a contributor to the GDP, and also ensures food security of the region. Climate change is projected to strongly impact agricultural production, the development of the sector, and the economic benefits derived from it. The countries located in the basins of the Syr-Darya, Amu-Darya and IliRivers will have to change their water management strategies and implement new water-saving technologies, otherwise, the region has to expect a series of droughts. In general, the impact and vulnerability of climate change have exposed Central Asia and the region requires appropriate adaptation measures. Increasing air temperatures, changing precipitation rates and glacier shrinkage have been observed in all regions and are likely to continue in the coming decades due to climate change.

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# India- Uzbekistan Relations through Cultural Connectivity

*Dr. Abuzar Khair\**

## **Abstract**

*Uzbekistan has become one of the most attractive and energetic areas for great power competition in the 21st century. Today Uzbekistan is one of the oldest and most well-established regions in Central Asia. The region's location and its capabilities have contributed to this competition. It is situated between two major rivers; i.e. Amudarya and Syrdarya. Geographically, the region is located on the ancient trade and communication routes linking Asia with Europe, and its historical nexus with the Indian subcontinent cannot be ignored. Indian connection with Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarqand has been deep rooted in history. Uzbekistan has played a very important role to spread Buddhism and Indian culture in other parts of the world. Earlier the Buddhist missionaries belonged to the Central Asian region. The language of India and the Central Asian region also had very profound impacts on each other. Sanskrit had enough impact on the Central Asian languages. Sanskrit was methodically also taught in the Region. Much Sanskrit work such as Ashwaghos's Budha Charita work was translated into Central Asian languages. Uzbekistan was so fertile due to its prosperity; the region constantly attracted outsiders. The region was an important centre for intellectual life and religion until the first century. The dominant religion in the region was Zoroastrianism, and later on Buddhism; Christianity and Islam. Bukhara became one of the leading centres for learning, and it was the home of renowned historians, scientists, philosophers and theologians. During the Soviet period, the situation changed radically. But after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, revivalism started in Uzbekistan. They are also motivated by a desire to re-establish their links with their past.*

## **Keywords**

Buddhism, Islam, Uzbekistan, Tashkent, India, Culture,

## **Introduction**

Within three decades of independence, Uzbekistan proved tremendously successful in all fields. Uzbekistan has developed its strategy for a radical renewal of society, now it is known as the Uzbek model in the world. The region is located in the heart

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of Central Asia between two important rivers and has a very old and rich heritage. The Uzbeks have been described as a nation (Qaum) or as people (Jamhur). In the medieval period, Uzbekistan has a unique character like ethnic, tribal, religious and cultural diversity (Haider, 2004). While discussing India-Uzbekistan connectivity it is rather difficult to separate the past from the present. The past feeds and enriches the present and provides the ambience for warm relations that exist between two countries. The ancient caravan routes and Central Asia's all famous civilizational cities are located in the territory of Uzbekistan which includes Tashkent, Samarqand, Bukhara Termez, Ferghana, Urgench and Khiva. This historically significant city presented many eminent personalities to the world.

Geographically Uzbekistan's location gives it a bridge and barrier function in the region. Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan has long had a reputation as a refuge for foreigners, during the mass relocation period of 1925-1952. When the neighbouring countries faced a famine crisis, Tashkent became famous as the City of Bread (Toshkent non shahri). The food was more available and the generosity of the city's residents was legendary (Akiner, 1990). Especially during the time of the Second World War, Uzbekistan had been turned into the major site for the reception of hundreds of thousands of multi-ethnic groups as refugees. It is remarkable that considerable numbers of orphaned and homeless children were adopted, and warmed by local families, thereby demonstrating to the world the depth of the Uzbek nation's humanity. The most common example is the family of the blacksmith Shoakhmad Shomakhmudov, a family who adopted fifteen different background orphaned children during World War II. Uzbekistan is characterised as a tolerant country and Tashkent as the City of Friendship of Nation (Kaushik 1985).

After the independence of India, the Soviet model provided enthusiastically full support in all fields. During this period, Indian leaders visited Tashkent; Nehru's visit became an important geopolitical turning point. He travelled with his daughter Indira Gandhi in 1955. He has given several speeches in different regions during his travels such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Moscow and other cities in Russia. In Ashkhabad, he spoke in the Indian language about the common cultures of Indians, Turkmen and Uzbeks. Another speech at Moscow University was famous; which was attended by Mikhail Gorbachev who recorded, in his memoirs, the deep impact of Nehru's words on democracy had on him. This visit was effectively fruitful and started the industrialization process in India with the collaboration of the Soviet Union, especially in the Bhilai and Bokaro Steel Plant. The Soviet government was the main supplier of modern arms and military equipment as well as supported the establishment of technical and scientific institutions. Tashkent agreement in 1965 between India and Pakistan was signed in this city.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, both regions are trying to connect their historical past needs to establish in all the spheres of life. Islam A. Karimov, Former president of the Republics of Uzbekistan came to India to explore, new areas of cooperation and understanding and many high-ranking delegations visited each other. The high level of exchanges between the leadership of the two nations indeed set the trend of cooperation. They laid the foundation for mutual understanding between the two countries regarding each other's interests and core concerns. During the second visit of Islam A. Karimov to India in 1994, he decided to the establishment of an Indian cultural centre in Tashkent (Gopal 2002). It is a milestone in the promotion of Indian culture in the republic of Uzbekistan in the modern era. In October 1996 an Indian chair was also created at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy.

The region has a vast amount of energy and other natural resources. The entire region has emerged as an important area due to its geostrategic, economic, and other factors. All the major powers from within the region and outside have very keen to influence and dominate the region, where India has already moved early period of the 1990s with the “Extended Neighbourhood Policy” towards Central Asia (Roy, 2013). Several visits of a high-level delegation from both sides took place in the early 1990s, signed trade agreements and provided substantive development aid and technical support

### **Historical Background of India-Uzbekistan Relations**

India's relationship with Uzbekistan is historically and culturally deep routed. Cultural relations with the Central Asian republics, especially Uzbekistan are very influential and in the aftermath, both regions have the greatest achievements in various fields such as architecture, music, cuisine and literature. Cultural interaction is an important and strong aspect of establishing relations between countries. India and Uzbekistan bound through spirituality from Buddhism and then through Sufism. Buddhism a religion of humanity was born in India and survives outside its border. Indian languages and culture were also promoted by Buddhist teaching (Dani 1999). Buddhism plays a very important role in spreading the Indian language, script, philosophy, religion and ideas to the farthest corner of Asia and opens India to foreigners.

Buddhism directly appeals to the sentiments of the people and establishes direct relations between a devotee and the almighty. The concept of equality also attracts people. Buddhism also deeply influences the mind of the people not merely as a spiritual or religious sect but also as a way of life. Sufism is a way of life of reaching God which involves rigorous meditation and prayer emphasizing on inner self rather than the external. Chistia, Shuharwardia, Qadiria and Naqshbandia are very important Silsila of Sufism. It mainly came from Ma Wara al-Nahr, which was accepted in the Indian sub-continent, all the Sufis were concerned with spirituality (Haider Dughlat 1973). They

were much more open to their spiritual traditions. Sufi became the bridge between distinct traditions of Indian society and constructs the composite culture in the Indian subcontinent. All Sufi orders contributed a great deal in promoting communal harmony and developing high spiritual and moral values among the masses. Visitors welcome their Khanqahs without any discrimination based on caste, colour or religion. They believe that no spiritual exercise or prayer had greater value than being consolation of the distressed heart and helping the poor and needy. The early Sufis who preached among the Indian people were also mostly of Central Asian origin. Such as Hazrat Sayyid Jalaluddin, Hamimuddin Nagauri, Bakhtiyar Kaki, Fridudin Shakarganji, Hazrat Nizamuddin auliya, Mir Saiyyed Ali Hamadani and Amir Khusrao among others.

Since the beginning of civilization, the notion of culture has been manifested in various spheres. Inheritors of ancient civilizations such as India, China, Greek, Rome, Babylonia, Alania, Mesopotamia and Egypt presented many cultural heritages to humankind, which can be observed throughout history. Ever since, nations live in a diverse milieu. Tribes and groups fought over land, and territory for dominating each other. In the state of nature, societies tended to use their shattered military strength to rule over one another. Cultural diplomacy is an important aspect to understand different people and their notions and behaviours. Cultural relation is one of the most important agendas for understanding international relationships in the twenty-first century. Cultural relation has a very suitable definition that the exchange of ideas, information and other aspects of the culture of a nation. Cultural relation includes a mutual exchange programme to understand the people in various nations, through this individuals or group to explore new thing apart from his own country's culture such as a language, arts etc.

Many documentary terminologies are borrowed from Central Asia such as Farman, Fatahnama etc. Most of them continued to be used in modern India like Misal, Tamgha, Hukm, Manshur, Nishan, Muhar, and Ailchi, not only the documentary terminology but weapons name are also borrowed from the Uzbek language like Toop, Toopchi, Bandoq, Bandoqchi. Mughlai cuisine is a style of cooking developed in the Indian subcontinent by the imperial kitchen of the Mughal Empire (Haider 2004). The cuisine is strongly inspired by Turkic cuisine in Central Asia and it is interesting to note that the name of various Indian and Uzbek dishes of food are the same like Qurma, Pulao, Qulfi, Baqarkhani, Halwa, Qima, Sikh Qabab, Chai, Samosa. Apart from this many social titles are also used in India such as Baji, Khan, Beg, Pasha, Biwi, Babaji, Dada, Aaqa, Aapa, and Khatoon.

### **Cultural Linkages and Literary Developments in India and Uzbekistan**

The cultural relations between India and Uzbekistan flourished from time immemorial. The famous Silk Route which links Central Asia to Europe and China had

extended to India. Through this route that most of the trade between India and Uzbekistan was carried out and interactions took place in the area of science and culture also. Historically the first important link between the cultures of India and Uzbekistan was established in the second century AD during the Kushan dynasty (Dani 1993). Since ancient times, both regions have had political, economic and cultural cooperation, which continues till today. Before the Bolshevik revolution the Emirate Bukhara, Khanates Khiva and Kokand were considered a hub of commerce and trade for the Indian traders. Due to trade linkages, the relationship with the regions was quite strong throughout the era.

The role of literature is also very important in shaping bilateral relations. Much of Uzbek and Central Asian literature from different languages was translated into Urdu language. Dr Qamar Rais's books on Uzbekistan and Alisher Novoi published manuscripts of Uzbek authors available in Khuda Bakhs Library, Patna and Raza library Rampur. A book also available in the Jamia Millia Islamia's Munshi Prem Chand Archive is *Russi Fikr Aur Mufakkir* Published in 1996, in Kolkata. The book contains many articles on Uzbek poets, Dancers and play writers etc. such as Hamza Hakeem Zadah, an Uzbek play writer, Tamarah Khanum an Uzbek singer and dancer and Ghafhor Ghulam, the Uzbek poet etc.

The visits of the renowned scholar and very great Sufis from Central Asia to Indian Subcontinents were well-known Phenomena. The very great traveller, Historian, and Social Scientists Abu Rehan Al-Beruni and Abdurazzaq Samarqandi came to India. Al-Beruni worked on India's "Kitab-al- Hind" known as one of the most classical books and very authentic books on the Indian social system. The book is also considered an encyclopaedia of Indian society, culture and history (Kaw 2006). A group of very learned scholars in Khwarizm was engaged in the translation of Indian historical and literary works into Central Asian languages. The translation work such as Arya Bhatta's *araharatrika* is still extended. Apart from the historical linkages, a manuscript was also found in Central Asia that deals with India's medical system. Abu Mansur Muwafaq highly appreciated the Indian medical system and adopted the Indian system of medicine himself.

The land of Uzbekistan was known as a cradle of the intellectual and political centre of human development, where Alexander came, married a local girl named Roxana and settled in Marcanda (now-a-days Uzbekistan). The early medieval East's greatest personalities in this region gave rise to sciences, mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, pharmacology, and medicine, as well as history, philosophy and literature. Thus, the biggest achievement of the period of independence has been to return to the people the memory of such outstanding historical figures as Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (780- 850), Ahmad al-Farghani (797-865), Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail



al-Bukhari (810-870), Abu Isa Muhammad al-Termizi (824-892), Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (853-944), Abu Rehan al-Beruni (973-1048), Abu Ali ibn Sina (980-1037), Abdukhalik Gijduvani (1103- 1179), Abu al-Qasim Mahmud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari (1075-1144), Najmiddin Kubro (1145-1221), Burhanuddin al-Marghilani (1152-1197), Bahauddin an-Naqshbandi (1318- 1389), Khoja Ahrar (1404-1490) and so forth, all who made an invaluable contribution to the treasure-house of world culture and human spirituality. As a key aspect, the country demonstrates its soft power through tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Ahmad al-Farghani (797-865) known as Alfraganus to the Western world, which's great work *Elements of Astronomy* contains evidence for the spherical form of the Earth and the data on the planet's size, which induced Columbus, Magellan and other travellers to make geographical discoveries. His works are scattered in various museums throughout the world, including Russia, Netherlands, Great Britain, Tunisia, France, etc. In 1998, with the initiative of Islam Karimov and UNESCO's cooperation, Uzbekistan widely celebrated the 1200th birthday of Ahmad al-Farghani. The Government of Uzbekistan erected monuments to his memory in Tashkent and Ferghana. In 1998, Jamia Millia Islamia with the help of the Uzbekistan Embassy in Delhi organized a seminar on al-Farghani. In 2007, when Islam Karimov was in Egypt on an official visit, a monument to Ahmad al-Farghani was mounted on the island of Raud.

As the oldest source, *Shahnameh* (The book of King) is based on the mythical and historical reign of 50 Kings, which contains many details on the historical parts of Central Asia (Turan), Afghanistan, India, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The historical analysis by European scholars finds that *Shahnameh*'s mythical faces coincide both with *Avesta* and *Rig Veda*. On this ground, the research finds some interesting facts on spreading the Gypsy community to the entire Iran and Central Asian regions. According to *Shahnameh*, during Sasanian king Bahram V Gor (420–438), who had married an Indian princess and was an admirer of celebratory events, induced Indian king Shangol to send to Iran thousands of Indian musicians called Luri (known as Luli, Jugi, Multani in present Uzbekistan) who were later sent out to various places in the country. According to Poboziak (1972), the south-east of Multan in Punjab (Pakistan), could have been the hometown of the Indian musicians.

Amir Khusrau Dehlavi was a significant player in formulating the Hindustani culture of the Subcontinent. Viewing his background, Khusrau is indeed a precise example of Indo-Turkic amalgamation. From his father's lineage, he belonged to Kesh (known as Shahr-e-sabz in Uzbekistan) of Turkic origin and his mother was from the Rajput community. His father, Amir Saifuddin Mahmud, fleeing the ravages of Chingiz Khan, migrated from Uzbekistan and settled in India during the reign of Iltutmish. Accordingly, Khusrau gained true knowledge of Turkic, Indian, Iranian, Arabic and

Greek cultures and philosophy. Perhaps, based on his rich experience, Khusrau contributed to the creation of a new linguistic medium known as Hindavi, as well as compiled a Hindi-Persian dictionary. Moreover, it is not only the merging of languages, he combined musical customs as well (Celly 2012).

In this context, there are many surveys done on Khusrau's role in the development of Hindustani music and its classical instruments. According to scholars, Khusrau contributed to the systematic process of synergising between Indian and Central Asian musical art styles, as a result, he invented and developed the Ragas. As India's first Muslim musicologist and iconic cultural figure, Khusrau created musical instruments as well. He has been credited for the creation of Tabla from the contemporary musical instruments like Mridang and Pankhawaj, which he converted into Tabla and Baya. Another recognisable musical symbol of India is Sitar, whose origin also is historically attributed to Amir Khusrau, by synthesising Indian Veena with Iranian Tambura. Since the 13-14th centuries, Amir Khusrau became a patron saint for musicians, and he introduced the genre of Qawwali among Muslims of the Subcontinent. Sufism and Bhakti stood on common grounds of ideology and practice.

After the invasion of Temur in India, a historical account was compiled by Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi popularly known as Zafar-nama. According to Zafarnama (Book of Conquest), Pir Muhammad ibn Jahangir, the grandson of Amir Temur occupied Uch, Multan and Tulamba. Afterwards, Temur marched towards the capital Delhi for an invasion of the Sultanate of the Tughlaq dynasty in 1398. As a historical fact, indeed which cannot be negated, Temur's conquest of northern India brought huge-scale devastation to the region. Along with a large number of valuable material resources of India, Temur carried away with him major human resources as well. Several thousand skilled artisans were enslaved and taken to Central Asia by Temur, who later presented many of these slaves to his subordinate elite. However, he reserved the masons for use in the construction of the Bibi Khanum mosque in Samarqand (Khalid 2015).

Since Shahrukh, the successor of Temurid's Dynasty, the fourth and youngest son of Temur, as the former governor of Khorasan (Afghanistan), preferred to rule the Empire from Herat instead of the political capital of Samarqand, which made Herat a centre of the interaction. Shahrukh's higher court functionary and Ambassador Kamaliddin Abdurazzaq Samarqandi's missions took him to various places in Eurasia. In response to a request from the Samudri Raja of Calicut (Kozhikode), in the south-western Indian region of Kerala, Samarqandi was sent to India as an emissary in 1441. As believed, Shahrukh desired to create a nexus and connectivity beyond the Empire. Samarqandi was the first Central Asian scholar who travelled to the West and across the Indian Ocean (Foltz 1998). His experiences in Calicut and the much larger neighbouring kingdom of Vijayanagar were described by Abdurazzaq Samarqandi in his book *Matla al-sadayn va majma al*

bahrain (the Rise of the Stars and the Junction of the two Seas). This encyclopaedic work of the 15th century contains a detailed chronicle of diplomatic relations of the Temurid dynasty from 1304 to 1470, which helps in linking the missing elements and is extremely useful to frame historical chronology.

Ulugh Beg is a well-known astronomer, who contributed his scientific works and built his observatory in Samarqand. Moreover, he founded a madrasa (Academy of science in modern times), where he invited a group of scholars, especially mathematicians and astronomers. With the effort of great scientists of Central Asia, including Qadizadeh Rumi, Jamshed al-Kashi and Ali Qushchi, Ulughbek could compile the star chart, the product which is known as *Zij-i Kuragoni* or *Zij-i Sultani*. Ulugh beg published the most accurate and extensive astronomical chart and star catalogue *Zij-i Sultani* (*Zij-i Kuragoni*) in 1438, which took him 17 years to complete (Foltz 1998). Today, hundreds of copies of the original Persian manuscript exist around the world. It has also been translated into many languages, including Arabic, Turkish, and Hebrew.

It is essential to know that although India was already familiar with the astronomy system, Ulugh beg had a lasting influence on astronomy in medieval India. The nature and development of the system prepared by Ulugh beg contributed to the foundation of observatories in India. It was the Baburid dynasty, who brought with them the scientific traditions of Central Asia to India. As an example, one of the unique manuscript copies of Ulugh beg's manuscript *Zij* is preserved in the central library, Hyderabad. During the reign of Akbar, the manuscript of Ulugh beg's astronomical table was translated by Abul Fazl and other Sanskrit scholars, and they produced a new calendar. By far the most valuable contribution to the advancement of astronomy in medieval India was made by the descendant of Babur, Sultan Muhammad Shah (1717- 1748). Based on his studies and the scientific knowledge of Savai Jai Singh II, who was a great scholar in mathematics and astronomy of his time, five major observatories were constructed. Under the patronage of Muhammad Shah, Jai Singh built an observatory in Delhi (known as *Jantar Mantar*), Varanasi, Ujjain, Jaipur, and Mathura from 1724-1735.

Among great classics of Indian poetry, there were descendants of the natives of Ma wara al-Nahr Abdul Qadir Bedil, Mirza Ghalib, and many others whose profound humanistic works in both soul and ideas found and are finding an equal response in the hearts of both the Indian and Uzbek people. According to an estimate, over 300 manuscripts on the history and literature of Central Asia are available in Indian libraries. In the middle of the 20th century, the works of Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Prem Chand, Rabindranath Tagore, Ali Sardar Jafri, Sajjad Zaheer, and Amrita Pritam were translated into Uzbek language and enjoyed popularity among readers in Uzbekistan. Uzbek readers have been addressing Indian themes again and again (Shamatov 2005).

With the arrival of several eminent scholars and linguists from India, Uzbekistan

took advantage of the field of translation, which laid the foundation for collaboration of Indo-Uzbek linguists. Literary translation in USSR served as a major soft power push towards intensifying cultural exchange and attracting foreign audiences. Under State-controlled cultural production, USSR heavily invested in publications. As a part of the USSR's Cold War cultural diplomacy, publications shaped the image of the USSR abroad. On the other hand, under the slogan of world literature, USSR set appropriate works for translation from all over the world. Subsequently, each region of the USSR made an immense contribution to translation works. Professional cadres, particularly Indologists of Soviet Uzbekistan presented several translations in Russian and Uzbek languages (Vohra 1999). As a result, since 1956, Uzbek theatre-goers had been shown *Daughter of the Ganges* based on Tagore's novel, *The Wreck*, *Shakuntala* by Kalidasa, *Sohni Mahival* by Balvant Gagri, *Clay Caarrige* by Shudraki, etc.

Apart from the commercial and cultural affinities, the people of both regions have much closer to each other. The colony was established in the Central Asian region by Indian traders and people at beginning of the seventeenth century. Indian trader's also occupied caravanserais located in Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarqand, and other parts of the Central Asian cities. In return Central Asians also stayed in India and had separate locations, such as the Muhalla-i- Khuwarizm Shahi, Muhlla- i -Smarqandi, Muhllai- i- Khitai, Muhallai-i- Atabagi, in a different city in Indian sub-continent (Haider 2004).

The government of India used to make a serious effort to promote the Hindi language in Uzbekistan a good number of Hindi books and computers were presented to the department of South Asian languages and institute of oriental studies at Tashkent in April 2003. Late Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's birth centenary was celebrated in Uzbekistan, on this occasion, Indian Minister of State, External Affairs Mr E Ahmad attended the event on 1-4 October 2004. MoS External Affairs visited Shastri School located in Tashkent and donated the amount of 25000 US \$ for the betterment of the School. Apart from these cultural interactions India and Central Asia on Uzbekistan in particular have a great influence on each other's culture. India and Central Asian state celebrate their heroes and are commonly popular in India and Central Asian regions. Bairam Khan's 500th birthday was celebrated by India and Turkmen jointly in 2000. Mission in Tashkent organised an International conference on the pre-Islamic linkage between India and Central Asia.

Suraj Kund craft Mela (Festival) celebrated its thirty-four years regularly in Faridabad Haryana, nearby South Delhi. The Mela to organised by the Tourism Ministry Government of Haryana every year in February from 1 to 15. Every year around 400 national and international state awardees craft parson participated. The main purpose of the fair is to promote traditional Indian handicrafts. The Crafts fair highlighted the very finest handloom and handicraft tradition of India. The Mela also celebrates the rhythms of

folk theatre and the one-state theme each year. In 2020 Uzbekistan was the partner country of the Suraj Kund Mela. Uzbekistan also displayed very traditional embroidery such as skillfully crafted, handbags scarves and skull caps including Tilla Kush red and yellow Kaftans in their stalls.

In the year 2001, ICCR hosted 15 members of the Uzbekistan folk dancers programme from 10-18 September. The folk dancers performed in various cities of India including New Delhi, Ahmadabad and Mumbai. Under the ICCR India Uzbekistan Cultural exchange programme, ICCR organized two exhibitions in Uzbekistan's capital city Tashkent (A) an exhibition on Indian musical instruments (B) an exhibition on Madhubani painting. During the same year, a musical group from India also performed in Tashkent and an Uzbek Cultural group visited India and performed in various cities of India.

A festival of Indian culture was organized in Tashkent in August-September 2004. One Indian musical group participated in the International Festival Sharq Taronalari in Samarkand in August 2005. In 2007 a Manipuri dance and martial art troupe visited Uzbekistan to participate in the Samarqand festival. "Sogdiana" During the visit to Uzbekistan External Affairs Minister of India Mr. S. M. Krishna in 2009-2010 inaugurated the Indian centre at the Al- Beruni Institute of Oriental studies for a better understanding of the Indian political, economic and cultural system.

Eight members Rajasthani Folk dance group led by Bhugra Khan Rajasthan was sent to Uzbekistan to participate in a very famous international music festival of the Uzbekistani called Music "Sharq Taronalari". 24-31 August 2009. During the year 2009-10 many Indian cultural and artist groups were sent to various cities of the world and Central Asia During the same year an eight-member Qawwali group led by the Ghulam Qadri gave a cultural performance in Uzbekistan on 8-15 October 2009. The performance was appreciated by the audience. During the year 2011, a very famous Qawwali singer from India led by Mr. Nazeer Ahmad Khan Hyderabad visited Uzbekistan on 25-30 August.

A five-member of the Uzbek Qawwali group visited India on the ICCR invitation on 24 -31 October 2012 at Delhi International Art Festival from 24 October to 11 November 2012. The group performs in various cities in India including Delhi and Pune. The performance was appreciated by the audience. Uzbek Chamber Orchestra presented its programme in November-December 2006 at New Delhi, Jaipur and Lucknow. At the same time, Raj Kapur's Family members visited Tashkent, Samarkand and Namangan and presented the concert programmes. The "Sabo" National Dance group visited India in December 2007 and June 2008. During the tours, the group has performed its programs in New Delhi, Lucknow, Jaipur, and Srinagar. Uzbekistan Academic Bolshoi Theater of opera visited India on a concert tour in 2009

## **Bollywood in Uzbekistan**

Bollywood is much more famous in Uzbekistan. It is not a new phenomenon as Bollywood has traced it a decade ago. In 1980 the film *Ali Baba Chalis Chor* was the first movie shot in Uzbekistan by an Uzbek Film studio. Indian films have always attracted the Uzbek populace and people living in the territory have adopted Indian movies. Indian movies have been translated into the Uzbek language. The movies were not only translated but also broadcast by various Uzbek national television channels. The Uzbekistan TV channel frequently broadcast Indian films. Raj Kapur and Nargis both of them were extremely popular in Central Asian states. The year 2012 was also a Silver Jubilee year of Uzbek radio. It has completed 50 years of broadcasting Indian programmes. After the Independence, the serials *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* were also telecasted on Uzbek TV channels several times. A copy of the film "*Kabhie Kabhie*" was also gifted to the Uzbek national TV and Radio Company of Uzbekistan in September 2012 for a telecast.

Mr. Akhmadjon Kasimov a radio anchor in Uzbekistan presented a radio programme in Uzbekistan namely *Namaste Hindostan*. For a decade it is presented twice a week regularly. In a program of about fifty minutes, there was a short description of the Indian movies, costumes and current events. In November 2013 the programme completed 15 years of broadcasting, and it included six Indian songs in every episode. Apart from all these things yoga is also very popular in Uzbekistan. Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture regularly organised Yoga Kathak, and Tabla, classes for Uzbek citizens. Apart from this Uzbek people still love Indian film stars such as Raj Kapur, Nargis, Sunil Dutt, Dilip Kumar, Shahrukh Khan, Rani Mukharji, Amitabh Bachchan, Amir Khan & others.

## **Conclusion**

Both regions have frequently connected. India's policy got more mature towards Uzbekistan through bilateral cooperation. The political cooperation with Uzbekistan which covers a wide range of global and regional affairs has strengthened the relations. India has also announced its "Connect Central Asia" policy in 2012, to celebrate the occasion of two decades of diplomatic relations with the Central Asian countries. Cultural relations and cultural diplomacy have been recognized by every nation since the very beginning. There must be people-to-people contact between the two nations to foster their bilateral relations. There are several tools which are used by the state to develop its cultural relations with other nations. India-Uzbek cultural relation is very strong and has a deep connection in their history constituting the basis of common civilization, which can become one of the most important and core elements of the India-Uzbek relationship in the future.

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# Eurasian Pipeline Politics and its effect on the Russian Economy

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## **Abstract**

*Hitherto dominated by Russia the Eurasian region became attractive with a huge amount of energy reserves such as oil and natural gas which remained unexplored before 1991. Unlike the previous competitions like territorial confrontations and rivalry, the present research examines the ongoing geopolitics in Eurasia focusing on pipeline politics. The emerging competition for energy export routes has intensified the pipeline politics in Eurasia. It focuses on the role played by the main competitors such as Russia, China, the U.S. and India in the pipeline politics of Eurasia after 1991. It investigates the emerging role of China and how it is challenging the supremacy of Russia in its 'soft belly'. The research paper also analyses the geopolitical and strategic implications of pipeline politics for both Eurasian states and the major powers which are involved in it. Lastly, the role of energy in Russian foreign policy and the effects of Eurasian pipeline politics on the Russian economy have been discussed.*

## **Introduction**

The geopolitics of energy has intensified in great detail in the present world. The rising demand for Energy has become an international issue today. Energy and politics are inseparable and are responsible for changing the political equations between many states (Gupta 2016). It is a crucial factor in explaining the strength and weaknesses of a nation's security architecture and might be called the most subjective resource. It has turned out as a crucial weapon within the global economy and has increasingly been instrumental in designing global politics and international relations between countries. In the present time, the significant region which is dealing with these contemporary issues is 'Eurasia'. The present game for controlling energy resources has intensified the Pipeline Politics in the Eurasian region where major powers are playing hard to gain maximum access to transport routes of energy-rich countries. In connection with the growing importance of energy security today, special attention is paid to energy diplomacy.

Being one of the most significant energy-rich states in Eurasia Russia has always

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been a big player in this power politics. Russia has the world's largest natural gas reserves and continues to replace Saudi Arabia as a major oil producer (Goodrich and Lanthemann 2013). It is the largest producer and exporter of natural gas added by its strength as the second largest producer of oil. Along with this, Russia generates a significant amount of electricity (21 per cent) through its water resources. Russia became the world's largest supplier of natural gas in 2008, second only to Saudi Arabia and the United States in coal and oil production (Lihuto 2010). Throughout Russian History, Russia's Energy Sector has strengthened the Foreign Policy of the country. Therefore, in addition to the military, Russia has selected an alternative policy i.e. to use the energy sector as a weapon to gain leverage in the international arena.

### **Geopolitics of energy in Eurasia**

Today, the relevance of energy security is well known. Oil and gas have become the country's strategic assets. A safe and reliable energy supply is the main force behind the country's economic growth. However, energy security encompasses many challenges, reflecting the complexities involved in it. For example, geographic location, physical security of assets, supply and trade routes. Along with this comes a huge problem i.e. role played by transit states in exporting energy reserves from the host country to the energy market. Therefore, in connection with the growing importance of energy security today, special attention is paid to energy diplomacy which includes finding secure sources or routes for energy supply. The search for reliable and secure ways to supply energy, especially oil and gas, creates great competition between countries looking for alternative sources of energy as well as energy-rich countries (like Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan) which are competing fiercely for the best deal.

The fall of communism in Europe and the former Soviet Union changed the global geopolitics and world map. About five years after the disintegration of Soviet Russia, the little-known Eurasian region attracted the international arena where natural resources and related issues started dominating in many parts of the world. Eurasia remained limited under communal rule until the regional boundaries were reshaped after 1991. Today, the Eurasian region includes Russia, Central Asian states, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Mongolia. Soon after the independence, these states started choosing their paths to develop themselves politically and economically.

Eurasia is a major source of energy resources and the developments in this area have great potential to reshape the global security models. Since most of the energy-rich states were part of Soviet Russia it had dominated the energy profile of these states like Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. However, with time these states started welcoming new partners in their energy sector to collaborate on new projects and therefore reducing their dependence on Russia. This led to new partnerships and players entering the region to

reduce Russian supremacy in Eurasia. Therefore, the present pipeline politics shows the implications of energy demands and strategies to control pipeline routes by different powers all over the world such as Russia, China, the U.S., the West, Iran and India. This geopolitics over energy has serious repercussions for the host country (energy-rich states) and its partners (actors like Russia, China, U.S.) which will be discussed in the next section in great detail.

### **Pipeline politics: What is Pipeline?**

To know the depth of energy politics related to pipelines it is important to understand the concept of pipelines in detail. A pipeline is a kind of long pipe, typically underground pipes, their pumps and flows control valves include crude oil, natural gas, water etc. It is used for transportation, especially at long distances. The energy pipelines are crucial for us to support our daily-to-daily life needs by supplying oil, gas, water and sewer. They are mainly used to supply the major natural resources from one region to another, such as oil and natural gas which are raw materials for global energy consumption. The pipeline is one of the most reliable, effective and cost-effective ways to export these natural resources safely. Therefore, pipelines play a crucial role in the transportation of energy resources from one region to another region.

There are two types of pipelines: liquid pipelines and Gas pipelines. On the one hand, the liquid pipelines are the ones that supply oil, petrol, propane and fuel via them. While on the other hand, gas pipelines are the ones that supply natural gas via them. The lifeline of a pipeline depends on what they transport and where do they transport. Today the role of transit pipelines has become quite significant since they are more in numbers due to the huge energy demand from different parts of the world. The case of 'transit pipelines' has grasped more controversies since it includes more countries. It is constructed in more than one country to satisfy the energy thrust of many energy-prone regions. As a result, it has interference from the host country as well as transit countries which can turn into problems many times such as Russian interference and strategies to pressure Ukraine by cutting off its energy supply.

Therefore, the transit pipelines create huge repercussions for all the countries that are part of the pipeline projects which eventually turns the game into pipeline politics where countries try to control these pipelines and the energy inside them to achieve their national interest. Currently, the pipelines in Eurasia stretch for thousands of kilometres through unstable geopolitical zones. As the importance of energy reserves has risen, this has led to several pipeline constructions to supply Eurasian energy reserves to the European market (Oge 2019). However, this process of transportation comes with huge challenges, have you ever wondered why some pipeline proposals succeed and others failed? Why do energy-rich states in Eurasia face challenges in transporting their

resources to the market? Why there is huge competition among major powers to control the export routes of the Eurasian region? What is the role of transit states in pipeline politics? To answer these questions, it is significant to study Eurasian pipeline politics in detail.

### **Pipeline Politics: Eurasia**

The geopolitical situation at the beginning of the 21st century has given a new boost to the concept of Mackinder's theory of Heartland. Mackinder talks about his 'heartland theory' where he mentions the significance of the Eurasian region in the present world. He provides the first systematic analysis of the geopolitical importance of Eurasia which he renamed as the 'heartland region'(Mackinder, 1904). He argued that Heartland is in the most favourable geopolitical position in the entire world. Mackinder recognised the importance of the concept of 'central location' and stated that Eurasia is at the centre of the world in the context of the global geopolitical process, with the heartland having the core of the Eurasian sub-continent.

In other words, it denotes that one who dominates the heartland (Eurasia) would have the geopolitical and economic potential needed to control the world island and the planet (Ismailov and Papava 2010). The Eurasian region has been known for being the battleground for great powers in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The previous competition was regarding territorial and political expansions where countries were fighting for land and political gains. Today, the rivalry is not regarding political and territorial control, but it is about the competition for huge energy reserves in this region (Gupta 2016). This energy war started to control the transportation routes of many countries and obtain large reserves of energy-rich Eurasian countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The advent of this competition has intensified the pipeline politics where major powers like Russia, China, and the U.S. trying to gain topmost power over export routes of oil and gas pipelines in Eurasia.

However, the newly independent post-soviet states are also playing their own game where on one side they are maintaining their relationship with Russia on the other side they are diversifying their routes to China and the west to reduce dependency on Russia. For example, after the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan became the sole owner of its energy reserves. Though it remained dependent on Russia for a long time gradually it started developing its path and set up its goals and objectives to fulfil its national interest through the energy sector. It started using energy as an instrument of its Multi-vector foreign policy which means getting rid of Russian dominance by diversifying its routes by gaining partnerships and collaborations with other countries like China (Henriksen 2013).

## **Russia**

Energy lies at the heart of relations between Russia and Post-soviet states since soviet times when these states (like Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Turkmenistan) were part of Russia and solely dependent on it politically and economically. Energy plays a big role in Russia's assessment of its national interest and foreign policy approach towards other states. It is one of the goals of Moscow's foreign policy to hold strongly its position in the Eurasian region for which Energy is very crucial. Russia has always tried to control the production and transport routes of energy sectors of Eurasian states due to fear of getting them close to other countries like China and the U.S. Here, two aspects are particularly important: oil and gas transport through Russia and Russia tries to continue its supremacy inits post-Soviet space in general and CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) in particular (Freire 2012).

The competition for Russia started in its area of influence with the entry of China and the U.S. after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Moscow became alert of the emerging partnership of China with the Eurasian countries such as Kazakhstan-china strategic relations developed with the signing of the Kazakhstan-china oil pipeline in 1997. Another challenge for the Russian route is the Central Asia-Centre gas pipeline which includes China, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. This diversifying approach made Russia more assertive which can be traced back to the beginning of the Putin era in 2000. Despite the 1990s during the Yeltsin era when Russia was more inclined towards building a relationship with the west, by 2000 Russia became more interested in shaping its relationship with its area of influence i.e. Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Naumkin 2003).

Since energy is an instrument of Russia's foreign policy there are plenty of instances where Moscow has used it as a tool to enhance its leverage in Eurasia. This is even more evident in the Russia-Ukraine gas dispute, in which Russia's energy company Gazprom said it would cut off gas supplies to Ukraine due to unpaid debts in 2005 and 2007. However, in April 2014, Gazprom cancelled Ukraine's natural gas supply. Gazprom suspended Russian exports of natural gas to Ukraine until November 2015. As a result, Russia has repeatedly hit Ukraine through the energy sector to influence Ukraine's elections and punish its misconduct (Oldberg 2011). In the case of Central Asian Republics, Russia utilises its monopoly on Central Asian oil and gas to strengthen its position in the international market as well as for other political and economic ends. However, China has created new transit routes and strategies that would threaten Russia's entire strategy, for instance, the Kazakhstan-China pipeline, Turkmenistan-China pipeline, and the OBOR (One Belt, One Road) initiative represent a significant challenge. Therefore, these projects and initiatives by China present a great challenge to Russia's supremacy in entire Eurasia.

## **China**

Soon after the fall of Soviet Russia, the Eurasian region became an increasingly crucial area for the realization of Beijing's foreign policy and ambitious strategy. In other words, internal security and energy policies are two important issues for China. In 1993, China became the net importer for the first time (IEA, 2015). Today, the issue of energy supply security is gradually becoming a core issue on the economic and political agendas of China while approaching the post-soviet energy-rich states. In the case of Central Asia, Beijing started collaborating with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan after 1991. The first level of the Kazakhstan China energy relationship was launched in 1997 with Chinese company CNPC (Chinese National Petroleum Corporation) which agreed to build an oil pipeline with the route from the oil fields of Aktobe to Atyaru named as Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline.

Besides this, the Central Asia-centre gas pipeline is another move of China to strengthen its ties with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. However, the emerging leverage of China in the Eurasian region has made Russia quite alert about its position in CIS in general and Central Asia in particular. China soon became a leading trading partner for both Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan; and several observers have recently claimed that China is winning the battle for influence against other major powers (Stegen and Kusznir 2015). In the case of Azerbaijan, the energy relations intensified when Chinese company CNPC entered Azeri oil fields and production services in 2002 (Bordachev 2015). As per the recent Chinese energy and infrastructure projects, such as the 'One Belt One Road' initiative Eurasia will be much more closely connected to China via overland and maritime routes. Therefore, given the current energy situation, Eurasian power politics will change the flow of energy from west to east.

## **United States**

The U.S. interest in Eurasia was driven by a huge number of factors which become visible soon after 1991. The U.S. sees Eurasian energy reserves as an alternative to the Middle East. For example, in 1993 U.S. companies Chevron and ExxonMobil came into the Kazakhstan energy market. Though for a longer time the post-soviet states remained much dependent on Russia and took time building its partnership with the world. However, there are plenty of events which show U.S. interference in the Eurasian region. American attention grew after the 9/11 attacks with security and terrorist issues coming to the scene. It started negotiating and placing its military camps in central Asian states like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for security reasons. Besides this, the topmost American interest in Eurasia is to reduce the Russian monopoly in the region. The two major projects which have always been supported by U.S. i.e. Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and Trans-Caspian pipeline connect Central Asian states to the west without having a Russian route

hence, bypassing Russia.

### **European Countries**

The European countries demand a huge amount of energy supply today for which Eurasia is very significant. They acknowledge the importance of energy-rich post-soviet states like Central Asian Republics since they are wealthy in oil, gas and water resources. The European Union (EU) is one of the first investors to focus on these newly independent states after 1991. It has always recognised the emerging significance of Eurasia for its energy market. The aims and objectives of the EU can be summarised in four broad points: firstly, harmonising the relationship between west and post-soviet states through energy and economic collaborations. Secondly, building new pipeline projects and converging the energy market of Eurasia with the west. Thirdly, establishing new alternative routes can bypass Russia such as the 'southern corridor'. Fourthly, increasing investment in energy deals for combined interests and benefits.

Safe and secure supply is one of the biggest concerns of Western European countries in terms of energy supplies. Out of all the Eurasian countries, Kazakhstan is the EU's most important oil partner. The EU imports 5-6percent of oil and a 21 percent of uranium from Kazakhstan (Umbach and Raszewski 2016). Given the issue of strategic energy, a regional alliance between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia was established in the 1990s. This alliance led to the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline on August 1, 2002. The project began in April 2003 and was completed in 2005 (Henriksen 2013). It is located in the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean, the first batch of oil from Baku arrived in Ceyhan in May 2006 (Oil and gas Journal 2008). Later on, this pipeline route included Kazakhstan to increase the oil exports from the port of Kuryk to Baku to Azerbaijan and connect it to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. Therefore, the Kazakhstan Caspian Transport System (KCTS) became a part of the BTC transport system in 2005.

As a result, the western export route made a serious blow to Russian supremacy in Eurasia. Since this route bypasses Russia, it is favoured by the U.S. and the West. Another route which can connect the west to Central Asia directly is the Trans-Caspian pipeline which will pass Caspian gas to the European market. However, this project has been halted by Russian interference in the project since it excludes Russia.

### **India**

The geopolitical prominence of Eurasia for India is undeniable. The development of political, economic and dynamic partnerships covered India's post-Soviet" extended neighbourhood" policy. The emerging China and Afghanistan factors in the region have

increased the Eurasian importance for India in recent years (Sachdeva and Mankoff 2016). This fact has led Indian decision-makers to expand and actively implement India's 2012 Connect Central Asia policy. India has good political relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus. These relations will be further strengthened through high-level visits, cooperation in the field of energy, military agreements, education and cultural exchange. In terms of the energy sector, India has signed strategic partnership agreements with Kazakhstan (2009), Uzbekistan (2011) and Tajikistan (2012).

As per energy requirements, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are the largest trading partners of India in the region. Kazakhstan supplies a huge amount of Uranium to India and can give more investment opportunities in the energy sector in the future. The India-Kazakhstan strategic deal was signed when Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev visited India in 2009 and recently five agreements were signed between India and Kazakhstan during the special visit of Indian Prime minister Modi to Kazakhstan in 2015. The agreement includes military-defence cooperation, defence cooperation and uranium purchase. In the case of Turkmenistan, the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan- Pakistan-India) pipeline is the most crucial project which is still on hold due to border issues. However, India still has not achieved any huge success in the energy sector with the Eurasian region (especially Central Asian states) due to high regional politics and technical hurdles.

Therefore, India must widen its vision and strategies to broaden its scope in Eurasia. The recent entry of India into SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) can be a good platform for India to preserve its energy interest in the region (Pradhan 2017).

### **How the pipeline politics affected the Russian economy?**

Throughout history, energy has been used by Russia to achieve its goals. It has used natural resources as leverage to reach equilibrium with world powers. The importance of energy can be depicted in the history of Russia during the Soviet regime. Since the late nineteenth century, Russia added energy resources as a part of the major tools to fulfil its vital national interest. Though Russia was lacking in technology and capital to start up a new industry, the Energy sector's importance grew faster for instance the Bolsheviks used it to oust the monarchy since the oil-producing regions were the hub of Communists. By the mid-twentieth century, the energy sector had become one of the major support systems of Russia's economic and Geopolitical strength. The oil companies in Russia benefitted in the 1970s oil crisis using its energy card and doubled oil prices for its customers. By the time of 1980s, it moved closer to the market-oriented energy sector with its profit-making goals. With the dissolution of Soviet Russia, the energy sector was in disorder and confusion which led to the division of the sector between foreign groups and Russian oligarchs.

Therefore, the Liberalisation of 'energy' which started with Gorbachev in the 1980s took extreme form during Yeltsin's rule in the 1990s. However, this changed under the rule of Vladimir Putin in 2000. He made the concentration on major oil and gas industries under the supervision of the Russian Government. Putin focused on an agenda for maintaining the situation in the country and consolidating the energy sector under state control. He changed the liberal policies which began several decades earlier by Gorbachev and then by Yeltsin. Under his, Presidency Putin announced the 'nationalization of the energy sector' under three major state Companies: GAZPROM, ROSENEFT and TRANSNEFT. These steps helped bring strength and stability to Russia. Russian President V. Putin, therefore, knew that energy is an important playing card that would allow Russia to once again be a great power.

### **Russian energy Strategy**

The energy sector and its exports are very significant to the Economy of Russia where the state has maintained its grip over the sector while at the same time limiting the activities of foreign companies. Russia carries the world's top proven reserves of natural gas and constantly exchanges the position of top oil producer with Saudi Arabia (Goodrich & Lanthemann 2013). It is the largest producer and supplier of natural gas added to its strength is the second largest producer of oil. 21% of Russia's electricity is generated through the water. Russia has the world's second-largest Coal reserves and is quite abundant in uranium as well (Goodrich & Lanthemann 2013). For Moscow, energy is not just 'commerce'. It has worked as a proven support for Russia that has improved strength and stability for over a century. In 2008, Russia was the world's largest natural gas supplier, and the second largest oil and coal producer after Saudi Arabia and the USA, respectively (Lihuto 2010).

There are two crucial assumptions for energy goals for Russia: 1) Russia wants its glory back again which it lost after the collapse of the USSR so that it can rule over its Eurasian region again. 2) The China factor is very important to mention since it is emerging as a big economic market in the world and has entered Russia's zone of interest i.e. Central Asia. As per the assumptions the major goals are, firstly, since Russian oil and natural gas industries are key players in the Global Energy Market, particularly Eurasia. Therefore, Russia wants to control Eurasian energy logistics. Secondly, Russia hopes to increase its influence in western CIS and Central Asia to establish its energy card as a major power in the post-Soviet region. Third, the main goal is to control transportation routes and get rid of dependence on transit countries, which can respond to pressure by increasing costs.

Fourthly, Russia wants no intervention by the west in its Zone of Interest i.e. the



newly emerged post-soviet states. Fifthly, it tries to reduce US domination in its near abroad and reducing Europe-USA relationships. Sixthly, Russia wants the EU to be dependent on its oil and gas reserves and it wants this relationship to be asymmetrical since Russia wants to remain free of any dependencies and perceives energy policy as a zero-sum game. Seventhly and most important Russia wants to use its energy strategy to fulfil its political and economic goals, especially in post-soviet states. For instance, the democratic western states have been targeted more by Russia. Besides this, Russia aims at pushing gas prices up to benefit its companies and extract better energy revenues. Therefore, energy has become the major instrument of Russia's foreign policy.

### **Effects of pipeline politics on the Russian economy**

Russia's economy is a mixed economy. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the collapse of the planned economy, it has come a long way. After the Disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia's position becomes dominant in its near abroad. After Advocating power in 2000, Putin turned to more aggressive foreign policy especially in the case of CIS by calling it Moscow's 'absolute priority'. Being a huge energy power in the Eurasian region Russia is trying to strengthen its position in the international arena by ruling its near abroad by controlling the pipeline routes of the region. However, there are huge effects of this energy-related pipeline politics on the Russian economy which Russia has been facing for many years.

The existence of economics and economic sanctions play a big role in the case of Russian power politics. Time and again, great powers like U.S. and others have shown their economic leverage on Russia. The emerging energy and pipeline politics in the Eurasian region made some adverse effects on the Russian economy. The biggest example can be seen in Russian-Ukraine relations where the gas Dispute between these two countries made from a business dispute to a geopolitical dispute involving heads from several countries who got threatened due to suspending of natural gas supplies to Ukraine which has indirectly affected them. The gas conflict began in 2005 over gas prices and the gas transport route, where Russia cut gas supplies throughout Russia's territory, affecting more than eighteen European countries (Oldberg 2011). The result, this made a huge impact on the Russian economy and as a result, Russia had to face a giant economic loss due to cutting off the gas supply to the west.

The situation became worse after the Crimean crisis of 2014 when Russia had to face economic resentment from the U.S. and the west. In the case of the EU, by 2014 almost 40 per cent of Europe's gas imports were met by Russia and the temporary suspension of Russian gas flows had created paranoid creations in Europe. Russia and the EU are interdependent in their energy relations. They fulfil 80 per cent of their energy needs from Russian supply via the Ukraine pipeline route. The European Union imports

about half of its natural gas and 30 per cent of its oil from Russia. Russia, on the other hand, is more dependent on the EU as a market, as 80 per cent of oil exports and 60 per cent of natural gas exports supply to the EU comes from Russia (Lihuto 2012). The sudden cut-off of the EU from Russia and the imposition of huge economic sanctions by the U.S. and west hit the Russian economy severely. This has a serious effect on the Russian gas company Gazprom. Gazprom, which dominates the natural gas market and owns an export monopoly in Russia, has become a serious target of Russia's economic crisis. Hitherto Gazprom has been used by Moscow to fulfil its economic and political goals through price hikes and establishing conditions for the supply of natural gas to the European energy market. However, today European antitrust authorities are attacking the core of Gazprom, citing Russia's energy pricing policy and political control over gas pipelines. The company is struggling to maintain its workforce, economic power and geopolitical heights. Along with these issues, In Europe, the cheap liquefied natural gas from Qatar is easily replacing Gazprom gas (Kramer, 2015). Russia must depoliticise the company since the political tensions and power politics continue to build financial pressure on Gazprom. Therefore, like other areas Russia is facing challenges in its Energy Sector too. It has been facing many problems whether it is internal or external to maintain one of the most crucial sectors. First of all, the future of Russia's gas production is uncertain. The Major Natural gas companies such as Gazprom and Rosneft are in danger since their gas fields are depleting (Goodrich and Lanthemann 2013). As a result, Russia has to face negative effects on its economy. Whereas there is a China factor also which has created a great threat to Russian gas imports from Central Asia. China has built up close gas links with Central Asian countries which will create serious problems for Russia. Secondly, Corruption is one of the major challenges to maintain Russia's Energy Policy. 30-40 percent of Russia's energy revenue disappears every year. Though right now Russia has managed this situation in the long run it will create serious problems for the Russian economy and energy sector.

Thirdly, European countries got alarmed after the Russia-Ukraine gas disputes. Hence, they are keen to find alternatives to bypass Russia. As a result, EU dependence on Russian oil and gas imports was reduced in Europe. Fourthly, the EU's policy of a 'third energy package' has made a serious blow to the domination of Gazprom in the European market. They have challenged the monopoly of the Russian gas market. Fifthly, Russian energy giants like Gazprom, Rosneft, and Transneft need to be modernised. They lag behind the west in Technology and Modernisation. Therefore, Modernisation and capital investment are required in these giant energy companies. Lastly, the most important concern for Russia is the fall in energy prices which has a clear effect on Russia's revenue since Energy exports add a big amount of money to Russia's budget. It will be a long journey for Russia to recover from such fluctuations, says World Bank.

The 2008 oil crisis and the recent oil crises of 2014 made fluctuations in Russian Energy strategies. Its economic recovery can be delayed because of lower oil prices and international sanctions (World Bank 2016). The fall in prices of oil hit Russia hard in general and its revenue generated by energy exports in particular. Therefore, these fluctuations can create destabilisation in Russia. Despite all the challenges this fact can't be denied that Russia's oil and gas energy reserves are significant players in the world energy market, especially in Europe and its near abroad. It has abundant energy resources such as natural gas, oil, uranium, coal, hydropower, nuclear and many more. Russia has never failed except a few times by playing this energy card in the global market with different countries for its benefit. Today the command of this sector rests on the regime of President Vladimir Putin who followed the idea of centralisation of energy resources by the state government. Putin is quite aware of the problems with the sector therefore he is developing his strategies according to that. He is playing the energy card well with new emerging energy initiatives by developing connections with East Asian Energy markets. It will help Russia in two ways i.e. firstly, they will find an alternative to the European market and secondly, it will boost the Russian economy.

In Europe despite the strategies made by the EU, Germany will remain a liable energy importer of Russia and can reverse the energy that came from the European market also. In Asia, India is a major partner of the Russian Energy sector. Russia has helped India in building hydroelectric and nuclear power stations such as the Construction of the Russian-aided 200 MW Kudankulam Atomic Power Plant in Tamil Nadu. Besides this, India has increased its partnership with Rosneft and has received stakes in the Sakhalin oil field located in Siberia of Russia (Maharana, 2013). Compared to the past, Putin has well managed the energy strategy of Russia and earned huge Energy revenues from abroad for the country. He made this sector strong and effective in the global market. Nonetheless, the future of Russia's Energy policy depends on the level of oil prices in the global market which is uncertain, how it works on energy savings and its equations with other countries.

## **Conclusion**

With the emerging competition to control energy reserves in Eurasia, pipeline politics will become more intensified and complex in future. The key players of the region such as Russia, China, the U.S., the EU, and India play a major role in creating a reliable and long-term partnership with the emerging Eurasian countries. On the one hand, Russia is trying to preserve its dominance in the whole CIS region to revive its lost Soviet glory. It is trying to preserve its strong presence in its area of influence (CIS) through the energy sector. On the other hand, the developing post-soviet states playing hard to find smooth alternative routes (China, west) for exporting their oil and gas to the energy market. The

interaction between China and Russia can be seen in two folds in the region: Cooperative and competitive. They have a similar interest in driving the United States out of Eurasia, thus making their relationship cooperative in nature to balance their unilateral actions, keeping in mind that the United States may cause harm to them in the future.

However, Russia and China, give huge competition to each other in contemporary global and regional politics. China's emerging pipeline projects and economic presence in Eurasia especially Central Asia have developed serious tensions in their relations. These two giant neighbours may confront each other for controlling the pipeline routes and leverage over the Eurasian region. In a nutshell, the ongoing geopolitics and competition over pipelines have reshaped the power politics of the Eurasian region. The emerging thirst for oil and gas among states will intensify pipeline diplomacy more in the future. It will redefine the equations of regional and international politics.

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# Migrations in Post-Russian Revolution Space and Geo-political Drivers

*Mehboob Ahmed\* & Imtiyaz Ahmad Malik\*\**

## **Abstract**

*Emigration simply implies a permanent departure from one country, settlement in another or a different country and suggests a choice by the émigré not to return to the native country. Émigrés are thus differentiated from refugees, who are seen as displaced people, forced from their native land in unnatural circumstances, usually under the shadow of violence, who return once normal life resumes. However, in the case of those who left the Russian Empire in the aftermath of the Russian revolution and Civil War, the line between émigré and refugee was blurred. Most of the Russian subjects who ended up living outside the borders of the empire had been captured as military personnel or had fled and sought refuge from hunger, deprivation, political persecution and military defeat in particular. The Russian revolutions of February and October 1917, and the ensuing Civil War created a severe wave of emigration from the land of the Russian Empire into Chinese Manchuria and Western and Central Europe. Emigration life was marked by uncertainty, poverty, bitterness, a-cultural flourishing and political disputes. Relying on the above facts, and applying a clear analytical methodology, we propose to highlight the various geopolitical factors acting as drivers for such migrations. The study concludes with the results and impacts of such migrations on the ethnic composition of both emigrants as well as immigrant areas.*

## **Keywords**

Emigration, Émigré, Russia, Revolution, Geopolitics, Ethnicity, Immigration

## **Introduction**

The demographic component acts as one of the most important factors determining the geopolitical situation of the state. It is important and precisely population that is the main driving mechanism of socio-economic and technological development, the source of military-strategic power and the foundation of integrity of the state. The significance of

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demographic factors has been noted by the greatest minds in history as an effective measure of state consolidation and well-being. The strict implementation of military expansion to increase living space and eliminate the problem of overpopulation has been proposed as early as the Middle Ages. In 1095, Pope Urban the Second in his words of severance to the knights of the Crusade, called for the land of "infidels" in the East to be taken and the "surplus" population in Western Europe to settle there (Vadim 1960).

This aspect of the population was studied in detail by the founder of geopolitics, the German scientist *Friedrich Ratzel* (1844-1904). Ratzel saw a state as a living organism, with characteristic stages of birth, development and death that take place in the natural environment called "*living space*". *Sebastien de Vauban* who lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in his book "*The project of the royal tithe*" intelligently and successfully proved the idea that "*the greatness of kings is measured by the number of their subjects*" meaning that kings' greatness is dependent upon several citizens that make up the power, wealth and well-being of a country.

Probably theories of migration were made use of only in 2004 to provide recommendations related to the policy of enlargement of the European Union towards some Eastern and Central European countries. Before the enlargement, several political debates and discussions took place in the West, driven by fears of welfare migration from East to West. Although these concerns were not supported in several studies which struggled to predict East-West migration dynamics, the actual policy decisions ensued in selective liberalization of the Western side of European Union labour markets with just three countries Sweden, Ireland and Britain fully liberalizing. To an extent, due to this selective approach, most of the pre-enlargement results turned out to be very inaccurate and could not manage to anticipate rates of migration. Furthermore, estimates were not in a position to predict different rates of emigration from the 'Central and Eastern European Countries (CEE)<sup>i</sup> economies by the end of 2007, Slovakia, Poland along with Baltic states had sent more labour than, Hungary, the Czech etc. Knowing it is free from the confusion that the assumptions that are important and most studies were used to know future flows were defective and led to inexact conclusions. In the case of the United Kingdom which was at the receiving end and Poland at the sending end resulted in a significant economic and social impact. Most of these works were grounded in the neo-classical theory of migration. While income differentials and wages arguably play a vital role in affecting migrant decisions, this paper will highlight that the neo-classical theory tries to account significantly for different rates of emigration from CEE countries which share to a certain extent similar living standards and wage differentials relative to Western Europe. The paper mainly focuses on the basic principles of the theories of migration starting with neo-classical migration and followed by theories that emerged in recent decades. The second part will discuss the geopolitical factors responsible for emigration from the Former

Soviet Union during and after the Great Russian Revolution. Such an approach speaks directly to recent works concerned with migration theorizing which also calls to study migration as part of global processes and social change (Castles 2016; Castles 2009).

### **Neoclassical Theory of Migration**

The important and basic model of migration was originally developed in the books authored by (Lewis 1954) and (Harris and Todaro 1970) which explains migration in the process of economic development, highlights migration results from the actual wage differentials across borders that emerge from diverse degrees of labour market tightness. To this theory, migration is driven by geographic differences in demand and labour supply, resulting in differentials in wages between capital-rich countries versus labour-rich countries. The central argument and the main focus of this theory are thus on wages. In the extended neo-classical model approaches, migration is ascertained by expected rather than actual earnings (Baur and Klaus 1999). They also believe that a one-dimensional relationship in the wages-migration tandem doesn't confirm and recognize the degree of wage-differential and the level of the country's income matter. Similarly, the ability to migrate is related to costs, therefore, neither the poor people migrate nor the poorest countries which send the maximum labour (Faist 2000). Therefore, it could be said that the migration rate speeds up with the growth of the GDP or wealth of countries as more people can migrate. Indirectly, it signs continued development of a country diminishes the outmigration rate and the incentives to migrate change (Todaro 1969). Introduced by Sjaadstad (1962), On the other hand, the human capital theory feeds the neo-classical framework by adding the socio-demographic characteristics of the individual as an important factor of migration at the micro-level (Sjaadstad 1962). The focal point of the analysis is a rational being who migrates to maximize his/ her gains and benefits. Human capital natural endowment, preferences and expectations, age, status, marital, occupation, gender, skills and labour market status strongly affect who migrates and who does not. The neo-classical theory is a push-pull framework which continues to underline the economic context of the flow of workers (Baur and Klaus 1999). Push-pull factors help us to bring relational aspects into thinking about migration and compose dyadic frames in which migration flows are studied empirically. So, push and pull factor is possibly a mirror-image of each other, the framework has been criticized for lacking the ability to determine dominant factors. However, the assumptions of migration have been challenged on different grounds by Neo Economics Theory of migration (De Haas 2009).

### **New Economics Theory of Migration**

The new economics of migration (NEM) theory has come as a challenge to the assumptions of the neo-classical approach. The important point of it is that it changed the



individual independence focus of migration research to mutual interdependence (Stark 1991). The main argument is that migration decisions are made by families rather than isolated individuals. Furthermore, their decisions are influenced to a large extent by a set of comprehensive factors which are shaped by conditions in the home country. Therefore, their decisions are not based only on individual utility-maximizing calculations but are rather a household response to both income risk and the failures of a variety of market – labour market, credit market, or insurance market (Massey 1993). Hence, the absence of migration in the presence of wage differentials or migration in the absence of meaningful wage differentials does not imply irrationality but rather prompts us to think over a set of other variables related to relative deprivation and risk-aversion and risk-minimization of household income (Stark 2003). Bringing in, concepts like risk-aversion and risk minimization, Stark- one of the leading and important migration theorists had in mind the risk aversion of poor households in developing and underdeveloped countries where are rarely institutional mechanisms present, such as government programs or private insurance markets, therefore, migration provides a colourful and meaningful strategy in handling with different market failures. Remittances also play a vital role and are an integral part of the new economics of migration research as they directly substantiate the household inter-connectedness concept and the diversification of risk while analytically connecting the empirical study of the causes and consequences of migration. Besides, migration also takes place through the known process of globalization which is the firm belief of the supporters of the world system theory of migration (Taylor 1999).

### **World Systems Theory**

Historical-structural approaches to migration bring different concepts into understanding the migration processes. Building on, (Wallerstein 1974) this theory links the factors of migration to structural change in the markets across borders and assumes migration as a significant function of globalization, the emergence of new forms of production and the increased interdependence of economies. The expansion of export agriculture and manufacturing connected strongly to (FDI) foreign direct investment flows from advanced economies to emerging economies has led to a commotion in traditional work structures and has mobilized new population segments into regional as well as long-distance migration. Hence, Capital mobility is an important factor in the world system.

It presents capital and labour mobility as inter-connected. While migration is a natural phenomenon of disruptions and dislocations that in reality occur in capitalist development and can be found historically, it also introduces global economic and political inequalities. Like them 'Dual labour market theory' also makes structural changes in the economy an important factor of migration which is discussed below (Favell 2008)

## **Dual Labour Market Theory**

This theory, like world system theory, links migration to structural changes in the economy but explains migration dynamics with the demand side, (Piore 1979). It put forwards a dual pattern of economic organization in advanced economies and a bifurcated occupational structure. Duality opens along the lines of two types of organization in the economy, namely capital-intensive where both skillful and unskilled labour is being utilized, and labour-intensive where unskilled labour prevails. The theory advocates that migration is driven by the conditions of labour demand rather than supply- the character of the economy in advanced countries produces a demand for low-skilled jobs which domestic workers refuse to take up due to status. As immigration becomes desirable and necessary to fill jobs, policy choices in the form of active recruitment efforts follow the needs of the market. It is important to mention here that different from all 'Network migration theoreticians' links time and space with migration (Aranjo 2000).

## **Network concepts – the Perpetuation of Migration**

This theory does not look at the factors which initiate migration but rather at what perpetuates migration in time and space (Massey 1993). Migrant networks assist to explain why migration continues even when wage differentials or recruitment policies cease to exist. The beingness of networks probably influences the decisions of migrants when they choose their destinations (Vertovec 2002). Network theory also helps in explaining the various reasons why migration patterns are not evenly distributed across countries, but rather how they tend to form so-called migration regimes (Faist 2000). This theory is very much affiliated with migration systems theory, advocated by (Magobunje 1970). Its main assumption is that migration changes the economic, social, cultural, and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends and it forms a whole developmental space within which migration processes operate (De Haas 2010). While migration systems theory has its main roots in geography, migration network theory is of anthropological and sociological origin (Castles and Mark 2009). Whereas network theory mainly concentrates on the role of personal relations between migrants and non-migrants, migration systems theory goes further and emphasizes that migration restructures the entire (De Haas 2010). It suggests that migration takes place in response to already links between sending and receiving states, such as trade, or colonial ties (Castles and Mark 2009).

After going through the theories discussed above one could assume that Migration is an outcome of the individual's behaviour but equally it has an aggregate social form. Therefore, the stages of migration dynamics analysis shift from micro-level decision processes to forces operating on national/international levels. The neo-classical theory has both micro and macro-level elaborations but the main explanatory variable at both

levels emphasizes wages and income differentials. The human capital theory of migration on the other hand brings heterogeneity into individual decision-making based on different expectations. The new economic theory, believed by some authors to be an amplification of the neo-classical theory, introduces important conceptual and analytical modifications. Through its concentration on households and family, it highlights the importance and significance of institutions and non-economic factors and hence brings in mezzo-level indicators and frames of reference. Dual labour market theory and world system theory of migration offer a set of structural variables, derived primarily from national or international levels. The network theories function across different levels of analysis. Keeping all the important areas on the table, it could be perceived that migration before and after the Russian revolution in the Former Soviet Union has taken place in the light of the above theories but at the same time, an important section of the Russian population like Jews emigrated from Russia due to threat to their life from the Soviet Communist authorities which is not directly highlighted in the above discussion part. Their emigration will be discussed in light of geopolitical factors.

The Russian Revolution began in late February 1917 on the streets of Petrograd. Within days, the tsarist regime lost all control and Nicholas II in no time abdicated his throne, ending the Russian Empire. Some political leaders promptly began to create a new central political structure to lead the country, which they called the Provisional Government. Urban Russia in 1917 was the crucible of revolution. The collapse of the tsarist govt. began first in the capital city of Petrograd; the appeal of the Bolshevik party among the urban populations of Moscow, Petrograd, and other cities was critical in ensuring the successful seizure of power by the Soviets in October 1917. Indeed, the city, and its urban workforce, had long been central to Marxist theorists, who opposed their vision of a proletarian revolution centered in the city to that of the populists, who believed that rural peasants would provide the spark of revolution in Russia. It was not only a historical irony, but also a severe threat to the future course of the revolution, that from the very moment of Bolshevik success in late 1917, thousands and thousands of urban residents, workers and non-workers, were abandoning the cities for the relative security of provincial towns and rural hamlets. Between May 1917 and April 1918, the city of Moscow lost 3 Lakh of its 2 million inhabitants. From 1918 to 1920, the city lost another 7 Lakh people. Moscow's population toward the end of the civil war was thus half of what it had been in the mid of 1917 revolution. An even more catastrophic fall occurred in Petrograd its population dropped from 2.5 million in 1917 to 7 Lakh in 1920. Between 1917 and 1920, nearly every city in the former Russian empire suffered similar population losses. Of the ten largest cities in 1910, the decline in Kiev came closest to Moscow's and Petrograd's: Kiev's population plummeted by 28 per cent in the years spanning the revolution and civil war. Only a handful of cities had an increase in population between

1910 and 1920; two, Baku and Tiflis, were politically independent after 1917 and as such were havens for refugees from the conflict of revolutionary Russia. The other cities that grew were all located on the periphery of European Russia, close to sources of grain but also at one time or another, centers of White Army activity as well.

## **Migrations and Political Migrations**

Nowadays migration processes play an important role in the context of the use of a cheap labour force. Recent events in Kosovo, France and Denmark have shown us that uncontrolled international migration of people who are very different both in culture and language can cause ethical problems and destabilize a society. Mexican Texas of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be one such example. After the economic crisis took place in the United States of America in 1819, different fortune-seekers, merchants and broke American landlords who required the growth of their lands to strengthen their positions in the Union and who wanted to create new slave states in the west of the United States, all these people started to pay attention to under-populated, rich with natural resources and climatically beneficial lands of Texas. The Russian Revolution of 1917 drastically changed Russia in almost every sphere imaginable, from politics and economics to foreign policy and civil rights. An empire became a nominal republic, ascendant liberal and leftist politicians replaced a tsar, and a new policy toward national and ethnic minorities began to emerge. The pro-Russian sentiments and results of the referendum in 2014 in Crimea are caused not only by political but also by ethnic factors. Because since the second part of the 1930s Russian population increased to 50% and according to the census of 2001 Ukraine from 2024056 people in Crimea 58.3% were Russian and 24.3% were Ukrainians. The mono-national countries have a higher index of geopolitical power and internal security. As a rule in such countries (Germany, Italy, Japan, China, and others) centripetal tendencies are very strong and internal separatism tendencies are weak. Such tendency has been noted as recently by Vladimir Lenin who stated that a mono-national country is more effective and stable from the economic and political point of view in comparison with a country which is not heterogenic on a national level (Lenin 1917). Recent cases of separatism in Spain, France, Belgium, India, Russia and other multinational or bi-national countries prove this point of view one more time.

## **Russian Revolution and Migration Pattern**

Hundred years ago, the Russian Revolution transformed the whole scenario that includes migrants into the refugee — a political actors. During the Cold War, the West started to embrace refugees fleeing from communism and turned them into powerful symbolic weapons. The politicization of the refugee facilitated movement across the Iron Curtain, but it obscured the complexities motivating migration. Now, this simplified

refugee narrative has intensified and heightened barriers for those forced to take flight in the 21st century. The Russian Revolution unleashed a flood of migrants streaming into Europe's cities. In the process, it also gave the world a new vocabulary of international migration by creating terms like refugee, escapee and defector to describe why people fled and to define the rights they enjoyed abroad. The Bolsheviks declared publicly departure from the socialist state as treason, while their opponents sheltered those who claimed to leave for ideological reasons. Both sides framed the decision to migrate as a political act, giving rise to a global refugee regime that reigns to this day. Those fleeing Soviet rule had their citizenship revoked, but became the world's first legally recognized refugees, acknowledged by the League of Nations as a group who faced persecution and were deprived of the protection of a state.

Although, several million Russians have emigrated within a century, Russia<sup>ii</sup> has no real emigration statistics. This is because the rule of law under which no citizen could leave one country and become a citizen of another without the permission of the country left, a rule which had been in force in many countries of Europe at an earlier date, survived in Russia almost to the present day. If a Russian violated that rule, he was sent away from the country and his property in Russia was taken under legal possession. Under these conditions, true emigration statistics were lacking. The Russian statistics of travelers crossing the Russian frontier begin in 1828; before that, Russian emigration was insignificant. The number of Russians reported as entering the United States of America between 1820, and 1828 was less than 100. From 1828 to 1915 inclusive the excess of outgoing over incoming Russians was 4,510,000. In 1914 the net loss to Russia was 526,000 while during the preceding years it had been between 150,000 and 180,000. These figures for 1914 indicate that from 200,000 to 300,000 agricultural labourers who were not real emigrants although included as such in the preceding figures, were caught in Germany by the war, a number which will perhaps about balance the unrecorded clandestine and war-time emigration of earlier years. If so, we may retain the figure of 4,510,000 for the total net outflow between 1828 and 1915. These 87 years fall naturally into three periods: first 1828—59, the period before the reforms of Alexander II began, when the peasants were serfs bound to the soil and the city folk were held in the ties of caste; second, 1860—89, when a new economic and social structure was displacing the old and the friction between the two brought about a wave of emigration; and third, 1890—1915 when the rise of capitalistic production in Russia sharpened the antagonism between the old and the new orders and emigration, partly legalized, swelled to a torrent. The emigration of persons of Russian speech, the regions from which they started and the proportion from each region, are more difficult questions than the corresponding ones about the Hebrews. Up to 1905 adherents of minor religious sects were a large part if not a majority of the Russian emigrants from Russia. The old regime denied freedom of

conscience and sternly persecuted its Russian subjects who fell away from the Orthodox Church. As early as the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries sectarians began to flee from these persecutions to the peripheries of the country. Later they went abroad, but not until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did this current become organized emigration. From the southwestern and southern provinces of the former empire settled by Ukrainians, and from the central and eastern provinces, where Great Russians predominated, we have no evidence of any considerable emigration before 1905. But after 1905 the picture changed as the emigration of Russians increased.

Analysis of the evidence of fragmentary nature about several Russian provinces leads to the conclusion that Russian emigration, from 1907 to 1913, was recruited predominantly from Ukrainians and White Russians. The Great Russian emigrants in former years have been mainly sectarians and during these years few sectarians departed. As a result of the general growth of emigration, while the number of emigrants from Great Russia probably did not fall their proportion diminished. There were two regions in pre-revolutionary Russia where the agrarian question was acute, although for different reasons. One was the group of western provinces adjoining Poland, Lithuania and Austria, and with Ukrainian. The other was the group of 'central agricultural' provinces between the Dnieper and the Volga and between the northern boundary of the black-earth region and the beginning of the southern steppes. This was largely inhabited by Great Russians. In these two groups, serfdom had its main development. The southern steppes were settled after the abolition of serfdom chiefly by free colonists. Into the wooded regions of the north and northeast serfdom could not penetrate; nor did it extend into Siberia. In the white earth provinces around Moscow, it was undermined before 1861, and later its remnants were abolished by the course of economic development. These two groups of western provinces and central provinces were dominated by serfdom and its after-effects developed the agrarian revolutions following 1905 and 1917 to the highest degree. The central agricultural region was the main source of internal migration. From all the evidence at hand, it may confidently be assumed: that landless agricultural labourer, especially those from the western provinces, were the most numerous groups among the Russian emigrants; that next to these were the peasants with small land holdings; and that there were a very few industrial workers, especially in 1908 and 1909—the years of industrial depression.

Russia contained 17 lakhs and 90 thousand people in 1897 whose native language was German; of these 9 lakh lived in the agricultural German colonies. Emigration from these colonies was never specially investigated, but it is known that the German emigrants from Russia were recruited almost exclusively from them. The 8 provinces in which the colonies lay formed a semi-circle in, southern, southeastern and southwestern Russia. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they lay on the frontier, where the

steppe began, and was nominally subject to Russia. Immigrants were invited to settle down there and numbers came from Germany. Many, like the Mennonites, were members of religious sects which were persecuted in Germany. These immigrants were given many privileges including a large allotment of land. From other ethnic groups in Russia, a steady current of emigration appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century only among the Crimean Tartars, who went to Turkey. The first wave was from 1860 to 1863, when 1 lakh and 81 thousand departed. Some counties were almost depopulated, and a special order forbade the departure of more than one-tenth of the inhabitants of any settled place. This emigration was a result of the devastation of the Crimean War. A second wave was caused by the introduction of general military service, which had not applied to Tartars. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the economic depression in Crimea, especially among the owners of vineyards, strengthened the movement. In 1904 with every passenger ship some hundreds of Tartar emigrants departed. Landowners made up a considerable percentage of these emigrants, their land being bought in many cases by the German colonists.

The migration current died with the start of the World War. It increased to some extent in the first year of the revolution (1917) then it reduced until the end of the civil war and blockade. The repatriation movement was at its peak after 1917 and reached its zenith in 1921 with the return of the prisoners. Emigration revived in 1922, but to only 1/10 of its pre-war volume. It sank again almost to zero in 1926. The emigrants, 1922 to 1925, were Hebrews who had left under the pressure of economic crisis in the Pale, not offset by the distribution of the Hebrews throughout the country and the improvement in their general position. Immigration into Russia over the European frontiers probably stopped and over the Asiatic frontier decreased during the war. Civil war and intervention also interrupted it. From 1921 to 1922 the outflow of foreigners exceeded the inflow because war prisoners were departing, there was a famine in the Volga region and the outlook was gloomy. Conditions changed in 1924 and 1925-26 the influx, although only a fraction of the pre-war figure exceeded the outflow. The internal migration beyond the Urals—was also got stopped by the World War, however, flared up again in 1918 and then fell off for several years. These migrants were only peasants of middle-class from the Black-earth Central and adjoining localities. They go increasingly to the Far East. This has become a normal process of colonization; the outskirts of the country are brought into cultivation and at the same time peasant farms in traditionally settled regions are improved and those regions are drained of their surplus population. Emigration from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is not likely to be heavy. The villages are overpopulated but the superfluous labour flows thence into the cities. This rural overpopulation cannot be immediately corrected by the development of industry and agriculture. But the work has been started, and the improvement of agriculture is helped by the efforts of the peasants whose cultural level and social consciousness have risen greatly. The majority of the peasants are

Table 1: Change in size of major Russian cities from 1910-1920

<b>City</b>	<b>Population (1910)</b>	<b>Population (1920)</b>
St. Petersburg	1,962,000	722,000
Moscow	1,533,000	1,028,000
Odessa	506,000	435,000
Kiev	505,000	366,000
Khar’Kov	236,000	284,000
Saratov	206,000	190,000
Ekaterinosla	196,000	164,000
Tiflis	188,000	327,000
Kazan	188,000	146,000
Baku	167,000	257,000
Astrakhan	150,000	123,000
Rostov-on-Don	121,000	177,000
Nizhnyi Novgorod	109,000	70,000
Ufa	103,000	93,000
Minsk	101,000	104,000
Samara	96,000	177,000
Tsaritsyn	78,000	81,000
Perm	50,000	74,000



interested and prefer to improve their condition within the country by employing its resources rather than emigrating. There are prospects for foreign immigration, not only of the Asiatic but also of the European type, in as much as the industrialization of the country attracts foreign specialists, skilled workers, and the like. Internal peasant migration beyond the Urals will continue within its present limits, but become more and more of a link in Russia's agricultural and industrial development and contribute to the settlement of her frontier. Koenker (1985) has presented the change in the size of major Russian cities from 1910 to 1920 as given below:

### **Geo-Political factors**

The term "*geopolitics*" (from the Greek geo-land, and politics – government affairs) first appeared in the works of Swedish sociologist and political scientist *Rudolf Kjellén* (1864-1922). In his main work "*The state as a form of life*" (1916), the scientist used the word geopolitics meaning "*the science of a state as a geographic organism embodied in space*" and, therefore, continued the idea of "*German organicism*" started by Ratzel. The theory of demographic impulses anticipated the term "*passionarity*" invented by the Soviet anthropologist *Lev Gumilev* (1912-1992). Moreover, Kjellén divided the population of Europe into "young" and "old" ethnic groups, although such a division had previously been proposed by *Fedor Dostoevsky*. *Kjellén* suggested Germans and Russians as young ethnic groups and English and French – as the old ones. Thus, a vast majority of scientists who founded the school of geopolitics and proposed geopolitical models fundamental to global politics paid special attention to the demographic factor. In addition to military victories, the success of the territorial expansion of a certain state directly depends on the demographics of the indigenous population.

Two world wars and the later collapse of the USSR profoundly altered political boundaries in central, eastern, and south-eastern Europe. In 1900 the region was influenced and dominated by four empires; Russian, Austro-Hungarian, German and Ottoman, all of which collapsed in the aftermath of the Great War (Magocs 2002). In the Russian empire era thousands of Latvians, Jews, Poles, Lithuanians, and others fled to the Russian interior when German and Austrian troops 1915 advanced deep into Russian territory. The displacement of people in Russia was invested with fears about the collapse of the economic and social order (Gatrell 2005). In the meanwhile, Russian withdrawal from the world war following the 1917 revolution was the prelude to a bitter Civil War, followed by a war between USSR and Poland. These prolonged conflicts further added displacements of the population throughout the Russian territory (Baron, and Gatrell 2004). This 'migration of nations' was not only the consequence of civilian fights (Gross 2002). As the world was already sadly and deeply troubled by mass movements of population, the disintegration of the former Soviet Union was without an iota of doubt,

unwelcome; it had changed the world map and the number of refugees crossing them. The disintegration episode did not solve ethnic conflict or fight across boundaries which it proved in the region. This and the decolonization-like movements did encourage only population displacement in the region. Consequently, Former Soviet Russia has been transformed from a country whose major portion of the population was surprisingly reluctant to migrate, importantly over a long distance, into a region, whose stability is very much threatened according to the various reports that include the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (Pikington 1998; Pikington 2003). The use of the Push and Pull classic model of migration to illuminate USSR migration processes tend, however, towards selective historical blindness, resting, as it does, on the hypotheses that people acted as rational economic agents in a free market economy, as migration in former Soviet Russia is examined. However, the researchers of Russia talk of a history of forced migrations in the entire region, beginning with the emigration for political reasons pre and post-1917 revolutions through the forced migration of entire social strata in the 1930s; every ethnic group before and during participation of Russian in the second world war and ending with the forced migration from ecological ecosystems and the relocation of masses of military personnel in the late and after the soviet period (Pikington 1998; Pikington 2003). The Jews, who before and after the 1917 Revolution constituted an important segment of Soviet Russian society, had to suffer a lot. The dissident movement of the 1970s comprised devastatingly of Jews dissatisfied with life in the former Soviet Union. The authorities labelled it a Zionist movement before the dissidents of the movement matured any other notion. Their immediate and primary object was to distance themselves from the norms and values of the Soviet society-(as per the response of Jews Interviewed by Noah Lewin-Epstein, in the book *Russian Jews on Three Continents.... 1979, 1-20*). Furthermore, the author says, they were disappointed with the abasement of Jews in what they perceived as a badly organized prison for the 300 million citizens of the country. Given the adversities the dissidents faced, a strong motivating force was required and this could only be ascertained in the realm of the symbolic. Every Jew understood at that time the truth that aside from Israel no other country could resonate as a symbol of faith and a source of inspiration. Therefore, the language of Zionism came forth as much from necessitating an abstract idea that could sustain them in their struggle against authorities as from primordial ties with their Jewish brethren. The decades of communist rule in the USSR effectively halted the religious learning, beliefs and practices of Soviet Jews. While an instance of change does exist among the former Soviet Union immigrants, correlated importantly with the region of the emigration and age, most former Soviet Union Jews claim to be non-religious but do not consider themselves atheists. Most of them describe themselves as traditional and some, who resided in Central Asian Republics and the Caucasus, have become more religious following their immigration (Epstein 1979).

However, political factors were not the only determinant of emigration. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Eastern Europe suffered heavily from widespread poverty. Peasants supported themselves on small family plots, often involving short and sometimes long-distance migration to factories and towns, supplementing their modest income from subsistence farming by side earnings from non-agricultural activity. Other family members worked part-time as agricultural labours on large estates. Planning for transforming traditional agriculture for example Stolypin land reform in Russia before the First World War, included promoting migration of peasants from the poor provinces of central European Russia to Central Asia and western Siberia. But in the end, the Bolshevik revolution overturned these plans; the peasantry seized and redistributed privately owned estates. It resulted, in the emigration of their owners, who swelled the number of post-war refugees in the West (Simpson 1939).

Russian emigration of the 1920s and 1930s besides political reasons contributed in two ways to the Russian culture and society at large. First varied social classes or pre-revolutionary Russia was represented abroad, although not in the same proportion. In the emigration, we find people of all classes like artisans, professionals, former ruling elites, craftspeople, intellectuals, employees, peasants, workers etc. Neither in religion nor ethnic, educational or economic grounds were the Russian emigration homogenous. The major religions of the Russian empire and several ethnic minorities continued their faith and represented their culture even in a foreign environment. The economic conditions and educational background were as diverse as that of the population in the empire. Secondly, besides, Sociological, Economic and Cultural criteria, the Russian émigrés were seriously committed to carrying on a purposeful Russian life. They were determined to act, work, and create as part and parcel of Russia, even in exiled life. They required producers and consumers of Russian cultural goods and values maintained in the foreign environment. Russia abroad was a society by her firm intention to go on living as Russia, to be the trusted and culturally most creative of the two Russians that political circumstances had brought into being. Though it was somewhat of a contorted society in sociological terms—including its demographic makeup, as we shall see émigrés did think of themselves as a country or society. They endeavored to act creatively as if the emigration represented Russia in a complete cultural and philosophical sense. Therefore, the Russians constituted them into a genuine, even though not perfectly complete society (Raëff 1999)

The Russian emigration was the defeat of the white armies in 1920-21 and the permanent settlement of the boundaries of the former Soviet Union Federation by the 1921 treaty of Riga. As long as the Russian Soviet Federation of Socialist Republics' borders remained to a certain extent open, the beginning of collectivization and the Russian abroad First Five-Year Plan did not attain its concrete form either. For this failure 1919 date is to an extent arbitrary and marks merely the start of that process. But even after

its structure, which was to a large extent solidly in place, in about 1928, Russia abroad did not remain unchanged. External political circumstances however did make further changes. Most of the provinces of Russia abroad disappeared completely as a consequence of political developments in host countries. The nationalistic policies of Rumania, Latvia and Poland pushed many exiles to move again, with a result active Russian cultural life came under attack and virtually to an impasse in those countries. Exiles in Kharbin in the far East were killed in large numbers and forced into mere vegetative survival by the invasion of China by Japan and the creation of the Manchukuo empire. In the end, Hitler's take over in Germany and the military control over Czechoslovakia broke down the creative potential centres of Russian émigré there, and snuffed out literary, cultural vitality and scholarly (Raeff 1999).

All the described examples show us the geopolitical aspects of demographic and migration processes and the importance of their monitoring and control from the side of the state and society. A rather close connection between demographics and geopolitics can be seen through the existence of such scientific fields as military and political demography. Military demography explores the role of a demographic factor in military art and military economics in their quantitative and qualitative aspects. Political demography studies the specifics of demographic trends, causes and socio-economic impact of demographic dynamics in different countries of the world. Therefore, we consider it rational to offer a new demographic discipline which is the *geopolitics of population* or *strategic demography*, which will take into account geopolitical aspects of demographic processes and their role in the context of sustainability and sovereignty of a state. This new discipline will study population factors in various countries of the world. The subjects will be demographic, ethnic and migration processes which have a direct and indirect impact on geopolitical situation and the change of foreign policy status of a certain state.

## Conclusion

Population parameters are becoming more crucial as the most important factors of national security and geopolitical power of the state. In this context, the demographic component acts as one of the most important factors determining the geopolitical situation of the state. Given the tremendous transformation that occurred in Russia between 1910 and 1920, it is not surprising that statistical sources can only hint at the dimensions of that transformation. Nonetheless, published census results permit us to trace the movement of the overall population of Moscow by size, age, sex, and precinct from its peak in 1917 through 1918 and up to 1920. Specific divisions by occupation were reported only in the 1918 and 1920 censuses, so a detailed study of changes in population by employment categories can be made only for a shorter period.

## Notes

1. Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) is an OECD term for the group of countries comprising Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and the three Baltic States- Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Retrieved from <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=303>
2. The term 'Russia' used in this paper means both pre-Revolution as well as post-Revolution Russia.

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# Dimensions of Gender Security in Kyrgyzstan

*Renu Sain\**

## **Abstract**

*Kyrgyzstan has seen political turmoil Post-Soviet era, which resulted in a major setback for weaker sections based on gender, class, age and disability. Social feminism has been seen in society during the Soviet era, which was the result of development in all spheres of society with equal opportunities. This post-colonial feminism overthrew patriarchy and achieved a radical reordering of society. In the Post-Soviet era, the country has seen the resurgence of the tradition of kidnapping the bride. Policies were framed without considering women and as a result, the gender order was transformed. Women became more susceptible to oppression due to narratives set on conservative gender roles. Due to the advent of the market economy, women faced a reduction in jobs. Environmental issues like land degradation and desertification and natural hazards pose a threat to agriculture. Despite making a significant contributor to agriculture their contribution is not valued. Domestic violence was experienced by women of all ages. In this context, the study is conducted to understand the gender status in Kyrgyzstan. What was women's condition during the Soviet Period and how they were benefited from the plans of the Soviet Union? All will be able to know the kind of problems Kirgiz women are facing socially, economically, ecologically and so on post-Soviet period. Like other newly independent countries, Kyrgyzstan is taking many steps for Gender Security Despite national and international interventions, women's problems have not been improved to greater extent, women are suffering from many problems on the ground.*

## **Keywords**

Human Security, Gender Security, Post-Soviet era, liberal feminism, social feminism, patriarchy, radical, tradition, agriculture, Environmental issues, Domestic violence.

## **Introduction**

The concept of human security has been defined in varied ways by different theorists. It has evolved in the recent past to encompass a wider concern for people and the environment. Traditionally security means national security, state security and regional security. This concept ignored the role of the individual and put the state as the main player

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(Liebermann 2010). Human security is a recent approach which stresses human development, their rights and the importance of non-state actors. It is in this approach; we talk about the rights of gender-unbiased human security where there is the inclusion of everyone in equal opportunity (Marsha 2007).

Kyrgyzstan has seen the political turmoil Post-Soviet era, which resulted in a major setback for weaker sections based on gender, class, age and disability. Gender refers to the sociocultural differences and how the power is shared between males and females (Suchinmayee 2008). Gender-related oppression and subordination are a result of factors like race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, disability and nationality (Marsha 2007).

The prevalence of gender security in a region has been studied comprehensively. In 1884, Fredrick Engels wrote in his book "*Origins of the family, private property and the state*" that "women's subordination is associated with the development of the private property. Once the private property was abolished and women joined the labour force, the patriarchy disappeared" (Suchinamayee 2008). This is what was observed in Kyrgyzstan when USSR Soviet rule was established in the 1920s. During the Soviet era, concepts of nationhood and nationality were dictated by the ruling power of Moscow. "*Women questions*" policies of the Soviets ushered in a wave of women's liberation. New laws came into place to safeguard women from discrimination, achieve universal literacy, and state-sponsored health care and child care (Kim Elena 2020). As a result, women received education and became included in the mainstream workforce (Hoare Joanna 2009: 2). Quotas or reservations made it possible for women to represent at senior management levels of the government. Rural and remote areas of Kyrgyzstan were highly subsidised by the Government (Sagynbekova 2017).

During the Soviet era, the concept of liberal feminism, and social feminism got their place and true status due to development in all spheres of society with equal opportunities (Lober 2014: 12). This post-colonial feminism, in a way could challenge and overthrow the patriarchy and achieve radical reordering of society (Willis and Ellen 1984: 171-150).

Kyrgyzstan lost Soviet rule in 1991 and announced sovereignty. With no power to rule over the diminished patriarchal system, Kyrgyzstan reinvented its nationhood ideas based on its age-old culture and traditions. In the Soviet era, the concept of equal wealth was so much prevalent that people practised the tradition of marrying a girl from a rich family to equate their status in society. Post-Soviet era, the country has seen the resurgence of the tradition of kidnapping the bride which was reduced to a minimum in the Soviet period. Policies were framed without considering women and as a result, the gender order was transformed. Women became more susceptible to oppression due to narratives set on conservative gender roles (Kim Elena 2020:708).

State, media and other non-state actors started portraying women as household

ladies in the role of mothers and wives. The sex class system rather than the economic class system began to prevail. The sex class system, as contended by a radical feminist, is the rule by men on women controlling and owing the reproductive capacities of women. As a consequence, physical and psychological subjugation of women has occurred (Suchinmayee 2008:38). This has influenced the thinking of Kyrgyz women and men. The lack of subsidized childcare facilities and health care led to the lesser representation of women in the public sector (Asian Development Report 2019:13).

The market economy captured the stage in the Kyrgyzstan Post-Soviet era. As a direct result of this, there was a reduction in job opportunities for women, due to a fall in universal literacy and loss of bureaucratic roles during the Soviet period (Asian Development Bank 2019: 22-23). The loss of formal jobs in the country was huge only 25% of the total employed are in the formal sector, and 75% are self-employed. Women were left behind and their employment rate came down to 42.3 % in 2007 from 81.6% in 1991. As per ADB report 2019:13, in comparison to 59% male, only 40% workforce was female. (ADB report 2019:13).

Kyrgyz tradition and culture are marked by its strong preservationist approach despite its discontents (Aisarakunova, Aizat 2010: 3). Kyrgyz big celebrations and feasts are famous all over Central Asia and they have such festivals for every occasion like birth, marriage and even death (Aisarakunova, Aizat 2010: 6). *Ala Kachuu* is an infamous Kyrgyz practise in the wedding ceremony where groom's family kidnap the bride and offer her family of kidnapping a girl by force following which after which the groom's family offers the girl marriage scarf (*jooluk*) and the bride has to accept it in public and then she consents in writing to her family for the wedding. Grooms's family offer the price to bride's family in form of cloth, sheep etc. which finally leads to an Islamic marriage ceremony (*nikah*) (ADB 2019:39). In 2014, 12.7% of females aged between 20-49 said that they got into unregistered marriage below the age of 18 (ADB 2019:14).

In April 2017, Kyrgyzstan framed a new law on the Prevention and Protection Against Family Violence against abduction and related sexual violence following the suggestion of the UN Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This law allows reporting against the physical and sexual and psychological and domestic violence (ADB 2019: 14). Despite the 2012 law of Kyrgyzstan for stringent punishment for *alakachuu*, the "tradition of bride kidnapping" and raising the prison term to 7 years, the custom persists (Amnesty International 2018). Kyrgyzstan is a signatory to the BPFA (Beijing Platform for Action) in 1995 and rectified CEDAW on 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 1997 and the optional protocol of CEDAW (OP-CEDAW) on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2002. Along with this, it has obligations under Article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ADB 2019: 25-26).

In 2008, the law "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for men and women" made provision for its strong implementation and documentation. In 2012 for compliance with CEDAW, Kyrgyzstan adopted its first long-term National Gender Strategy (NGS). NGS undertakes the following areas under National Action Plan to achieve gender security by 2020: (i) access to justice for women; (ii) economic empowerment; (iii) strong, effective institutional mechanisms; (iv) gender-equitable political participation; and (v) an education system that promotes gender equality (ADB 2019: 12).

The Kyrgyz economy is mainly based on agriculture, mining and energy sectors. Environmental issues like land degradation and desertification and natural hazards pose a threat to the agricultural sector and food security. Women constitute the majority of the labour force in agriculture but their contribution to the economy is not valued. Women represent only 6% of members of pasture management committees (PMCs), 18% of Water User's Associations, 13.6% of local councils and 4.65% head of local self-governments (LSGs). Women's say in the decisions of natural resource management, climate change adaptation and mitigation practice, and policy-making is very less (UNDP 2016). The rural male population is forced to migrate in search of jobs as climate change has significantly impacted agricultural practices. This leads to women facing the additional burden of agricultural work, animal husbandry, and taking care of senior citizens and children (Sagynbekova Lira 2017: 462).

Domestic violence is widespread in Kyrgyzstan and experienced at least once by 23% of all women aged between 15-49 and this figure stands at 28% for married women. (ADB 2019: 14). Lack of universal healthcare further deteriorates the economic condition of Kyrgyz women (Reechel, Bernd and Saltanant Moldoisaeva 2020). This has led to the record highest maternal mortality rate in the WHO European region (Ministry of Health, Kyrgyz Republic 2020). By 2030, 39% of neonatal deaths, 11% of stillbirths and 19% of maternal deaths could be prevented by taking into consideration neonatal and maternal care (Kamali *et al.* 2021).

## **Conclusion**

Gender issues are being addressed in Kyrgystan through national and international interventions. There has been a marked decline in women's condition Post-Soviet era due to sociocultural foundation and subsidized health care. Kyrgyz republic is transforming into a full-fledged market economy and this comes at a cost of human development. But due to liberalism and international pressure, legislation has been passed which ensures gender security. Now it is at the part of social consciousness how they evolve into a just society amidst a market economy and patriarchal cultural system.

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# Impediments of Regional Integration in Central Asia: A Critical Analysis

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## **Abstract**

*Central Asia emerged as an internationally important region after the five republics gained their independence from the USSR in 1991. The new regional identities that gained independence in Central Asia soon had the potential to motivate the regional integration process in this region. Until recently, the region's independent identity was often blurred by Eurasia, as it was not unanimously recognized as a separate geopolitical region. At present, nearly three decades after independence, these countries could not break the spell of traditional interstate interaction. Central Asia is the only region in the world that lags behind other regions in terms of indigenous regional integration. The purpose of this article is primarily to emphasize that Central Asia is an influential regional entity with an independent identity. Second, it focuses on the factors behind the regional integration process or situation and the absence of an indigenous regional institution. It is argued that regional distinctive features and the influence of interregional actors have frozen the regional integration process in Central Asia.*

## **Keywords**

Central Asia, Regional Integration, Regionalism, Organization, Relations

## **Introduction**

Since the 1980s, efforts have been made in the world towards regional integration. At present, the absolute majority of neighbouring countries in different regions have established joint institutions for cooperation. However, Central Asia is one of the regions that are lagging. It is a vast region stretching from the eastern mountainous regions of Tajikistan to the Caspian Sea to the west. It has a total area of 4,003,451 km<sup>2</sup> and 10,035,185 people (Worldometer 2022). The five countries of the region are divided into two parts in terms of natural resources. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are rich in oil and gas resources. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are hubs of water resources and

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minerals like gemstones. Central Asia as a political region came into existence after the Russian Tsarist Empire established the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan. Before this administrative establishment, there was no common political identity in the region and the people were divided among three different Khanates. It was the Soviets who worked to give a common comprehensive regional identity to the people of this region (Luong 2004: 4-5).

The policy of the Soviets was aimed at Intra-regional economic integration in Central Asia. According to constructivists, the post-Tsarist attempt to give a common identity to the region disintegrated the former Russian regionalism. Central Asia is regarded to be a natural region due to historical commonalities between the people of the region in terms of ethnicity, culture, language, religion etc. During the USSR era, the five republics embarked upon multiple attempts to make institutional arrangements for regional cooperation but they failed to operationalize their initiatives. The nature of inter-state relations and the influence of foreign actors were the major barriers to this process. The immediate effect of the independence of the five republics of Central Asia was a new political identity of the region. Subsequently, the region resurfaced as a significant geopolitical arena – as was underpinned by western authors - attracted the attention of regional and global powers who intended to establish their version of regional arrangements.

The newly emerged states of the region attempted to overcome their internal challenges and begin cooperation within a regional framework. These attempts, however, did not result in any fruitful outcome. The region which shares various commonalities (culture, social structure, history etc.) has failed to experience regional integration. Central Asian Union (CAU) was the only regional organization, exclusively established by Central Asian states in 1994. Tajikistan joined it as an observer in 1996 while Turkmenistan due to its neutral foreign policy did not join. The short-lived CAU was ultimately dissolved in 2004 (Rumer 2017: 104).

This study aims to examine the power centres in the Central Asian geography after the Cold War period. In other words, the extent to which Central Asia progressed and developed in the post-Soviet period will be examined. The theoretical framework of the study focuses on regionalism and regional integration to understand regional developments and integration. Therefore, this study revolves around the question that despite having a common background, huge economic potential and significant geostrategic location as well as passing through 1/3 of a century after independence, why has a dynamic regional integration not been institutionalized in Central Asia? The nature and level of political, economic and social relations, imbalance of power, nature of communication, the structure of relations as well as roles of foreign actors are the factors that decelerated regional integration in Central Asia.

## **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

There are many approaches to the study of regionalism and regional integration in International Relations. According to Ernst Haas (1958: 16), integration is a "process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new larger centre whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over preexisting nation-states". In his next work, Haas (1964: 22) redefined integration as a process whereby the objective and determinate international system transforms into an indeterminate system in the future. According to Amitai Etzioni (1965: 322), integration is a process whereby political units increase or strengthen the bonds among themselves. To him, an integrated community (organization) has effective control over the use of means of violence, a central decision-making unit that must allocate resources and rewards throughout the community. Leon Lindberg (1963 cited in Sangioyanni, 2017: 8) defines it as the development of devices and processes for arriving at collective decisions by means other than autonomous actions by national governments. Hence, integration is a process whereby nations give up their independent direction of foreign and domestic policies and instead attempt to make common decisions or give the decision-making task to a new central institution. Thus, integration is a process through which states associate with each other to achieve a consensus situation. Despite the question of whether integration is a process or a situation, it is commonly agreed that integration requires states to give up some of their national sovereignty to a transnational institution. Therefore, integration can be defined as a process and situation whereby states as the main actors of the international system submit to a transnational institution by giving up some of their sovereignty.

Regarding regional integration, the mainstream theories of International Relations hold different positions. Even though realism acknowledges cooperation between states but when it comes to the concept of integration, it does not find a suitable place in this school. When looking at regionalism in terms of power-based approaches, it is seen that they make a state-centred evaluation. With a focus on power studies, realism examines regionalism within the framework of regional dominance. Rationalists argue that actors act with similar decisions against external problems. Power-based approaches explain regionalism in the backdrop of international and regional power distribution (Katitaş 2019: 122-123). Perhaps, cooperation differs from integration as the former is mere cooperation without giving up sovereignty while the latter requires high compromise (Phan, 2017: 305). It is the liberalism school of International Relations that conceptualizes integration. Scholars such as David Mitrany, Karl Duetsch and Joseph Nye, Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel are the proponents of the concept of integration. While Mitrany and Duetsch's functionalism theory is more Euro-centric Nye and Haas's neo-functionalism can be applied to non-European situations (Cram *et al.*, 1999: 8-10).



Apart from the power-oriented realist approach, a society-centred approach draws attention. Here, regionalism, and economic and social interests are brought to the fore (Katitaş 2019: 122-123). In the context of this paper, which examines the reasons behind the failure of Central Asian countries in the development of regional integration and promotion of regionalism, the neo-functionalism theory of Joseph Nye and Cantori and Spiegel Model is applied. Ernst Hass of neo-functionalism regards integration as a political process and argues that if the leaders believe that integration does not fulfil their interests, they will abandon it. According to neo-functionalism, four independent variables are required for the materialization of integration: Economic symmetry and equality, complementary values of elites, pluralism and the ability of states for integration (Tüfekçi *et al.*, 2017: 55-56).

In addition to the above four factors, the Cantori and Spiegel Model forms the basis of this paper. This theory studies factors of divergence from regional and trans-regional perspectives. The trans-regional factor relates the presence of international actors with different intentions and incentives while the regional factors revolve around four dimensions:

- a) Nature and level of cohesion: This factor refers to the extent of similarity and complementarity nature of political, social, and economic relations.
- b) Nature of communication: It relates the extent and nature of relations between regional states in terms of communication between citizens, media, exchange of opinion between elites, physical communication routes such as railways, roads, tourism etc.
- c) Structure of relations: The potential and historical relations between states that can be either positive (peace) or negative (conflict).
- d) Level of power: The more uneven distribution of power in a given geographic region, the more divergence increases. This imbalance creates the perception of relative gain that subsequently hinders integration (Cantori & Spiegel 1970: 406-413).

In this study, the structure of the Central Asian region will be examined based on this theory. For this reason, it is necessary to define the region in the first place starting from a theoretical basis.

### **Central Asia and Regional Factors**

Central Asia as a term was first coined by a German geographer, Alexander Von Humboldt in 1843. Humboldt has located in Central Asia in the steppe desert between the Caspian Sea and eastern Mongolia. To him, Afghanistan and western China were also

parts of Central Asia (Aronoya 2021: 71). This designation coincided with the prolonged great game between Russian Empire and Great Britain. To Russian Empire, however, the Central Asian region stretched from Kazakhstan to the Oxus River excluding Afghanistan and west China (Khan 1996: 38). During the Soviets, Central Asia encompassed northern Mongolian territories, Xinxiang and Tibet while Medieval Asia referred to the contemporary four Central Asian republics except Kazakhstan. Though theoretically Central Asia is considered a region with a separate identity, the practice of some actors blurs its identity with Caucasasia, Europe and South Asia. For example, in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of most countries, the affairs related to Central Asia are administrated by the joined bureau of Central Asia and other neighbouring regions. In the US, the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs and in China the Department of European-Central Asian Affairs are in charge of Central Asian affairs. Even the Russian perspective intermingles the region with Europe thanks to its Eurasianism approach. Whatever the practice is, contemporary Central Asia is commonly referred to as the five republics Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The criteria for referring to these countries as a region are geostrategic factors. Cantori and Spiegel (1969: 361-362) definition of region best applies to Central Asia. To them, the region is represented by a broader subordinate system that "consisting of one state or two or more geographically proximate and interacting states which share in some degree common ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social and historical bonds and whose sense of identity is sometimes increased by the actions and attitudes of states external to the system." Central Asia lies within the scope of this definition because all five republics fulfil the above criteria. The five republics of Central Asia are not only geographically interrelated but also share common historical backgrounds, values and cultures. Regional factors are the foremost causes of divergence in Central Asia. These factors are analyzed by nature and level of cohesion, nature of communication, structure of relations and level of power.

### **Nature and Level of Cohesion**

First of all, the effects of nature and level of cohesion have to be analyzed. Although the countries of the region have historical ties, the change experienced in the Soviet period should not be forgotten. In this respect, nature and level of cohesion include social, political and economic factors. Despite having a common background and sharing cultural commonalities, the countries of Central Asia are divergent along several social lines. The foremost reason behind this divergence is the artificial social values injected by Russian Empire followed by the Soviet Union. Social convergence is a decisive factor in regional integration. The indicators of social cohesion are language, religion and ethnicity. The language of Central Asian countries is traditionally dominated by the Russian language as during the Soviets the Cyrillic alphabet was introduced to this region.

Even though these countries use the Cyrillic alphabet and priority is given to the Russian language, the indigenous languages of these countries remain different. By the end of Soviet rule over Central Asian countries, each country started to promote its own national linguistic identity (Fierman 2009: 1219-1221). For the multilingual identity of Central Asia, it is sufficient to name each republic by dominance of the linguistic population residing in that particular country. Following independence, the national languages of each country were incorporated into the constitution and a process of de-Russification started (Landau *et al.* 2001: 66). Except for Kyrgyzstan – which declared Russian and Kyrgyz language as two official languages of the state in 2000 – other countries allowed the application of Russian only in inter-ethnic communications (Dietrich 2011: 468). The multilingual profile of the countries of Central Asia played an obstacle role in the process of integration. According to Joseph Nye, in the process of integration states are required to give up some of their values. It seems if a regional arrangement is supposedly established in Central Asia, the countries will not be ready to accept other countries' languages as an official dominant language.

Religion is another indicator of social cohesion. In Central Asia, however, this factor could not play a constructive role in regional integration. It is estimated that Islam is the dominant religion in Central Asia with 81% of followers (Rowland 1990). Turkmenistan has the largest Muslim population (93%), while in Kazakhstan 70.2% of the total population practices Islam (CIA 2022). The bitter Russian imperialist hegemony over this region suppressed religion in order not to play a unifying role among these countries. The legacy of the Soviets in the region has been the systematic suppression of Islam (Bethamann 1958: 4). This process was triggered after the call for the global war on terror and the emergence of the threat of extremism from the Central Asian southern border. Tajikistan's Civil War was inspired by Islamic ideology and the consequent repression of Islamic movements in these countries prevented this indicator to contribute to regional integration. Tajikistan is the leading country in terms of religious suppression which is followed by Uzbekistan. For example, in 2015 Tajikistan banned the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) which was the only political opposition in this country. Recently, in late December 2021, it was reported that Uzbekistan police forced Muslim men to shave their beards (RFERL 2021).

The ethnic indicator of social cohesion in Central Asia is the more complex one. Just like distinction on the linguistic part, Central Asian countries are also ethnically divergent. All countries of Central Asia host multiple minority groups in their territory who hold substantive ethnic loyalty to their original mainland. This ethnic fragmentation roots back to the Stalin policy of *Dekulakization* in the 1930s. In this process, hundreds of Kulaks who belonged to different ethnic groups were either massacred or forcefully resettled (Viola 1989: 97). For example, Kazakhstan which nominally represents the

Kazakh ethnic group has only 68% of the Kazakh population followed by Russians (19.3%), Uzbeks (3.2%), and Ukrainians (1.5%) (CIA 2022). In addition, independence occurred along the Soviet-demarcated boundaries resulting in a complex ethnic conflict. Stalin designed Fergana Valley is home to ethnic minorities of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. There are seven exclaves in this region. Tajikistan has two exclaves in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan has four exclaves in Kyrgyzstan followed by a Kyrgyz exclave in Uzbekistan. This uneven geographic demarcation of boundaries without consideration of ethnic settlements resulted in a long-lasting ethnic conflict between these three countries (Polat 2021: 56). For example, Sokh is geographically located within the territory of Kyrgyzstan but the population is Tajik whereas it is politically controlled by Uzbekistan. This character of Fergana Valley has made it to experience ethnic conflict alongside the trihedral border. The same is the case with Samarkand and Bukhara cities of Uzbekistan which are warily claimed by Tajikistan. Tajik ethnic minority in these two cities is more than the total population of mainland Tajikistan and constitutes 30% of Uzbekistan's population (Pillalamarri 2016). Before improving the relations between the two countries after 2016, Rahmon of Tajikistan was a big mouth regarding Uzbekistan's treatment of Tajik minorities. In 2009, he even claimed that Tajiks would someday recapture Samarkand and Bukhara (Eurasia 2016).

The second reason that hinders the process of regional integration in Central Asia relates to political factors. This factor is analyzed both in terms of the domestic political system as well as foreign policy orientations. All countries of Central Asia except Kyrgyzstan – which started to move towards democracy after the Tulip Revolution in 2005 – practice authoritarian rule. Martha Brill Olcott (2004: 25-26) argues that local leaders perceive regionalism and regional integration as a threat to their power and authority. National security is replaced by regime security and the policies are aimed at the survival of the leadership. As Haas and Nye point out that submitting some extent of sovereignty to a transnational actor is a prerequisite for regional integration. To the leaders of Central Asian countries, this process does not serve their interests. The political system of Central Asian countries falls in the category of illiberal democracies (Zakaria 2007: 101). Though the election is held in all countries of Central Asia and some democratic rights are given to political parties but this practice lacks liberal elements. In the constitution of all these countries separation of power, parliament, presidential term and other democratic mechanisms are stipulated but they are not practically enforced. For example, according to the constitution of Uzbekistan, the president can run for two terms of five years each, but Islam Karimov held the presidency of the country from 1991 to his death in 2016 establishing a lifetime presidency practice in the country. In Tajikistan, the situation is worse than in Uzbekistan. Emomali Rohmon has banned all opposition political parties and held the power since independence. Dynasticism prevails in

Tajikistan as its lifetime leader appointed his son as Speaker of Parliament and his daughter as ambassador to the United Kingdom. In the constitution amendment of 2016, Emomali minimized the age criterion of running for the presidential election to 30 years of age, paving the way for his son's nomination (Putz 2020). There are similar situations in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. On the one hand, the recent move of Turkmen President Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov to hold an early election on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and to voluntarily step down from office is an indication of breaking the political tradition in Central Asia. On the other hand, the nomination of his son Serdar Berdymukhamedov in this election to replace his father consolidates dynasticism in the country. As a result of this, he was declared the winner of the presidential election by obtaining about 73% of the votes (Press 2022). In 2005, a revolution towards democracy was triggered in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan but due to Russian quick intervention, this process failed and did not spread to other countries of the region. The 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2022 massive protests in Kazakhstan and the regime's crackdown also clearly indicate how authoritarian regimes of Central Asia are sensitive to any democratic uprising. Therefore, at the domestic level lack of a liberal democratic political system, suppression of political parties, discouraging civil society and media censorship have undermined any potential for regional integration. The leaders of these countries have failed to balance national security and regime security.

The foreign policy orientation of these countries also differs at a great level. The countries of Central Asia hold contradictory approaches to their foreign relations. Since independence, Turkmenistan has followed a policy of neutrality which hinders it to join any regional arrangement. In the regional organizations established by trans-regional powers, Turkmenistan is the only country that is withheld to join. Tajikistan with its devastating background of civil war and its fragile economy is dependent on Russia. Kazakhstan is also a strategic ally of Russia thanks to 19.3% of the Russian population living in this country, geographical proximity, the tendency of Kazakh political elites and economic-military dependency. Kyrgyzstan again differs in its foreign policy orientation. After Tulip Revolution, Kyrgyzstan approached the West and provided Manas Airbase to the US forces. In the context of foreign policy, Uzbekistan has a challenging position. In the late 1990s, it suspended its membership in CIS and entered GUAM (Organization for Democracy and Economic Development) under the auspices of the west and provided a military base to the US. The Andijan protests of 2005 again shifted the foreign policy direction of Uzbekistan by suspending its membership in GUAM and re-approaching to Moscow (RFERL 2012). It also closed its US military base in Khanabad. However, in light of the recent developments in Afghanistan, it attempts to balance its relations with both US and Russia. Currently, all countries of Central Asia except Tajikistan hold a common view regarding the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Given this divergence in the

foreign policy orientations of Central Asian countries, it can be easily observed that different foreign policy orientations affect the establishment of a common regional organization.

According to Hass's (1958: 134) neo-functionalism theory of integration, the existence of a common need among countries of a particular region encourages them to cooperate on the particular sector which subsequently bears a spillover effect on other sectors. The economy as the most important factor of regional integration has not played a constructive role in Central Asia. In this context, there are a few economic variables that affected regional integration. Cantori and Spiegel's Model explains how the economic powers of states, the pattern of foreign trade, and the nature of economic relations affect regional integration in a particular region.

Even the distribution of resources can contribute to the establishment and consolidation of regional integration but uneven distribution of resources can result in an economic disparity between states. Central Asian countries greatly differ from each other in terms of economic power. For example, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan lack oil and gas as two core energy resources in Central Asia while Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are hubs of what is called black gold. Despite Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan enjoying abundant hydropower resources, the contribution of these resources to the national economies of these countries is not comparable to the oil and gas of the former three countries. Tajikistan is the most disadvantageous country in this region in terms of economic resources (Collins 2009: 257-260). 92.9% of its land is occupied by mountains and only the remaining 6.1% is ripe for cultivation. Perhaps, one can argue that hydropower could be alternative to oil and gas as energy resources, but due to unfavorable weather in almost six months of the year, Tajikistan faces a shortage of hydropower and cannot fulfil its energy needs (Council 2018: 12). On the contrary, all three oil-rich countries enjoy their energy resources without any interruption while the majority of their agricultural needs are also domestically supplied. Given the most important indicators, the economic disparity of Central Asian countries is illustrated in the following table.

One of the most important pre-requisites of regional integration is that the states should have a complementary economy. In other words, the level of economic interdependence should be sufficient enough that could tie their needs to the cooperation of each other. The pattern of economic relations should also be intra-regional rather than trans-regional. The economy of Central Asian countries is neither complementary nor intra-regional. These countries are economically more dependent on trans-regional countries. The pattern of foreign trade represents fewer figures among the countries of Central Asia. The majority of exports and imports of these countries are conducted beyond the boundaries of the region. The most important exports of Central Asia are oil,

**Table 1: Comparative Data on the Economic Indicators of Central Asian Countries (2021)**

<i>Country/Indicator</i>	<i>GDP</i>	<i>GDP (per capita)</i>	<i>Unemployment Rate</i>	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>FDI</i>
<i>Kazakhstan</i>	\$169.84 b	\$9,056	6.05%	\$66.20b	\$51.63b	\$3.32b
<i>Uzbekistan</i>	\$57.71b	\$1,686	5.97%	\$15.18b	\$21.20b	\$2.32b
<i>Turkmenistan</i>	\$45.23b	\$7,612	4.38%	\$9.24b	\$5.09b	\$2.17b
<i>Tajikistan</i>	\$8.19b	\$859	7.50%	\$1.40b	\$3.13b	\$0.21b
<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	\$7.74 b	\$1,174	7.89%	\$2.42b	\$4.00b	\$0.28

Source: Macrotrends

gas and minerals while these countries import machinery and industrial equipment. The industry sector of none of these countries is a competing market for local oil and gas in Central Asia. In other words, the economic needs of Central Asian countries are not fulfilled inside the region; instead, they import their needs from trans-regional countries. The following table demonstrates the major export and import partners of Central Asian countries.

**Table 2: Major Export and Import Partners of Central Asia (2015-2019)**

<i>Kazakhstan</i>		<i>Uzbekistan</i>		<i>Turkmenistan</i>		<i>Tajikistan</i>		<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	
Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
Italy	Russia	Unspec ified	China	Russia	Russia	Russia	Uzbeki stan	UK	China
China	China	Russia	Russia	Italy	Turkey	Netherl ands	Russia	Kazakh stan	Russia
Russia	S. Korea	China	S. Korea	Iran	Ukrain e	Uzbeki stan	Ukrain e	Russia	Kazakh stan
Netherl ands	Italy	Kazakh stan	Kazakh stan	Turkey	UAE	Switzer land	Kazakh stan	Uzbeki stan	Turkey
France	Germa ny	Turkey	Turkey	Ukrain e	Japan	Italy	Azerbai jan	Turkey	Uzbeki stan

Source: World Bank.

As shown, no regional country is among the top five trade partners of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Kazakhstan is the fourth export and import partner of Uzbekistan while the same export position is replaced by Switzerland in trade with Tajikistan. However, Kazakhstan preserves its position as the fourth importing partner of Tajikistan. Only Kyrgyzstan has a favourable situation in intra-regional trade. Regionally, Kazakhstan is the second-largest exporting and third-importing partner. Uzbekistan ranks fifth as importing partner of Kyrgyzstan.

Therefore, these indicators well illustrate that economic cooperation in Central Asia is below average and that the similar economic needs of these countries make them supply their needs from international markets and deem regional integration unnecessary.

### **Nature of Communication**

It is argued that the more communication between leaders of states in a given region, the more common trust develops. This variable is essential but not enough factor for regional integration (Lombaerde *et al.* 2012: 53). Diplomatic meetings, construction of transportation routes, people-to-people contact etc. can be mentioned as the most common indicators of inter-state communication. In the context of Central Asia, the level of communication between leaders is below average. For example, since 2000 Islam Karimov the president of Uzbekistan never visited its neighbouring Tajikistan. It was not until Shavkat Mirziyoyev broke the spell and opened bilateral visits in 2016 (Pannier 2021). Since independence, official high diplomatic visits have been taking place on the sideline of multilateral gatherings under the auspices of a trans-regional state. Only after 2018, the countries of Central Asia started to have multilateral visits without any role of trans-regional catalysts.

The uneven construction of road and rail connectivity in the region designed by the Soviets also brought about disadvantages to these countries. Road and rail infrastructures were designed to connect three energy-rich countries to Moscow. The road and rail connectivity in the countries like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that lacked substantial energy resources remained limited to the transfer of cotton to other regional countries. The mountainous terrain in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan has been another major barrier to rail and road connectivity. Kyrgyzstan's connectivity infrastructures were constructed along its northern border with Russia paying less attention to its southern Central Asian neighbours (Russell 2019: 1).

### **Structure of Relations**

This parameter indicates the nature of relations between countries of a region in terms of being cooperative or conflictual. In Central Asia, the nature of relations between



countries has been swinging between difference, tension and dispute spectrums. Many factors potentially trigger disputes between these countries. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have developed unfriendly relations over water resources. The water crisis in Central Asia is becoming a decisive factor for the future of relations between these countries. The uneven distribution of water resources due to the Soviet's water policy and lack of water agreement among all five countries are the main potential factors for political divergence. Soviet's legacy of the diverted flow of Syr Darya and Amu Darya to Fergana Valley – which was the major producer of cotton at the time – drained the Aral Sea of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Though the new leadership of Uzbekistan started to show bonhomie to upper-stream Tajikistan by waiving its resistance against the construction of the Rogun Dam, the developing water crisis scenario potentially fosters dispute between the two countries. Tajikistan holds 75% of Amu Darya's headwater that goes downward to Uzbekistan. Since Tajikistan's share of geopolitics is headwaters, it continues to build water dams on its rivers most notably on Vakhsh and Panj rivers (Reuters 2018). The tense relations between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan arise from ethnic tension in the exclave of Tajikistan inside Kyrgyzstan. The differences that exist here have their origin in the village of Vorukh, an outer region of Tajikistan on the territory of Kyrgyzstan, where the majority of Tajiks live. About 32,000 Tajiks reside in this region and there is a fertile area of 130 square kilometres. Legally, Vorukh is part of Tajikistan. However, this area remained a residential area within a distance of about 20 kilometres in Kyrgyzstan as a result of the borders being redrawn in the past. For this reason, the region is still disputed between the two countries and military conflicts periodically strain their relations (Kurmanalieva 2018: 5-6). The most recent frontier skirmish between the two countries happened on September 16, 2022, as a result of which 24 Kyrgyz were killed (Dzyubenko 2022). This incident happened just when the leaders of these countries were gathered at the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tashkent. Previously, the three days military confrontation between the two countries occurred between 28 April and 1 May 2021 whereby 55 people were killed and 40,000 were displaced (Abdülkerimov 2021).

One of the major factors that hinder regional integration in Central Asia is the hegemonic vying of the two relatively dominant powers of the region. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan develop a cold competition over the hegemony of the region (Deyermond 2009: 162-165). Kazakhstan is the largest country in Central Asia in terms of territory while Uzbekistan is the largest country by population. It has a central location in the region with the advantage of having a common border with all Central Asian countries. The dominance of Kazakhstan in Central Asia is by and large unquestionable but not unchallengeable. Under Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan's hegemonic challenge to Kazakhstan was explicit but since the rise of Mirziyoyev to power, Tashkent – while

pursuing the same goal – adopted a smarter method. The idea of an annual leadership summit of Central Asian countries was proposed by Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan and was operationalized since 2018.

**Level of Power**

The last regional factor that relates to the barriers to regional integration in Central Asia is the imbalance of power between these states. All countries of Central Asia are different in terms of physical indicators of power. In this context, the level of power can be measured by the national economy and military. As discussed earlier, the five countries of Central Asia suffer from huge differences when it comes to economic power. Kazakhstan as the largest economy in the region is capable to compete in the international markets while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan still depend on foreign international aid mainly from Russia.

The next indicator of national power is military capabilities. Again, Uzbekistan with a \$15 billion military budget is the region's biggest military power followed by Kazakhstan with \$4 billion. The smallest military in terms of budget belongs to Kyrgyzstan with a \$20 million military budget and only 1100 military forces. Regional integration which is manifested by an institutional organization requires active and equal participation of states. The imbalance of power in Central Asia caused this criterion to be lacking in regional integration.

**Table 3: Main Indicators of Military Power in Central Asia (2022)**

<i>Country/Indicator</i>	<i>Military Budget</i>	<i>Active Personnel</i>	<i>Available Manpower</i>	<i>Rank in the World</i>
<i>Uzbekistan</i>	\$15 b	50,000	15,894,014	51
<i>Kazakhstan</i>	\$4,00 b	135,000	8,591,377	61
<i>Turkmenistan</i>	\$800 m	22,000	2,666,600	86
<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	\$20 m	11,000	3,042,097	93
<i>Tajikistan</i>	\$79 m	9,000	4,081,888	99

Source: Global Fire Power

This huge disparity between Central Asian countries creates a core-periphery political environment in Central Asia. Smaller countries fearing exploitation by powerful countries did not show interest in regional arrangements. According to Robert Keohane, however, the existence of a hegemon in a region can contribute to the creation and consolidation of regional integration, providing that this hegemon should intend to go for integration and secondly its hegemony should be accepted by others (Yazid 2015: 68). In Central Asia, this presumption is not relevant. First, Uzbekistan acts as a counter-

hegemon against Kazakhstan and secondly due to emerging nationalism the hegemonic domination of none of these countries is favoured by other countries.

### **Trans-regional Factors**

Central Asia has been an arena of competition between alien powers since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Russian Empire and Great Britain were the two main rival actors on the political, military and geopolitical fronts. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 ended the existing colonial Great Game, but it did not stave off the upcoming episode of great power competition in the region. Soon after the disintegration of the USSR and the independence of the Central Asian Republics, new trans-regional actors entered the region. Great powers such as USA, Russia and China started to influence the region with their version of regionalism. This trend, however, is not driven by cooperation but competition. In the absence of an indigenous regional integration in Central Asia, the ground became ripe for trans-regional actors to exploit the opportunity and lead collective regional arrangements.

### **Russian-led Regional Arrangements in Central Asia**

In the 1990s, Russia as the successor of the USSR abandoned its traditional orbit of influence in Central Asia due to internal economic challenges and the Atlanticist views of Boris Yeltsin. This trend encouraged other global and regional actors to fill the vacuum of great power influence in the region (Iqbal & Afridi 2017: 233). It was not until Vladimir Putin's rise to power in Moscow made Central Asia was reconsidered as an important geopolitical periphery to both the security and economy of Russia. The Eurasianism approach of Russia during the Putin era resulted in the return of Russian influence to Central Asia. Russian concern about Central Asia rises from political considerations, national security, drug trafficking and energy security (Schmidt 2005: 93).

In 1992 Russia established the Commonwealth of Independent States with the inclusion of all five countries except Turkmenistan. This organization, however, does not denote the essence of regional integration concerning Central Asia thanks to the membership of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova and Belarus. The next Russian-led regional arrangement in Central Asia is Collective Security Treaty Organization which was established on 14 February 1992. The organization which was solely aimed at military and security issues prohibits its members from engaging in any military activities with foreign countries. According to article 7 of the charter, no member of CSTO is permitted to host any foreign military base in its territory without the consent of other member states (CSTO, 2012). Indeed, Russia which shares 50% of the total budget of CSTO enjoys more influence when it comes to decision-making (Karimov 2021). In

addition, all Central Asian countries are not members of this organization. Turkmenistan due to its neutral foreign policy never joined the organization and Uzbekistan with its shaky regime-centric foreign policy suspended its membership twice. Tashkent withdrew from the organization in 1999 after the perception of a conflict of interests between Uzbekistan and Russia. It rejoined the organization in 2006 after the Andijan Crisis of 2005. This partnership again was unilaterally suspended by Uzbekistan in 2012 when it again approached the US bloc after mistrust developed between Tashkent and Moscow.

Eurasian Economic Union is the third Russian-dominated regional arrangement which was officially established on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. In the context of Central Asian regional integration, this organization also cannot be considered a full-fledged regional arrangement due to certain reasons. Russia's approach to this organization is to integrate the industrial Central Asian and Eurasian countries. Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are not members of this organization and Uzbekistan hold the status of observer. Armenia and Belarus as two trans-regional members alter the essence of Central Asian indigenous regionalism while Cuba and Moldova take part as observer states (EEU 2022). It means that the status of Uzbekistan as a regional country in Central Asia is equal to a trans-continental (alien) country i.e. Cuba. As illustrated, the only regional arrangement in which all countries of Central Asia take part in Russia + 5 Format meetings launched in

**Table 4: Russian-led Trans-regional Institutional Structures**

<i>Organization/Platform</i>	<i>CIS</i>	<i>CSTO</i>	<i>EAEU</i>	<i>SCO</i>	<i>5+1</i>
<i>m</i>	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan (Uzbekistan 2006-2012)	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Moldova	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China India, Pakistan	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan
<i>Members/Observers</i>					
<i>Non-members</i>	Turkmenistan	Turkmenistan	Turkmenistan and Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	

Source: Wilson 2021: 59.

2019. This initiative, however, firstly started by Japan in 2004 followed by other great powers, lacks organizational structure and is confined to multilateral summits of the

foreign ministers. Shanghai Cooperation Organization is another foreign-driven regional arrangement in Central Asia that functions as a medium of influence for both Russia and China (Wilson 2021: 60).

Even though CIS, CSTO, EAEU, SCO and Russia + 5 Format function as regional arrangements in Central Asia, due to the dominance of Russia as a trans-regional power and legislative restrictions stemming from membership in these organizations, it appears that the Central Asian countries are less likely to go for indigenous regional integration shortly.

### **Chinese-led Regional Arrangements in Central Asia**

Since 2001, China started to pay significant attention to Central Asia thanks to its dire need for raw materials and energy as well as its concern over military security. The establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with the initiative of China in 2001 highlights the intense interest of China in the region. Turkmenistan again left a gap in this arrangement by not joining the organization. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), however, was China's initiative but due to Russian traditional hegemony in the region, the inevitable conflict of interest between China and Russia eventually would influence foreign policy orientations of Central Asian countries. Membership of Central Asian countries in this organization contradicts the spirit of regional integration for Central Asian member states of CSTO. For example, Tajikistan is traditionally dependent on Russian military support, but its membership in SCO makes it favour China as well. Belt and Road Initiative is the second Chinese-led regional approach in Central Asia which was launched in 2013. Though BRI lacks institutional structure this deficiency is covered by SCO. All countries of Central Asia except Turkmenistan have inked a memorandum of understanding with China. Even though BRI has the potential to function as a catalyst of regional interdependence between Central Asian countries, the concentration of China on oil-rich countries is a disadvantage for countries like Tajikistan. Thus, China plays the role of splitter among Central Asian countries and unintentionally increases the already existing power disparity in the region. China's economic ambition in Central Asia eclipses the efforts of regional integration because two first stages of regionalism<sup>1</sup> can only be operationalized when domestic products are exported. Under BRI, the influx of cheap Chinese goods to Central Asia would replace domestic goods resulting in a decrease in intra-regional trade (Baumer 2018: 297).

China also embraced Central Asian countries through its Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank established in 2016. Weak economies of Central Asia like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are increasingly depending on Chinese loans. In 2020, 52% of the total foreign debts of Tajikistan came from AIIB followed by Kyrgyzstan with 45% (Wilson 2021: 62). This dependency on Chinese-led banks further complicates the process of

indigenous regional integration as each country's economic tendency diverts from intra-regional countries to trans-regional economies.

**Table 5: Chinese-led Regional and Trans-regional Institutions and Platforms**

<i>Organization/Platform</i>	<i>SCO</i>	<i>BRI</i>	<i>5+1</i>
<i>Members/Observers</i>	China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan
<i>Non-members</i>	Tajikistan	Tajikistan	Tajikistan

Source: Wilson 2021: 60.

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<sup>1</sup> Preferential Trade Agreement and Free Trade Agreement.

In addition to SCO, BRI and AIIB, China also influences the region through its China + 5 Format meeting. This initiative which was launched in 2020 aimed at increasing Chinese clout in Central Asia. Like Russia + 5 Format, in China + 5 Format also all countries of Central Asia participate. This initiative also hurts intra-regional integration. It is argued that under this framework, China is intended to convince Central Asian countries to fight any ethnic-religious sympathy with the culturally and linguistically close neighbours across the border. This will consequently further increase the ethnic rift between Central Asian countries (Hashimova 2020).

### **US-led Regional Arrangements in Central Asia**

Despite the United States has been the major proponent of regionalism across the globe, due to the political dynamics of Central Asia it was not able to establish any institutional arrangement in the region. The first foothold of the US in Central Asia dates back to 1989 when Chevron Company invested in the petroleum industry of Kazakhstan (Cohen 2006: 14). But the landmark of US engagements in Central Asia is more clearly observed in the 2000s after the US activities in the region were shaped by bilateral agreements. Since 2011, the US relations with Central Asian countries have become more organized by the introduction of the US New Silk Route (north-south) and the 1+5 Joint Project.

Central Asia as a region was highlighted in Washington after Hillary Clinton's

official visit to Central Asia and South Asia in 2011. In the context of regional integration, the most prominent outcome of the visit was the introduction of the New Silk Road Initiative. Unlike Russian and Chinese patterns of regionalism in Central Asia, the United States focused on the three passive countries of the region. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, which were less involved in the Russian and Chinese-led regional arrangements are centurms of the US-led initiatives. This situation is best represented by the two notable connectivity projects initiated and partially funded by the US. The first project known as CASA-1000 transfers hydropower from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan. The second is a gas pipeline project between Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (Saleem 2018: 58-59). Even though this initiative was aimed at inter-regional integration between Central Asia and South Asia through Afghanistan, its impact on the Central Asian indigenous regional integration is inevitable.

The C5+1 platform was launched in 2015 as the US main dialogue summit with Central Asian states. It is a ministerial-level summit that is held annually between the foreign ministers of five republics and the United States. Underpinned by the US Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025, the C5+1 is aimed at supporting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Central Asian countries. The C5+1 platform channeled \$34 million in US assistance to fund projects in the areas of security, economic connectivity and environment (State 2020). In the latest summit between the foreign ministers which was held in April 2021, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated the US commitment to the aforementioned three sensitive discourses in Central Asia. Based on the discourse analysis, it can be argued that the US C5+1 platform intends to trigger the creeping nationalistic trends in Central Asia. Consequently, it will result in further divergence among the Central Asian countries.

## **Conclusion**

Passing through thirty years of independence, Central Asian countries have failed to integrate into the form of establishing a regional institution. The Cantori and Spiegel Model well illustrates how intra-regional and trans-regional factors hindered regional integration in Central Asia. Nature and level of cohesion, nature of communication, structure of relations and level of power are regional indicators of divergence among these countries. Even though difference as a natural phenomenon in international relations cannot be accounted as the sole factor of regional divergence among Central Asian countries, the nature of international relations in Central Asia tends to be characterized by tension. Illiberal democratic regimes of the region whereby regime security is more prioritized than national security as well as uncomplimentary economies of the region prevent the establishment of any indigenous regional organization in Central Asia.

The great power vacuum in the region after the collapse of the USSR paved the way for trans-regional powers to enter the region with different political and economic objectives. The influence of three great powers in the region i.e. Russia, China and the US shapes the foreign policy choices of these countries. This divergence of political tendency is well illustrated in Uzbekistan as it swayed from the Russian spectrum to the US within a decade. The institutional arrangements led by these three powers do not fulfil the regional needs of Central Asia. The interests often overlap or contradict each other as illustrated by CSTO and SCO as two parallel security organizations dominated by two great powers i.e. Russia and China. Theoretical frameworks of regional integration prioritize economic cooperation for consolidation of regional integration rather than political or military arrangements. The only economic organization in which all countries of Central Asia are members is Economic Cooperation Organization which was cofounded by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Since this organization is an inter-regional organization and Central Asian countries enjoy nothing but membership, it seems to lack the required potential to integrate these countries.

## Notes

1. Preferential Trade Agreement and Free Trade Agreement.

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