

ISSN 1404-6091 (Print)
ISSN 2002-3839 (Online)

**CENTRAL ASIA
AND
THE CAUCASUS**
English Edition

Journal of Social and Political Studies

**Volume 20
Issue 4
2019**

***CA&C Press AB*
SWEDEN**

FOUNDED AND PUBLISHED BY

INSTITUTE
FOR CENTRAL ASIAN AND
CAUCASIAN STUDIES

Registration number: 620720-0459
State Administration for Patents and Registration of Sweden

CA&C PRESS AB

Publishing House

Registration number: 556699-5964
Companies registration Office of Sweden

Journal registration number: 23 614
State Administration for Patents and Registration of Sweden

Editors

Murad ESENOV

Editor-in-Chief

Tel./fax: (46) 70 232 16 55; E-mail: m.esenov@gmail.com

Kalamkas
YESSIMOVA

represents the journal in Kazakhstan (Astana)

Tel./fax: (7 - 701) 7408600; E-mail: kesimova@gmail.com

Ainura
ELEBAEVA

represents the journal in Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek)

Tel./fax: (996 - 312) 61 30 36; E-mail: ainur_eb@mail.ru

Saodat OLIMOVA

represents the journal in Tajikistan (Dushanbe)

Tel.: (992 372) 21 89 95; E-mail: olimov@tajik.net

Farkhad
TOLIPOV

represents the journal in Uzbekistan (Tashkent)

Tel.: (9987 - 1) 225 43 22; E-mail: farkhad_tolipov@yahoo.com

Kenan
ALLAHVERDIEV

represents the journal in Azerbaijan (Baku)

Tel.: (+994 - 50) 325 10 50; E-mail: kenan.allakhverdiev@gmail.com

David
PETROSYAN

represents the journal in Armenia (Erevan)

Tel.: (374 - 10) 56 88 10; E-mail: dave@arminco.com

Vakhtang
CHARAIA

represents the journal in Georgia (Tbilisi)

Tel.: +995 593 13 18 11; E-mail: vakhocharaia@gmail.com

Vladimir MESAMED

represents the journal in the Middle East (Jerusalem)

Tel.: (972 - 2) 5882332; E-mail: mssamed@olive.mscc.huji.ac.il

Sun ZHUANGZHI

represents the journal in China (Beijing)

Tel.: (86) 10-64039088; E-mail: sunzhzh@isc.cass.net.cn

Irina EGOROVA

represents the journal in the Russian Federation (Moscow)

Tel.: (7 - 495) 3163146; E-mail: egorova@mosinfo.ru

Rustem
ZHANGUZHIN

represents the journal in Ukraine (Kiev)

Tel.: (380 - 44) 524-79-13; E-mail: zhangozha@yahoo.co.uk

EDITORIAL BOARD

Vakhit AKAEV	Chief Researcher, Ibragimov Integrated Research Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, D.Sc. (Philosophy), Professor, Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Chechen Republic, Honored Scientist of the Chechen Republic, Expert of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Russia)
Mariam ARUNOVA	Ph.D. (History), leading research associate, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences (Russia)
Garnik ASATRIAN	D.Sc. (Philology), Professor, Head of the Department of Iranian Studies, Erevan State University (Armenia)
Svante E. CORNELL	Professor, Research Director, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Silk Road Studies Program, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS (U.S.A.)
Jannatkhon EYVAZOV	Ph.D. (Political Science), Associate Professor, Department of International Relations at Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University (Azerbaijan)
William FIERMAN	D.Sc. (Political Science), Professor of Indiana University (U.S.A.)
Paul GOBLE	Senior Advisor, Voice of America (U.S.A.)
Sergey GRETSKY	Doctor, Chair of Central Asian Studies, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State (U.S.A.)
Xing GUANGCHENG	D.Sc. (Political Science), Professor, Deputy Director of the Institute for East European, Russian and Central Asian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (China)
Alexander IGNATENKO	President, Institute of Religion and Politics, Doctor of Philosophy, specialist in Islamic studies, leading expert of the Institute of Social Systems, Moscow State University, member of the Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations under the Russian Federation President (Russia)
Ashurboi IMOMOV	Ph.D. (Law), Assistant Professor, Head of the Department of Constitutional Law, Tajik National University (Tajikistan)
Stephen F. JONES	Professor, Russian and Eurasian Studies, Mount Holyoke College (U.S.A.)
Lena JONSON	Doctor, senior researcher, Swedish Institute of International Affairs (Sweden)
Klara KHAFIZOVA	D.Sc. (History), Director, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Professor at the International Relations and Foreign Policy Department, Kainar University (Kazakhstan)
Zaynidin KURMANOV	D.Sc. (History), Professor, Head of the Chair of International Relations, the Kyrgyz-Russian University (Kyrgyzstan)
Jacob M. LANDAU	Professor of Political Science, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel)
S. Neil MACFARLANE	Professor, Director, Center for International Studies, The University of Oxford (Great Britain)
Alexei MALASHENKO	D.Sc. (History), Professor, Scholar-in-Residence, Ethnicity and Nation-Building Program Co-Chair, The Carnegie Moscow Center (Russia)
Abbas MALEKI	Doctor, Director General, International Institute for Caspian Studies (Iran)
Akira MATSUNAGA	Doctor, History of Central Asia and the Caucasus, Program Officer, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation (Japan)
Roger N. McDERMOTT	Research Associate, the Institute of Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies (MECACs), University of St. Andrews, Scotland (Great Britain)
Vitaly NAUMKIN	D.Sc. (History), Professor, Director, Center for Strategic and International Studies of RF (Russia)
Yerengaip OMAROV	Professor, Rector of Kainar University, President of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Republic of Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan)
Vladimer PAPAUA	D.Sc. (Economy), Professor, Faculty of Economics and Business, Ivane Javakhsishvili Tbilisi State University, Member of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences (Georgia)
S. Frederick STARR	Professor, Chairman, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, The Johns Hopkins University (U.S.A.)
James V. WERTSCH	Professor, Director of the International and Regional Studies Program, Washington University in St. Louis (U.S.A.)

The materials that appear in the journal do not necessarily reflect
the Editorial Board and the Editors' opinion

EDITORIAL OFFICE: CA&C Press AB, Hubertusstigen 9. 97455 Luleå, SWEDEN

WEB ADDRESS: <http://www.ca-c.org>

© *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, English Edition, 2019
© CA&C Press AB, 2019

CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS

English Edition

Journal of Social and Political Studies

Volume 20

Issue 4

2019

IN THIS ISSUE:

REGIONAL INTEGRATION

- Leonid Bezrukov.** EURASIAN CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION:
PREREQUISITES AND DIFFICULTIES 7
- Sergey Ryazantsev,
Zafar Vazirov,
Elena Pismennaya,
Leila Delovarova.** CHINA IN CENTRAL ASIA:
GEOPOLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND
SOCIOCULTURAL VECTORS OF INFLUENCE..... 18
- Azhar Serikkaliyeva,
Aidarbek Amirbek,
Rashid Tazhibayev,
Olzhas Beisenbayev.** GLOBAL GOVERNANCE, CHINESE-STYLE:
THE CENTRAL ASIAN PROJECTS OF
THE ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK..... 32

REGIONAL POLICY

- Agnieszka Miarka.** VELVET REVOLUTION IN ARMENIA AND
ITS INFLUENCE ON STATE POLICY:
SELECTED ASPECTS 41
- Oleg Karpovich,
Adelina Nogmova,
Larisa Aleksanyan.** CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL PROCESS
IN GEORGIA..... 51

Sergey Zhiltsov, Igor Zonn.	POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF KAZAKHSTAN: RESULTS AND PROSPECTS.....	62
--	--	----

ENERGY AND RESOURCE POLICY

Roman Temnikov.	CASPIAN PIPELINE GEOPOLITICS. <i>Competition between Western and Northern Oil and Gas Transport Routes to Europe</i>	70
Nata Garakanidze.	GAS AND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES.....	81
Anurag Tripathi, Punit Gaur.	WATER DISPUTE IN CENTRAL ASIA: CONFLICT POTENTIAL.....	93

ETHNIC RELATIONS AND MIGRATION

Vladimir Dunaev, Akhan Bizhanov, Mukhtarbek Shaykemelev.	THE SPACE OF ETHNONATIONAL IDENTITIES OF KAZAKHSTAN SOCIETY: PRINCIPLES AND MODELS OF STRATIFICATION.....	107
Mehdi Afzali, Sergey Ryazantsev, Elena Pismennaya, Tamara Rostovskaya.	THE IRANIAN EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC MOBILITY MODEL.....	122

RELIGION IN SOCIETY

Akhan Bizhanov, Aydar Amrebaev, Elena Burova, Natalya Seitakhmetova.	THE POLITICS OF SECULARITY/RELIGIOSITY IN KAZAKHSTAN.....	135
Nurgul Tutinova, Bekzhan Meirbayev, Albert Frolov, Kudaiberdi Bagasharov.	REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN: ETHNORELIGIOUS IDENTITY AS AN INTEGRATION FACTOR.....	147

Contents of the <i>Central Asia and the Caucasus Issues English Edition</i> . Volume 20, 2019.....	161
--	-----

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

***The Special Feature section
in the next three issues will discuss:***

- ***Eurasia: Politics Today***
- ***Eurasia: Energy Policy and Energy Projects***
- ***China's Infrastructure Projects in the Black Sea-Caspian Region***

***Contributors please use
the following guidelines:***

- begin articles with a brief abstract of 300-500 words and keywords;
- articles should be no less than 3,000 and no more than 6,000 words, including footnotes;
- footnotes should be placed at the bottom of each page; if there are references to Internet resources, please give the author's name, the name of the document, the website address, and the date it was made available, for example, available 2007-04-19;
- quotations, names of authors and other information from English-language sources should be duplicated in brackets in the original language, that is, in English;
- the article should be divided into sections, including an introduction and conclusion;
- the author should include the following personal information: first name, last name, academic degree, place of work, position, city, country.

***All articles accepted are published in Russian and English.
Articles must be submitted to the editorial staff in Russian and English.
Any questions relating to translation may be discussed
with the staff on an individual basis.***

REGIONAL INTEGRATION

EURASIAN CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION: PREREQUISITES AND DIFFICULTIES

Leonid BEZRUKOV

*D.Sc. (Geography),
Head of Laboratory of Georesource Studies and
Political Geography, V.B. Sochava Institute of Geography,
Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences
(Irkutsk, Russian Federation)*

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to address underexplored issues in Eurasian continental integration such as the impact of the continental (landlocked) location of vast inland territories on their economic development and possible ways to overcome transportation-economic difficulties within the framework of a Greater Eurasia. It notes the trend towards the progressive formation of this broad integration grouping on a continental scale and, based on a politico-economic understanding of the essence of the new bloc, determines its current composition, which mainly includes member coun-

tries of the Eurasian Economic Union and member and observer countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The author considers the conceptual views of geopoliticians and geographers on the role and place of continental Eurasia in the world and examines the main prerequisites and difficulties of Eurasian continental integration. The study reveals a common geographical feature of the countries included in Greater Eurasia: the unique ultra-continental position of their inland regions, located, globally speaking, at the greatest distance from economical sea routes and major world

This study has been conducted with the support of RFFI and RGO Grant (17-05-41057 PGO_a).

markets. A case study of the Central Asian countries, Russia's Siberia, and the western regions of China shows the negative impact of the ultra-continentality factor as manifested in increased transport costs, which creates serious barriers to economic growth and foreign trade activity. It is suggested that accelerated creation of latitudinal and

meridional international transport corridors is a promising way to achieve greater economic consolidation of the inland regions of Greater Eurasia. The study highlights the new opportunities for the economic development of Russia's ultra-continental macroregions offered by Eurasian continental integration.

KEYWORDS: *Greater Eurasia, Eurasian continental integration, international transport corridors, transport costs, ultra-continental zones, economic interaction.*

Introduction

Recent years have seen a growing urge to integrate among the Eurasian countries, primarily manifested in the enlargement of two major associations: the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The idea of a broad Eurasian community was put forward at the highest level by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in 2016, when they spoke of the possibility of forming a "Greater Eurasian Partnership" (or "Greater Eurasia") with the participation of EAEU partners, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, the Central Asian countries, and other interested states of the continent. It is assumed¹ that at the initial stage the leading role in implementing this project is to be played by the Russian-Chinese tandem as Russia turns to the East and China to the West, coupling the EAEU and the Silk Road Economic Belt.

The topic of Eurasian integration is well-grounded in theory, which primarily dates back to the original system of ideas of classical Eurasianism that arose within the Russian émigré community in the 1920s. This powerful school of thought is based on the "Eurasian idea" of Russia as a special type of "heartland" civilization that includes the peoples of mainland Eurasia united by a common history, natural conditions, language, an established interdependent economic complex, the age-old traditions of a single state, and a supranational socio-cultural identity.²

At the same time, it should be specified that the doctrine of classical Eurasianism understood Eurasia mainly as the territory within the borders of the Russian Empire and the U.S.S.R., whereas today the ideas of Eurasianism have found a practical embodiment in a broader "Eurasian continental" integration,³ which encompasses a number of countries neighboring the post-Soviet space. Assessments of this transformation of unification processes differ widely. Whereas U.S. political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski⁴ believed that the creation of an "antihegemonic" coalition of Russia, China,

¹ See: *K Velikomu okeanu—4: Povorot na Vostok. Predvaritelnye itogi i novye zadachi*, ed. by T.V. Bordachev, MDK Valdai, Moscow, 2016, 36 pp.; *K Velikomu okeanu—5: Ot povorota na Vostok k Bolshoi Evrazii*, ed. by S.A. Karaganov, MDK Valdai, Moscow, 2017, 48 pp.

² See: P.N. Savitsky, *Kontinent Evrazia*, Agraf, Moscow, 1997, 464 pp.; N.S. Trubetskoy, *Nasledie Chingiskhana*, Agraf, Moscow, 1999, 560 pp.

³ Ye.Yu. Vinokurov, A.M. Libman, "Dve evraziiskie integratsii," *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 2, 2013, pp. 47-72.

⁴ See: Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, 1997, xiv + 223 pp.

and Iran was potentially the most dangerous scenario for the United States, Russian geopoliticians Alexander Dugin,⁵ Igor Kefeli and Dmitri Kuznetsov,⁶ on the contrary, advocate a strategy of creating a Greater Eurasia as one of the poles of a multipolar world.

A meaningful discussion on Greater Eurasia requires its clear geographical delimitation. However, there is still no consensus on how to define this concept, and opinions on the dimensions of Greater Eurasia vary widely: from the post-Soviet space to the whole Eurasian continent.

In the foreseeable future, it would probably make sense to be guided by the current international situation of a sharp cooling of Russia's relations with countries of the European Union (EU), the United States and its allies. Increased pressure from the West threatens Russia's national security, which makes it necessary to strengthen allied relations with our nearest neighbors. The negative Western response to China's economic successes (the "trade war" with China unleashed by the United States) is also intensifying. This is why the institutionalization of Greater Eurasia at the initial stage is based in large part on the need to join forces in order to counter the challenges of the "collective" West. Given this politico-economic understanding of the essence of the new bloc, the basis for a Greater Eurasian Partnership is currently provided, in my opinion,⁷ by member countries of the EAEU (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan) and the SCO (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, India, and Pakistan), SCO observer countries (Iran, Mongolia, Belarus, and Afghanistan), and Turkmenistan as an organic part of Central Asia.

In the future, it is possible and desirable to admit new members, both Asian and European. First and foremost, this could include Turkey as a key component of Greater Eurasia (but so far it is a member of NATO), Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Serbia, both countries of the Korean Peninsula, and many others.

Greater Eurasia, even one confined to the EAEU and the SCO, is the largest landmass on the continent (70.5% of its area), with a total of 14 countries. As a result, a new powerful entity is gradually taking shape on the planet. Greater Eurasia already exceeds the EU and North America (the NAFTA integration arrangement consisting of the United States, Canada, and Mexico) in area (by 6.9 and 1.8 times, respectively); population size (by 6.1 and 6.8 times in 2017); and gross domestic product at purchasing power parity (GDP at PPP) (by 1.8 and 1.7 times in 2016).⁸ Owing to its huge natural resource and demographic potential, as well as expected economic growth and rise in living standards, Greater Eurasia could eventually become the world's largest market for goods, services, capital, and labor.

A wide variety of researchers in Russia and other countries—political scientists, economists, historians, culture experts, and geographers—have been working productively on the interdisciplinary topic of Eurasian continental integration. Nevertheless, many issues have yet to be thoroughly studied. These include issues related to the composition and boundaries of the Greater Eurasian Partnership; the prerequisites and difficulties of integrating such different countries; the limits (depth) of their economic and political integration; the choice of specific projects in creating a global transportation infrastructure; the new opportunities arising in this process, etc. While giving a brief outline of some of these issues, we will focus on the impact of the continental (landlocked) location of large inland territories of the continent on Eurasian integration processes and current economic development.

⁵ See: A.G. Dugin, *Evraziiskiy revansh Rossii*, Algoritm, Moscow, 2014, 256 pp.

⁶ See: I.F. Kefeli, D.I. Kuznetsov, *Evraziiskiy vektor globalnoi politiki*, Yurait Publishers, Moscow, 2018, 274 pp.

⁷ See: L.A. Bezrukov, "Geograficheskiy smysl sozdaniia 'Bolshoi Evrazii'," *Geografiia i prirodnye resursy*, No. 4, 2018, pp. 5-14.

⁸ See: *Ibidem*.

Conceptual Views on the Role of Continental Eurasia in the World

As the largest continent on the planet, Eurasia has vast inland territories deep inside the continent. On the one hand, this hinders economic relations and economic growth, and on the other, it is a potentially strong unifying feature of extensive adjacent regions of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Afghanistan, the Central Asian countries, and partly Iran, India, and Pakistan. The problem of existence on the globe of such a unique huge space super-distant from the seas with all the ensuing political and economic consequences has always naturally attracted the interest of geopoliticians and geographers.

In the global geopolitical model constructed at the very beginning of the 20th century by Halford Mackinder,⁹ a British geographer and a classic of geopolitics, global space is hierarchized around a pivot (Heartland) area through a system of concentric circles: the Heartland (“heart-land”) as the “pivot area” occupies the center of continental Eurasia; then comes the “inner or marginal crescent” (the coastal areas of the Eurasian continent); and the next belt is the “outer or insular crescent” (Britain, both Americas, the southern part of Africa, Japan, Australia, and Oceania). By Heartland is meant a significant part of the Eurasian continent that stretches from the Baltic and the Caspian to South-eastern Siberia inclusive (mainly the territory of the Russian Empire) and is inaccessible to the ships of maritime powers. Viewing the Heartland as the potential world center of power, or the “geographical pivot of history,” Mackinder assumed that, with the construction of railways across the whole of Eurasia, the global domination of maritime powers would give way to the supremacy of the continental Heartland, where a new superpower would emerge. This led him to a geostrategic conclusion in the spirit of Anglo-Saxon geopolitical thinking: that the maritime powers had to tighten control over the outer and inner crescents while blocking access to warm seas for the Heartland and preventing its alliance with the key countries of the inner crescent.

Today it is clear that Mackinder’s theory has proved to be true only in part: whereas a new superpower as represented by the U.S.S.R. did appear within the Heartland in the 20th century (even though it ceased to exist in the early 1990s), rail transport has never actually become a real competitor to sea routes in long-distance transportation. Incidentally, that was one of the main factors that made it impossible to realize the Heartland’s huge potential to the necessary extent, although the U.S.S.R. experienced rapid industrial growth with a significant “eastward shift in the distribution of productive forces” to the very interior of Eurasia. According to our estimates,¹⁰ the gap between freight charges for shipments by land and by sea in the developed countries increased on average by 1.5-3 times in the 20th century: despite the colossal successes of land transport, maritime transport advanced at a faster rate. The driver here was a sharp increase in ship tonnage and in maritime traffic (especially in the second half of the 20th century), which has made it possible to radically reduce maritime transport costs and freight rates correlated with them. As noted by L. Hekimoglu,¹¹ no mode of transport in the early 21st century is capable of providing shipping services that can even compare with maritime shipping services in economic efficiency, which is why overland shipments are only supplementary to shipments by sea: the latter account for about 90% of total shipments.

⁹ See: H.J. Mackinder, *Geograficheskaya os istorii* (The Geographical Pivot of History), in: A.G. Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki. Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii*, Arktogeya, Moscow, 1997, pp. 491-506.

¹⁰ See: L.A. Bezrukov, *Kontinentalno-okeanicheskaya dikhotomiya v mezhdunarodnom i regionalnom razviti*, Geo Academic Publishers, Novosibirsk, 2008, 369 pp.

¹¹ See: L. Hekimoglu, “Whither ‘Heartland’? Central Asia, Geography and Globalization,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (34), 2005, pp. 66-80.

In the 1940s, American geographer Nicholas Spykman corrected Mackinder's model in this matter. In his doctrine, he took into account certain shortcomings of the Heartland's continental location in transportation-economic terms. He believed, and more rightly so, that the key zone of the world was not the Heartland, but the viable and active "Rimland," the strip of coastal land that encircles Eurasia, which corresponds in location to Mackinder's Inner Crescent. In Spykman's opinion, complete control of the Rimland by the sea powers would lead to a final victory over the terrestrial powers of the Heartland, which would be suffocated in the coils of an "anaconda." It is interesting to note that in a new 1994 geopolitical zoning model, the prominent American geographer Saul B. Cohen, who continued to develop Mackinder's ideas, was the first to include not only Russia and other CIS countries, but also China in what he called the Eurasian convergence zone.

Of particular importance for determining the place of continental Eurasia in the world economy is the original geo-economic concept of Eurasianism put forward in the 1920s by P.N. Savitsky, an émigré Russian geographer and geopolitician.¹² A crucial role in the dualism of land and sea powers he assigns to the drastic differences in the economic efficiency of shipments by land and by sea, which creates significant transportation-economic difficulties for continental countries and landlocked regions (especially those located in the interior of the Eurasian continent). As I see it, Savitsky's approach to the problem of the dualism of "Land" and "Sea" is more consistent than the theories of classical Western geopolitics.

Our concept of "continental-oceanic dichotomy"¹³ can be regarded as a further elaboration of the geo-economic doctrine of Eurasianism. This concept is also based on the fundamental differences in the efficiency of land and sea shipments (the former are much more costly than the latter), on the one hand, and the specific macro-location of countries and regions relative to the sea, on the other. The essence of the concept is that the fundamental difference that exists between continental (landlocked) and oceanic (coastal) countries in transportation costs and transport intensity of their national economies underlies the mechanism of the constant "flow" of income from continental to oceanic (coastal) countries, and this ultimately leads to profound differences in the national economic efficiency of these two types of countries, their overall socio-economic development level, their interaction with the outside world, and the territorial organization of society. In my opinion, this income redistribution mechanism is a key one among all mechanisms that shape the global economic center-periphery relations associated with the reproduction and entrenchment of global and regional inequality.

The geo-economic doctrine of Eurasianism and the continental-oceanic dichotomy concept aim to identify promising ways to reduce the adverse effects of continentality, which is extremely important for economic growth in the continental countries and regions of Eurasia. The Eurasian doctrine held that the keystone to the development of such countries and regions consisted in ending the total domination of the principles of the "oceanic" global economy within their limits by increasing economic cooperation between adjacent landlocked regions (the principle of "continental neighborhoods").¹⁴ The continental-oceanic dichotomy concept also suggests focusing on short-range ties (with some limitations on more costly long-range ties), well-established territorial division of labor, economic organization based on regional and economic zoning principles, maintenance of relatively low transportation rates, development of traffic arteries, formation of line-and-territorial systems of productive forces along major traffic arteries, etc.¹⁵ All these measures and principles can be used to the best advantage precisely within the framework of Greater Eurasia.

¹² See: P.N. Savitsky, *op. cit.*

¹³ L.A. Bezrukov, *Kontinentalno-okeanicheskaia dikhotomiia v mezhdunarodnom i regionalnom razvitii.*

¹⁴ P.N. Savitsky, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ See: L.A. Bezrukov, *Kontinentalno-okeanicheskaia dikhotomiia v mezhdunarodnom i regionalnom razvitii.*

General Prerequisites and Difficulties of Creating Greater Eurasia

Geopolitical and related geo-economic motivations are among the immediate prerequisites for the formation of a Greater Eurasian Partnership, because international relations in a globalized world are characterized by intensifying competition for possession of natural resources, territory, the latest technologies, and high status in the world-system hierarchy. Current trends point to a continued geopolitical and military-strategic confrontation between Russia, its CIS allies, and China, on the one hand, and the Western powers, on the other. Russia's continental location and Western sanctions seriously complicate its integration into the world economy and compel it to form its own system of Eurasian alliances. The unfriendly policy of the "collective" West pushes "non-Western" ("non-Atlantic") countries, primarily Russia and China, towards each other.

The impressive results of economic growth in some countries of East and South Asia, especially China (first place in the world in GDP at PPP) and India (third place) are of great importance. But their natural urge to bring their political weight into correspondence with their economic weight meets with the existence of a basically unipolar world "centered" on the interests of the dominant superpower: the United States. The largest emerging or re-emerging Eurasian countries—China, India, and Russia—can become the backbone of a new multipolar world.

Meanwhile, the road that leads to such a global association will be far from easy. In the opinion of experts,¹⁶ attempts to deepen international cooperation within its framework are constrained by the existence of very big countries with large domestic markets (China, India, and Russia), the heterogeneity of countries and their political systems, and the weakness of infrastructure links caused by the historical separation and long periods of autarky of the U.S.S.R. and China, and partly India. One should also note the sharp contradictions and conflicts between the project participants themselves.

In addition, the economic relations and economic development of most countries of Greater Eurasia are seriously impeded by their unfavorable location in the interior of the continent.¹⁷ This is why an important part of both the difficulties and the prerequisites of Eurasian continental integration is of a transportation-economic nature. Until very recently, maritime transport has continued to play the leading role in global economic relations. Due to its low cost, the global historical trend in population distribution and production location patterns is a steady gravitation towards the coasts of warm seas and oceans, which particularly increased in the 20th century.

The importance of access to sea routes for the growth of big cities and agglomerations is well illustrated by the fact that in 2000 most urban centers with a population of more than 3 million were located on the coast or in the 200 km maritime zone, which accounted for 78.6% of such cities in the world and about 81% of their population.¹⁸ The three key regions of the world economy (the global "triad")—Western Europe, the United States, and Japan—were formed largely in maritime zones as the cores of the respective key world markets: West European, North American, and East Asian. At the same time, the inland regions of Eurasia are located on the distant periphery of these markets, are very weakly connected with each other, and in most cases have a relatively low level of economic development.

At the same time, the radical changes in land transport that have taken place in the late 20th and early 21st centuries ("container revolution," improved logistics, high-speed railways, etc.) have reduced transport technology costs and shortened delivery time for goods and passengers, which has

¹⁶ See: Ye.Yu. Vinokurov, A.M. Libman, op. cit.

¹⁷ See: L.A. Bezrukov, "Geograficheskiy smysl sozdaniia 'Bolshoi Evrazii'."

¹⁸ See: L.A. Bezrukov, *Kontinentalno-okeanicheskaia dikhotomiia v mezhdunarodnom i regionalnom razvitiu*.

had a positive effect on the final price of the cargo.¹⁹ As a result, such a disadvantage of sea transport as relatively low transportation speed has become more noticeable. In addition, sea transport has almost reached its natural limits in terms of ship size (passage through straits and canals, port calls, etc.), which is a key factor in reducing shipping costs. The possibilities for narrowing the gap in efficiency between sea and land transport will evidently be determined by the pace of progress in the latter, primarily the pace of development of super-fast rail services as railways get a “second wind.”

Given the ongoing changes in the communications sector, plans for the creation of international transport corridors, including across the whole of Eurasia, have great prospects. Whereas in the past the only transit route between East Asia and Western Europe was the Trans-Siberian Railway (TSR), Russia’s main railway line, today there are various alternative railways being built across the continent. The construction of a system of international corridors running in latitudinal and longitudinal directions can become a powerful driver of greater economic consolidation and development of the inland regions of Greater Eurasia.²⁰

Eurasian continental integration is also favored by prerequisites and factors related to population distribution and the environment, which are usually overlooked. Considering the overpopulation in some parts of the planet, the possession of vast, relatively undeveloped territories could be a great advantage in the future. For example, the territory of Russia’s Siberia and Far East in its southern latitudinal belt has great potential for further population settlement and location of production, concentrating large amounts of humanity’s increasingly scarce “immobile” resources such as freshwater and land (“living space”). Vast sparsely populated areas also exist in the Central Asian countries, Western China, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and their more intensive development could become an important element of overall economic cooperation between Eurasian countries. In addition, Northern and Central Eurasia have retained the world’s largest areas of undisturbed land.

Overcoming Transportation-Economic Difficulties Through Eurasian Continental Integration

The factor of continental location and vast overland distances, which leads to increased transport costs, usually has an adverse effect on the economy, hindering its participation in the international and interregional division of labor. Most countries of Greater Eurasia—9 out of 14—are landlocked countries without ocean access (Afghanistan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). In Russia and China, which have access to open seas, many regions lie very far from the coast.

In order to identify countries (regions) relative to the World Ocean, a special technique has been suggested within the framework of the continental-oceanic dichotomy concept.²¹ It is based on the quantification of the degree of “transport-geographical continentality” (TGC) of countries (regions) as a measure of the remoteness of the main part of their demographic potential from maritime routes with year-round shipping. The essence of the suggested technique is,

¹⁹ See: I.M. Mogilevkin, *Globalnaia infrastruktura: mekhanizm dvizheniia v budushchee*, Magistr, Moscow, 2010, 317 pp.

²⁰ See: L.B. Vardomsky, “Tranzitnyi potentsial Kazakhstana v kontekste evraziiskoi integratsii,” *EKO*, No. 8, 2015, pp. 59-78; L.A. Bezrukov, “Geograficheskiy smysl sozdaniia ‘Bolshoi Evrazii’.”

²¹ See: L.A. Bezrukov, *Kontinentalno-okeanicheskaia dikhotomiia v mezhdunarodnom i regionalnom razvitii*.

- first, to determine how the population of a particular country (region) is distributed across zones located at different fixed distances from the sea; and
- second, to calculate the degree of TGC based on the estimated shares of these zones.

“Maritime” zones include belts located within 50 km and at a distance of 50 to 200 km from the coast; “continental” zones include belts located at distances of 200 to 500 km and 500 to 1,000 km from the sea; and “ultra-continental” zones include territories located at a distance of 1,000 to 2,000 km from the coast and beyond.

When comparing our scheme of ultra-continental zones in Eurasia with Mackinder’s scheme of geopolitical zoning of the world, one finds some parallelism between them, albeit only cartographic or formal logical. First and foremost, one can say that the contours of these ultra-continental zones broadly coincide with the Heartland as the central element of Mackinder’s scheme. At the same time, although both schemes for dividing the world into zones are constructed based on a continental-oceanic dichotomy, the two authors attribute this dichotomy to different causes, which is why the two schemes themselves differ fundamentally. Mackinder’s model, which rests largely on a military-strategic foundation, hierarchizes global space around the “pivot area” (Heartland), located in what he called Euro-Asia, via a system of concentric circles, while the transport-geographical continentality model, built on an objective geo-economic basis, divides the territories of various continents and islands of the Earth into zones of different remoteness from the sea: maritime, continental, and ultra-continental.

The degree of TGC of countries (regions) was measured on a scale of 1 to 100 points based on their demographic potential according to a scheme that provides for a reduction in the actual specific weights of the population in the various zones with decreasing distance to the sea in direct proportion to the average distance of each zone from the coast. The higher the degree of continentality of a country or region, the more unfavorable is its position relative to sea routes. In terms of the degree of transport-geographical continentality, we have established six gradations for countries and regions (in points): very high (60.1-100), high (35.1-60), increased (20.1-35), moderate (10.1-20), low (5.1-10), and very low (1.0-5).

According to calculations for the countries of Greater Eurasia based on this technique,²² a very high degree of continentality is found in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia; a high degree in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Russia; an increased degree in Pakistan and Iran; and a moderate degree in Belarus, China, India, and Armenia. Ultra-continental zones in Russia span across Siberia, the Urals, and partly the Volga Region; in China they include the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), Tibet Autonomous Region, Gansu, Qinghai, and partly Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Shaanxi, and Sichuan; the territories of Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and the Central Asian countries are almost entirely ultra-continental; and in Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan these zones cover significant areas. The core of Eurasia’s ultra-continental zones (more than 2,000 km from the sea) with an area of about 9 million sq km is in the most disadvantageous position in the world relative to year-round sea routes. The main part of this core—over 60%—is located in Russia (Siberia); China (western regions) and Kazakhstan account for 15-17% each; Mongolia has 6%, and Kyrgyzstan 1%.

Thus, quantification has confirmed that, in terms of areas remote from sea routes, Greater Eurasia is unmatched in the world. An overwhelming majority of its countries have no access to the World Ocean, while the degree of continentality of a number of countries and regions is close to the maximum possible degree.

²² See: L.A. Bezrukov, *Kontinentalno-okeanicheskaia dikhotomiia v mezhdunarodnom i regionalnom razvittii*; idem, “Geograficheskiy smysl sozdaniia ‘Bolshoi Evrazii’.”

For Eurasia's ultra-continental zones, global market entry involves significant transport costs in both exports and imports of goods. A permanent mechanism of "income flow" from continental to oceanic countries (within the international division of labor) and partly from inland to coastal regions (within the interregional division of labor) generally leads to a slowdown in economic growth and a decline in living standards in continental countries and ultra-continental zones compared to maritime ones.

The constraining effect of the ultra-continentality factor on economic growth and international economic relations was shown previously in case studies of Central Asia, Russian Siberia, and China's western regions.²³ Whereas for the Central Asian countries this effect is also compounded by lack of direct access to the sea, the specific impact of the ultra-continentality factor on the inland regions of the largest and most heterogeneous countries of Eurasia—Russia and China—is manifested in the emergence of interregional disparities of a continental-oceanic nature.

The negative impact of the landlocked location of countries on their socio-economic performance is convincingly demonstrated in many foreign studies.²⁴ It is not surprising that the Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—are near the bottom of world rankings in cost and time required to export and import cargo containers by ocean transport (out of a total of 183 world economies considered, they rank among the bottom ten).²⁵ Transportation-economic problems seriously worsen the socio-economic situation in these countries. True, because of Kazakhstan's proximity to the Russian market and significant oil and gas exports from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, their GDP per capita (at PPP) is close to the world average. At the same time, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are among the world's poorest countries, with GDP (PPP) per capita figures close to those of the countries of Tropical Africa.

Siberia is a major industrial macro-region of Russia specializing in raw material exports with very long-distance (3,000-4,000 km to seaports or more) and at the same time mass shipments by land. The share of transport costs in the final cost of some products in Siberia has no parallel in the vast majority of Russian regions, let alone other countries in the world: for some kinds of large-volume products exported by the forest, coal, and chemical sectors, this share is 60-70% or higher.²⁶ Such high transport costs significantly reduce the profitability and price competitiveness of Siberian products in domestic and foreign markets.

A characteristic feature of China continues to be the relative underdevelopment of huge spaces in its inland western part. According to our estimates,²⁷ whereas the total share of China's eight coastal provinces and three centrally governed cities in 2014 was 55.3% of GDP, 81.0% of foreign direct investment, and 85.0% of foreign trade, the total share of its four ultra-continental regions (XUAR, Tibet, Gansu, and Qinghai) was 2.8%, 0.5%, and 0.9%, respectively. This means that in per

²³ See: L.A. Bezrukov, "Geograficheski smysl sozdaniya 'Bolshoi Evrazii'."

²⁴ See: S. Radelet, J.D. Sachs, Shipping Costs, Manufactured Exports, and Economic Growth, 1998, available at [<http://www.earth.columbia.edu/sitefiles/File/about/director/pubs/shipcost.pdf>], 5 October, 2018; L. Annovazzi-Jakab, "Landlocked Countries: Opportunities, Challenges and Recommendations," in: *Trade Facilitation. The Challenges for Growth and Development*, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2003, pp. 81-136; L. Hekimoglu, op. cit.; P. Collier, *The Bottom Billion. Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2007, 205 pp.; C. Grigoriou, *Landlockedness, Infrastructure and Trade: New Estimates for Central Asian Countries*, The World Bank, Development Research Group Trade Team, Policy Research Working Paper 4335, August 2007, available at [<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/289461468016849336/pdf/wps4335.pdf>], 5 October, 2018; K.D. White, "Geography, Policy, and Barriers to International Trade in Central Asia," *Central Asia Business Journal*, 3 November, 2010, pp. 44-54, available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306380017_Geography_Policy_and_Barriers_to_International_Trade_in_Central_Asia], 5 October, 2018.

²⁵ See: K.D. White, op. cit.

²⁶ See: L.A. Bezrukov, *Kontinentalno-okeanicheskaia dikhotomiia v mezhdunarodnom i regionalnom razvitiu*; T. Lopatina, I. Perechneva, "Otorvite gruz ot serdtsa," *Ekspert*, No. 26, 2016, pp. 68-76.

²⁷ See: L.A. Bezrukov, "Geograficheskiy smysl sozdaniia 'Bolshoi Evrazii'."

capita terms the gross regional product of ultra-continental regions is only half that of coastal ones; foreign trade is 10 times lower; and foreign direct investment almost 17 times lower. Despite an active state policy aimed to reduce regional disparities, the gap in living standards between the interior and the coastal regions is narrowing very slowly.²⁸

The creation of international transport corridors can be regarded as a promising way to mitigate the adverse effects of ultra-continuity, as well as a powerful instrument for Eurasian integration. At the same time, proper coordination of competing projects and routes in the effort to create a global infrastructure is still lacking. Many of them overlap in very intricate combinations. Some corridors are already in operation, wholly or partly, but most are still in the design stage or are just being discussed. Let us point out only some of the current problems in creating transport corridors of interest to Russia and especially Siberia.

- First, priority is usually given to the transit function of these corridors, primarily to their ability to facilitate latitudinal transit traffic between East Asia and Western Europe. But emphasis on extra long-distance transit, which will mean transportation of mainly Chinese goods, is not necessarily a top priority. Whereas revenue from transit container traffic is significant for the budgets of relatively small countries, such revenue can hardly have a significant effect on the Russian economy.²⁹ A more relevant issue is the reduction in transport costs, which is necessary to bring the ultra-continental regions of countries in Greater Eurasia closer to each other and to key markets. The corridors being built should become belts for greater economic consolidation and development of adjacent inland territories.
- Second, an analysis of options for creating latitudinal transport corridors raises concerns about the emergence of competition in transit shipments between Russia's Trans-Siberian Railway (TSR) and the routes of China's Silk Road. However, the Southern corridor of the Silk Road is much less efficient in terms of cost and time than the Trans-Siberian Railway, while its Northern corridor does not bypass Russia, but like the TSR runs through its territory over a considerable distance (Urals, Volga Region, and Center). Given the overall length of the route, the TSR will be more competitive than the Northern corridor of the Silk Road for transit cargo not only from Korea and Japan, but also from the northeastern part of China, including Beijing and Tianjin. It is necessary not to contrast the TSR and the Silk Road, but to develop a rational logistics scheme for their interaction taking into account the different distances from the main regions of cargo origin.³⁰
- And third, unreasonably little attention is being paid to projects and routes of meridionally-oriented international transport corridors required to create an optimal transport network and driven by the logic of increasing economic interaction between Eurasian countries. It would make sense to ensure direct access for Russia's ultra-continental regions to large markets in China, India, Pakistan, Iran, and other countries along such meridional corridors. For example, a promising option for Siberia is to extend the planned Kuragino-Kyzyl railway to Mongolia and China, and then on to India and Pakistan.

In the current international situation, the eastern and southern vectors of economic ties assume greater importance for Russia, with an objective increase in the overall economic role of regions bor-

²⁸ See: J.D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty. Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, Penguin Books, New York, 2005, 448 pp.; Ye.N. Samburova, "Regionalnye disproportsii sovremennogo razvitiia ekonomiki Kitaia," *Vestnik MGU*, Series 5, *Geography*, No. 4, 2014, pp. 49-55.

²⁹ See: G.I. Khanin, "Ekonomicheskie programy i prognozy, ili manilovshchina i samoobman," *EKO*, No. 4, 2006, pp. 2-19.

³⁰ See: L.B. Vardomsky, op. cit.; L.A. Bezrukov, "Geograficheskiy smysl sozdaniia 'Bolshoi Evrazii'."

dering on countries of the emerging Greater Eurasian Partnership. The ultra-continental industrial macro-regions bordering on these countries—Siberia, the Urals, and the Volga Region—should primarily be oriented towards broader and deeper Eurasian continental integration. The creation of Greater Eurasia with the new opportunities it has to offer is precisely what will spur their development.

One of these opportunities is a broader prospect for using the “continental neighborhoods” principle: whereas in the past this principle operated mainly within Russia, today it can also be used at the international level to enhance economic interaction between adjacent ultra-continental regions of the countries of Greater Eurasia. As Russian regions enter neighboring landlocked markets along transport corridors, this will enable them to cut transport costs while limiting costly entry into key global markets, dominated by developed maritime countries.

Another new opportunity is that Greater Eurasia can help to create conditions for a higher degree of processing of domestic raw materials in Russia by organizing midstream and downstream activities, for the production of transportable intermediate and finished products with high value added that are in high demand in the markets of the Greater Eurasian Partnership. Such a modernization of basic production facilities in Russian industry will help to diversify products, make them more competitive, cut transport costs, and minimize the loss of value added.

The creation of an international transport corridor based on the Trans-Siberian Railway will also provide an opportunity for its radical modernization using new engineering solutions. This could include the construction of a trunk railway on elevated tracks, which will make it possible to boost traffic capacity, speed, and safety, as well as the TSR’s profitability and competitiveness compared to sea routes. This will reduce the inhibiting effect of the ultra-continentiality factor on economic efficiency in Siberia, the Urals, and the Volga Region.

Conclusion

The main prerequisites of Eurasian continental integration are as follows:

- first, geopolitical and geo-economic motivations for some political and economic unification among a number of Eurasian countries in order to form a major international region capable of resisting Western pressure;
- second, progressive changes in the transport and communications sector leading to the creation of a system of international rail corridors across the whole continent, which can become a powerful driver of greater economic consolidation of the inland regions of Greater Eurasia;
- and third, the advantages of possessing vast, relatively undeveloped territories suitable for further population settlement and location of production.

The main difficulties in creating a Greater Eurasian Partnership include the existence of very big countries with large domestic markets (China, India, and Russia), the heterogeneity of countries and their political systems, the sharp contradictions and conflicts between them, the weakness of infrastructure links, and the unfavorable landlocked location of huge territories in the interior of the continent.

The need for the countries and regions of Greater Eurasia to overcome extra-long overland distances and increased transport costs is a serious barrier to foreign market entry and economic development, on the one hand, and an active unifying force that makes them look for their own (largely “unconventional” by the standards of developed Western countries) political and economic paths into the future. This quest must take into account the persistent differences between the fundamental interests of continental and oceanic (coastal) powers. In view of this, the construction of transport corridors and intensification of international economic ties that help to overcome the transportation-economic difficulties of countries and regions in this bloc should provide the basis for long-term and

sustainable Eurasian continental integration. We need a comprehensive strategy to determine the interests, possibilities, and constraints of Russia and other interested countries in building complementary ties and implementing major integration projects within the Greater Eurasian Partnership.

CHINA IN CENTRAL ASIA: GEOPOLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIOCULTURAL VECTORS OF INFLUENCE

Sergey RYAZANTSEV

*D.Sc. (Econ.), Corresponding Member, Russian Academy of Sciences;
Professor, Department of Demographic and Migration Policy, MGIMO-University,
Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Director of the Institute of
Socio-Political Research, Russian Academy of Sciences
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Zafar VAZIROV

*Junior Research Fellow, Center for Social Demography,
Institute of Socio-Political Research, Russian Academy of Sciences,
Ph.D. student, Department of International Economic Relations,
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Elena PISMENNAYA

*D.Sc. (Sociol.), Associate Professor, Professor of the Finance University
under the Government of the Russian Federation, Leading Research Fellow of
the Institute of Socio-Political Research, Russian Academy of Sciences
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Leila DELOVAROVA

*Lecturer of the Department of International Relations and World Economy,
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
(Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan)*

The study was conducted with the financial support of the Council on Grants of the President of the Russian Federation for state support of young Russian scientists and on state support of leading scientific schools of the Russian Federation (Grant No. NSh-3781.2018.6).

A B S T R A C T

The authors discuss new forms of China's economic, sociocultural, geopolitical, and ethnoreligious influence in Central Asia and the factors behind it. They examine the specifics of Chinese, Central Asian and Russian demography and analyze the impact of socioeconomic and demographic processes of the recent years on China's foreign policy. Having analyzed the volumes, dynamics, branch and regional specifics of China's investments in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, the authors conclude that they can be described as a new form of realization of China's geopolitical interests in Central Asia and Russia. They have identi-

fied new forms of Chinese migration in the context of China's expanded investments beyond its borders, involvement of Chinese citizens in the "golden visa" programs in Europe and Mediterranean countries and revealed that, more likely than not, labor migrants follow the flows of Chinese money and business migrants, consolidating the economic and geopolitical aspects of Beijing's foreign policy.

The authors have discussed the geopolitical, sociocultural, and economic role of Chinese diasporas in promoting the interests of their homeland and pointed out that the forms of Chinese influence in the world have become more varied.

KEYWORDS: *China, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Central Asia, Russia, diaspora, migration, Chinese communities, remittances, migration, investments.*

Introduction

Central Asia is the geopolitical "pivot" of the Eurasian continent, a region rich in oil, natural gas and various mineral resources and, therefore, an object of rivalry between great powers. Early in the 20th century, three countries—the U.K., China, and Russia—were fighting for control over the region. Today "great" (the U.S., China, India, Russia, Japan, and the EU) and "average" (Turkey, the Middle Eastern countries and Iran) states have joined the active geopolitical game in the region. China, one of the most energetic and powerful players, relies on all sorts of instruments, up to and including its economic, sociocultural and geopolitical advantages, to influence the Central Asian countries.

The Chinese government and business elites demonstrate a lot of pragmatism when consolidating their relations with five Central Asian countries and carefully designate their short-, mid- and long-term interests in the region.¹ At first, China focused on border demarcation and tried to minimize both direct and indirect interference of the Central Asian countries in the problems of ethnic minorities living in China. The border between them is fairly long: 1,782 km with Kazakhstan; 858 km with Kyrgyzstan, and 414 km with Tajikistan. In post-Soviet times the borders were partly demarcated: Beijing treated border demarcation as a national security issue, which explains several demarcation attempts. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was set up in the mid-1990s to resolve border disagreements with Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia.

¹ See: Official site of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, available at [<https://carnegieendowment.org/regions/251>].

Today, China has posed itself the task of consolidating its economic influence and strengthening cooperation in the security sphere as one of its mid- and long-term objectives. Seen from Beijing, Central Asia is brimming with potential and existing threats to China's national security: terrorism, extremism, fundamentalism, and separatism, to name but a few. No wonder it has opted for stronger economic and geopolitical influence in the region to neutralize at least some of the risks and obtain apparent economic preferences.

The Factors of Stronger Chinese Influence in Central Asia and its New Forms

The deep-cutting processes unfolding in the last few years in China became the prerequisites of stronger Chinese influence outside the borders of continental China.

- First of all, it was *the economic factor*, namely, sustained economic growth based on well-planned and successful economic reforms launched in the 1970s. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, in 2018 China's GDP equaled 90.03 trillion yuan. In the first quarter of the same year its year-on-year growth was 6.8%, in the second—6.7%, in the third—6.5% and in the fourth—6.4%.² In the course of reforms, the country had accumulated a fairly big investment potential, realized today inside and outside its borders. Its investment potential corresponds to Central Asia's needs in foreign investments. This explains why in recent years China has been pouring money into the region. In 2005-2019, its total investments were nearly \$54 billion, of which \$34.9 billion were invested in Kazakhstan; \$6.8 billion—in Turkmenistan; \$5.6 billion—in Uzbekistan, \$4.7 billion—in Kyrgyzstan; \$2.2 billion—in Tajikistan. China also invested about \$54 billion in Russia (see Fig. 1).
- Secondly, it is *the social factor* or the changes in the social structure of Chinese society caused, in particular, by economic reforms. On the one hand, privatization deprived a great number of people of their jobs, while the domestic market could not accommodate them all. On the other, the Chinese middle class and a wealthy (rich) Chinese stratum have emerged.³ The People's Republic of China has become part of the globalized world, today it is more open than before, which added mobility to these population groups; migration to other countries became possible.

There are two new trends in Chinese migration: highly qualified and wealthy Chinese move in greater numbers than before to the countries of the rich North (the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Europe), where they invest in real estate and businesses. All programs in Southern Europe offer real estate investment as an option. In Spain the minimum price of a property must be at least €500,000; in Portugal—€350,000 (if the property is 30 years old or older, or is located in one of the cities); in Malta newcomers must invest €250,000 or more in bonds and securities and €60,000 in real estate depending on location. Cyprus offers residence permits in exchange for €300,000 invested in real estate and a deposit of

² See: Official site of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, available at [http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201901/t20190121_1645752.html].

³ See: *Rossia i Kitay: izmeneniya v sotsialnoy strukture obshchetsva*, ed. by M.K. Gorshkov, Li Peilin Z.T. Golenkova, Novy khronograf, Moscow, 2012, pp. 257-260.

€30,000 in one of the local banks. Greece offers the cheapest program—a residence permit in exchange for a real estate property valued at €250,000 or more (see Fig. 2).

Figure 1

**Volumes of Chinese Investments
in Central Asian Countries and Russia
in 2005-2019, \$bn**

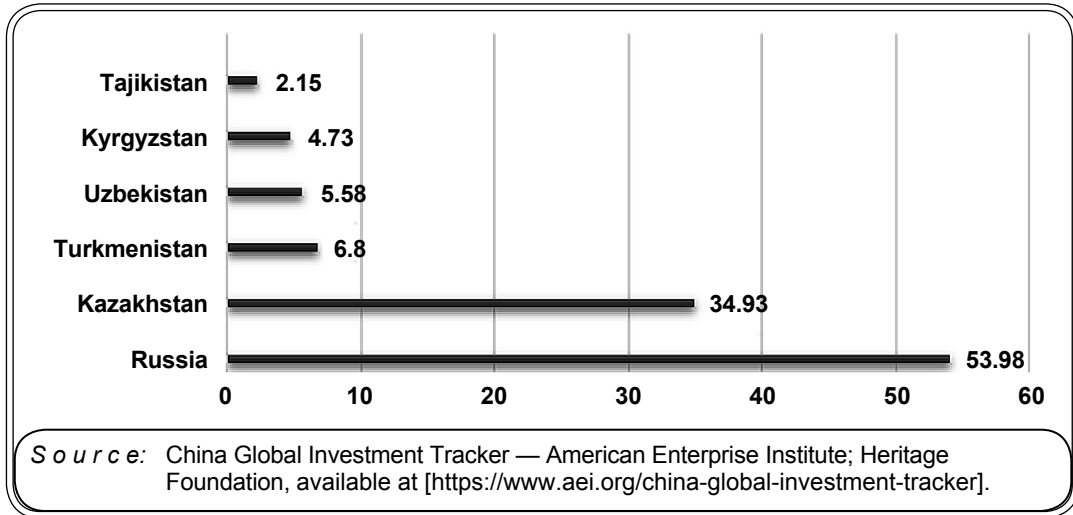
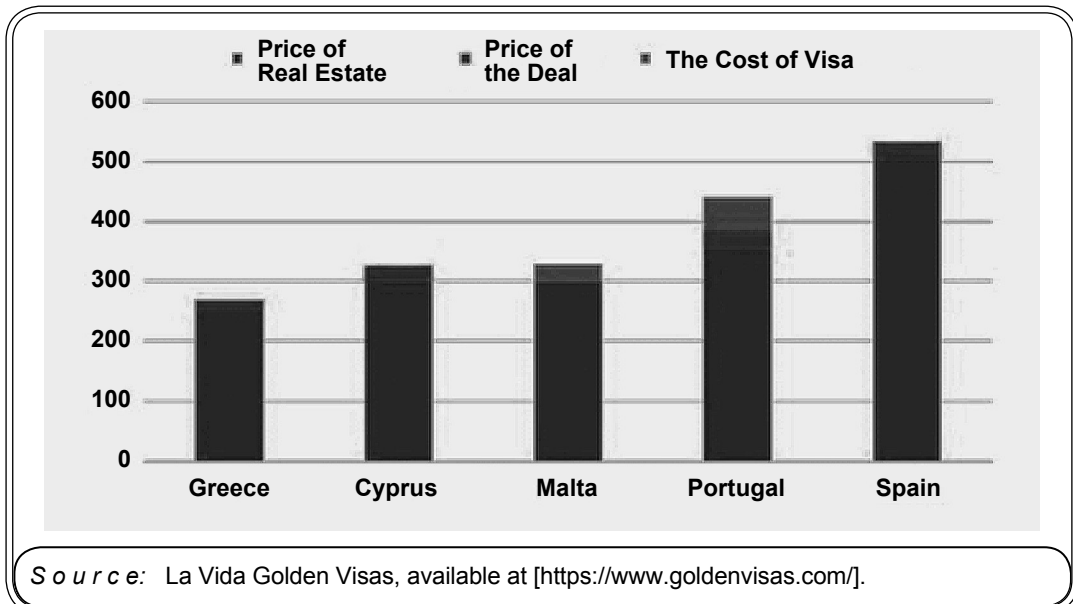


Figure 2

**Minimum Costs of the Golden Visa
in Some of the South European Countries,
thousand euros**



Between the start of the “golden visa” program in Greece and the early 2019, 2,416 citizens of the PRC obtained residence permits in this country.⁴ Highly qualified Chinese migrants (professors, engineers, top managers) actively migrate using work contracts to settle permanently in economically developed countries.

The low-qualified and unqualified Chinese migrants prefer the countries of the “poor South” (the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America); this means that they follow Chinese investments. It is expected that having worked there for several years they will return to China; some of them manage to remain in the host country with different migration statuses.

- Thirdly, it is *the demographic factor*: despite the One Family—One Child policy that has functioned for many years the demographic pressure on China remains strong. The huge demographic potential (1.4 billion) along with other factors creates a considerable migration potential realized through encouraged migration inside the country and an outflow of young able-bodied people to other countries. China occupies the first place in the population size; it “hangs over” its Central Asian neighbors and Russia, which occupy vast and relatively sparsely populated spaces rich in mineral resources (see Table 1).

Table 1

The Key Social-Demographic Indicators of the PRC, Russia, and Central Asia

Indicator	Countries					
	PRC	Russia	Tajikistan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan
Total population size, million people (2018)	1,400	144	8.9	18	6.2	32.4
Population between 0-14 years, % (2017)	17.7	25.8	35.3	27.9	31.8	28
Human Development Index (HDI) ranking (2017)	87,	49	127	59	122	105
Level of unemployment, % (2018)	4.7	5.2	10.3	5.1	7.4	6.9
Level of unemployment among the younger generation, % (2018)	10.8	16.3	19.2	4.7	15.9	14.2
Share of urban population, % (2017)	58	74	27	57.3	36.1	50.5
GDP per capita, \$ (2017)	8,826,99	10,743,10	800,97	8,837,46	1,289,82	1,504,23
<p><i>Sources:</i> Based on information supplied by the ILO, UNDP, WB [http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/ilostat-home/home;ILOSTATCOOKIE=A10ljqL7_6klz7yvAlIQOfBijr7lqpg2BY6PRr18i2e4CUtko uhf!1567639201?_adf.ctrl-state=5w96ez0ns_4&_afrLoop=262615711648154&_afrLoop=2019859534736994&_afrWindowMode=0&_afrWindowId=null; http://hdr.undp.org/en/data; https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2016&_afrLoop=2015&_afrWindowId=null; view=map].</p>						

⁴ See: Official site of the Migration Policy Ministry of Greece, available at [http://www.immigration.gov.gr/en_US/web/guest/elleniki-metanasteutiki-politiki].

- Fourth, *the ethnic and religious factor* is in play: China's nationalities policy produced fairly ambiguous effects on the ethnic and religious minorities in the country's ethnic regions. The conflict in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region drove Muslim Uyghurs to Central Asia. Kazakhstan's active repatriation policy, designed to attract ethnic Kazakhs (Oralmans), stimulated their migration from China to Kazakhstan. China is not interested in this form of emigration, yet its migrants obviously spread China's influence to Central Asian countries. Elements of Chinese everyday culture have already become part of everyday life of the local peoples.

Mass outflow from China began in the mid-19th century, when emigrants moved to Southeast Asia. Until the end of World War II, the majority of migrants considered themselves as *huáqiáo* (Overseas Chinese) politically and culturally loyal to China.⁵

In the 1950s-1980s, Chinese acquired new directions of emigration from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia to North America, Australia, and Western Europe. Chinese migrants renounce their Chinese citizenship to become *huaren* (ethnic Chinese living abroad) and vow loyalty to the host country. Starting in 1980, *xin yimin* ("new migrants") from different regions of China prevailed in the total volume of Chinese émigrés.

Investments as a New Form of Realization of China's Geopolitical Interests in Central Asia

In the late 1990s, Chinese investments to Central Asian countries had not exceeded \$1 billion⁶ and were limited to the oil and gas sector; ten years later, the volume increased more than 20 times to make China the region's main financial donor. Its influence became especially obvious after the crisis of 2008, when the traditional sponsors (Russia, the U.S., and Europe) were struggling with budget problems of their own.

China prefers direct investments, and Kazakhstan was the main object of investments: in 2017, 51 China-Kazakhstan projects that amounted to \$27 billion were implemented in different spheres, including agriculture, the most "sensitive" sphere of their bilateral cooperation.⁷ Kazakhstan helps China resolve its demographic problem by settling a million and a half of Chinese citizens, who are ethnic Kazakhs, along its border. According to China, they "want to live in their historical homeland." Between 1991 and 2014, over 136,000 Kazakhs from China received the Oralman status (Kazakhstani repatriate).⁸

China is the key partner of the Kyrgyz Republic; their trade turnover grows faster than the trade between Russia and Kyrgyzstan. China is interested in several promising industrial projects in this country. In 2016, Bishkek rejected the services of RusGidro from Russia in building the Kambarata Hydro Power Plant-1. China regards Kyrgyz invitation to take part in the project as a step towards solving the energy problem in this Central Asian country. China, which needs agri-

⁵ See: H. Liu, E. van Dongen, *The Chinese Diaspora*, Oxford Bibliographies, 2013, 26 pp.

⁶ See: G.I. Chufirin, "Investitsionnoe nastuplenie Kitaia na Tsentralnuiu Aziu," *Ekonomicheskoe obozrenie*, No. 4, 2012, p. 54.

⁷ See: S. Ryazantsev, A. Ter-Akopov, E. Pismennaya, A. Lukyanova, "Diasporas as Informal Tools for Regulating Migration in the Eurasian Economic Union," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 18, Issue 3, 2017, pp. 35-42.

⁸ See: F. Chuanglin, Yu. Danlin, *China's New Urbanization: Developmental Paths, Blueprints and Patterns*, Springer, 2016, 329 pp.

cultural imports (milk, in particular), plans to build The Star of Asia, a large agricultural complex in the Chui Region in Kyrgyzstan by 2020, with a total area of 4.6 sq. km, to supply China with organic products.

The following bilateral documents recently signed by the two countries attract attention: an agreement on technical and economic cooperation, on joint exploitation of the Kyrgyzstan-China gas pipeline; cooperation in health protection that allowed Kyrgyzstan to rely on traditional Chinese medicine, a credit agreement regarding the construction of the North-South Highway and on a credit of \$10 million to Kyrgyzstan.

China's cooperation with Turkmenistan is, likewise, very active: in 2017, their trade turnover reached \$14.8 billion. Turkmenistan supplies China with natural gas from the Samandepe gas field along the main pipeline built in 2009 as a joint investment project.

Uzbekistan occupies the first place in China's trade turnover. In 2017, its volume reached \$3.2 billion, or 22.7% of the country's turnover. It should be said that the sides increased their cooperation in 2014 on the strength of the agreements between President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov and the Chinese leaders on the highly ambitious five-year economic plan The Program of the Development of Strategic Partnership for 2014-2018 with the Chinese-Uzbek project of cooperation in mining and processing of uranium as its core.

China comes second after Switzerland in the volume of Uzbek export. According to official information, there are over 500 joint ventures with Chinese capital and offices of 70 Chinese companies in the country. In 2019, the total volume of Chinese investments in Uzbekistan's economy was \$5.58 billion (see Table 2).

Table 2

**Spheres of China's Investment
in Central Asian Countries in 2005-2019**

Country	Volume of Investments, \$	Key Spheres of Investment
Kazakhstan	24.8 billion	Power production
	3.68 billion	Transport
	3.68 billion	Chemicals
	2.33 billion	Metals
	350 million	Real estate
Kyrgyzstan	2.89 billion	Power production
	1.69 billion	Transport
	150 million	Metals
Uzbekistan	3.49 billion	Power production
	610 million	Real estate
	460 million	Transport
	440 million	Chemicals
	290 million	Agriculture
	190 million	Metals
	100 million	Other branches

Table 2 (continued)

Country	Volume of Investments, \$	Key Spheres of Investment
Tajikistan	750 million	Power production
	560 million	Transport
	540 million	Metals
	300 million	Real estate
Turkmenistan	6.8 billion	Power production
<p><i>Sources:</i> Based on the data supplied by China Global Investment Tracker—American Enterprise Institute; Heritage Foundation, available at [https://www.aei.org/china-global-investment-tracker].</p>		

Despite the fact that Tajikistan received smaller investments than any other of its neighbors, there are over 70 enterprises with Chinese capital functioning in the country and about 200 Chinese companies. The investment and trade cooperation between China and Tajikistan has been steadily growing since 2004, when Chinese companies came to the country aiming to actively implement their projects. For example, the Chinese road and bridge corporation reconstructed the Dushanbe-Qolma-Karasu highway that connects the Tajik capital with the checkpoint on the Tajik-Chinese border. The Sinohydro Corporation rebuilt the highway between Dushanbe and the Kyrgyz border and funded a survey of the sites of planned hydropower plants in Tajikistan. The development of the transborder transport corridor between Dushanbe and Kashgar is an obvious signal that integration of transport and economic corridors leading to the western areas of Tajikistan has been launched. This highway will give China access to Afghanistan and Iran and connect Tajikistan with China, India, and Pakistan. In 2006 and 2013, Chinese companies invested in 1,700 km of newly built highways and 31 km of tunnels.⁹

Chinese Huawei Technologies and ZTE are actively involved in modernizing the Tajikistan communication sector and realize, from time to time, all sorts of social and educational programs: Huawei supplied four secondary schools with computers, and along with the Ministry of the Interior of Tajikistan it built the Automated Traffic Control Center “Secure City” to supervise public order and road safety in Dushanbe. It functions at the Traffic Police Department at the republic’s Ministry of the Interior in order to control traffic lights, regulate traffic, spot transportation means and implement video surveillance on the roads.¹⁰

Bilateral trade is another important sphere of cooperation. In 1993, the volume of bilateral trade was \$9 million, ten years later it was \$39 million and thirteen years later, in 2016, it reached the figure of \$885 million.¹¹ Chinese export to Tajikistan textile and other consumer goods, special equipment, machines, foodstuffs and agrarian raw materials. Today, China exports about 2,000 items to Tajikistan.

China took part in commissioning the Dushanbe Thermal Power Station 1 and 2; Chinese capital was present in other sectors, including mining and processing of lead, zinc and gold, transport and services. The country’s leaders are convinced that Chinese capital helps develop the economy and

⁹ See: S.V. Ryazantsev, Z.K. Vazirov, “Kitayskaia migratsia v Respublike Tadjikistan” *Migratsionnoe vzaimodeystvie Rossii so stranami Vostochnoy i Iugo-Vostochnoy Azii*, Series *Demografiya. Sotsiologiya. Ekonomika*, Moscow, 2018, pp. 94-98.

¹⁰ See: Official site of the Huawei, available at [<https://www.huawei.com/kz/press-events/news/kz/2018/sistema-bezopasnyi-gorod-v-dushanbe-c-ikt-huawei>]

¹¹ See: “Makroekonomicheskie pokazateli,” Statistical Agency at the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, available at [<https://stat.tj/ru/macroeconomic-indicators>]

moves the country towards its strategic goal of obtaining a developed transport system and energy security. This wide-scale involvement of China in the Tajikistan's economy is however not free from certain or even considerable risks.

Today, China owns about half of the Tajikistan's external debt (over \$1 billion).¹² When realizing their economic projects, Chinese companies prefer to hire their own workers: China invests money on the condition that Chinese migrants are employed in all projects implemented using Chinese money. The Chinese laborers are more disciplined, more diligent and much cheaper. In one of our previous works, we had studied the interconnection between Chinese money and migration.¹³ Employment of Chinese workers is one of the conditions stipulated in the agreement on Chinese investments and cooperation.

In late 2018, China and Tajikistan signed an agreement on investments in the construction of the government and parliamentary complex in Dushanbe totaling \$200 million, on the condition that Chinese labor migrants would be employed.¹⁴

Early in 2019, the main Department of Geology of Tajikistan informed that the Chinese TBEA company obtained a license to construct a gold mining plant in the north of Tajikistan. The project will take two years to complete, Chinese workers and engineers will be employed.¹⁵

In 2019, *The Washington Post* wrote about a Chinese military base in the Murghab District of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region. The newspaper supported this information with interviews, details detected by satellites and the personal observations of the author of the report.¹⁶ Several days later, Tajik media refuted this information and denied that China had built military facilities at the Tajik-Chinese border under the 2016 agreement. The Foreign Ministry of Tajikistan officially stated that there were no Chinese military bases in Tajikistan. However, other sources informed that Chinese military forces were seen at local markets, while the flags of China and Tajikistan were raised over military facilities.¹⁷ The Chinese government preferred to keep silence.

Despite the highly contradictory information, it should be stated that economic advantages of large-scale Chinese investments are fraught with certain geopolitical risks for the Central Asian countries, primarily, in the border areas.

Investments and New Forms of Chinese Migration to the Central Asian Countries

In the last decade, Beijing has been actively involved in international migration—not only as a source of migrants, but also as a host country. In 2017, about 10 million Chinese migrants lived

¹² See: Information supplied by the Tajik Agency for Statistics. *Vneshneekonomicheskaja deiatel'nost' Respubliki Tadjikistan*, Dushanbe, 2017, pp. 5-6.

¹³ See: S. Ryazantsev, R. Manshin, Z. Vazirov, M. Karimov, "China's Influence on the Social and Economic Development of the Central Asian States: Methods and Consequences," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, 2018, pp. 18-25.

¹⁴ See: Azia Plus Press Service at the Ministry of Economic Development of the RT, available at [<https://www.news.tj/ru/news/tajikistan/society/20180919/kitai-vse-zhe-dast-deneg-na-vozvedenie-parlamentskogo-i-pravitelstvennogo-kompleksov-tadjikistana>].

¹⁵ See: Avesta, available at [<http://avesta.tj/2019/02/01/tvea-v-etom-godu-nachnet-stroitelstvo-zolotodobyvayushhego-predpriyatiya-na-severe-tadjikistana/>].

¹⁶ See: "In Central Asia's Forbidding Highlands, A Quiet Newcomer: Chinese Troops," *The Washington Post*, available at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-central-asias-forbidding-highlands-a-quiet-newcomer-chinese-troops/2019/02/18/78d4a8d0-1e62-11e9-a759-2b8541bbbe20_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.cd073fa74412].

¹⁷ See: Azia Plus, available at [<https://news.tj/ru/news/tajikistan/security/20190221/the-washington-post-prinyala-tadjikskuyu-pogranzastavu-v-murgabe-za-voennii-obekt-kitaya-istochnik>].

and worked abroad, while about 1 million of international migrants were registered in China (see Table 3).

Table 3

**Key Indices of International Migration
in China and Central Asian Countries in 2017**

Index	Countries				
	PRC	Tajikistan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan
Accumulated number of immigrants, <i>thous. people</i>	999.5	273.3	3,600	200.3	1,200
Share of immigrants in total population, %	0.1	3.1	20	3.3	3.6
Migration balance, in 2012-2017, <i>thous. people</i>	-1,600	-100	0	-100	-44.3
Share of women migrants, %	38.6	56.9	50.4	59.6	53.4
Accumulated number of emigrants, <i>thous. people</i>	10,000	578.5	4,100	760.1	2,000
Change in the share of migrants in total population in 1995-2017, %	0	-1.8	0.9	-4.6	-2
Share of migrants below 19, %	29.7	10.6	21.1	13.8	14.1
Share of immigrants over 65, %	10.7	27.1	15.3	21.7	28.8
Number of refugees in the country, <i>thous. people</i>	321.7	2.5	0.6	0.3	0.02
Number of refugees coming from the country, <i>thous. people</i>	207.7	1.4	2.5	2.8	3.4

S o u r c e: Data supplied by the U.N. Population Division, UNHCR, 2018, available at [<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml>]; http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/persons_of_concern].

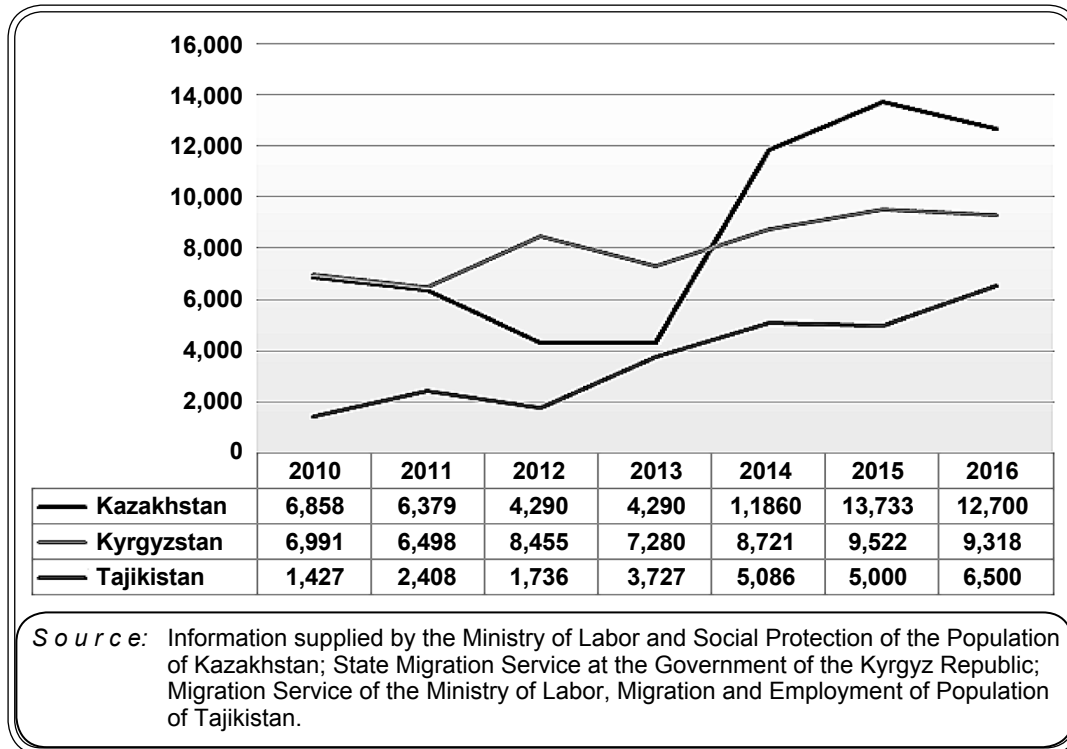
The economic and migration policies of the Central Asian countries have created a paradox. On the one hand, huge numbers of laborers migrate from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Russia, Kazakhstan, Korea, the Middle East, and Europe. On the other, new jobs in Central Asia go to Chinese citizens; this means that no matter how much money China pours into the region, the level of employment among the local population will remain low.

Business migration to Central Asia is a phenomenon that emerged in the early 2000s; it was rooted in a stronger economic cooperation between China and the local countries. Kazakhstan (see Fig. 3) leads in the number of Chinese labor migrants, followed by Kyrgyzstan, where Chinese laborers work on all sorts of large-scale infrastructure projects: the Kyrgyz-Chinese gas pipeline to the Osh Region; the ring road in the Issyk Kul Region; an alternative North-South highway and bypasses in the Batken Region; a thermal power plant in Bishkek, an oil refinery and a gold-mining plant in the Chui Region.¹⁸

¹⁸ See: Official site of the State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, available at [<http://ssm.gov.kg/>].

Figure 3

Chinese Labor Migration in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, 2010-2016, people



Today, Tajikistan occupies the last place in the number of Chinese guest workers, but their number is steadily increasing. In 2016, according to the Migration Service of the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population of Tajikistan, the number of Chinese migrants increased by 30% against the previous year. Today, there are top managers, engineers and businessmen, as well as unqualified workers among them.

By employing well-educated Chinese specialists and qualified workers, the Central Asian countries try to fill the gap in their economies created by the lower quality of education and an outflow of specialists. While closing the gap, employment of Chinese specialists does nothing good for the employment of the local population, many of whom are ready to leave their countries.

Sociocultural and Migration Policies in the Context of China's Foreign Policy

In the 1990s, China strove to create a sustainable international situation to promote its own and its closest neighbors' economic development. Today, the Government of the PRC pays a lot of attention to the management of migration, mostly in view of the country's geopolitical interests, rather than the situation on the labor market.

In the late 20th century, China’s external expansion had intensified and changed its forms: it was implemented as the “external movement” conception, and Central Asian countries were its first targets. Chinese emigration and the active encouragement of Chinese communities and businesses in the neighboring states were its main instruments along with China’s increasingly stronger economic and sociocultural impact.

In fact, Chinese migration is accompanied by the promotion of Chinese culture, philosophy, traditions, goods, science, technologies, design, medicine, cuisine and food. Chinese businesses, restaurants, markets, Chinatowns, Confucius institutes and classrooms are the most visible factors of Chinese presence in any country.

Today, there are 548 Confucius institutes: there are 125 of them in 34 Asian countries (regions), 59 in 43 African countries, 182 in 41 European countries, 161 in 24 American countries and 21 in 5 countries of Oceania. There are 1,193 Confucius classrooms operating: 114 of them are situated in 22 Asian countries; 41 in 18 African countries, 341 in 30 European countries (regions), 595 in 9 American countries and 102 in 4 countries of Oceania.¹⁹

In Central Asia and Russia there are Confucius institutes and classrooms set up to promote the Chinese language and culture (see Table 4).

Table 4

The Number of Confucius Institutes and Classrooms in Russia and Central Asia in 2019

Country	Number of Confucius Institutes	Number of Confucius Classrooms	Total
Russia	19	5	24
Kazakhstan	5	1	6
Kyrgyzstan	4	21	25
Tajikistan	2	2	4
Uzbekistan	2	0	2

Source: Report of the Institute of Confucius, 全球孔子学院 (课堂) 分布, 2018.

Since 2002 when the Ministries of Public Security, Human Resources and Social Security, Education, and Transport of the PRC issued a joint statement that allowed private companies to act as commercial intermediaries in promoting emigration of Chinese citizens.²⁰ In 2008, the Ministry of Trade of the PRC assumed responsibility for labor migration. The Ministry of Public Security of China controls the agencies of immigration and emigration normally used by those who want to leave the country. Agents and companies working in the labor migration sphere cannot be involved in businesses related to educational migration.²¹

¹⁹ See: *Report of the Institute of Confucius* (全球孔子学院 (课堂) 分布), 2018, available at [<http://www.hanban.org/confuciousinstitutes/>].

²⁰ See: Official site of the Foreign Ministry of China (支持中欧人员往来和移民领域对话项), available at [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gjhdqzz_681964/lhg_681966/zghgzz_681970/t1266605.shtml].

²¹ See: *Brochure about EU-China Dialog on Migration and Mobility Support Project*, ILO, available at [https://www.ilo.org/beijing/what-we-do/publications/WCMS_421619/lang--en/index.htm].

China attaches great importance not only to the process of emigration and protection of the rights and interests of Chinese citizens abroad. It fights slave trade and illegal immigration. Chinese embassies and consuls provide all sorts of support, including material assistance, to Chinese citizens wishing to settle abroad.

Beijing responded to the growing mobility of the country's population by increasing its involvement in the international management of migration by consolidating regional and international cooperation on the migration-related issues. Today, China attaches more importance to international cooperation in the sphere of immigration and is actively involved in such aspects of immigration as the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the Baltic Process and the Colombo Process.²²

In December 2018, China supported the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and was actively involved in the debates on global migration. It means that the IOM structures working in the country deal with practically all aspects of migration—from encouraging people's mobility to the prevention of uncontrolled migration and slave trade and keeping them in check.²³

The Geopolitical and Economic Role of Foreign Chinese Communities

Today, ethnic Chinese live in more than 150 countries. Normally, they are defined by the umbrella term “overseas Chinese,” which comprises about 60 million ethnic Chinese living outside continental China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macao.²⁴ Chinese communities in foreign countries are fairly complicated structures; their members belong to different waves of migration and social layers and come from different regions of China. Despite their variety, they became an important factor or even “reference points” of China's foreign policy.

The 2018 World Bank's Survey on migration and development demonstrated that the volume of global monetary transfers amounted to \$689 billion, an increase caused by stronger economic activity and better employment figures in the United States and restoration of external flows from certain countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. In 2018, the volume of remittances to the countries with low and average incomes reached \$529 billion, much greater than the flow of direct investments (\$344 billion). In the same year, the volume of remittances from migrants to the East Asian countries increased by 7%, while the following countries received the greatest amounts of remittances from migrants: India (\$79 billion), China (\$67 billion), Mexico (\$36 billion), the Philippines (\$34 billion), and Egypt (\$29 billion).²⁵ China's second place, after India, means that Chinese migrants actively support their relatives and make a considerable contribution to China's social and economic development.

²² See: 中国代表团团长吴海龙大使在国际移民组织第106届理事会会议上的发言, available at [<http://www.china-un.ch/chn/hyyfy/t1319871.htm>].

²³ See: Official site of the International Organization for Migration, available at [<https://www.iom.int/countries/china#dr>].

²⁴ See: China, International Organization for Migration, available at [<https://www.iom.int/countries/china>], 20 March, 2019

²⁵ See: Official site of the World Bank, available at [<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/04/08/record-high-remittances-sent-globally-in-2018>].

Conclusion

The Chinese are gradually becoming more mobile internationally, which explains why the Chinese issue is gradually moving to the fore in the political and economic agenda of the Central Asian countries. China's penchant for peaceful development is stressed by the trade and economic cooperation between it and its Central Asian neighbors.

China is building up its partnerships with Central Asia and demonstrates increasingly greater interest in the region.

Seen from the Central Asian capitals, China seems to be a friendly power that offers grants and loans to the region's poorest states (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), opening up positive opportunities for hydrocarbon export from the stronger states (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan), while ensuring competition between them. China offers loans on extremely good conditions—payment deferment of 10 to 15 years, which other powers cannot afford. China prefers to use its own labor in the projects realized using its funds.

Beijing regards the Central Asian states as an important buffer, very much needed to stabilize and develop Xinjiang, whose Uyghur population has certain religious and cultural ties with the populations of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

This explains why Beijing fears that Uyghur separatists may pool forces with Islamic extremists and why China had intensified its cooperation with Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation.

China has settled border disputes, contributed to the demilitarization of the border areas, and consolidated the confidence-building measures which, in the final analysis, helped develop the relationships within the SCO.

China will continue buying energy assets and strategic natural resources and winning practically all tenders for building important facilities in Tajikistan and in the rest of the region.

The PRC and Central Asia are much more than geographic neighbors with intertwined economies and a common history; they are tied with deeply rooted migration processes. The authors have revealed the three stages of evolution of Chinese emigration and exposed the factors that stimulate it.

China, Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries will widen their cooperation in power production, infrastructure, agriculture and other fields that will undoubtedly increase all types of migration in the course of implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative related to the broader Silk Road Economic Belt strategy.

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE, CHINESE-STYLE: THE CENTRAL ASIAN PROJECTS OF THE ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK

Azhar SERIKKALIYEVA

*D.Sc. (Oriental Studies),
Acting Associate Professor,
Almaty Management University
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

Aidarbek AMIRBEK

*D.Sc. (International Relations), Dean,
Humanitarian-Economic Faculty,
Sikway International University
(Shymkent, Kazakhstan)*

Rashid TAZHIBAYEV

*D.Sc. (International Relations),
Acting Associate Professor, Department of International Relations,
Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University
(Turkestan, Kazakhstan)*

Olzhas BEISENBAYEV

*Ph.D. Student (Oriental Studies),
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

ABSTRACT

Global governance underlies the solution of vital problems throughout the world. How can government mechanisms at the national, regional, and global levels promote transformational approaches designed to achieve economic, social, and environmental sustainability? China's rapid growth in the international arena and its increasing influence are unprecedented. The

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visits to Central and Southeast Asia, has proposed a new strategic vision for trade and investment flows based on a concept of communications embodied in the ancient Silk Road. The BRI has become a powerful platform for economic growth and regional cooperation. Meanwhile, the range of finan-

cial instruments available to developing countries has been expanding with the establishment of new intergovernmental institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). This new international financial institution reflects a key change in the architecture of global governance. An analysis of China's contribution to the multilateral system shows its unprecedented growth and commitment to global governance, as written into the country's 13th Five-Year Plan. The principles of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, in turn, provide an agreed and inclusive basis for working out an international political approach to sustainable development with a focus on development cooperation. Global governance offers opportunities for further implementation of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, the BRI reflects China's global role as a bridge builder. The BRI

can make a contribution to global governance by suggesting an effective implementation mechanism so as to move towards a more balanced, multipolar, and multilateral international architecture. The BRI's gradual multilateralism will enhance China's legitimacy and prestige. If the BRI builds on the Sustainable Development Goals, this will enhance China's impact and give it additional advantages. Success will depend on concrete actions at the global, regional, national, and subnational levels. In addition, the BRI could be a driver of sustainable development, an effective tool for achieving the SDGs. Acting in harmony with the SDGs, the BRI will be able to promote the common good of participating countries in all areas of development. In this endeavor, regional and multilateral political frameworks are an important step in providing real win-win opportunities.

KEYWORDS: *global governance, China, investment, sustainable development, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).*

Introduction

The contribution of emerging economy countries to global governance, as might be expected, has been focused at both the regional and global levels. Apart from the fact that some problems are regional, not global (such as regional trade agreements), while others are global, not regional (such as financial stability or climate change), a coalition to improve governance is easier to create in coordination with existing groups of countries. This has resulted in a complex network of actors, including states and interconnected regional and subregional organizations differing in size, purpose, and mechanism. Some researchers say that the emergence of countries from the global South has led to the advent of a multipolar world and to an increase in the level of political and economic organization in these countries, thereby strengthening the general trend towards a "more regionalized international order."¹ Thus, the role of regional powers and different forms of regional leadership have been discussed as the main drivers of regional transformation.

Although modern China is still considered a developing country, it is already generally recognized as an emerging superpower that plays an increasingly important role in the global arena. The concept of rejuvenation (revival) of the Chinese nation announced by Chinese President Xi

¹ See: J. Garzón, "Multipolarity and the Future of Regionalism: Latin America and Beyond," *GIGA Research Programme: Power, Norms and Governance in International Relations*, 10 January, 2015, available at [www.giga-hamburg.de/en/system/files/publications/wp264_garzon.pdf], 12 June, 2019.

Jinping in 2013 implies China's growing superiority in economics, international politics, and armed forces.

Today, development of China's geopolitical and geo-economic activity is seen as a priority task. Chinese leaders have recently stepped up their rhetoric on protecting China's national interests and have described the first decades of the 21st century as a "period of strategic opportunity" for China.²

After implementing its strategy of Going Out (Going Global) in world economics and politics, initiated in 2000, China became one of the key and most dynamic global investors. Following the announcement of the BRI, China further increased its outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) to countries located along the route by 31.5% in 2017, while Chinese global OFDI fell by nearly 20%.³ Thus, investment in BRI-linked infrastructure projects across Asia, Europe, and Africa is expected to amount to \$8 trillion.⁴ Data analyzed by the World Resources Institute (WRI) show that in 2014-2017 major Chinese banks invested \$102.6 billion in the oil, gas, and petrochemical sectors of the BRI countries, while \$25.7 billion went into electric power generation and transmission, and \$12.4 billion into transportation.⁵ Thus, China's national interests, like its investments, are "going out" beyond its national boundaries. As China's role in the international arena increases, there is a redistribution of spheres of influence between China and existing global players.

Sustainable Development and the BRI

The Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in April 2019 ended with the adoption by more than 60 participating countries and organizations of a Joint Communiqué entitled "Belt and Road Cooperation: Shaping a Brighter Shared Future." An orientation towards sustainable development and a new type of international relations was clearly evident in the statements and official documents of the leaders of these countries. The Joint Communiqué repeatedly mentioned their resolve "to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions—economic, social and environmental—in a balanced and integrated manner."⁶ Since 1994, when China presented its national Agenda 21 (an agenda for the 21st century), sustainable development has become a government slogan in different areas, such as family planning, the fight against poverty, healthcare, protection of the environment by water protection, control of pollution, solid waste reduction, rational natural resource management, prevention of natural disasters, renewable energy sources, and urbanization. In order to achieve these goals, in 2000 China established a reorganized leading group for promoting sustainable development projects. The Chinese government has also published a document presenting its position on sustainable development and reaffirming its commitment to "following the road of mutual benefit,

² Xu Jian, "Rethinking China's Period of Strategic Opportunity," *CIIS*, 28 May, 2014, available at [http://www.ciis.org.cn/english/2014-05/28/content_6942258.htm], 12 June, 2019.

³ See: Lihuan Zhou, S. Gilbert, Ye Wang, C. Muñoz, K. Gallagher, "Moving the Green Belt and Road Initiative: From Words to Actions," available at [<https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2018/11/GDP-and-WRI-BRI-MovingtheGreenbelt.pdf>], 12 June, 2019.

⁴ See: Cheang Ming, "China's Mammoth Belt and Road Initiative Could Increase Debt Risk for 8 Countries," available at [<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/03/05/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-raises-debt-risks-in-8-nations.html>], 12 June, 2019.

⁵ See: L. Zhou, S. Gilbert, Y. Wang, C. Muñoz, K. Gallagher, *op. cit.*

⁶ *Joint Communiqué of the Leaders' Roundtable of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation*, 27 April, 2019, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, available at [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t1658766.shtml], 12 June, 2019.

win-win cooperation and common development” and working with other countries “to contribute to the construction of a community of shared destiny.”⁷

As a large-scale project of the 21st century that spans across three continents, the BRI should also transition to a long-term model of sustainable development. The sustainable development concept was a logical transition to the greening of scientific knowledge and socio-economic development, an approach that took hold and expanded rapidly in the 1970s, when humanity had to address global environmental challenges.⁸ A response to this problem was the creation of international non-governmental research organizations to study global processes on the Earth. The main goal of sustainable development in the sphere of ecology is to ensure the stability of physical and ecological systems.⁹ Environmental protection is seen as part of the long-term process of sustainable human development.¹⁰ Although the Belt and Road Initiative focuses on economic development, particularly infrastructure projects, it can also make a big contribution to the process of sustainable development, including when it comes to the environment.

Since the BRI mainly involves developing countries, in the past few decades they have focused on economic growth, particularly on increasing GDP. But this approach has not solved the problem of inclusive development. Moreover, these economic models have shown their weakness in achieving social, gender, regional, and ecological balance.¹¹ BRI projects provide opportunities for implementing sustainable development practices, because recently published documents and other statements on this concept speak of “green finance,” community development, and environmental protection along the BRI routes.¹² For example, a document entitled “Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road” calls for “diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development” in the countries involved. The BRI has the potential to contribute to China’s development for many reasons.

- First, by linking the power plants of its eastern coastal regions with the rich resources of its western regions, as well as with all Eurasian regions, China can achieve steady progress and stabilize energy consumption and demand in the country, for example, by producing cleaner gas and developing renewable energy sources.¹³
- Second, the BRI intends to connect Asia, Africa, and Europe by modern communication lines. At the Belt and Road Forum, Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke of connectivity centered on major infrastructure projects, such as the New Eurasian Land Bridge, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and the China-Mongolia-Russia Corridor, including their telecommunications networks, railways, and pipeline systems. These corridors connect

⁷ *China’s Position Paper on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, available at [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t1357701.shtml], 12 June, 2019.

⁸ See: J. Cogburn, D. Rahm, *Government Green Procurement in the U.S.: An Approach to Meeting Global Environmental Challenges*, Routledge, New York, 2007, 616 pp.

⁹ See: D. Griggs, M. Smith, J. Rockström, M. Öhman, O. Gaffney, G. Glaser, N. Kanie, I. Noble, S. Will, P. Shyam-sundar, “An Integrated Framework for Sustainable Development Goals,” *Ecology and Society*, Vol. 19, Issue 49, 2014.

¹⁰ See: H. Daly, “Sustainable Development: From Concept and Theory to Operational Principles,” *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 16, 1990.

¹¹ See: Li-jun Xu, Xiao-chao Fan, Wei-qing Wang, Lei Xu, You-lian Duan, Rui-jing Shi, “Renewable and Sustainable Energy of Xinjiang and Development Strategy of Node Areas in the ‘Silk Road Economic Belt’,” *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, Vol. 79, 2017.

¹² See: Liu Qin, “China Needs to Pave ‘One Belt One Road’ with Green Finance,” available at [<https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/8532-China-needs-to-pave-One-Belt-One-Road-with-green-finance-say-experts>], 12 June, 2019.

¹³ See: Yunyang Liu, Yu Hao, “The Dynamic Links between CO2 Emissions, Energy Consumption and Economic Development in the Countries along ‘the Belt and Road’,” *Science of the Total Environment*, Vol. 645, 2018.

rapidly growing regions with relatively backward ones, providing opportunities to reduce economic disparities and thus helping to achieve one of the goals of sustainable economic development. In addition, Beijing has followed a policy of combining BRI projects with the local policies of the participating countries: it cooperates with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), where Russia plays the leading role; Kazakhstan's state program Nurly Zhol (Bright Path); and the Steppe Road program in Mongolia, thus creating a ramified multimodal transport system.

- Third, the BRI has an opportunity to support globalization through infrastructure projects and to integrate various aspects of production, consumption, and distribution in the coming decades, thus helping to mitigate and overcome current financial crises and, possibly, to foster new diversified economic development models differing from current, export-oriented ones. Within the country, China has switched from an export orientation to domestic consumption during the 12th and 13th five-year periods.
- Fourth, "low-carbon" investments in concrete infrastructure and environmental protection projects could provide an alternative to the current trend to invest in environmentally harmful projects. The Forum participants have reportedly signed 283 agreements worth a total of more than \$64 billion, but the list of these projects has not yet been published. Thus, we cannot say whether these are mostly green investment sectors.
- And fifth, the BRI suggests improving urban development through smart cities. This can integrate various industrial, transport, energy, environmental, and sustainable development projects over the long term. In addressing the environmental problems of regions, China also plans to use the excess capacity created in the recent period of reform and openness.

The Forum reviewed the implementation of the BRI from 2015, that is, from the adoption of its action plan. Much attention was paid to the ideas of anti-protectionism and global welfare for all. Based on the argument that in the period from 2014 to 2016 (right after the announcement of the BRI) Chinese trade with BRI countries exceeded \$3 trillion, China launched an initiative on unimpeded trade between the BRI countries. The development of trade and investment in BRI regions can promote the economic connectivity of continents and lead to more sustainable development practices. It was pointed out that simplified trade and investment rules within the BRI framework had reduced customs clearance time for agricultural products from Central Asian countries to China by 90%;¹⁴ that 56 economic and trade cooperation zones with 180,000 jobs had been established in BRI countries; that Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank loans to BRI countries amounted to \$1.7 billion; and that China's total investments in BRI countries amounted to \$50 billion.¹⁵

Clearly, China wants to position itself as a trendsetter in modern international relations and a promoter of global sustainable development. Moreover, China is already seen as the architect of a new type of international relations based on transparency without blocs, plurality of political systems, and the concept of integrated security. It is obvious that the large-scale Belt and Road Forum has become a platform where China presents its vision of global governance, increasingly integrating it with sustainable development goals and objectives. Thus, China is seeking to prove the consistency and legitimacy of the monumental BRI project, which, in its opinion, not only develops the new multimodal infrastructure network, but also makes a significant contribution to the development of education, environmental protection, and cultural dialog between the BRI countries.

¹⁴ See: *The Belt and Road Initiative Progress, Contributions and Prospects 2019*. Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, available at [www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/TheBeltandRoadInitiativeProgressContributionsandProspects.docx], 6 November, 2019

¹⁵ See: "What to expect from Belt and Road Forum," available at [http://english.www.gov.cn/news/top_news/2017/05/01/content_281475642425749.htm], 12 June, 2019.

The AIIB in Central Asia

For many years, China's leaders have argued that international financial institutions have been unable to come to terms with China's rising prominence in the world economy.¹⁶ Although recent reforms have helped to increase China's contribution and voting power in the global market, China is still underrepresented in global economic governance relative to its weight in the global economy.¹⁷ Since the beginning of market reforms in the late 1970s, China's GDP has grown at an average rate of 10% per year, and today it is the world's second largest economy after the United States. The establishment of the AIIB was part of the reorientation of Chinese foreign and international economic policy that began when Xi Jinping came to power as General Secretary of the Communist Party of China in 2012 and then as President of China in 2013.¹⁸

The initiative to create the AIIB was launched by President Xi Jinping in October 2013. This regional multilateral development institution is based on the model and principles of a multilateral bank and aims to support infrastructure construction in developing countries. On 24 October, 2014, the finance ministers and authorized representatives of 21 founding countries, including China, India, and Singapore, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on establishing the AIIB. The Bank's Articles of Agreement were signed on 29 June, 2015, at a ceremony attended by the finance ministers and representatives of 57 prospective founding members, including 37 Asian and 20 non-regional countries. The AIIB was officially formed on 25 December 2015, when the Articles of Agreement entered into force. The list of member countries soon expanded, as AIIB President Jin Liqun announced that more than 20 countries had applied to join the Bank and that in 2017 the number of member countries could reach 90. The AIIB is the first multilateral financial institution created at China's initiative. The Bank officially opened for business in January 2016, when its Board of Governors and Board of Directors held their inaugural meetings.

The creation of the AIIB has led to the development of joint projects between China and Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Since it was Beijing that initiated its establishment and largely controls its activities, the Bank's principles and policy are considered in the context of China's global and regional goals. The AIIB is a mechanism for implementing Chinese investment projects in Central Asia. Having joined the Bank, the post-Soviet states of Central Asia have accepted its principles.

The initial stage of its activity in Central Asia correlates with the first agreements on the relocation of some Chinese industrial facilities to CA countries. Through the AIIB, Beijing competes for regional influence with Russia, the United States, Japan, India, and the European Union, which have pursued an active regional policy through multilateral institutions such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the World Bank (WB), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Thus, Russia has promoted its integration policy in the region mainly through the EAEU, while China uses the AIIB. Although the Central Asian countries can benefit from this situation by choosing the best conditions, the emergence of economic contradictions and conflicts between Russia, China, the United States, and other competitors operating in the region cannot be ruled out. The gradual institutionalization of the AIIB shapes China's

¹⁶ See: "China's Calls for Reform at the World Bank, IMF and ADB Cannot Be Ignored Any Longer," *South China Morning Post*, 12 September, 2016, available at [<https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2018461/chinas-calls-reform-world-bank-imf-and-adb-cannot-be-ignored>], 12 June, 2019.

¹⁷ See: A. He, *The Dragon's Footprints: China in the Global Economic Governance System*, McGill-Queens University Press, Ontario, 2016, 320 pp.

¹⁸ See: W. Morrison, "China's Economic Rise: History, Trends, Challenges, and Implications for the United States," available at [https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.kz/&httpsredir=1&article=2323&context=key_workplace], 12 June, 2019.

economic policy in Central Asia, making it more structural, active and unilateral so as to serve Beijing's interests.¹⁹

The Bank's authorized capital stock is \$100 billion, divided into 1 million shares with a par value of \$100,000 per share. China's subscription amounts to \$29,780.4 billion, which gives it 26.6% of total votes.²⁰ The second largest participant is India with 7.51% of votes, followed by Russia with 5.93%. The voting power of Central Asian countries is as follows: Kazakhstan has 0.89% of the total, Uzbekistan 0.45%, Tajikistan 0.29%, and Kyrgyzstan 0.29%. On 25 June, 2016, AIIB President Jin Liqun reported that the Bank's Board of Directors had approved the first four loan projects in the field of energy, transport, and urban development in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan totaling \$509 million. These include a joint AIIB-EBRD border road improvement project in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan worth a total of \$105.9 million (with the EBRD contributing \$62.5 million); an AIIB loan of \$100 million for the National Motorway M-4 (Shorkot-Khanewal Section) project in Pakistan; a \$165 million loan to upgrade and expand the power distribution network in Bangladesh; and a \$216.5 million loan for a slum-upgrading project in Indonesia. At the Beijing Forum on 4 November, 2016, Jin Liqun said that the Bank had approved financing for nine projects worth a total of \$1.7 billion: the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline project (Azerbaijan); the Duqm Port Commercial Terminal project and a railway project (Oman) and others. All projects financed by the Bank are located in Asia, and most of them relate to the development of infrastructure, energy, and transport. According to the AIIB president, the Bank intends to gradually expand the scope of its work, aiming to increase annual loan amounts to \$10-15 billion in the next five or six years.

While deepening economic relations with neighboring countries under the BRI Initiative, China has also intensified its cooperation with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and regional development banks in order to reform the governance and functioning of these institutions taking into account China's increased economic influence in the global economy.²¹ The BRI Initiative and the AIIB have been working together to develop infrastructure construction in the countries involved. Overproduction is a problem of the modern Chinese economy. Since China has passed the active phase of infrastructure modernization, its production economy needs new projects to maintain employment levels for workers and production at plants outside the country. In building infrastructure for the BRI Initiative, it is important to move the "huge building site" from China to Asian countries, particularly to Central Asia. The AIIB is the main mechanism for financing these projects. In the past, China suggested establishing a bank and a free trade area within the SCO, but other participants did not support the initiative. So, China has found an alternative solution for such cooperation. The road improvement project on the border between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will enhance connectivity along the Tajikistan segment of the Asian Highway Network and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Corridor 3 (CAREC Corridor 3). The project road—the last missing section of the Asian Highway Network and CAREC Corridor 3 in Tajikistan territory—was built 30 years ago and is currently in poor technical condition. The project will help to increase national and regional trade, reduce traffic congestion, and improve road safety. It has a road rehabilitation and reconstruc-

¹⁹ See: K. Muratshina, "Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Post-Soviet Central Asia: New Multilateral Bank Formation in the Context of China's Economic Interaction with Post-Soviet Central Asian Countries," *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, No. 3, 2017, pp. 84-106.

²⁰ See: He Jia, Chong Yatu, "The AIIB First Successes," *Silk Road-Review*, No. 3, 2017, pp. 8-15.

²¹ See: Hongying Wang, "From 'Taoguang Yanghui' to 'Yousuo Zuowei': China's Engagement in Financial Minilateralism," available at [<https://www.cigionline.org/publications/taoguang-yanghui-yousuo-zuowei-chinas-engagement-financial-minilateralism>], 12 June, 2019 (see also: idem, "The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Status-Seeking: China's Foray into Global Economic Governance," available at [<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41111-016-0043-x>], 12 June, 2019).

tion component, as well as a consultancy service component to provide construction supervision. The detailed engineering design for the roadwork component has been completed. The scope of work includes:

- (1) Building a 3-level traffic interchange and related pedestrian underpasses at 82nd Roundabout.
- (2) Building a 3-level traffic interchange at Avicenna Roundabout.
- (3) Building two 2-level traffic interchanges at key local road crossings.
- (4) Widening the project road to dual 4 lanes.
- (5) Improving adjacent intersecting roads.
- (6) Reconstructing pavements.
- (7) Building several pedestrian underpasses.

The Ministry of Transport of Tajikistan is the project executing agency. The project implementation period is from December 2016 to December 2020. Improving the Dushanbe-Uzbekistan border road is essential to promoting economic growth in Tajikistan and trade in Central Asia. The Project will help to increase national and regional trade, reduce traffic congestion, and improve road safety.²² New financing will help Tajikistan to upgrade a section of the road in the capital, Dushanbe, between the Avicenna Monument and the Western Gate, including the 82nd and Avicenna roundabouts.²³ This road, which provides a direct connection between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, is one of the most important international roads requiring urgent reconstruction.

Conclusion

The growth of developing countries, such as China, shows that policy and international collective decision-making mechanisms cannot keep pace with global changes. The creation of a fair and inclusive global governance system will improve the international environment and strengthen the global partnership for development in many respects.

The 2030 Agenda uses a comprehensive and sustainable approach to inclusive growth in all regions.

The AIIB is an important tool for increasing China's international influence and implementing its economic strategy in the Central Asian countries involved in the BRI project. Clearly, China needs to diversify the supply routes for its goods that lead to Europe and other regions by developing infrastructure in landlocked Central Asia. It is obvious that China and the AIIB are currently the main investors in Central Asian infrastructure. While increasing investment in Central Asian countries, AIIB membership also leads to a certain increase in debt, thus causing concern among the local political elite and the population, as well as makes it impossible to insist on state priorities and partnership plans. The Chinese economy has long gone beyond the regional boundaries, which is why large-scale infrastructure construction in Central Asia benefits China and serves its long-term interests, generating interest income and offers to Chinese equipment manufacturers and construction compa-

²² See: "Tajikistan: Dushanbe-Uzbekistan Border Road Improvement Project," available at [<https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/approved/2016/tajikistan-border-road.html>], 12 June, 2019.

²³ See: S. Pyrkalo, "Road Project in Tajikistan Becomes First Joint EBRD-AIIB Investment," available at [<http://www.ebrd.com/news/2016/road-project-in-tajikistan-becomes-first-joint-ebrdaiib-investment.html>], 12 June, 2019.

nies. For China, this is also important from the perspective of implementing the Silk Road Economic Belt project, while for the CA countries this is an opportunity to upgrade their infrastructure and expand their international ties and routes. Since the launch of the AIIB, China's international competition for influence in Central Asia has been intensifying. Another priority for Beijing in its relations with post-Soviet Central Asia is a partial relocation of its industrial facilities and lease of agricultural land in the region. Owing to China's large share of capital stock and its leadership in AIIB governance, it can support such initiatives. As for expectations from the AIIB, the priorities of post-Soviet CA states and China differ: Beijing attaches primary importance to infrastructure projects, while the CA countries are generally in need of investment in both infrastructure and production.

Clearly, China wants to position itself as a trendsetter in modern international relations and a promoter of global sustainable development. Moreover, China is already seen as the architect of a new type of international relations based on transparency without blocs, plurality of political systems, and the concept of integrated security. It is obvious that the large-scale Belt and Road Forum has become a platform where China presents its vision of global governance, increasingly integrating it with sustainable development goals and objectives. Thus, China is seeking to prove the consistency and legitimacy of the monumental BRI project, which, in its opinion, not only develops the new multimodal infrastructure network, but also makes a significant contribution to the development of education, environmental protection, and cultural dialog between the BRI countries.

REGIONAL POLICY

VELVET REVOLUTION IN ARMENIA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STATE POLICY: SELECTED ASPECTS

Agnieszka MIARKA

*Ph.D. Candidate (Political Science),
Master's degree in political science.
Research assistant at the Institute of Political Science,
University of Silesia
(Katowice, Poland)*

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to analyze and characterize the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia and to present its influence on the politics of this country. The first part of the article is devoted to pointing out the most important factors that led to the mass protests in Armenia, such as the weakness and corruption of political elites, monopolization of power structures by one party, inefficiency of foreign policy or the constitutional amendment of 2015. The em-

phasis was placed on the political determinants of the state political crisis. The course of events during the revolution is subsequently presented, emphasizing the priority role held by the opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan. The paper concludes with the enumeration of the most important transformations in Armenia's politics, which were initiated after the My Step bloc came to power, and Pashinyan took over the position of Prime Minister.

KEYWORDS: *revolution, Armenia's politics, Nikol Pashinyan.*

Introduction

The phenomenon of a revolution is an important area of research initiated by political science, sociology, and history experts.¹ The events that took place in Armenia in 2018 have similar characteristics to the Velvet Revolutions that led to political transformations in other post-Soviet countries. It should be stressed that this type of revolution differs from its classical form in that it does not use force to launch systemic changes; on the contrary, concessions are often achieved by renouncing violence and intensively mobilizing the society, as was the case in Georgia (2003). Moreover, the actions are very dynamic and not necessarily associated with breaking the law in a given country. The paper intends to answer the following research questions:

- What were the reasons for the Velvet Revolution in Armenia?
- What was the course of events in the course of the revolution?
- How did the revolution affect Armenia's politics?

The answers to these questions are necessary to analyze and elaborate a complete characterization of the revolution in Armenia, including its determinants, course and effects. It is important to verify the hypothesis that the revolution was an important event influencing the country's domestic and foreign policy. In the course of the research, methods and techniques characteristic of political science were used, among others: analysis of documents and official statements of politicians, secondary analysis of quantitative research, deduction. Due to the formal limitations of this paper, we have selected the initiated political changes and presented the most important ones as subjectively perceived.

The Causes of the Revolution

It should be stressed that the causes of the mass protests in Armenia in April 2018 are very complex and reflect the citizens' weariness of corrupt politicians who are only concerned with securing access to power for themselves, and also their hope for profound systemic changes, guaranteed by a person who is not connected with the elite, namely, Nikol Pashinyan. Also important was the extremely low popularity of the former Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan among Armenians. Sargsyan won the 2008 presidential election with 862,369 votes, which allowed him to win in the first round of the election.² The second place was taken by Levon Ter-Petrosyan, the first president of sovereign Armenia in 1991-1998, who was the favorite in the elections. Petrosyan's supporters did not recognize the election results, while at the same time organizing support rallies and protests in Erevan, demanding that a new round of elections be held, while Petrosyan himself stressed the need to appeal to the Constitutional Court over rigged elections.³ The outgoing President Robert Kocharyan declared a state of emergency and the security forces used firearms to pacify a rally on 1 March, 2008 to demand the release of Petrosyan from house arrest, resulting in the deaths of 8 people.⁴ Sargsyan, after his inauguration as president, did not boost the efforts to punish those responsible for the Erevan massacre, which had shocked the public.

¹ See: Ch. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, New York, 1978; C. Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, New York, 1952.

² See: "2008 Presidential Elections", available at [<https://www.elections.am/presidential/election-22052/>].

³ See: *Ter-Petrosyan oprotestayet itogi vyborov prezidenta Armenii v sude*, Vesti.Ru, available at [<https://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=165529&tid=54373>], 12 May, 2019.

⁴ See: "At Least Eight Killed in Armenian Post-Election Unrest," available at [<https://www.azatutyun.am/a/1593576.html>]; N. Borisov, "Potentials and Limits of Political Competition: Institutional Transformations in Georgia and Armenia in the 2000s," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 16, Issue 3-4, 2015, pp. 17-22.

Citizens also criticized the President for being too submissive about the final settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh's status. It is important to emphasize that no satisfactory progress was made under Sargsyan's presidency, and the negotiations reached a strategic stalemate. In addition, in 2016, a so-called four-day war took place, which is a symptom of the conflict's occasional defrosting. The fights lasted from 2 to 4 April. According to data from the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense, 31 Azeri soldiers and 56 Armenians died. The head of the operational department of the Defense Army of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Viktor Arustamyan, pointed out that 29 people died and 100 were injured as a result of the clashes, while Azerbaijan's losses may have numbered as many as 2,000 people.⁵ According to independent sources, the total number of victims was about 200.⁶ What is important is that Azerbaijan obtained territorial gains, including the village of T'alish, but as Thomas de Waal rightly points out, the essential thing was to create a psychological effect in the form of breaking the humiliation and showing the Azerbaijani citizens that Baku is capable of taking effective action to regain control of Karabakh.⁷ From Armenia's perspective, the unfreezing of the conflict and the losses incurred may be treated as a Sargsyan's failure in the form of ineffectiveness of the military reforms carried out and the unpreparedness of soldiers for military operations.

The one of the key determinants of the revolution was Armenia's difficult economic predicament, which had reached the effects of the global economic crisis of 2008, causing the country's long-term economic stagnation, which began to gradually eliminate only in 2017.⁸ This situation implied a rise in unemployment, a fall in wages and forced thousands of citizens to seek work abroad, mainly in Russia. In this context, it is worth stressing the importance of the 2015 population protests. Peaceful demonstrations, which began on 19 June, were a reaction to the government's decision to increase electricity prices by 16% starting in August 2015. The demonstrations were organized by the Stop the Looting civil movement.⁹ It is worth emphasizing that they were an expression of the frustration of society connected with the inefficiency of the political elites to create and implement the necessary internal reforms. Moreover, it was a symptom of the Armenians' growing dissatisfaction with social welfare. The social disposition was confirmed by the results of research by The Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), in which as many as 29% of respondents indicated that Armenia's domestic policy was definitely heading in the wrong direction. It is worth noting that as many as 32% of the respondents did not see an opportunity for change.¹⁰ These figures confirmed the apathy and frustration of the society resulting from the political vector that Sargsyan and the dominant Republican Party of Armenia adhered to.

The main origin of the above-mentioned phenomena is the previously mentioned permanent crisis of Armenia's political structures. The party system has been monopolized by the Republican Party since 1999, which dominated the revolution at the highest levels of government, often accompanied by favoritism. The corruption of the ruling center, the ineffectiveness of the concept of improving the political system, the façade of the reforms being implemented, the lack of effective solutions for reviving the economy all contributed to the gradual loss of public support by the Republicans and the President, who came from this milieu. In 2015, as many as 45% of those surveyed by the

⁵ See: "Aprel'-2016: O chem govoriat itogi boyev na linii fronta v Nagornom Karabakhe?" news.az, available at [<https://1news.az/news/aprel--2016-o-chem-govoryat-itogi-boev-na-linii-fronta-v-nagornom-karabakhe>]; "Karabakh Army: We Suffered 29 Casualties," news.am, available at [<https://news.am/rus/news/320751.html>].

⁶ See: L. Broers, "The Nagorny Karabakh Conflict: Defaulting to War," July 2016, p. 14, available at [<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/NK%20paper%2024082016%20WEB.pdf>].

⁷ See: Th. de Waal, "Karabakh-2017: budet li vojna," available at [<https://carnegie.ru/2017/02/06/ru-pub-67915>].

⁸ See: A. Iskandaryan, "The Velvet Revolution in Armenia: How to Lose Power in Two Weeks", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 26, No. 4, Fall 2018, p. 468.

⁹ See: "Protesty v Armenii," *Interfax*, available at [https://www.interfax.ru/story/166/page_1].

¹⁰ See: "Caucasus Barometer 2015 Regional Dataset (Armenia and Georgia)," available at [<https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2015/POLDIRN/>].

CRRC declared a total lack of trust in the President, while 41% of respondents did not trust political parties.¹¹ It is not by accident that we refer to 2015 data, treating these variables as a priority in the context of the roots of the revolution. In that year, a very important amendment to Armenia's Constitution took place, which changed the country's political system from a presidential-parliamentary to a parliamentary republic. The changes approved the constitutional referendum that was held on December 2015 and the amendments to the Constitution were supported by 63.37% of voters, which made it possible to implement these changes.¹²

When analyzing the contents of the amended Constitution, it is worth pointing out a few important changes. First of all, the term of office of the President has been extended from 5 to 7 years (one term), he is elected through indirect elections by the National Assembly (NA), and his powers have been limited mainly to ceremonial functions. In turn, the political positions of the Prime Minister (PM) and the government have been strengthened. It is the PM who chairs the meetings of the Security Council and is the supreme commander of the armed forces during the war. The armed forces shall be subordinate to the government, which is also responsible for the development and implementation of Armenia's internal and external policies.¹³ It should be noted that the role of the NA has not been strengthened, as in the classic form of parliamentarianism; rather, the executive body in the form of a government led by the PM has been fortified.

The motivation for these systemic transformations should be sought in Sargsyan's particular aspirations to remain in power. Sargsyan was unable to participate in the presidential elections planned for 2018 due to the fact that he had held office for two terms. The constitutional changes implemented in 2015, which strengthened the PM's position, were supposed to allow Sargsyan to retain a dominant influence on Armenia's politics in the future by holding a key office and filling the cabinet with politicians from the former ruling camp. Such insinuations appeared during work on constitution amendment proposals and were firmly rejected by the former president. During an official meeting with the members of the Commission for Constitutional Reform (2014), the President clearly stressed that he would never be nominated as PM of Armenia, and that future reforms are an appropriate response to the challenges facing the state.¹⁴

Despite these assurances, further political transformations in Armenia have led to a repetition of the legitimacy of the existing oligarchic-political contract. The parliamentary elections that took place on April 2017 were won by the Republican Party of Armenia, which obtained 58 seats in the 105-member NA, which allowed it to form an independent government. Both the results of the 2015 referendum and the 2017 parliamentary elections may seem surprising due to the social mood, but they are the result of very specific phenomena in Armenian political life up until 2018—the absence of strong opposition groups and the electoral apathy of the citizens, as well as the feeling of being unable to change. These frustrations of the Armenian society culminated in the 2018 events. As Sargsyan's term of office expired on 9 April 2018, the NA elected a new President (March 2018). As expected, representatives of the Republican Party indicated on 11 April that the Parliament was designating the outgoing President as PM.¹⁵ These announcements gave a direct impetus to the launch of social demonstrations against the current political agreement in Armenia.

¹¹ See: "Caucasus Barometer 2015 Regional Dataset (Armenia and Georgia)," available at [<https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2015/TRUPRES/>]; [<https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2015/TRUPPS/>].

¹² See: *Sunday, 6 December, 2015 Referendum*, available at [<https://www.elections.am/referendum/election-26015/>].

¹³ See: Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, available at [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Armenia_2015.pdf?lang=en].

¹⁴ See: "Draft of Concept Paper on RA Constitutional Amendments was Presented to RA President," available at [<https://www.president.am/ru/press-release/item/2014/04/10/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-meeting-Commission-on-Constitutional-reforms/>].

¹⁵ See: L. Harutyunyan, "Nedelya v Armenii: Serzh Sargsyan stanet novym prem'yer-ministrom strany", *RFI*, available at [<http://ru.rfi.fr/kavkaz/20180412-nedelya-v-armenii-serzh-sargsyan-stanet-novym-premer-ministrom-strany>].

The Course of the Revolution

The rallies against the Republican plans to appoint Sargsyan as new PM by the NA began on 13 April, 2018 in Erevan. The protesters accused the former president of contributing to the worsening of the country's economic situation. It is worth noting, however, that much earlier, on 31 March, the leader of the anti-regime opposition, Nikol Pashinyan, together with his collaborators, initiated a two-week march in the northern and central regions of Armenia against the activities of Sargsyan and the Republican Party in the country,¹⁶ mobilizing the public to express dissatisfaction. The My Step initiative was established in April and the activities of opposition supporters and revolutionary activists were conducted under the slogan "reject Serzh." The intensity of the protests escalated very quickly. Passengers called on citizens to block bridges without resorting to violence and start marching to the seat of the NA.¹⁷ Notably, the protest movements were characterized by a high degree of decentralization. Many facilities and roads were blocked at the same time, which made it very difficult to disperse the demonstrators. Pashinyan indicated that the goal of this social mobilization was to block the appointment of Sargsyan as PM on 17 April. There were several dozen wounded both among the protesters and police officers, including Pashinyan, who injured during the clashes.¹⁸ The security forces often stressed the fact that the opposition leader may be responsible for the initiated activity.

Despite the described actions of civil disobedience, on 17 April the NA unanimously approved the election of Sargsyan as the new PM of Armenia. In response to these actions, Pashinyan announced the beginning of the Velvet Revolution on the same day. In his view, a revolutionary situation arose in the country.

In many cities, such as Gumri and Metsamor, people were still blocking the roads, declaring disobedience to the existing authorities and beginning mass strikes. At the same time, he signaled that the revolution would be peaceful.¹⁹ The security services remained at permanent readiness, separating the protesters from the government buildings.

The expected breakthrough and restoration of order in the country were to take place during the meeting between Pashinyan and Sargsyan, which took place on 22 April at the initiative of the former president. Negotiations only lasted a few minutes and did not bring the expected results—Pashinyan was uncompromising in putting forward his demand for Sargsyan to resign as PM of Armenia, which the latter interpreted as blackmail. Subsequently, dozens of military units left their home bases and joined the protesters in Erevan.

Pashinyan was detained and arrested by police officers and other security personnel in Erebuni (the southern district of Erevan) as he led the march and called for massive disobedience. The police dispersed the demonstrators and arrested some of them together with the leaders of the demonstration.²⁰ These events did not pacify the demonstrations; on the contrary, they intensified revolutionary

¹⁶ See: "Barkhatnaia revoliutsiia v Armenii: tsentr Erevana otseplen politsiei," available at [https://ee.sputniknews.ru/world_news/20180422/10321279/armenija-erevan-revoljucija-policija-stolkhovenija.html]; L. Arutyunyan, "Nedelia v Armenii: oppozitsiia nachala marsh protesta protiv praviashchey partii," available at [<http://ru.rfi.fr/kavkaz/20180405-nedelya-v-armenii-oppozitsiya-nachala-marsh-protesta-protiv-pravyashchei-partii>].

¹⁷ See: "Besporiadki v Erevane: lider protesta gospitalizirovan," *BBC*, available at [<https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-43783471>].

¹⁸ See: *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ See: "V Armenii ob'iaivili 'barkhatnuiu revoliutsiu'," *Lenta*, available at [<https://lenta.ru/news/2018/04/17/revolution/>].

²⁰ See: "V Erevane zaderzhan lider protestnogo dvizheniia Nikol Pashinyan," *Radio Svoboda*, available at [<https://www.svoboda.org/a/29185030.html>]; "V Erevane desiatki voyennykh prisoyedinilis k protestuiushchim," *RIA*, available at [<https://ria.ru/20190815/1557520121.html>].

moods, especially in the younger stratum of the society. The intensity of the protests increased and people from many Armenian towns joined the protesters in demanding Pashinyan's release.

The breakthrough moment of the revolution was Sargsyan's decision on 23 April. The former president issued an official statement in which he resigned from the position of PM of Armenia. As he pointed out, "Nikol Pashinyan was right. I was wrong (...)." ²¹ Also important is the date of Sargsyan's resignation itself—the day before the national holiday, which is the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, celebrated annually in Armenia and by the Armenian diaspora in many countries of the world. A potential commemoration of the genocide could have exacerbated the protests, intensifying the chaos on the streets, thus risking a military response from the security forces, which brings to mind the events of 2008.

After Sargsyan's resignation, it was clear to Armenian public opinion that the leader of the revolution would be appointed by parliament as PM, but that the political forces that followed the revolution failed for the first time. During the 1 May vote on Pashinyan's candidacy, he did not receive the required support and was not elected the new PM of Armenia. ²² This legislative decision caused renewed anxiety and opposition among the public. The next vote on Pashinyan's candidacy took place on 8 May during a special parliamentary session. With 59 votes in favor and 42 against, the leader of the revolution was elected PM. In thanking the MPs for their appointment, he stressed that the page of hatred should be closed in the Republic of Armenia. ²³ It should be stressed that Pashinyan's appointment as PM, a symbolic complement to the revolution, is not the end of the revolution in Armenia, but rather the beginning of changes, both in domestic and foreign policy, initiated by post-revolutionary political forces. What is important, when Pashinyan took up a priority position, it was the end of an era in Armenia's politics—that of the total domination of the Karabakh elite in power structures.

The Influence of the Revolution on Armenia's Politics

As mentioned above, the events during the revolution led to a complete rotation of the political elite.

Despite the appointment of Pashinyan as PM of Armenia, the opposition parties could not provide effective support for the leader due to the fact that the NA was dominated by MPs from the Republican Party of Armenia, which was an obstacle to the implementation of reforms aimed at creating a post-revolutionary political vector for the state. In view of this, Pashinyan announced his resignation from the post of PM on October. This was not a sign of surrender of the new political forces, but a desire to complete Armenia's political transformation and cleanse the NA structures of people linked to the former elites. As Pashinyan pointed out in an official press release published by the PM's press office, his resignation was intended to help finalize the revolution, that is to say, the transfer of power to the people. ²⁴ According to Armenian legislation, the NA has 14 days to appoint

²¹ "Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan's Statement," available at [<https://www.primeminister.am/ru/press-release/item/2018/04/23/Prime-Minister-Serzh-Sargsyans-statement/>].

²² See: K. Fedorowicz, "Where is Armenia Heading—The Way to the Unknown?" *Bulletin of the Institute of Armenian Studies*, No. 2, May-July 2018, p. 6 (in Polish).

²³ See: "At Special Sitting of RA National Assembly Nikol Pashinyan Elected RA Prime Minister," available at [http://www.parliament.am/news.php?cat_id=2&NewsID=10270&year=2018&month=05&day=08&lang=rus].

²⁴ See: "Nikol Pashinyan ob'yavil o svoyey otstavke s posta prem'yer-ministra," available at [<https://rus.azatutyun.am/a/29547027.html>].

a new PM, otherwise the parliament is dissolved and the president announces early elections. Indeed, MPs were unable to elect a new PM, and early parliamentary elections took place on 9 December. The opposition bloc My Step achieved unquestionable success (My Step Parties Alliance with 70.42% of the vote, which translated into 88 of 132 seats in the NA). Significantly, the Republican Party of Armenia won only 4.7% of the vote, and its representatives did not become a part of the newly elected parliament.²⁵ The results of the elections reflect the great public trust enjoyed by the Pashinyan group, which is the only party in the perception of the people capable of carrying out the necessary reforms that can raise the standard of living in the country.

The PM initiated a very important organizational change in the government. The project assumed a reduction in the number of ministries from 17 to 12. The Ministry of Agriculture was supposed to be merged with the Ministry of Economic Development and Investment.

In addition, the post of the first deputy prime minister was abolished, and two deputy prime ministers were proposed in place of three. The NA passed the draft in its second reading on 8 May, 2019, when 79 MPs voted in favor of the draft, 41 against and 1 abstained. It is worth noting that the two parties with the largest number of representatives in the parliament after the Pashinyan's party voted against the proposed changes. In the case of the Bright Armenia Party, the objections resulted from the fact that the Security Service and the Police were not given the status of ministries, so that they would not be directly subordinate to the PM, indicating that this strengthens the "super-premier" system. On the other hand, MPs representing the Prosperous Armenia Party expressed their disapproval of the plans to merge the ministries.²⁶ The changes were voted through due to the fact that the My Step had a constitutional majority. Such an organizational form of government is intended to reduce the unnecessary growth of the administration and to improve the management of government administration, making it more effective.

An extremely important change in Armenia's internal policy is the initiation by the new PM and ruling camp of the campaign against corruption at the highest levels of government, as well as accounting for the mistakes made by the predecessors. This goal was clearly stated during the Address delivered by the PM on 7 June, 2018 during the NA sitting. The key tasks of the new government included public rejection of corruption as a means of building a corruption-free society, as well as separating politics and business.²⁷

Pashinyan considered it crucial to punish those responsible for the events of 1 March, 2008, which became a symbol of the deepening authoritarianism in the state. The arrest of former President Kocharyan on 28 July, 2018 was an absolutely unprecedented event. The Special Investigation Service accused the former President, under Article 300.1 of the Criminal Code, of breaching the constitutional order in Armenia, threatening to imprison him for 10 to 15 years.²⁸

In addition, the President was accused of accepting large bribes. A month later, the President was released for immunity, and then arrested again on New Year's Day. In May 2019, Kocharyan was released again by the court on bail, the current President of the Republic of Artsakh being among

²⁵ See: "Sunday, 9 December, 2018 Parliamentary Elections," available at [<https://www.elections.am/parliamentary/>] (in Armenian).

²⁶ See: *Zakon Respubliki Armenia ot 16 maia 2019 goda No. ZR-31 O vnesenii izmeneniy i dopolneniy v Zakon „O strukture i deiatelnosti Pravitelstva*," available at [http://base.spinform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=116107]; "Natsionalnoe sobranie prinialo proekt izmeneniy v strukture pravitelstva," *Radio Azatutyun*, available at [<https://rus.azatutyun.am/a/29928441.html>]; *Structure*, available at [<https://www.gov.am/en/structure/>].

²⁷ See: "Speech Delivered by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan While Introducing the Government Program to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia," available at [<https://www.primeminister.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2018/06/07/Nikol-Pashinyan-Speech-National-Assembly/>].

²⁸ See: "2nd President Kocharyan's Attorneys to Submit Appeal to Court of Cassation on 30 or 31 August," *Armenpress*, available at [<https://armenpress.am/eng/news/945490.html>].

bail bondsmen, but at the end of June he was arrested for the third time.²⁹ Despite appeals by Kocharyan's defenders to the PM to intervene in order to allow a free response, he did not intervene in this case. On the one hand, bringing about Kocharyan's conviction is to be undeniable proof of the implementation of the slogan of destroying old systems based on oligarchic connotations and authoritarian governing style. There can be no denying the strong personal motivation of Pashinyan due to the repressions he experienced in connection with the 2008 events.

An example of the fight against corruption and the criminal past of high-ranking officials is the case of General Manvel Grigoryan. He was arrested in June 2018 and charged with illegal acquisition, sale and transport of weapons, ammunition and explosives and the misappropriation of property³⁰. Grigoryan was repeatedly awarded for his service, including the title of the Hero of Artsakh. This should be treated as the end of the glorification of those who fought in the Nagorno-Karabakh War and the consequent lustration of public space in order to vet those connected with the old system. What is noteworthy is that Pashinyan was taking steps to obtain support from EU structures for the effective implementation of the anti-corruption program, including the construction of an independent judiciary system in Armenia, free from political pressure, as he had mentioned during his speech to the PACE (April 2019).³¹

The leading EU decision-makers declare their support for Armenia's striving for democracy and implementing necessary reforms. During his meeting with the PM of Armenia, Donald Tusk stressed the readiness of EU structures to increase financial and technical assistance to Erevan, as well as support for the fight against corruption and the implementation of the rule of law reform throughout the country (July 2019).³² The approval of the West is extremely important for the success of the post-revolutionary political changes, because without financial support and foreign specialists Armenia will not be able to effectively implement the new development program due to its economic weakness.

The economic strengthening of the country has also become a matter of concern for the new government. At the beginning of February 2019, the PM announced a program of economic revolution—one of the priority objectives of the government's activities over the next five years was to create a competitive and exclusive export-oriented economy, meeting the highest international standards.³³

It is worth noting that economic innovations are not only important for building up the welfare of society, but also for the ultimate elimination of corruption. Transparency and lack of system gaps will remove the possibility of corrupt activities. As an example of mechanisms intended to help Armenia's economic recovery, we should point to the agricultural reform currently being prepared. Its most important objective is to bring the country closer to the status of an industrial state.³⁴

The package of reforms initiated by Pashinyan concerning areas important for the economy, such as tax and pension policy, combating corruption, strengthening competitiveness and the labor

²⁹ See: "Zashchita Kocharyana poprosila sud osvobodit yego pod zalog," *RIA*, available at [<https://ria.ru/20190708/1556317400.html>].

³⁰ See: "General Manvel Grigoryan ostanetsya pod strazhey—resheniye suda," *NewsArmenia*, available at [<https://newsarmenia.am/news/armenia/general-manvel-grigoryan-ostanetsya-pod-strazhey-reshenie-suda-/>].

³¹ See: *Report Sixteenth Sitting Thursday 11 April, 2019 at 10 a.m.*, available at [<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2019/E/1904111000E.pdf>].

³² See: "Remarks by President Donald Tusk after His Meeting with Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan," available at [<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/press/press-releases/2019/07/10/remarks-by-president-donald-tusk-after-his-meeting-with-prime-minister-of-armenia-nikol-pashinyan/>].

³³ See: "Nikol Pashinyan: 'The Program of the Government of the Republic of Armenia Ushers in the Launch of the Economic Revolution'," available at [<https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2019/02/08/Cabinet-meeting/>].

³⁴ See: "Government Discusses Land Reform-related Issues," available at [<https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2019/07/14/Meeting/>].

market, was positively evaluated by the International Monetary Fund's experts. According to their forecasts, the full implementation of economic reforms could result in Armenia's GDP growth of up to 7%.³⁵ Undoubtedly, the economic package is intended primarily to stabilize the economy, as economic growth in 2018 was 2.3% lower than in 2017.³⁶ The economy is expected to accelerate in 2019 and the growth may amount to 4.8%. Comparing data from other South Caucasian countries, it should be noted that Armenia's economic growth is slightly higher than that of Georgia (expected growth in 2019—4.7%), where reforms have been implemented for many years, and much higher than in Azerbaijan (expected growth in 2019: 2.6%).³⁷

In view of the above, it can undoubtedly be said that the economic changes initiated by the post-revolutionary political forces should be seen as a positive direction of Armenia's economic transformation.

The impact of the revolution on the Armenian authorities' approach to the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh is also worth analyzing. As for the issue of regulating the status of Nagorno-Karabakh—a region inhabited by more than 90% Armenians, which is *de jure* part of Azerbaijan, but which has functioned *de facto* as an independent entity since 1994,³⁸ the position of the new authorities was of interest not only to the national, but also to the international public opinion. This is due to the fact that the PM was not linked to the region, which could have implied, for example, a decrease in the Armenian authorities' desire to determine the final legal status of these lands during negotiations with Azerbaijan alone.

In this context, the direction of Pashinyan's first foreign visit should be interpreted as an extremely symbolic decision. Pashinyan did not follow the tradition of going to Russia, but went to Artsakh instead. On 9 May, 2018, he met the President of the unrecognized republic in Stepanakert. This event is extremely important because during his speech he presented the position of the post-revolutionary political forces on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. The PM expressed his support for the para-state, while emphasizing the readiness to conduct negotiations with the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, under the OSCE Minsk Group format; as he pointed out, the Azerbaijani side should respect the right to self-determination of the Nagorno-Karabakh population. It is worth noting that the PM said that Nagorno-Karabakh should be recognized as a party to the conflict and that representatives of the region should take part in negotiations.³⁹

This is a view that is completely different from the international perception of the conflict, which perceives it as an interstate conflict, so the talks were held at the level of Armenia-Azerbaijan, considered parties to the conflict, without the voice of the separatist authorities. A strong emphasis on the leading role of Stepanakert as an independent entity indicates that Erevan will no longer act as an intermediary for the region's interests in the international arena, although it will still be considered a guarantor of its security and survival. This is the result of the general shape of government policy according to the "Armenia first" principle, i.e. the focus on the internal transformation of the country and the willingness to be a force supporting, rather than creating, the peace process. This

³⁵ See: IMF Staff Country Reports, "Republic of Armenia: Selected Issues," p. 9, available at [<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2019/06/05/Republic-of-Armenia-Selected-Issues-46969>, available 2019-09-02].

³⁶ See: "Economic Growth to Speed Up in 2019 with the Revival of Investment Activity," available at [<https://eabr.org/en/press/news/armenia-economic-growth-to-speed-up-in-2019-with-the-revival-of-investment-activity/>].

³⁷ See: "Comparative Economic Forecasts for Central Asian Countries," available at [<https://www.adb.org/countries/armenia/economy>].

³⁸ For more details, see: Th. de Waal, *Black Garden. Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, New York and London 2003; M. Mooradian, D. Druckman, "Hurting Stalemate or Mediation? The Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh 1990-95," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol 36, Issue 6, 1999; S.E. Cornell, "Undeclared War: The Nagorno Karabakh Conflict Reconsidered," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 4, Summer 1997.

³⁹ See: "PM Attends Triple Holiday-Dedicated Events in Artsakh," available at [<https://www.primeminister.am/en/Artsakh-visits/item/2018/05/09/Prime-Minister-Nikol-Pashinyan-visited-Artsakh/>].

could also be a way of peaceful absorption of Nagorno-Karabakh by Armenia, as argued by the voice of the people of this region. As Eduard Abrahamyan rightly pointed out, during the revolution Pashinyan called for the revitalization of the Miacum!, the idea of unifying Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴⁰

It is also noteworthy that Pashinyan met with Aliyev several times. One could mention the meeting of the two decision-makers in Vienna (March 2019), under the auspices of the Minsk Group. The PM stressed the need for further efforts to stabilize the situation in areas close to the front line. Politicians had already agreed on the need to strengthen the ceasefire mechanisms.⁴¹ The revival of contacts is important in order to create the right conditions for negotiations, although key decisions cannot be expected within a few months. The peace process will have a positive impact if there is the political will to make concessions on both sides. However, it should be stressed that, given the stagnation in the negotiations, such steps should be interpreted as positive steps by the post-revolutionary authorities.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the revolution was the beginning of important changes in Armenia's domestic and foreign policy. The ruling center, headed by Nikol Pashinyan, began a ruthless fight against corruption at the highest levels of government, as well as accounting for the mistakes made by its predecessors.

Moreover, since the revolution, large-scale economic reforms have been implemented to stimulate Armenia's economy and make it more attractive to investors. The position of Yerevan on the final regulation of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh was also transformed and talks on this subject between representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan were intensified. In this respect, it should be pointed out that the research hypothesis proved to be true. The work on this paper inspired the author to conduct further research on the creation of vectors in Armenia's politics, as it may change the balance of power in the South Caucasian region.

⁴⁰ See: E. Abrahamyan, "Pashinyan Stiffens Armenia's Posture Toward Karabakh," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 15, Issue 72, available at [<https://jamestown.org/program/pashinyan-stiffens-armenias-posture-toward-karabakh/>].

⁴¹ See: "Vstrecha Pashinyana i Aliyeva vyzvala sderzhanny optimizm v Armenii," *Kavkazskiy Uzel*, available at [<https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/333634/>].

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL PROCESS IN GEORGIA

Oleg KARPOVICH

*D.Sc. (Political Science),
Deputy Director of the Institute for Topical International Problems,
Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Adelina NOGMOVA

*Ph.D. (Political Science),
Dean for the Training of Highly Skilled Scientific and Pedagogical Specialists,
Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Larisa ALEKSANYAN

*Research Associate,
Department of the Political Science and
Political Philosophy, Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

ABSTRACT

The study of political processes in the Southern Caucasus, one of the most complex and conflict-prone regions of the world, poses a great interest. Post-Soviet transformation of the political regimes of the South Caucasian countries has generally turned out to be rather complicated and painful. The Soviet legacy, the difficulties of adapting Western-style democracy to post-Soviet realities, manifestations of authoritarianism, civil wars, ethnic conflicts and the economic crisis have all left their mark on the nation-building process in the countries of the Southern Caucasus. Each of these states, in turn, has chosen its own path in developing its political system and building its own democratic architecture.

Also important in these geopolitical processes is the role of rivalry along the Russia-the West axis.

Georgia was distinguished among the South Caucasian states by what may have been the most complex state formation process and a difficult transition from socialism to capitalism. This country is still characterized by a weak institutional nature of the political system, elements of authoritarianism and the general instability of democracy. The study of these problematic aspects of Georgia's internal political processes is highly relevant.

This article is devoted to identifying the characteristics of the transformation of the post-Soviet Georgia's political landscape.

The stages of the country's political development are examined. Particular attention is paid to the study of public administration in Georgia following the 2012 parliamentary elections, with a focus on the polarization of Georgian society. The effectiveness of competition policy within Georgia has been ex-

amined. It was revealed that political parties in Georgia are defined not by ideologies and programs, but by their charismatic leaders, which Georgian society so desperately needs. The role of civil society and non-governmental organizations in the country's political processes is also analyzed.

KEYWORDS: *Georgia, political process, public administration, personalization, civil society.*

Introduction

Prior to the 2012 parliamentary elections, the power in post-Soviet Georgia was monolithic,¹ the political regime was authoritarian, and the political elites aimed to maintain their position at all costs. Prior to this period, the political development of Georgia was characterized by the cyclical nature of the crisis, which was expressed in the fact that regime changes in the country took place through coups and revolutions. In the past, only in October 1990 did the opposition and anti-communist coalition Round Table—Free Georgia led by the charismatic leader Zviad Gamsakhurdia come to power in a multi-party election. This event in modern Georgian development can be considered a peaceful revolution, since the people have pressured the authorities to conduct multi-party elections, ultimately leading to the victory of the nationalist forces over the communists. This victory was consolidated in May 1991, when Zviad Gamsakhurdia was elected President of Georgia by a majority of votes.² Subsequently, he led the process of Georgia's secession from the U.S.S.R., attempting to create a nation-based democratic state, with no regard for the rights of national minorities, including Muslims.

Zviad Gamsakhurdia's domestic policy was based on two concepts: nationalism and democracy. He promoted the ideas of ethnic nationalism in a state with a diverse multinational composition. Democratization of Soviet Georgia had transformed nationalism into authoritarianism, which led to the formation of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's personal regime.³ During this time, serious problems emerged in the establishment of political institutions, there was a lack of political consensus within the Round Table coalition, and an intense struggle for power ensued among individual forces. The political thinking paradigm based on the "Georgia for Georgians" slogan, Gamsakhurdia's attempt to establish control over the country's political life, as well as serious economic problems caused by the collapse of the U.S.S.R., led to a crisis of Gamsakhurdia's legitimacy and an outbreak of civil war.

In 1992, the new charismatic leader Eduard Shevardnadze came to power through a coup d'état. In August 1995, the country's Constitution was adopted, transforming Georgia into a presidential republic with separation of powers.⁴ In the fall of that year, Eduard Shevardnadze was elected presi-

¹ See: I. Kachkachishvili, "Sostoianie postmoderna' vnutrenney politiki Gruzii," in: *Armenia i Gruzia v sovremennykh politicheskikh protsessakh: novyye vyzovy i vozmozhnosti v sfere regionalnoy bezopasnosti*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2015, p. 46.

² See: G. Nodia, A.P. Scholtbach, *The Political Landscape of Georgia*, The Netherlands, 2006, p. 8.

³ See: V.M. Dolidze, "Gosudarstva—chleny GUAM: postkommunisticheskaia transformatsiia i tsikly politicheskogo razvitiia Gruzii," *Postsovetskie issledovaniia*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2019, p. 887.

⁴ See: *Constitution of Georgia* 24/08/1995, in: Legislative Herald of Georgia, available at [<https://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opendocpdf.pdf?docid=548f04404>], 25 June, 2019.

dent, and his party, the Union of Georgian Citizens, won the parliamentary elections. The authoritarian regime of Zviad Gamsakhurdia was transformed into the liberal authoritarianism of Eduard Shevardnadze. He created a political regime that did provide a certain space for civil and political freedoms, but there were no conditions in place for genuine political competition.⁵

In turn, the ruling party was weakly institutionalized, the power was concentrated in the hands of a narrow circle of the political elite and served its interests. Despite the development of civil society institutions, namely, the emergence of independent media and NGOs, the political activity in the Georgian society was low. The country had developed a private sector and, accordingly, private property was proclaimed to be the foundation of society, which led to the deepening of social inequality. Characteristic features of Shevardnadze's regime were corruption and falsification of elections. All of the above-mentioned factors have negatively affected its legitimacy, as a result of which there was a gradual weakening of Shevardnadze's influence. Georgian society found it necessary to look for a new charismatic leader.⁶

Despite the fact that Eduard Shevardnadze and his team have managed to ensure pluralism in the country's political life, the democratic process was still inhibited. According to an annual study by the Freedom House NGO, which assesses the degree of political and civil liberties throughout the world, there was no fair competition for political power in Georgia during this period.⁷ It was not coincidental that in 2003 the change of power did not take place via elections, but was carried out unconstitutionally, through a revolution.

The political opposition united around Mikhail Saakashvili, Nino Burjanadze and Zurab Zhvania, who at one time were all active supporters of Shevardnadze's regime. The socially unprotected part of the voters opposed the existing establishment, and Western countries supported the opposition forces financially and through political mechanisms. An important role was played by a network of NGOs and foreign foundations, as well as the media, some of which were controlled by the opposition.⁸ It should be noted that the opposition did not have a clear program or an ideology, the key principles of its election platform being the fight against corruption and the "elimination of the Shevardnadze clan."⁹

The falsified results of the 3 November, 2003 parliamentary elections prompted multi-thousand demonstrations.¹⁰ Eduard Shevardnadze was forced to resign by the rallies that followed. Mikhail Saakashvili came to power, and was elected president in 2004 by a majority of electoral votes (95%). In March of the same year, his bloc United National Movement—Democrats won the parliamentary elections. The third stage of the transformation of Georgia's political system began, and Saakashvili's authoritarian regime began to be formed based on the paradigm of the country's modernization. A favorable business climate was established within the country, and tax rates were reduced. Decriminalization of society has also begun at an active pace. Thus, the country demonstrated a certain progress and success in the nation-building process. Saakashvili's actions led to the strengthening of state

⁵ See: G. Nodia, A.P. Scholtbach, op. cit., p. 13.

⁶ See: S.S. Zhiltsov, "Revolutionary Waves in the Post-Soviet Expanse," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (36), 2005, pp. 7-13.

⁷ See: "Georgia: Nations in Transit 2008," Freedom House, available at [<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2008/Georgia>], 1 August, 2019.

⁸ See: V. Dolidze, "The Regime and the 'Revolution' in Post-Soviet Georgia," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (44), 2007, p. 33.

⁹ *Georgia: Parliamentary & Presidential Elections 2003-2004*, NORDEM Report 07/2004, p. 4, available at [<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UNTC/UNPAN019186.pdf>], 1 August, 2019.

¹⁰ The fact that the 2003 Parliamentary elections in Georgia fell short of a number of OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections was recorded in the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report (see: *Georgia: Parliamentary Elections, 2 November, 2003*, OBCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report, Part 1, Warsaw, 2004. P. 1, available at [<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/georgia/22206?download=true>], 1 August, 2019).

institutions, whose stability and democratic character were nonetheless questionable.¹¹ The country has achieved significant success in the fight against corruption, but this phenomenon has only intensified in the upper echelons of the ruling elite.¹²

As he conducted the reforms, Saakashvili has strengthened his positions. In 2004, on his initiative, the parliament had amended the Constitution, expanding the powers of the president. He received the right to dissolve the parliament under certain conditions, thereby ensuring the dependence of the legislative branch. The President received the authority to appoint ministers, governors and mayors, moreover, the executive branch also dominated the judiciary. Thus, the institution of the president became a powerful body, and the power was concentrated in the hands of Mikhail Saakashvili.

Amendments to the Constitution, the establishment of a one-party system in the presence of a formally multi-party system, and control over the media have hindered the democratization of Georgia. These factors have intensified after November 2007, when peaceful demonstrations were brutally suppressed in Georgia. At the same time, Saakashvili's legitimacy was on the decline and his popularity was decreasing. This was indicated by the results of the 2008 presidential election, Saakashvili won narrowly with only 53.47% of the vote.¹³ Saakashvili's administration was also unable to peacefully resolve conflicts with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which proclaimed their independence as a result of the 2008 South Ossetian war. On the other hand, the tense Russian-Georgian relations have ultimately worsened, reaching a complete impasse. It was during Saakashvili's rule that the intensification of Russophobia and the restoration of the country's so-called "territorial integrity" became an integral part of domestic political processes. Despite the regressive trends in Georgia's political development, the West supported the authority of Saakashvili, considering him a pro-Western reformer and a pronouncedly anti-Russian politician.

In the wake of the 2012 parliamentary elections, Georgia's political system was shocked by the mass protests caused by the publication of evidence of serious violations and abuse of power by Georgian police and intelligence agencies.¹⁴ Demonstrations have contributed to the victory of the Georgian Dream opposition coalition under the leadership of Bidzina Ivanishvili in the parliamentary elections. The nature of the regime change has proven that, despite the authoritarian regime of Mikhail Saakashvili, the country has achieved quite a bit on the path of nation-building and the development of democracy.

Public Administration in Georgia after the 2012 Elections

The fourth stage of the transformation of the political landscape of Georgia began in 2012, with the power being transferred to the opposition forces after the parliamentary elections. As a result, the Georgian Dream coalition obtained 85 seats in the parliament, and Saakashvili's party won 65 seats. For the first time in the history of post-communist Georgia, the former ruling party turned into a parliamentary opposition faction. Thus, the ruling coalition and the opposition began to work together in state institutions. Favorable conditions were created for political pluralism and genuine

¹¹ See: "Georgia: Nations in Transit 2008," Freedom House.

¹² See: S.S. Zhiltsov, "Korruptsiia i politicheskie protsessy v sovremennom mire," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, Vol. 63, No. 6, 2019, pp. 118-121.

¹³ See: "Georgia: Election for President, 5 January, 2008," in: *Election Guide: Democracy Assistance and Election News*, available at [<http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/2060/>], 1 August, 2019.

¹⁴ See: P. Stronski, A. Vriman, "Nezavisimoy Gruzii dvadtsat piat let: v slozhnom polozhenii," *Moskovskiy tsentr Karnegi*, 1 March, 2018, available at [<https://carnegie.ru/2018/03/01/ru-pub-75652>], 7 July, 2019.

political competition. In addition, the depersonalization of politics began, since it was precisely “the effect of personalization of politics that challenged the key role of parties in the political process as well as the entire model of party democracy.”¹⁵

Mikhail Saakashvili continued to exercise his powers until the 2013 presidential election, which was won by the Georgian Dream coalition candidate Giorgi Margvelashvili. With the loss sustained by David Barkadze,¹⁶ the candidate of the United National Movement opposition party, the chance was missed to create a real two-party system that could have a positive effect on the development of democratic Georgia.

Irakliy Garibashvili became the new Prime Minister of Georgia, nominated by Bidzina Ivanishvili himself. Despite the fact that Bidzina Ivanishvili had officially left politics, nevertheless, he continued to be the unofficial leader of the Georgian Dream until his return.

After the presidential election, constitutional amendments (2010-2013), which provided for a reduction of presidential powers and an increased importance of the prime minister’s role, entered into force. These amendments made Georgia a parliamentary republic.¹⁷ Meanwhile, the lack of a clear separation within the executive branch had a negative impact on the country’s development. This had caused a sharp rivalry between the president, who possessed legitimacy and the prime minister, who possessed a wide range of powers. As a result, Giorgi Margvelashvili and Irakliy Garibashvili, both being representatives of the ruling coalition, began to struggle with each other for power. Their rivalry involved various governmental functions. In addition, Margvelashvili repeatedly used his right of veto in regard to the bills proposed by the Georgian Dream. At the end of 2014, Margvelashvili declared his independent stance in a speech he delivered in the parliament.¹⁸

Fearing the destabilization of the political system, parliament necessitated “the need for a new constitutional amendment, which would state that the president was to be elected by the parliament rather than by a popular vote.”¹⁹ The lack of transparency in the separation of powers indicated significant problems with political institutions.

Uncertainty was exacerbated by the situation in the Georgian Dream coalition, which from the very first days of its establishment was not comprised of homogeneous political entities. The unifying factor of the coalition was not ideology, but the so-called negative mobilization “against the regime of Saakashvili.”²⁰ It is no coincidence that shortly thereafter, in 2014, the Republican Party led by David Ustupashvili and the Free Democrats party led by Irakliy Alasania have both left the coalition. Ex-associates, who had occupied key positions in the party hierarchy, also left the coalition.²¹ Despite these changes, Georgian Dream was unable to become a monolithic party and participated in full strength in the 2016 parliamentary elections without a clearly defined ideology. In addition, the ruling party was sharply criticized by its opponents because of unfulfilled promises (increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies, combating corruption, reducing the influence of the Orthodox clergy).

Prior to the 2016 elections, the main opposition force, the United National Movement, in turn, was rather weak and disorganized. The reasons for this condition were mainly related to the process

¹⁵ Quoted from: M.A. Kukartseva, “Effekt personalizatsii sovremennoy politiki,” *Vestnik RGGU, Series Filosofiya. Sotsiologiya. Iskusstvovedeniye*, 2017, p. 239.

¹⁶ According to the Georgian Constitution, Mikhail Saakashvili did not have the right to participate in the election, as he had been the country’s president for 2 terms.

¹⁷ See: “Kak menialas Konstitutsiia Gruzii,” *Kommersant*, No. 49, 22 March, 2013, p. 7.

¹⁸ See: *The Speech by the President of Georgia, Mr. Giorgi Margvelashvili*, Parliament of Georgia, 14 November, 2014, available at [<http://www.parliament.ge/en/media/axali-ambebi/the-speech-by-the-president-of-georgia-mr-giorgi-margvelashvili.page>], 5 July, 2019.

¹⁹ B. Chedia, “The Paradigm of Post-Soviet Political Leadership in Georgia,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Volume 15, Issue 3, 2014, p. 140.

²⁰ I. Kachkachishvili, op. cit., p. 47.

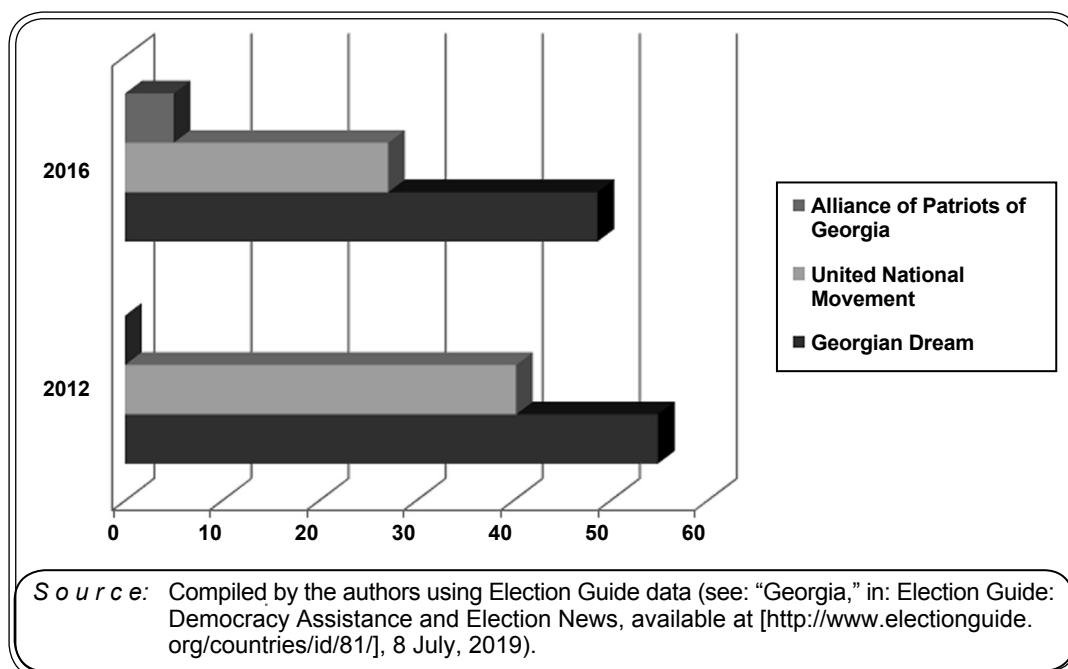
²¹ See: N. Gegelashvili, “Gruzia posle parlamentskikh vyborov,” *Kavkazskiy khroniki*, No. 1, 2016, p. 72.

of “restorative justice” in regard to the former officials of the United National Movement party for various corrupt activities and abuse of power, as well as to Saakashvili’s²² low standing among the electorate.

The 2016 parliamentary elections brought clarity to the Georgian political landscape. The ruling party Georgian Dream had won, receiving 48.67% of the general vote, and the United National Movement opposition group retained its position in parliament, receiving 27.11% of the vote.²³ When comparing the results of the parliamentary elections of 2012 and 2016 (see Fig. 1), the ruling party’s lowered rating and the decrease in popularity of the main opposition forces become clear. This has contributed to the fact that the third force, namely, the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia (5.01%), also overcame the 5% barrier.

Figure 1

**Georgian Parliament:
Parties that Overcame the 5% Barrier**



In the second round of elections, Georgian Dream had won in 48 single-member constituencies out of 50. According to the final results, the party received 115 out of 150 parliamentary seats, which allowed to form a constitutional majority.²⁴ The opposition UNM obtained 27 seats and the Alliance of Patriots had won 6 seats. Once again, the dominance of a single political party with an indistinct program and ideology became apparent.²⁵

²² See: Mikhail Saakashvili is currently living abroad, and a criminal case has been initiated against him for the alleged abuse of power in 2007.

²³ See: “Georgia: Election for Georgian Parliament.”

²⁴ See: “‘Gruzinskaya mechta’ zavershila razgrom sopernikov,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 1 November, 2016, available at [http://www.ng.ru/cis/2016-11-01/6_6849_gruzia.html], 8 July, 2019.

²⁵ See: S. Markedonov, A. Skakov, “Postsovetskaia Gruzia: ot turbulentnosti k stabilnosti i predskazuyemosti,” in: *Evolutsiia postsovetskogo prostranstva: proshloe, nastoiashchee, budushchee*, Moscow, 2017, p. 139.

Despite the fact that the victory of Georgian Dream was convincing and unconditional, it did not enjoy extensive support. The reason behind it was the crisis of electorate's confidence in political forces. Only half of all voters (51.63%) had participated in the elections and, given this indicator, it is apparent that only 23.37% of the electorate had voted for the ruling party. This situation, in turn, indicated the weakness of the country's electoral system. The Georgian parliament was basically formed with a lack of legitimacy, which posed a threat to the stability of power in the country.

The reasons for the weakening of the electoral legitimacy of the ruling party were the increase in social inequality associated with devaluation of lari (Georgian monetary unit) to 7%,²⁶ and unfulfilled promises in the socio-economic and political spheres. Also, public distrust of law enforcement agencies increased. The struggle intensified within Georgian Dream against the backdrop of widespread mistrust.

As a result, in April 2018 Bidzina Ivanishvili returned to high-level politics, taking the post of the party chairman.

At the end of May 2018, rallies began in Georgia because of a highly non-transparent investigation into the deaths of two teenagers.²⁷ Under the pressure of public demonstrations, the Prosecutor General of Georgia resigned in May and Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili followed in June. In fact, personnel shifts in state bodies of power have become a successful political mechanism of the ruling party in opposition to public activity.

The Georgian opposition, which had previously retained a passive position, was given the opportunity to challenge the ruling majority.²⁸ The reason for the society's mobilization was the presidential election in October 2018, wherein the United National Movement Party hoped for Saakashvili to return to big politics.

The 2018 presidential election was the turning point in the history of independent Georgia. It was the first time when a candidate supported by the ruling party could not win in the first round. The pro-government candidate Salome Zurbishvili and the candidate of the United National Movement Grigol Vashadze received practically the same share of the vote, 38.64% and 37.44%, respectively.²⁹ Salome Zurbishvili had only managed to win in the second round of elections with 59.52% of the electorate's votes.

The first round was highly praised by international observers, but the second round was criticized due to the abuse of administrative resources and the lack of conditions for genuine political competition.³⁰

These elections were a test both for the government and for the opposition and Georgian society in general. The elections showed discontent among the ruling elites, an increased level of electoral competition, as well as increased political activity in society.

The 2018 presidential election was the last. According to the new version of the Constitution, in the future the president will be elected by the parliament. New constitutional amendments to ensure the country's transition to a parliamentary governmental system were adopted in 2017 and entered into force after the newly elected president Salome Zurbishvili was sworn in.

²⁶ See: "Consumer "Price Index (inflation)," National Statistics Office of Georgia, available at [<https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/26/cpi-inflation>], 8 July, 2019.

²⁷ See: "Gruzinskiy bunt," Lenta.ru, 2 June, 2018, available at [<http://www.google.com/amp/s/m.lenta.ru/articles/2018/06/02/georgiriot/amp/>], 9 July, 2019.

²⁸ See: A. Devyatkov, "Yuzhnyi Kavkaz: Dilemma stabilnosti i peremen," *Globalnyi prognoz RMSD 2019-2024*, available at [<https://russiancouncil.ru/2019-caucasus#2a>], 30 June, 2019.

²⁹ See: "Georgia: Election for Georgian Parliament," 5 January, 2008, *Election Guide: Democracy Assistance and Election News*, available at [<http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/2576/>], 30 June 2019.

³⁰ See: *Georgia: Presidential Election 28 October and 28 November, 2018*, ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Warsaw, 2019, p. 1, available at [<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/georgia/412724?download=true>], 30 June, 2019.

According to the new version of the Constitution, the president has turned into a formal figure, merely possessing “the right of veto, of awarding citizenship, of conferring state awards, military and diplomatic ranks and titles, and the appointment of a referendum.”³¹ Thus, Georgian Dream concentrated all the power in the hands of the prime minister.

Despite the fact that over the past six years the ruling party has strengthened its position in the country through constitutional amendments, its legitimacy has been weakened. The effectiveness of political institutions remained low.

All of the above-mentioned factors led to the destabilization of the Georgian political system, which took place in June 2019.

The reason for the unrest was the presence of the Russian delegation in the building of the country’s parliament during the plenary session of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy. The outrage was caused by the fact that the Russian deputy who was leading the session sat in the seat of the chairman of the Parliament. Mass demonstrations began in Tbilisi with slogans of an anti-Russian nature. The protesters began to demand the resignation of the Chairman of the Parliament, the head of the State Security Service and the Minister of the Interior. A demand was also put forward for early parliamentary elections.

The reaction of the nationalist part of society was related to the fact that, despite maintaining a pro-Western political course, Georgian Dream nevertheless acted from a pragmatic position and contributed to the intensification of Georgian-Russian cultural and economic ties. Against this background, rumors circulated in society concerning the secret pro-Russian sympathies of Ivanishvili, who had established his fortune in Russia.³²

Such allegations are groundless, since all Georgian political forces, including the ruling party, and various social movements are aligned in matters of “restoring territorial integrity” of the country and seeing Russia as an “aggressor.” Georgian political forces differ from each other only in the degree of radicalism on this issue.

Accordingly, the real reason for the demonstrations did not include geopolitical issues or the growing distrust of Georgians towards the Georgian Dream. There was a sharp internal political struggle, and opposition forces sought to overthrow the ruling party. However, the society’s activity gradually subsided thanks to traditional political decision-making methods: some of the officials resigned, and Ivanishvili announced that the parliamentary elections would be organized according to a proportional system with a zero barrier.

As the Georgian political scientist Ghia Nodia rightly notes, and as the development of the processes has shown, *Georgian Dream* can still mobilize some real support around their platform, which would not allow Saakashvili, the main alternative leader, to return.³³ The fragmented state of the United National Movement party and the mixed popularity of M. Saakashvili in the country are the reasons behind it.

The destabilization of Georgian political system is slated to intensify further. It is highly likely that demonstrations and rallies will be integral parts of the political process in Georgia in the medium term.

Also, in Georgian society, the demand for a third force and new faces in politics is bound to grow increasingly more.

³¹ “Novaya konstitutsiia vstupila v silu,” *GruziaSputnik*, 16 December, 2008, available at [<https://sputnik-georgia.ru/politics/20181216/243509342/Novaya-Konstitutsiya-Gruzii-vstupila-v-silu.html>], 11 July, 2019.

³² See: G. Nodia, “Georgia: Unexpected Expected Crisis,” 3 DCFTAs Op-ed, No. 20, 2019, available at [http://www.3dcftas.eu/publications/other/3-dcftas-op-ed-georgia-unexpected-expected-crisis?fbclid=IwAR0s71Cr5MjcE_0YhhvELXLe-SCXPICy8QiL9dvdQjlg15nEPZ0GntP83ZY], 9 July, 2019.

³³ See: *Ibidem*.

The Role of Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations in Political Processes in Georgia

In every democratic state, the central place is occupied by an active civil society, which is involved in the process of selecting leaders and making political decisions. A high level of consensus between civil society and the political elite is required to strengthen political institutions.³⁴ A generally active civil society is needed to legitimize the existing political system.³⁵ In democracies, civil society should be informed, that is, obtain objective information about the electoral process and political parties. In post-Soviet states, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which act as the third sector of the government, are the key civil society institutions that link the state apparatus with society.

After coming to power, Georgian Dream has been paying special attention to strengthening the civil society, which was not particularly effective during the reign of Mikhail Saakashvili. According to Freedom House estimates, in recent years Georgian civil society has become active and strong, and non-governmental organizations have begun to enjoy a significant degree of political freedom.³⁶ While Georgian Dream was in power, the role of public civic groups in the process of the country's political development has notably increased. Their activity was evident in 2012 in the process of the power transfer from the UNM to the GD, as well as in 2017, 2018, and 2019, when pressure was exerted on the government to comply with democratic norms. In general, NGOs and think tanks are the strongest institutions of Georgian civil society. However, non-governmental organizations face funding problems on a regular basis. Most of their funding comes from Western countries, and in some cases—from the business community and the government. This fact often transforms NGOs into an instrument of Western countries for influencing political processes in Georgia.

The second powerful element of civil society consists of representatives of the cultural sphere and the intelligentsia. However, this element is also very often faced with financing issues, and is therefore influenced by political authorities. The diversity of the Georgian civil society fuels an atmosphere of political polarization,³⁷ as a result of which certain NGOs become puppets in the hands of the ruling party or the opposition. NGOs must ensure a strong connection between the population and the state apparatus, and ensure that ordinary citizens are informed and involved in the state's political process.

Opinion polls conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) show the level of effectiveness of NGOs as the link between citizens and the state apparatus of Georgia and the level of people's involvement in the country's political life. According to a CRRC 2017 survey, only 4% of respondents fully trust NGOs, with 19% likely to trust this element of civil society, and 39% of respondents being indifferent to NGOs. Survey data showed that there is a tendency in the society towards an increased distrust of non-governmental organizations (see Fig. 2).

Distrust of NGOs was also confirmed in a 2019 opinion poll conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). According to the obtained data, almost half of Georgian society (43%) believes

³⁴ See: L. Kakhishvili, "Democratic Consolidation in Georgia: Why Does Consensus Matter?" Georgian Institute of Politics, *Policy Brief*, Issue No. 12, April 2018, p. 2.

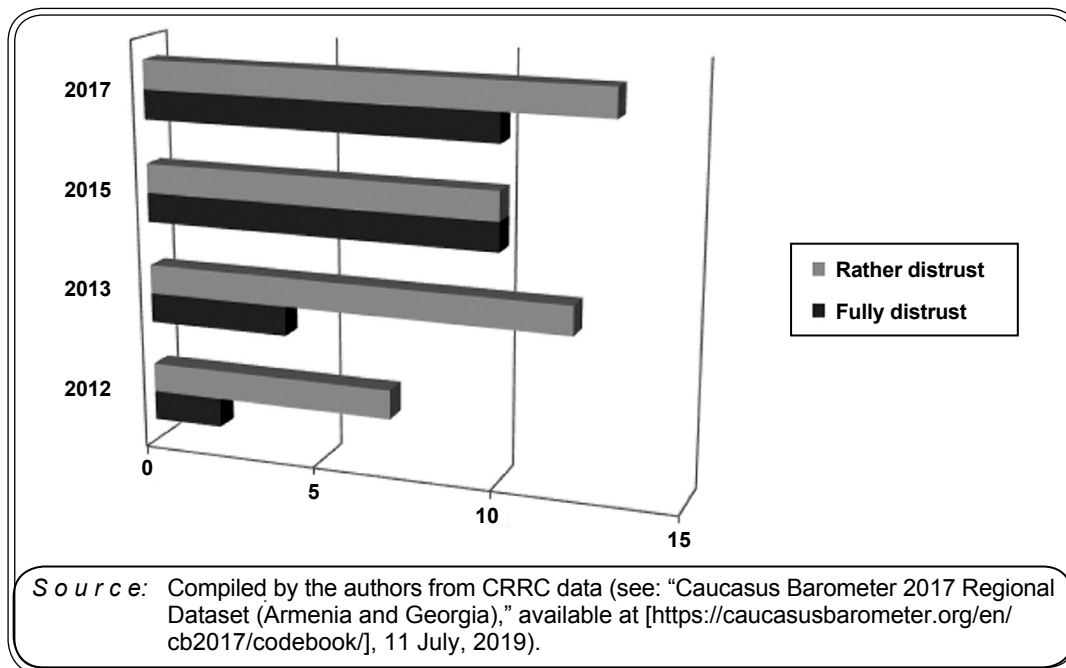
³⁵ See: A.V. Dyatlov, P.V. Sazhin, "Grazhdanskoye obshchestvo," *Gumanitarnye, sotsialno-ekonomicheskie i obshchestvennyye nauki*, 2015, p. 67.

³⁶ See: "Georgia: Country Profile," *Nations in Transit 2018*, Freedom House, available at [<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/Georgia>], 12 July, 2019.

³⁷ See: "Georgia: Country Profile," *Nations in Transit 2017*, Freedom House, available at [<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/Georgia>], 12 July, 2019.

Figure 2

**Social Survey Data
that Demonstrates the Tendency towards Increased Distrust of NGOs
in Georgia (2012-2017) (%)**



that NGOs are dividing the society.³⁸ These data indicate that the social effectiveness of NGOs is not high. According to the surveys, the population considers the election to be the principal means of participation in political processes in Georgia, rather than participation in rallies, non-governmental organizations, movements, etc.

However, the recent parliamentary and presidential elections, in turn, showed that almost half of the electorate did not participate in the elections. These factors have led to the conclusion that political nihilism is widespread in the Georgian society. Political parties, public administration institutions, and officials enjoy a low level of public confidence. For example, according to a 2017 survey, only 2% fully trust political parties.

This situation is also associated with the policies of the ruling party, which had concentrated power in its hands, without establishing the conditions for openness and transparency of the political system. It did not contribute to building a consensus between the government and civil society. There is also a lack of effectiveness of those NGOs that focus on promoting Western values in the country, do not inform society about political processes, and do not contribute to its active participation in political decision-making. A primarily indifferent attitude to political processes is common among the Georgian population.

According to a CRRRC survey in 2017, only 9% of respondents stated that they were periodically interested in political processes, and 36% of the respondents said they were not interested in politics at all.³⁹

³⁸ See: “NDI: Public Attitudes in Georgia,” April 2019, available at [<https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/na2019ge/codebook/>], 11 July, 2019.

³⁹ See: “Caucasus Barometer 2017 Regional Dataset (Armenia and Georgia).”

Notably, despite the passive political role of the Georgian society, in recent years, youth has become progressively more involved in political life. Increasingly, youth speaks at rallies, demonstrations, various movements, promoting their specific interests. The 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections, recent demonstrations, and especially large-scale rallies in June 2019 indicate a growing political activity of civil society.

Conclusion

After the collapse of the U.S.S.R., Georgia went through a rather complicated and controversial path of nation-building and development of democracy. Prior to the 2012 parliamentary elections, the negative factors in the democratization of Georgia included authoritarian regimes, a high level of personalization of political life, the typical dominance of one party, weak institutionalism, and the lack of democratic consensus between the government and civil society. At the same time, during the reign of Mikhail Saakashvili, Georgia has made significant progress on the way to strengthening state institutions, decriminalizing society, and the anti-corruption struggle; conditions were also created for economic development.

After the 2012 parliamentary elections, Georgia has switched to a hybrid government regime, combining authoritarian and democratic institutions and practices. Georgian Dream, the ruling party, has not been able to create a real multi-party system and conditions for political competition in the six years in power.

Moreover, the ruling elite aimed to concentrate all power in their hands at all costs, developing authoritarian tendencies within the country. In turn, the opposition forces were disorganized and could not provide serious competition.

Amendments to the Constitution, which have been introduced in recent years, have strengthened the position of the ruling party, while creating a deficit of “popular” legitimacy.

This factor leads to the destabilization of the political system of the country, creating a threat of crisis.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF KAZAKHSTAN: RESULTS AND PROSPECTS

Sergey ZHILTSOV

*D.Sc. (Political Science),
Head of the Department of Political Science and Political Philosophy,
Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia;
Professor, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia;
Research Fellow, the Sergey Witte University of Moscow
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Igor ZONN

*D.Sc. (Geography), Research Fellow, the Sergey Witte University of Moscow
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

ABSTRACT

Kazakhstan has been following its own path of social development that differed a lot from its Central Asian neighbors: it did not opt for total democratization as Kyrgyzstan did (viewed at a certain time as the region's most democratic country) and was not tempted by the autocratic trends typical of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan where, back in 1992, the president became the central figure with the parliament and the judicial system pushed aside.

Kazakhstan took time to build up its political system, where the president invariably remained the main figure. The First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev played a huge role in the political processes unfolding in the country and its development as a whole. His well-balanced foreign policy helped avoid the shocks of economic reforms and political upheavals inside and outside the country and establish good relationships with its Central Asian neighbors as well as with Russia, the U.S., and China.

For a long time the First President was consistently consolidating the executive power vertical in order to concentrate it in

the hands of the president and stabilize the social and economic situation by keeping the multifaceted influence of regional elites in check.

On the other hand, consolidation of presidential power caused certain political problems, which negatively affected the country's development, namely, lack of political elite rotation and complete domination of the president in the country where the parliament had no independent role to play.

The political system, therefore, was adjusted to the interests of Nazarbayev and his closest circle, which became especially clear when he decided that time had come to start looking for ways and means to preserve political stability and remain in control. It was vitally important to continue his well-balanced foreign policy, to prevent cardinal changes in the balance of power inside the country and ensure the continuity of power. On the other hand, changes at the country's highest post could no longer be postponed, which explains why in recent years the First President of Kazakhstan has been working hard to resolve the problem.

In 2019, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev won the off-year presidential elections to become the second president of Kazakhstan. The process attracted a lot of attention for the simple reason that the head of state is the key figure in the country's political system. The fact that Nursultan Nazarbayev stayed away from the elections for the first time in the country's history and suggested To-

kayev as a presidential candidate stirred even more interest.

This election summed up the presidency of Nazarbayev, who remained the key figure on the republic's political arena.

Tokayev's advent to power opened a new stage for the country's political development, the results of which are hardly predictable.

KEYWORDS: *Kazakhstan, political process, power, political system, Nazarbayev, Tokayev.*

Introduction

The story began in the late 1980s, when the federal center lost some of its influence in Kazakhstan, one of the Soviet republics at the time, and forced the local leaders to redistribute the rights and duties. The presidency introduced in all Union republics was one of the obvious signs of their stronger positions. In April 1990, that is when the Soviet Union was still a unified whole, the Supreme Soviet of Kazakhstan established the post of the president and elected Nursultan Nazarbayev President of the Republic. In December 1991 he was reelected during the general presidential elections. His victory was the result of a covenant between the republic's main political forces and launched political changes in Kazakhstan.

The political system, which was created from scratch, formally relied on Western patterns while being deeply rooted in the country's past; it relied on the informal practices of regional-clan division that, having survived Soviet power, proved to be very much alive. In Soviet times, the party and administrative mechanisms kept clan disagreements in check: none of the clans was allowed to consolidate its power at the expense of others.

In independent Kazakhstan the president acquired enough power to build up a system of authority based on available experience and relevant to the tasks the country was facing at the time. It was highly important to trim the influence of the Supreme Soviet, the president's main opponent. As distinct from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan where the presidents never hesitated to deal harshly with the opposition parties¹ or to limit the powers and influence of the parliament and the judicial system, in Kazakhstan the institution of presidency was building up its power and influence gradually. It was in April 1995 that the referendum expanded presidential powers; in August, after a conflict between the president and the legislature² and a referendum, the country acquired a new Constitution which buried the issue of a parliamentary republic in Kazakhstan.³

It was in the same year that the Supreme Soviet passed the Law on Temporal Powers of the Presidents and Heads of Administrations that had widened their powers; a new parliament was elec-

¹ See: E.T. Seylekhanov, *Politicheskaia sistema Respubliki Kazakhstan: opyt razvitiia i perspektivy*, KISI (Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies) under the President of the RK, Almaty, 2009, p. 62.

² See: R.N. Zhanguzhin, *Kazakhstan postsovetskiy*, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, NAN of Ukraine, Kiev, 2002, p. 129.

³ See: M. Karsakov, "Osobennosti transformatsii politicheskoy sistemy Kazakhstana v kontse 80kh-seredine 90kh godov," *Tsentralnaia Azia*, No. 14, 1998.

ted at the same time. Nobody noticed that the parliament was thrust aside and nobody stood up to defend it.⁴

The president, meanwhile, was consistently expanding his powers: in October 1998, a Constitutional amendment extended the term of presidency to seven years with no limitations on the number of terms; in January 1999, the off-year presidential elections allowed Nazarbayev to remain in power; in June 2000, the Constitutional Council ruled that it was Nazarbayev's first presidential term because his previous terms had been acquired under the "old" Constitutions; in December 2005, Nazarbayev won the presidential elections for the third time.

Post-Soviet Kazakhstan tried to fit the democratic principles into the form of parliamentary and presidential elections, a multi-party system and the principle of separation of powers. Very soon, however, it became clear that the Central Asian countries were not ready to cut their political garments according to Western patterns.⁵ Kazakhstan, which developed economic and political relationships with the West, tried to fit the demands of democratic states. The parliamentary and presidential elections, the multi-party system and the separation of powers were treated as evidence that the country was aligned with the Western political principles. In real life, however, the ruling regime exploited the democratic procedures and elections as one of the forms of political mobilization.⁶ Moreover, Kazakhstan had relied on the traditional methods of governance with compromises between informal groups of influence achieved behind the scene rather than in official structures. This system left no place for opposition parties; it was nothing more than a screen behind which a tribal and clan system was structured according to traditions and historical experience. As could be expected, this created highly specific conditions for domestic and foreign policies.⁷ The viable self-regulation structures of local societies (religious, tribal, clan and other traditional ties) strongly affected the conditions in which external and internal policy of Kazakhstan was taking shape.⁸

This made the president the key figure in Kazakhstan's political system: he determined the country's foreign policy and strongly affected everything that was going on inside the country. Formally, Kazakhstan was a country of political pluralism, where the legislature with all sorts of informal groups was protected against direct pressure. The president, however, went to all lengths to neutralize powerful regional and ethnic clans⁹ locked in an uncompromising struggle for the redistribution of power. In this context true democracy was replaced with its bleak copy.¹⁰ This was the case in all Central Asian countries, whose leaders paid lip service to the liberal democratic values and ideals. In practice, however, this was propaganda pure and simple, far removed from the real intention to arrive at a liberal democratic system of governance.¹¹

⁴ See: N.I. Petrov, M.S. Gafarly, "Kurs na politicheskuiu stabilnost i sotrudnichestvo s sosedomi," in: *Postsovetskaiia Tsentralnaia Azia. Poteri i obretenia*, Vostochnaia literatura Publishers, RAN, Moscow, 1998, p. 50.

⁵ See: S. Zhiltsov, "Political Processes in Central Asia: Peculiarities, Problems, Prospects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Volume 17, Issue 1, 2016, pp. 21-29.

⁶ See: A. Kurtov, *Demokratia vyborov v Kazakhstane: avtoritarnaia transformatsia*, ASTI-IZDAT, Moscow, 2001, p. 331.

⁷ See: A.D. Bogaturov, A.S. Dundich, V.G. Korgun *et al.*, *Mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia v Tsentralnoy Azii: sobytia i dokumenty*, Aspekt Press, Moscow, 2011, p. 19.

⁸ See: *Ibidem*.

⁹ See: *Tsentralnaia Azia: 1991-2009*: Monograph, ed. by B.K. Sultanov, KISI under the President of the RK, Almaty, 2010, p. 199.

¹⁰ See: V. Tuleshov, "K voprosu o formirovanii i razvitiu identichnosti v Kazakhstane i Tsentralnoy Azii," in: *Tsentralnaia Azia-25: mysl' o proshlom, proektsiia budushchego*, 2017, ed. by M. Laruelle, A. Kurmanova, Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, the George Washington University, Washington, 2017, pp. 36-38.

¹¹ See: P.N. Zhanguzhin, *Novye nezavisimye gosudartva Tsentralnoy Azii v sisteme sovremennykh mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy*, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, NAN of Ukraine, Kiev, 2005, p. 52.

Political Construction Kit

Redistribution of power in favor of the president of Kazakhstan created a very specific political system based not so much on the parliament and not on the institute of presidency, but on Nazarbayev. His wider powers allowed him to realize a unified state policy and keep in check political rivalry among the branches of power.¹² At a certain stage of development, when the task of building up a modern state made important economic decisions essential or even inevitable, this approach was justified.

In the course of time, however, the super-presidential republic became a negative factor: false political stability could no longer conceal the gradually rising social tension and the absence of political competition. The political model practically ignored the interests of the regional elites. Konstantin Syroezhkin pointed to the weak political institutions as the main danger: the presidential vertical of power that relied on the authority of President Nazarbayev was the only viable and efficient structure.¹³

The president of Kazakhstan tried to take this into account. In 2007, he suggested a reform of the political system that widened the powers of the parliament.¹⁴ Constitutional amendments of 2007 strengthened the legislature¹⁵ and consolidated the power of the president.¹⁶ The presidential term was cut to five years, yet the first president was excluded from the Constitutional norm of the maximum of two presidential terms in a row. In June 2010, Nursultan Nazarbayev received the official status of the First President of Kazakhstan. In February 2011, the Constitutional amendment allowed the president to run in off-year presidential elections. Several months later, in April, Nazarbayev won the next off-year elections.

The formally observed democratic changes did not bring the country closer to Western democracy. Elections presented to the public as one of the democratic processes¹⁷ were not democratic at all. The Western countries did all they could to develop democracy in Kazakhstan, which proved to be a very difficult endeavor.¹⁸ The leaders of Kazakhstan wanted to remain in power no matter what; this can be partly explained by the inter-clan relationships. Democratic procedures were nothing more than an instrument of attracting investments and maintaining political contacts.¹⁹

The Constitutional changes, likewise, were superficial; they could not improve and never improved the situation: the nature of presidential power remained intact. During the years of independence, the Central Asian countries have revived and consolidated their clan systems as a guarantor of relative political stability and an instrument of regulation of political processes. The president remains the key figure and as such plays a great role in the balance of power inside the country.²⁰

¹² See: D.E. Furman, "Evolutsia politicheskikh sistem stran SNG," in: *Sredizemnomorie-Chernomorie-Caspian: mezhdru Bolshoi Evropoi i Bolshim Blizhnim Vostokom*, ed. by N.P. Shmelev, V.A. Guseynov, A.D. Iazkova, Granitsa, Moscow, 2006, p. 136.

¹³ See: K.L. Syroezhkin, "Sotsialno-politicheskiy protsess v Kazakhstane (opyt rekonstruktsii)," in *Politicheskiy protsess v Tsentralnoy Azii: rezultaty, problemy, perspektivy*, IV RAS, Moscow, 2011, pp. 194-195.

¹⁴ See: S. Shkel, "The Political Regime in Kazakhstan: Its Current State and Possible Future," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (60), 2009, pp. 101-108.

¹⁵ See: *Kazakhstan: 20 let nezavisimosti*, ed. by B.K. Sultanov, KISI under the President of the RK, Almaty, 2011, p. 14.

¹⁶ See: *Tsentralnaia Azia: 1991-2009*: Monograph, p. 69.

¹⁷ See: Iu.O. Buluktaev, S.O. Bokaev, *Elektoralnaia demokratiya v Respublike Kazakhstan*, KISI under the President of the RK, Almaty, 2011, 244 pp.

¹⁸ See: E.U. Sharipov, "Energeticheskie resursy Kaspiyskogo regiona i vneshnie svyazi Kazakhstana i Turkmenistana v oblasti uglevodorodov," in: *Strany SNG v sisteme mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy*, Institute of Oriental Studies RAS, Moscow, 2008, p. 406.

¹⁹ See: Iu.G. Aleksandrov, *Kazakhstan pered bar'erom modernizatsii*, Institute of Oriental Studies RAS, Moscow, 2013, 288 pp.

²⁰ See: A.M. Vasiliev, "Rossia i Tsentralnaia Azia," in: *Postsovetskaya Tsentralnaia Azia. Poteri i obreteniya*, p. 7.

In Kazakhstan, therefore, the president remained at the helm, which made the country's political future vague and the elite—too concerned to avoid squabbles. In the absence of well-oiled mechanisms of transit of power (presidential elections) the risk of conflicts was very high.

In 2015, the country went to the polls to vote at the next off-term presidential elections carried out a year earlier than scheduled. Formally, this was done to give Nazarbayev a chance to realize his new initiatives; in fact, this deprived the opponents of the time needed for a proper election campaign. The authorities, in turn, used this chance to take the lead, detracting the attention of the country's population from the social and economic reforms and the highly unpopular measures. Kazakhstan was in turmoil, despite his huge political and economic experience, Nazarbayev lost the initiative.²¹ At that time the question of Kazakhstan's political future came to the fore.²²

In Search of an Ideal Model

In recent years, Nazarbayev was looking for a power transfer formula, so to speak, which, while imitating similar Western procedures, that is, rotation of power, would allow him to preserve his role in politics. In 2017, the Constitution was amended once more to redistribute the powers between the president, the government and the parliament. The latter, or, rather, its lower chamber, acquired the right to review all ministerial candidates before their appointment; the head of state, however, retained a fairly big share of his powers.

In 2017-2018, the Constitutional amendments limited the rights of presidential candidates: for instance, the civil service experience requirement closed the doors to self-nominees. Kazakhstan expert Islam Kuraev presupposed, and with good reason, that “the transfer of power will be fairly smooth and will be accepted by all political groups.”²³

In the course of time, the mechanism of pre-term elections created certain problems: out of seven parliamentary elections five were carried out ahead of schedule. This means that the “resetting” of the parliament was carried out to consolidate the positions of the president and limit the role of the parliament. More than that, this technology made considerable changes at the top possible.

Nazarbayev's quest for a version of power transition that would have preserved his domination when he left the post of the president has begun. In 2017-2018, the main groups of influence and the political elite clashed for the right to nominate the next president. The key figures in his closest circle were actively seeking his support to be nominated as candidates at the next presidential elections.

A New Trend

Political changes appeared on the horizon after a long period of seeking the best possible option that would allow Nazarbayev to remain in power but leave the post. Time was short: political changes were long overdue. The next presidential elections were scheduled for 2020, and there was a chance of new candidates appearing. Unrelated to the president and his closest circle, they may have

²¹ [<http://www.rosbalt.ru/world/2019/03/04/1767411.html>], 7 August, 2019.

²² See: *Integratsionnye proekty v Evrazii: problemy sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya*, ed. by B.K. Sultanov, K. Kaiser, Scientific Research Institute for the International and Regional Cooperation at the Kazakh-German University, Almaty, 2016, 248 pp.

²³ Quoted from: A. Ivanov-Vayskopf, “Prezidentskie vybory v Kazakhstane: poka tikho, no...” *Kursiv*, 4 April, 2019, pp. 1, 2.

looked acceptable to Russia, China, the EU and the U.S., which demonstrated significant interest in the ongoing events in Kazakhstan.

A higher status for the Security Council in the republic's system of authority looked attractive enough: its new status and wider powers would have put its head on an equal basis with the president.

The draft Law on the Security Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan presupposed that it would be headed by Nazarbayev who would thus remain in power for the rest of his life. This called for Constitutional amendments.

The president's closest circle expected that these changes would make criticism of the Western states impossible. To avoid accusations of the desire to establish an authoritarian regime, the president planned to initiate another Constitutional redistribution of powers in favor of the parliament at the expense of the president.

Early in 2018, the country closely approached the realization of this idea, yet the changes were not free from certain risks. It remained unclear how the Security Council and the Presidential Administration would coexist in future; the potential Law on the Security Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan that might have established dual power in the republic caused apprehensions. Indeed, the Head (Nazarbayev) of the Security Council with extensive presidential powers and the wide powers that would remain in the hands of a new head of state might have led to a conflict of interests between them and aggravate the political situation.

Nazarbayev was not in a hurry, but the idea of a political reform survived: a new mechanism of interaction between the Security Council and the Presidential Administration and between the Head of the Security Council and the new President was needed.

The Law on the Security Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan was adopted in 2018; it transformed the Council from a consultative structure headed by the president into a Constitutional structure with wide powers and the Leader of the Nation (Elbasy) as its head for life.

Nazarbayev did this to achieve a smooth transit of power and in order to remain in power. The Constitutional changes upgraded the status of the Security Council and lowered the status of the Presidential Administration.

The law intensified the undercover rivalry between the two structures, which was especially obvious in the process of drafting and discussing the documents in the corridors of power. The country acquired two centers of power with extensive rights; Nazarbayev used his authority to suppress open competition: he wanted to remain in control over both groups and to preserve political stability.

The system of checks and balances and the mechanisms that was fine-tuned for the acting president and allowed him to remain in power will not survive political changes: it contained preconditions of future exacerbations and political rivalry. Two power centers with practically equal rights will compete between themselves, while internal forces and extra-regional players will try to capitalize on their rivalry.

Moving towards Clarity

The First President of Kazakhstan did not want to exacerbate political tension: on 19 March, 2019 he stepped down from the post of the head of state; Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, speaker of the Senate, was appointed president. On the next day the new president suggested that Dariga Nazarbayeva would be appointed speaker of the Senate; the upper chamber agreed.

On 20 March, 2019, having taken the oath, President of Kazakhstan Tokayev suggested in his inaugural speech that Astana, the republic's capital, should be renamed Nur-Sultan, in honor of the First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. The parliament agreed; on 23 March, the pres-

ident signed a Decree on the new name for the country's capital; on the same day Art 2 of the Constitution was amended.

It was expected that Tokayev would fulfill the duties of the head of state until April 2020, when the presidential term of his predecessor would expire. The next presidential elections should be carried out in December 2020. On 9 April, 2019, however, President Tokayev announced that the next off-year presidential elections would take place on 9 June: "I firmly believe that early elections of the Head of State are a vital necessity. In order to ensure political and social consent, confidently move forward, and solve the tasks of socio-economic development, it is of vital importance to remove any uncertainty. Moreover, the situation in the world is changing rapidly, and, unfortunately, we are facing new challenges ahead. We must confirm the continuity, predictability and stability of our domestic and foreign policy. We shall continue working on the effective, successful implementation of social programs and strategic course of Elbasy. This can be fulfilled only through direct expression of the will of the people in the elections."²⁴

The fairly complicated social and economic situation meant that pre-term elections were needed. Food prices were climbing up along with the prices on essential goods; everything that the government was doing to raise wages in the strategically important sectors (metallurgy and oil extraction) may have proven futile and fanned latent dissatisfaction across the country.²⁵ The First President wanted to complete the so-called transit of power as quickly as possible to clarify the political situation. Expert Tolganay Umbetaliyeva from the Central Asian Foundation for the Development of Democracy has pointed out that "the two centers of political decision-making created a system of dual power—on the one hand, there is acting President Mr. Tokayev, on the other, an informal and, more likely than not, the main center of political decision-making represented by former president Mr. Nazarbayev. In the absence of mechanisms of settling contradictions between these two centers operating inside a new construct might lead to dual power in our political system."²⁶

On 9 June, 2019, Tokayev won the presidential elections; the new president is in perfect alignment with Nazarbayev's interests. Having worked abroad for a long time, he was excluded from the political changes that had taken place in Kazakhstan; not an appointee of financial-industrial groups, he belonged to Nazarbayev's closest circle and, as president, would remain under his strong influence.

The transit of power, however, was not completed; the 2019 elections were but the first step towards a new political system in which Nazarbayev would remain the most influential player as the Leader of the Nation and Chairman of the Security Council for life and would balance out the power of the president.²⁷ On the whole, the off-year elections created preconditions for even fiercer political competition between the practically equal centers of power. A conflict of interests cannot be excluded as well as an open confrontation.

The transit of power is realized against the background of slower economic growth and the worsening socio-political situation accompanied by a crisis of the middle class, lower incomes of the main population groups, increasingly more noticeable inequality of economic growth due to unstable urbanization, problems with the development of infrastructure and the complicated ecological situation.²⁸

No matter how attractive the scheme—the First President at the head of the Security Council and Tokayev as President—looks at first glance, it is not free from certain faults, dual power being

²⁴ [http://www.akorda.kz/en/speeches/internal_political_affairs/in_speeches_and_addresses/address-of-the-president-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-to-the-nation], 12 August, 2019.

²⁵ [<https://ia-centr.ru/experts/sergey-masaulov/kazakhstan-politicheskaya-sfera-v-2019-godu/>], 7 August, 2019

²⁶ [https://kz.expert.ru/materials/polemika/1373_o_riskah_tranzitnoy_vlasti], 12 August, 2019.

²⁷ [<https://ia-centr.ru/experts/gaziz-abishev/nyneshniy-sostav-kazakhstanskogo-parlamenta-ustarel-ikh-mesto-dolznyanzayat-odnomandatniki/>], 12 August, 2019.

²⁸ [<https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/perekhodit-reku-nashchupyvaya-brod-prezidentskie-vybory-v-kazakhstane-2019/>], 12 August, 2019.

the main of them. The president elected by general vote has extensive powers and will pursue an independent foreign and domestic policy. Nazarbayev as head of the Security Council will keep the president in check. If and when his role in domestic policies decreases, the entire political structure will become unbalanced. Regional groups may try harder to gain control over the post of the head of the Security Council.

The absence of a mechanism of cooperation between the Security Council and the Presidential Administration will intensify the struggle between Nazarbayev and the second president of Kazakhstan for greater control of the situation in the country. This means that after the pre-term presidential conditions the conflict between these two structures may develop into a serious one, and further on into an acute conflict of interests among all branches of power and regional elites. This will not have a positive effect on the social and political situation and economic growth. Moreover, it will fan the competition between Russia and China—both will increase their pressure on Nur-Sultan.

Conclusion

The desire of the First President and his closest circle to remain in power pushed aside the problems of interregional relations, the relations between the center and the regions and the problems of economic development. The Constitutional amendments that followed one another, the alterations to the parliamentary elections system, the off-year presidential elections did and are doing nothing good to the country's political development. Dissatisfaction among the regional elites that are unable to protect their interests is rising.

The new functions of the Security Council, just recently a consultative structure, created the precedent of adjusting the Constitution to the interests of any influential politician. The role of the First President in the development of Kazakhstan was immense, a fact that is fraught with potential problems for his successors.

The reformed role of the Security Council of Kazakhstan is, in fact, a Constitutional reform of unprecedented importance. It has led to subsequent constitutional amendments, stripping the country of political stability. The tipped balance of power between the parliament, the president, and the government may cause conflicts between them in the future.

ENERGY AND RESOURCE POLICY

CASPIAN PIPELINE GEOPOLITICS

Competition between Western and Northern Oil and Gas Transport Routes to Europe

Roman TEMNIKOV

*Ph.D. Candidate (International Relations),
Social Sciences Faculty, Masaryk University
(Brno, Czech Republic)*

ABSTRACT

Since ancient times, the Caspian region has been known for its energy resources, which attracted the attention of the leading world players. The struggle for control over hydrocarbon resources intensified after the collapse of the U.S.S.R.

The new independent states—Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan were rich in energy resources, but economically weak, and became a target for Russia and the Western countries, which used their oil and gas companies to seek control over the hydrocarbon reserves of the new states and influence the oil and gas sectors of the economies of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

The second stage of the competition was the struggle for control over oil and gas export routes from the Caspian region to world markets. The fact is that initially the newly independent states had no other way to transport hydrocarbons, except to the north—through Russian territory. These pipelines were inherited from the Soviet Union; there were simply no others available at the beginning of the 1990s. Having thus become heavily dependent on Moscow, the new Caspian region states began to work on creating alternative routes, one of which was the western route—from Azerbaijan through Georgia to Turkey and then to Europe. In 1998-2018, two oil pipelines and one gas

pipeline were built in the western direction, which were subsequently expanded and modernized in order to increase capacity.

As a result, a feud broke out between the two main routes for delivering Caspian oil and gas to Europe and to world markets: the northern and western routes. The northern route is being lobbied by Russia, the western—by the U.S., EU, and Turkey. Accordingly, depending on geopolitical preferences and the degree of dependence on one or another world locus of power, supporters of the northern and western routes

were identified among the new countries of the Caspian.

Thus, Azerbaijan has clearly come to support the western route, Kazakhstan—the northern one, and Turkmenistan has not yet made its decision, preferring to export gas along the northern route, and oil—along the western one.

This article compares the strengths and weaknesses of both routes and the influence of geopolitics on the choices made by Baku, Nur-Sultan, and Ashghabad for exporting their hydrocarbons to Europe.

KEYWORDS: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Russia, the U.S., EU, oil, gas.

Introduction

The Caspian region is an old and well-known source of oil and gas. Initially, oil production was concentrated in Azerbaijan, where it began about 200 years ago (in the 1840s). Subsequently, in Soviet times, oil and gas fields in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan began to be developed. But this process was proceeding at a slow pace, as it required a large investment. At that time, the Soviet Union leadership focused on the oil and gas fields of Siberia, leaving the Caspian region as a strategic reserve for the future. But an entirely different situation emerged after the collapse of the U.S.S.R., as the new independent states—Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan—became the owners of what were once the Soviet strategic oil and gas reserves.¹

From the very beginning, the new Caspian region states have faced a number of problems. First of all, the absence of the Caspian Sea's legal status, which Russia and Iran took advantage of, posing all sorts of obstacles to the development of offshore fields by Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, where the main oil and gas reserves of these countries were located. Accordingly, Baku and Astana (since March 2019—Nur-Sultan) advocated dividing the sea into national sectors, where each of the countries could conduct mining operations. Moscow and Tehran adhered to the exact opposite point of view. They considered it unacceptable to develop offshore oil and gas deposits by any one state without the consent of other states, since in the absence of an agreement on the status of the Caspian and the marine borders, they continued to consider the Caspian to be a common sea, and proposed to use its resources similarly to property use in a condominium.

Nevertheless, Azerbaijan was the first of the Caspian states to unilaterally begin to develop the oil fields in its own sector of the Caspian, engaging Western companies. In 1994, the “Contract of the Century” was signed in regard to the development of the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli fields, and Russia was unable to prevent this, despite harsh statements and appeals to the U.N. about the illegality of unilateral actions in regard to the Caspian.²

¹ See: S. Kolchin, “Oil and Gas as Seen from Russia,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (8), 2001.

² See: S.A. Pritchkin, “Rossiia na Kaspii. Poiski optimalnoi strategii,” Aspekt Press, Moscow, 2018, pp. 60-61.

Subsequently, Russia began to alter its own Caspian policy, when Kazakhstan took up the development of oil and gas deposits in its shelf area, following Azerbaijan's example. In this matter, Moscow, not wanting to completely lose its leverage over the partition of the Caspian and its resources, was forced to agree with the position held by Astana in dividing the Caspian floor into national sectors, when the surface remained in common use.³ Subsequently, this principle formed the basis of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian, signed in 2018.

The second problem was the lack of a developed system of oil and gas pipelines for the export of hydrocarbons to world markets in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. The oil and gas transportation system that existed at the beginning of the 1990s was inherited by these countries from the Soviet Union and was tied to Russia, which allowed Moscow to exert pressure on Baku, Astana, and Ashgabad.⁴ The routes of pipelines that traverse Russian territory can conditionally be called "northern."

The then-current state of affairs could not suit either the leadership of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, or foreign investors (mainly Western), who were risking big money when investing in oil and gas production in these countries. Therefore, there emerged a need to develop new routes for oil and gas pipelines, which would bypass Russia.⁵ Under U.S. pressure, these routes went in the direction of Georgia and Turkey, that is, towards the West, and thus began to be conditionally called "western."

Today, there are three "northern" oil pipelines and one gas pipeline in the Caspian region, as well as two "western" oil pipelines and one gas pipeline.

Northern Routes

Among the northern pipeline routes, *the Baku-Novorossiysk oil pipeline*, which has been operating since 1983, should be heeded special attention. Initially, it was intended to deliver Russian oil to Azerbaijan's oil refineries. The length of the pipeline is 1,535 km, of which 1,300 km passed through Russia, while the remaining 235 km went through Azerbaijan.⁶ This pipeline's annual capacity is 18 million tons of oil.

The pipeline's most important advantage was its indispensability in the mid-1990s for the transportation of early Azerbaijani oil to world markets. However, this pipeline was in no way suitable for transporting the bulk of oil for several reasons:

- Instability of the situation in the Northern Caucasus, where military operations were conducted in Chechnia in 1994-1996. But even after the war, throughout the 1990s, the situation remained unstable, and terrorist attacks took place periodically;⁷
- Light Azerbaijani oil (Azeri Light brand) in this pipeline was mixed with heavier and more viscous Russian oil (Urals brand) and was eventually sold on world markets at a lower price;

³ See: S. Zhiltsov, "Resources of the Northern Caspian and Russian Policy," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (24), 2003.

⁴ See: V. Ginsburg, M. Troschke, "Sharing the Resources of the Caspian Sea: Participants, Interests, and Problems," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (23), 2003.

⁵ See: I. Tomberg, "Energy Policy in the Countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22), 2003.

⁶ See: S.S. Zhiltsov, I.S. Zonn, "Kaspiiskiy region. Politika, ekonomika, sotrudnichestvo," Aspekt Press, Moscow, 2017, p. 208.

⁷ See: S.S. Zhiltsov, "Politika Rossii v Kaspiiskom regione," Aspekt Press, Moscow, 2016, pp. 149-152.

— There were problems with the transportation of oil through the Turkish Bosphorus and Dardanelles due to restrictions imposed by Ankara on the passage of tankers due to environmental concerns. This led to long delays, which entailed material costs.⁸

Another important northern route was *the Uzen-Atyrau-Samara pipeline*, which spanned 1,380 km and a design capacity of 30 million tons of oil per year. After the collapse of the U.S.S.R., it was the only pipeline used to transport almost all Kazakh oil to world markets. However, this project suffered due to logistical reasons, as it was inconvenient for entering world markets and therefore, shortly after the collapse of the U.S.S.R., the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) was created in 1992, with the aim to construct *the Tengiz-Novorossiysk pipeline*. It spanned 1,580 km, with an initial annual capacity of 28 million tons of oil, and a projected increase to 67 million tons. It was commissioned in 2001.

Both of the above pipelines are primarily beneficial to Russia, both from a political point of view (tie Kazakhstan to the northern route of oil transportation) and from an economic point of view (oil transit tariffs).

The CPC project is beneficial to Kazakhstan primarily because of the low tariff for pumping oil through Russian territory—only \$27 per ton.⁹

The weak point of the CPC, since it is a pipeline that terminates in Novorossiysk, is the problem of tankers passing through the Turkish Straits.

As for gas pipelines, with the collapse of the U.S.S.R., the only opportunity to export gas for Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, was *the Central Asia-Center (CAC) pipeline*, which was built in Soviet times. However, this gas pipeline possessed several disadvantages:

- The pipeline has been functioning for 40 years and the pipes' degree of wear is high;
- Insufficient gas pipeline capacity—under 50 billion cubic meters of gas per year. The fact is that the CAC was originally built to transport exclusively Turkmen gas, and currently Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan use it to export their gas;¹⁰
- Due to the absence of a gas pipeline going towards the west, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan are completely dependent on Russia, through whose territory the CAC passes, in their gas export to Europe. The current situation allows Moscow to exert both political and economic pressure on Nur-Sultan and Ashgabad, setting a low price for gas (as was the case with Turkmen gas) with a view to its further resale to Europe at a higher price, as well as earning extra money on gas transit.

A. Position of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The official position of Baku in relation to the main direction of export of its hydrocarbons to world markets was determined quite early (back in 1992) and has not changed since then. Of the routes that were available at that time (the northern—via Russia, the southern—through Iran, the western—through Georgia), only the route through Georgia to Turkey's Mediterranean coast corresponded to the national interests of Azerbaijan.

Nevertheless, Baku was forced to agree to transport part of its early oil along the northern route due to two factors:

⁸ See: S.A. Pritchkin, op. cit., p. 127.

⁹ See: Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁰ See: Ibid., pp. 130-131.

- Azerbaijan feared the deterioration of the situation around Nagorno-Karabakh in case of refusal of conditions set by Russia and wanted to lift the transport blockade;
- Moscow's desire to transport Azerbaijani oil produced in the Caspian shelf could also be interpreted as recognition by the Russian authorities of Azerbaijan's right to develop offshore fields.¹¹

As a result, since 1996, Azerbaijani oil has begun to be transported along the northern route Baku-Novorossiysk. Although, according to the agreement, Azerbaijan undertook to increase the pumping volume to 5 million tons of oil by 2002, in reality, no more than 2 million tons of oil have been annually pumped through the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline.¹² Currently, only under 1.5 million tons of oil per year is transported along this route, for the sole reason of avoiding complications in the relations with Russia.¹³

B. Position of the Republic of Kazakhstan

A number of factors initially influenced the position of Astana in the question of choosing a route for transporting oil to world markets:

- Lack of access to international transportation systems, that is, to the World Ocean;
- All the oil and gas transportation systems available in the early 1990s were tied to Russia;¹⁴
- Russia attempted to use this dependence as an instrument of pressure on Astana in order to maintain control over the newly independent republic;
- The unresolved issue of the status of the Caspian Sea also gave Moscow a reason to prevent the development of offshore deposits in Kazakhstan's coastal waters.

Under the current conditions, Astana began to take steps similar to those that Azerbaijan had taken at the same time—to develop cooperation with Western countries and progressive oil and gas companies in these countries in order to reduce Russia's influence and gain access to modern equipment and oil and gas production technologies both on land and on the Caspian shelf.¹⁵

In response, Moscow began to obstruct the export of Kazakhstani oil, which led to increased losses and reduced Western investments in the Kazakh economy.¹⁶ This forced Astana to pursue a more cautious policy not only on the issue of oil production, but also on the issue of determining the status of the Caspian Sea. The consequence was that, on the one hand, Astana supported Baku's idea of dividing the Caspian into national sectors, but on the other, proposed to divide only the bottom and leave the waters in common use, which became a compromise between the extreme positions held by Azerbaijan and Russia on the issue of dividing the Caspian.

Under the new conditions, Moscow was now forced to make concessions out of fear of creating a hostile bloc of countries in the Caspian Sea region and, as a result, the threat of being isolated. As a result, agreements were signed in 1998 between Russia and Kazakhstan on dividing the Northern

¹¹ See: V.A. Guseynov, "Kaspiiskaia neft: ekonomika i geopolitika," Moscow, 2002, p. 88.

¹² See: S.S. Zhiltsov, I.S. Zonn, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

¹³ See: T. Mursagulov, "Azerbaidzhan mozhet uvelichit obyem prokachki nefti po Baku-Novorossiysk," *Trend*, 27 January, 2019, available at [<https://www.trend.az/business/energy/3011088.html>], 10 June, 2019.

¹⁴ See: S. Kushkumbaev, "Vliianiye energoresursov na nekotorye aspekty vnutrennei i vneshnei politiki Kazakhstana," *Tsentralnaia Azia i Kavkaz*, No. 1, 1998.

¹⁵ See: V. Babak, "Neft Kaspia v otnosheniakh Kazakhstana s Rossiei," *Tsentralnaia Azia i Kavkaz*, No. 1 (2), 1999.

¹⁶ See: S.S. Zhiltsov, op. cit., p. 141.

Caspian into national sectors according to the plan proposed by Astana. In addition, Moscow agreed to joint development of a number of disputed deposits located adjacent to the border.¹⁷

At the same time, having conceded on the division of the Caspian, Russia kept the export of the bulk of Kazakhstani oil to world markets under its control, using the CPC for this purpose. Astana was forced to accept this because of its close ties to Moscow, the long-spanning border, its dependence on the Russian pipeline system and the general vulnerability of Kazakhstan to Russian pressure. The fact is that despite all the contradictions, it was Moscow that could serve as a guarantor of national security for Astana against external threats.

C. Position of Turkmenistan

The official position of Ashgabad on the export directions of its energy resources initially depended on a number of factors:

- The presence of only one (northern) route for transporting Turkmen gas (Central Asia-Center gas pipeline);
- Low profitability of the northern route, since gas was mainly supplied to the former Soviet republics of the Southern Caucasus and Ukraine. And these countries experienced major economic problems in the early 1990s and did not possess disposable funds to pay for the supplied gas on time and in full.

Only in 2003, after long and difficult negotiations, Ashgabad had managed to conclude a long-term (25-year) contract with Moscow for the supply of gas at prices acceptable to the Turkmen side.

This agreement turned out to be beneficial to the Turkmen side, as it brought foreign exchange earnings, which was allocated for the socio-economic development goals of the country, and a part of the profit was invested in the subsequent development of the gas industry, which allowed to increase gas production.¹⁸

It should also be noted that Russia benefited from this transaction in the following ways:

- Moscow began to control the gas exports of one of its potential competitors in the European gas market;
- By purchasing large volumes of Turkmen gas and reselling it in Europe, Russia could afford to maintain the volume of gas exported to Europe, thus fulfilling its obligations under the agreements signed with the European states.¹⁹

However, in 2009, Russia began to reduce the volume of purchases of Turkmen gas, and in 2016 stopped purchasing it entirely.²⁰ One of the reasons for the refusal was Ashgabad's uncompromising stance regarding the high gas prices.

The termination of the contract hit Turkmenistan the hardest, since the flow of available funds to the budget was reduced and the socio-economic situation in the country was complicated. As a result, in April 2019, after long negotiations with the Russian authorities and Gazprom, a new con-

¹⁷ See: V. Babak, op. cit.

¹⁸ See: V. Ginsburg, M. Troschke, "The Export of Turkmenistan's Energy Resources," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (24), 2003.

¹⁹ See: M. Karayianni, "Russia's Foreign Policy for Central Asia Passes Through Energy Agreements," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22), 2003.

²⁰ See: S.S. Zhiltsov, I.S. Zonn, op. cit., p. 211.

tract was concluded for a period of five years, providing for the supply of 5.5 bcm of gas per year.²¹ Thus, after a three-year break, Ashghabad resumed gas export along the northern route, which continues to be one of the main routes in Turkmenistan's export policy.

Western Routes

Among the western pipeline routes, *the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline* is the most notable. It went into operation in 1999 and spans 920 km, with an annual capacity of 6.5 million tons of oil. The tariff for pumping equaled only \$1.2 per ton of oil at the time of completion.²² The main advantage of the new pipeline was that it was the first completed pipeline project that provided an alternative to the northern route. Azerbaijan's early oil began to be supplied to world markets through this pipeline.

This pipeline's disadvantages include its small capacity—several times less than that of the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline. The emerging issue of tankers passing through the Turkish Straits posed an additional problem.²³

Due to the aforementioned shortcomings, *the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline*, commissioned in 2006, became the main export pipeline. It spanned 1767 km, including 443 km in Azerbaijan, 248 km in Georgia and 1,076 km in Turkey. The pipeline's capacity amounted to 50 million tons per year. The main advantages of the new pipeline are:

- The final liquidation of the Russian monopoly on oil pipelines for the transportation of Caspian oil and the loss of strategic importance by the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline;
- Bypassing the Turkish Straits and direct access to Turkey's Mediterranean coast at the Ceyhan deep-water terminal, capable of receiving supertankers;
- Initial plan to export not only Azerbaijani, but also Kazakh oil to world markets.²⁴

Azerbaijan managed to achieve a significant breakthrough in 2007 in the construction of gas pipelines in the western direction with the start of gas pumping through the new Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline (BTE). Thanks to this pipeline, Azerbaijan began to supply gas to Georgia and Turkey. It spanned 691 km (from Sangachal to Turkey), and its initial capacity was 8 bcm per year.

However, BTE is only the first section of the Southern Gas Corridor project spanning a total 3,500 km from Azerbaijan to Italy. In the summer of 2018, the second part of the project came into operation—the TANAP gas pipeline with a span of 1,850 km (from the border with Georgia to the border with Greece). Its initial capacity is 16 bcm of gas per year, with the potential to increase to 31 billion.

The third part of SGC is under construction and will be completed in 2020. It will be the Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline from the Greek-Turkish border to Italy. Its initial capacity will be 10 bcm of gas per year with the possibility of further increase to 20 billion. This pipeline is intended for the supply of Azerbaijani gas to Italy and countries of Southeast Europe.²⁵

²¹ See: G. Gasanov, "Gazprom zakliuchil piatiletniy kontrakt s Turkmenistanom," *Trend*, 3 July, 2019, available at [<https://www.trend.az/casia/turkmenistan/3085321.html>], 5 July, 2019.

²² See: K.S. Gadzhiev, *Geopolitika Kavkaza*, Moscow, 2003, p. 431.

²³ See: S.S. Zhiltsov, I.S. Zonn, op. cit., p. 223.

²⁴ See: S.A. Pritchkin, op. cit., pp. 128-129.

²⁵ [https://www.bp.com/en_az/caspian/operationsprojects/Shahdeniz/SouthernCorridor.html].

A. Azerbaijan's Position

By giving preference to the western route, as well as to cooperation with Western companies, Baku was pursuing at least three goals:

- Move away from Russia politically and begin to pursue an independent foreign policy;
- Establish partnerships with Turkey, the United States, and the West as a whole;
- Seek support from the West in resolving Azerbaijan's most pressing problem—the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, taking into account the support that Russia provided to the aggressor country, Armenia, at the time;²⁶
- Attract Western investments required for the development of oil and gas fields. Russia was not incapable of investing funds at the time;
- Gain access to technologies for deep oil and gas production, which Russia also did not possess.²⁷

In general, we can state that Azerbaijan, with the support of Turkey and the West, primarily the United States, has won the confrontation with Russia for the right to develop oil and gas fields in its sector of the Caspian Sea and transport the bulk of oil and gas bypassing Russian territory. As a result, only in 2016, about 12 million tons of Azerbaijani oil was delivered to European countries,²⁸ which allowed to cover up to 5% of their oil needs.²⁹

It should be noted that, as the Southern Gas Corridor project is being implemented, Azerbaijan has made some progress in exporting its gas to neighboring countries, fully supplying Georgia with gas in recent years. Thus, the neighboring country was spared from gas dependence on Russia, and, accordingly, from a significant lever of political and economic pressure. Moreover, every year, as gas consumption in the country increases, the export of Azerbaijani gas there is also growing.³⁰

In addition, since 2007, Azerbaijan has begun to supply gas to Turkey and at present, the export volume has reached 7.5 bcm per year.³¹ Since 2020, after the final implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor, Turkey will receive 12.6 bcm of Azerbaijani gas annually. Subsequently, the export of Azerbaijani gas to Europe will begin.³² As a result, Europe will obtain another source of gas imports independent of Russia, which will allow it to reduce its energy dependence on Moscow.

B. Kazakhstan's Position

By exporting the main volume of oil and gas in the northern direction, Astana remained faithful to its most important foreign policy principle—multi-directionality, and decided to also use the west-

²⁶ See: G. Kuliev, "Geopoliticheskie kollizii Kavkaza," *Tsentralnaia Azia i Kavkaz*, No. 4, 1999.

²⁷ See: R. Musabekov, "Russia-Azerbaijan: Relations in Theory and Practice," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3, 2000.

²⁸ [www.customs.gov.az].

²⁹ See: "CPC Research Team Report: Protection and Modernization of Critical Infrastructure—Key to Prosperity and Security," Caspian Policy Center, 23 January, 2019, available at [https://www.caspianpolicy.org/report-protection-and-modernization-of-critical-infrastructure-key-to-prosperity-and-security/], 15 June, 2019.

³⁰ See: "Postavki azerbaidzhanskogo gaza v Gruziyu uvelichatsia," Moskva-Baku, 25 December, 2018, available at [https://moscow-baku.ru/news/economy/postavki_azerbaydzhanskogo_gaza_v_gruziyu_uvelichatsya/], 15 June, 2019.

³¹ See: "Postavki azerbaidzhanskogo gaza v Turtsiu vozrosli," *Minval*, 28 February, 2019, available at [https://minval.az/news/123867281], 14 June, 2019.

³² See: "Stoimost proyekta TANAP mozhet snizitsia eshche bolshe," *Day.az*, 15 June, 2019, available at [https://news.day.az/economy/1129324.html], 17 June, 2019.

ern route through Azerbaijan (BTC pipeline). Moreover, this route was actively lobbied by Turkey and the United States, and it was clearly disadvantageous for Kazakhstan to come into conflict with them. Therefore, in 1999, Nazarbayev signed an agreement on the construction of the BTC.³³ However, without waiting for the completion of the BTC pipeline construction, Kazakhstan began to export oil westward to the Black Sea coast along the following route: Tengiz-Aktau port (Caspian Sea), tankers from Aktau to Dubendi port (near Baku), then via the Dubendi–Ali-Bayramli pipeline and from there by rail to the Batumi oil terminal. In this manner, Kazakhstan annually exported about 2 million tons of oil.³⁴ Gradually, the volume of exports via this route increased. For instance, in 2016, the volume of transshipment of oil and oil products through the Batumi oil terminal amounted to approximately 3.4 million tons.³⁵ After the commencement of the BTC pipeline's operation, Kazakhstan joined the usage of this pipeline in 2008, when up to 3 million tons of Kazakh oil was exported annually through this pipeline. However, in mid-2015, Kazakhstani companies stopped transporting oil through the BTC due to the expansion of the CPC, where all Kazakhstani oil was rerouted.³⁶

In parallel with the transportation of oil by tankers, projects were developed to construct the Trans-Caspian oil pipeline, capable of linking the Kazakh and Azerbaijani shores of the Caspian. In January 2007, a memorandum of understanding was signed in Astana on the project that involved the creation of the Kazakhstan Caspian system for transporting oil from the Kashagan field to the BTC pipeline. Initially, the capacity of this system was planned at 25 million tons per year with a further increase to 38 million tons. In this case, it was mainly a matter of oil delivery by tankers. But they also discussed the project for the construction of the Aktau-Baku subsea Trans-Caspian oil pipeline with a length of 590 km. However, by and large, these projects have not yet been implemented, since the development of the Kashagan field has not yet been fully implemented, as well as due to the need to fill up the expanded CPC.³⁷

C. Turkmenistan's position

Despite the fact that gas was mainly exported via the northern route, the Turkmen authorities never overlooked the prospects of the western direction—through the Caspian Sea to Azerbaijan, and then through Georgia and Turkey to Europe.

But the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline (TCG) project ran into a number of very difficult problems, from the very beginning, as a result of which it was never implemented:

- Mutual claims of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan to each other regarding the ownership of deposits in the central part of the Caspian Sea—Azeri, Chirag and Kyapaz;
- Change of the role of Baku in the TCG from the transit country to the gas exporting country after the discovery of the Shah Deniz, a large gas field in the Azerbaijani section of the Caspian shelf;³⁸

³³ See: A. Chebotarev, "Kazakhstan: Priority Oil Routes," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (9), 2001.

³⁴ See: D. Preiger, I. Maliarchuk, T. Grinkevich, "Pipelines for Caspian oil," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22), 2003.

³⁵ See: M. Tsurkov, "Kazakhstan zainteresovan v postavkakh nefi cherez Azerbaidzhan," *Trend*, 13 November, 2017 [<https://www.trend.az/business/energy/2819883.html>], 12 June, 2019.

³⁶ V. Gayfutdinova, "Postavki nefi po BTD budut snizhatsia," *Kapital*, 16 July, 2014, available at [<https://kapital.kz/business/31740/postavki-nefti-po-btd-budut-snizhatsya.html>], 14 June, 2019.

³⁷ See: S.S. Zhiltsov, I.S. Zonn, op. cit., pp. 221-222.

³⁸ See: H. Kuliev, "Azerbaijan: Pipeline Strategy and Pipeline Geopolitical Dimension," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (9), 2001.

— Gradual divergence of views on the prospects of the TCG between the U.S. and Turkmenistan, as Washington eventually began to lose interest in it in the light of other problematic issues in the Middle East region. In addition, in the Azerbaijani-Turkmen dispute over the volume of gas pumped through the TCG, the U.S. supported Baku's right to half of the volume. This caused serious discontent in Turkmenistan, as a result of which Ashgabad signed a long-term gas supply contract with Russia, temporarily abandoning the TCG project.³⁹

Additionally, it is important to recall that in addition to gas, Turkmenistan possesses oil reserves, although not as vast in size as its gas reserves. In recent years, production has reached 10-11 million tons per year. Approximately half of this amount is consumed domestically, the remaining amount is exported. It should be noted that the export of oil and oil products from Turkmenistan is difficult, since there are still no export pipelines in the republic. As a result, oil was exported for a long time, tentatively speaking, in the northern direction (by tankers through the Caspian Sea to Makhachkala, then through the pipeline to Novorossiysk and again by tankers to world markets) and in the southern direction (by tankers to Iran and then via pipelines to oil refineries in Tabriz and Tehran).⁴⁰

In July 2010, an agreement was concluded between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan on pumping Turkmen oil through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline.⁴¹ In 2018, 4.2 million tons of oil were transported in this manner. That is, most of the exported Turkmen oil was transported to world markets through the western route. At the end of 2019, less than 4 million tons are expected to be transported, which is associated with the resumption of export of Turkmen oil along the northern route. It is anticipated that approximately 1.5 million tons of oil will be exported by the end of the year.⁴²

Conclusion

The twenty-five years since the arrival of Western companies in Azerbaijan, and later—Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, with the aim of developing oil and gas fields, have altered the position of the above-mentioned Caspian states regarding hydrocarbon production and export. In particular, in Azerbaijan, oil production is reduced every year due to the depletion of developed fields. But gas production is growing and thereby the republic is gradually changing its profile, re-qualifying for gas production and export. Oil production is still quite low in Turkmenistan, but gas production is growing. As for Kazakhstan, the volumes of oil and gas production are increasing there with every year. In this regard, it is expected that the available northern oil pipelines may not be enough to export the growing volumes of produced oil. In that case, the western route through Azerbaijan may come into play. In particular, a Trans-Caspian oil pipeline from Kashagan to Sangachal (where it will be connected to the BTC) may be built within the framework of the second phase of the development of Kashagan. Moreover, the Kashagan field is offshore—on the Caspian shelf. Thanks to this, transportation of Kashagan oil, unlike Tengiz oil, will be spared from such technical difficulties as loading oil into tankers and unloading them in Alat. It will be more commercially profitable as well. But for the implementation of the TCO project, the volume of oil production at Kashagan is important. Specifically,

³⁹ See: S. Kamenev, "Turkmenistan: Energy Policy and Energy Projects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22), 2003.

⁴⁰ See: "Neftegazovyi kompleks Turkmenistana," *Zhivoi zhurnal*, 11 November, 2010, available at [<https://iv-g.livejournal.com/353097.html>], 22 June, 2019.

⁴¹ See: M. Nasibova, "Transportirovka po BTD turkenskoi nefi dostigla svyshe 3 mln tonn," Sputnik, 8 September, 2011, available at [<https://az.sputniknews.ru/azerbaijan/20110908/296350241.html>], 18 June, 2019.

⁴² See: D. Savosin, "Azerbaidzhan sokratit tranzit turkenskoi nefi v svyazi s vozobnovleniem ee tranzita cherez Rossiu," *Neftegaz*, 25 March, 2019, available at [<https://neftegaz.ru/news/transport-and-storage/193513-azerbaydzhan-sokratit-tranzit-turkenskoy-nefti-v-svyazi-s-vozobnovleniem-ee-tranzita-cherez-rossiyu/>], 17 June, 2019.

the construction of the pipeline will be profitable if more than 10 million tons of oil is transported through it, which seems quite realistic in the medium term.

Of course, the implementation of the TCO project will be beneficial both to Nur-Sultan, which will deliver its oil directly to Mediterranean ports, bypassing the Turkish Straits, and Baku, which will earn on transit. Moreover, over the past few years, due to a drop in oil production in Azerbaijan, about 34 million tons were transported annually through the BTC, including about 4 million tons of transit oil.⁴³ Thus, the free volume of the pipeline is about 16 million tons, and it may be filled with Kazakh oil from the Kashagan field in the future.

It should also be noted that recently the negotiation process between the EU and Turkmenistan has intensified not only in regard to strengthening ties, but also on the issue of supplying Turkmen gas to Europe through the Trans-Caspian Gas pipeline (TCG) project. In addition, Turkmenistan's relations are gradually being established with the main transit country for Turkmen gas, Azerbaijan.

As for the TCG itself, according to the basic plan, a pipeline spanning about 300 km should be built, directly connecting the Turkmen and Azerbaijani shores of the Caspian. It is estimated that the capacity of the TCG will be 31 bcm of gas per year, and its cost is estimated at \$1.5-2 billion.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the implementation of the project, despite the already achieved breakthrough steps, is facing a number of problems, one of which is the financing of construction. In addition, the problem of the ecology of the Caspian remains strong, which Moscow and Tehran can take advantage of and impede the implementation of the project. In this regard, some Western experts suggest abandoning the construction of a full-fledged gas pipeline, and build a connector between the offshore gas fields of Azerbaijan and similar fields in Turkmenistan. In this case, the length of the pipeline will be reduced to a third of its length, and the cost will not exceed \$500 million. Thus, it will become possible to sharply reduce the TCG project costs, and Russia and Iran will more easily agree to this gas pipeline version than to a full-fledged pipe.⁴⁵

However, even if the above problems are resolved, there still remain a number of controversial issues that need to be addressed:

- Lack of accurate data on recoverable gas reserves in Turkmenistan, since Ashghabad does not allow foreign experts to conduct independent audits of the country's gas reserves;
- Absence of specific proposals for the sale of gas on the part of Turkmenistan and the purchase of gas on the part of the EU;
- Ashghabad does not allow international companies to conclude production sharing agreements and participate in profits. Moreover, the country itself is unable to independently invest large sums of money either in exploration or the development of gas fields;⁴⁶
- Conflict of Baku's and Ashghabad's interests. In order for TCG to become profitable, at least 30 bcm of gas must be pumped through it annually. Thus, Turkmen gas may occupy the entire volume of the Southern Gas Corridor, designed for 31 bcm of gas per year. But Baku will soon be able to fill the TCG entirely with its own gas due to an increase in gas production and export. Thus, in 2018 Azerbaijan exported 9.5 bcm of gas, by 2022, 25 bcm are projected for export, and in 2025 the exports should amount to approximately 35 billion;

⁴³ See: "Baku-Tbilisi-Dzheykhan uvelichil prokachku turkmenskoy nefti," Regnum, 24 January, 2018, available at [<https://regnum.ru/news/2371892.html>], 1 July, 2019.

⁴⁴ See: P. Leonard, "Caspian Agreement May Trigger Cascade of Energy Projects," Eurasianet, 8 August, 2018, available at [<https://eurasianet.org/caspian-agreement-may-trigger-cascade-of-energy-projects>], 2 July, 2019.

⁴⁵ See: L. Coffey, E. Nifti, "A Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline: Start Small but Aim Big," Caspian Policy Center, 29 May, 2019, available at [<http://www.caspianpolicy.org/a-trans-caspian-gas-pipeline-start-small-but-aim-big/>], 3 July, 2019.

⁴⁶ See: R. Morningstar, "A Trans-Caspian Pipeline Still Far Away," *Caspian Affairs*, May 2019, available at [<http://www.caspianpolicy.org/caspian-affairs-magazine-2/a-trans-caspian-pipeline-still-far-away/>], 5 July, 2019.

—Low quality of Turkmen gas, which contains a large amount of sulfur. As a result, before deliveries of this gas to consumers, it will need to be processed. And this, therefore, will automatically lead to a rise in the cost of Turkmen gas for end consumers.

In view of the foregoing, the construction of the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline in the short term does not seem profitable. And if the TCG is still to be implemented, then it will be a purely political project lobbied by the United States.

In general, the western routes of oil and gas pipelines seem preferable for logistical reasons. Oil pipelines bypass the Turkish Straits, and there is a shorter way for the gas pipelines to enter the European market. But generally, geopolitical, rather than economic factors are the decisive ones. As a result, the specific route for transporting oil or gas depends on the lobbying efforts made by one or another interested party: the West represented by the U.S., the EU and Turkey, or Russia.

GAS AND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES

Nata GARAKANIDZE

*Ph.D. Candidate, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
(Tbilisi, Georgia)*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to study the interconnection between energy resources, gas in particular, and the foreign policy of Central Asian post-Soviet states. It is suggested that gas as an internal economic factor has an impact on the foreign policy formation of Central Asian states.

The comparison of five countries—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan—leads to the conclusion that rich gas reserves together with profitable export opportunities have enabled Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to pursue “flexible” foreign policy, which in this article means the possibility to stay away from military alliances and economic/political international organizations created by Great Powers. Since independence, Turkmenistan has adhered to the “positive neutrality” strategy

and pursued the “open door” policy, while Uzbekistan has affirmed its commitment to a self-reliant foreign policy.

These strategies exclude a close alignment to Great Powers and participation in the economic and military organizations created by them.

In contrast to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which do not possess gas, have directed their foreign policies towards the integration into the regional/international organizations led by a Great Power — Russia, and, therefore, remained heavily dependent on it. The leaders of these two countries believe that pro-Russian policy is the only way to survive. Therefore, both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan became parts of almost all of the Russian-led economic and military initiatives.

Kazakhstan represents an exception: on the one hand, this country sits atop the large reserves of gas but, on the other hand, it still stays aligned with Russia. The article offers the following explanation for this exception: Kazakhstan's gas sector is still immature, while the export is not as diversified as in other gas-rich states of Central Asia;

Kazakhstan shares the largest border with Russia hosting the majority of ethnic Russians, who could create potential threats to Kazakhstan's national security.

Given these factors, Kazakhstan does not have the possibility to pursue "flexible" foreign policy as other gas-rich Central Asian states do.

KEYWORDS: *Central Asia, energy resources, gas, foreign policy.*

Introduction

There are many studies that emphasize the role of domestic factors when analyzing the foreign policy of post-Soviet states. However, those works mainly discuss the formation of foreign policy in the domestic political context while often ignoring the economic factors. Only a few articles refer to the correlation between energy resources and foreign policy, but only in the context of the Great Powers.¹ This article instead aims to shed light on interconnection between energy resources, gas in particular, and foreign policies of Central Asian post-Soviet states, i.e. small/weak states—the ones whose leaders believe that they cannot impact the international system or secure their own national interests independently.²

The article focuses mainly on gas because the natural gas pipeline industry represents a natural monopoly for sovereign states. Unlike other fossil fuels, gas is mainly transported via pipelines³ in sovereign states' territories and needs each government's approval. Therefore, gas transportation often becomes the subject of agreement/conflict between different states.

Central Asian states share many similarities, however, only some of them are rich in energy resources, which in this case means:

- Possessing significant gas reserves;
- Having different export possibilities.

Foreign policy of Central Asian states is analyzed based on the following factor:

- Participation in military alliances and regional/international organizations created by Great Powers.

The main question of this article can be stated as follows: *What is the role of gas resources in the foreign policy of Central Asian post-Soviet states?* The respective hypothesis states that rich gas resources enable some of the Central Asian (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) countries to pursue "flexible" foreign policy, meaning that they have an option not to join the military alliances and regional/

¹ See: H. Kjaernet, "Azerbaijani-Russian Relations and the Economization of Foreign Policy," in: *Caspian Energy Politics: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan*, ed. by I. Overland, H. Kjaernet, A. Kendall-Taylor, Routledge, London, 2010; G. Gvalia, "Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States," *Security Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, February 2013, p. 100.

² See: R.O. Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemma: Small States in International Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1969, pp. 291-310.

³ Some amount of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is exported via tankers only by the littoral states.

international economic/political organizations created by Great Powers. Countries with poor gas resources (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) do not have such possibility. This hypothesis is proven only partially because it is contradicted by an exception—the case of Kazakhstan, a country with rich gas reserves but less “flexible” foreign policy. This exception can be explained by the immaturity of the Kazakhstan gas sector, limited export opportunities and some special geographic and demographic factors that are unique to Kazakhstan.

Central Asian States: Common Characteristics

Each of the Central Asian countries can be characterized by some qualitative criteria of small states—inability to impact the international system and secure the national interests independently. In fact, all of the existing conflicts within the Central Asian region are influenced by third parties.⁴ Moreover, all of the Central Asian states are parts of the same geographic region sharing common history and post-Soviet heritage—deteriorated political and economic situation.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian countries have become mainly authoritarian states. According to the Freedom in the World 2019 report, Kyrgyzstan is “partially free,” while the other four states are “not free.”⁵ Each of the Central Asian states has faced problems with democracy building while struggling to tackle corruption. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index 2018 (CPI), Turkmenistan has only 20 points and is ranked 161st among 180 countries worldwide, while Kazakhstan has 31 points and holds 124th place; Kyrgyzstan—29 points, 132nd place; Tajikistan—25 points, 152nd place, Uzbekistan—23 points, 158th place.⁶

Distinguishing Factor—Energy (Gas) Resources

The states of Central Asian greatly differ in terms of energy resources, in particular, gas reserves and export possibilities, which, in turn, determine the flexibility of their foreign policies.

Gas Reserves

K y r g y z s t a n

Kyrgyzstan consumes some 1.9 bcm of natural gas, 3% of which is produced domestically, the rest is imported.⁷ The main donor of Kyrgyzstan is Uzbekistan, which supplies gas through the Bukhara-Tashkent-Bishkek-Almaty pipeline. In 2000-2013, Uzbekistan repeatedly cut off gas sup-

⁴ See: Ya. Sari, “Identity-Conflict Relations: A Case Study of the Ferghana Valley,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Volume 14, Issue 4, 2013.

⁵ Freedom in the World 2019, available at [<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2019/map>], 15 August, 2019.

⁶ See: CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2018, Transparency International, available at [<https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>], 30 July, 2019.

⁷ See: J. Banks, “Kyrgyzstan: Problems, Opportunities,” *Oil and Gas Journal*, 15 March, 1993, available at [<https://www.ogj.com/articles/print/volume-91/issue-11/in-this-issue/general-interest/kyrgyzstan-problems-opportunities.html>]. 12 July, 2019

plies to Kyrgyzstan mainly due to political reasons.⁸ Kyrgyzstan's gas crisis was solved only through the involvement of Russian Gazprom which became an exclusive owner of the entire Kyrgyz gas system in 2014. Kyrgyz government sold the outdated gas infrastructure to Gazprom at a symbolic 1-dollar price. Moreover, Gazprom received licenses to carry out geological exploration works in the Kyrgyz territory.⁹

Tajikistan

Tajikistan does not possess any fossil fuels. Until 2012, gas was imported exclusively from Uzbekistan. However, similar to Kyrgyz case, Tashkent has repeatedly refused to supply gas to Tajikistan due to political issues. In 2012, the relations between two neighbors became particularly tense. As a result of this crisis, Tajikistan was left without Uzbek gas for 6 years. Gas supplies were resumed only in 2018. Similar to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan was assisted by Gazprom replacing the Uzbek supplies. Russia together with Kazakhstan became main gas donor to Tajikistan during the period of 2012-2018.¹⁰

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan sits atop huge gas reserves—19 trillion cu m. There are some 200 proven gas and oil deposits in the country. The biggest one is Galkynysh with the reserves of 4-14 tcm of gas. Galkynysh is listed among the 10 biggest deposits worldwide. It is planned to use the Galkynysh gas for the implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor projects designed to supply Caspian gas to Europe.¹¹

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan possesses some 1.2 tcm of gas. Tashkent signed important contracts with foreign companies including Russian Lukoil, American General Electric, Honeywell UOP, ExxonMobil, Chinese CNPR and others in order to develop gas deposits and further enhance the export potential.¹²

Kazakhstan

Another energy-rich Central Asian state is Kazakhstan (1.1 tcm). However, this country mainly focuses on oil deposits rather than gas development. Currently, Kazakhstan extracts some 27 bcm of gas per year, out of which 16 tcm is consumed domestically. Most of the Kazakh gas reserves are

⁸ See: F. Aminjonov, "Limitations of the Central Asian Energy Security Policy: Priorities and Prospects for Improvement," *CIGI Paper No. 103*, Series: CIGI Papers, 20 May, 2016, available at: [https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/paper_no103web_0.pdf], 17 July, 2019.

⁹ See: S. Peyrouse, "Kyrgyzstan's Membership in the Eurasian Economic Union: A Marriage of Convenience?" *Russian Political Digest*, No. 165, 2015, pp. 10-13; A. Jafarova, "Gazprom to Resume Exploration of Two Energy Fields in Kyrgyzstan," *AzerNews*, 3 May, 2013, available at [https://www.azernews.az/oil_and_gas/53353.html], 13 July, 2019.

¹⁰ See: "Gazprom Reportedly Continues Work on Exploring New Gas Fields in Tajikistan," *Asia-Plus*, 2018, available at [<https://www.news.tj/en/news/tajikistan/economic/20180720/gazprom-reportedly-continues-work-on-exploring-new-gas-fields-in-tajikistan>], 17 July, 2019.

¹¹ See: K. Aliyeva, "New Promising Oil and Gas Structures Discovered in Turkmenistan," *Azernews*, 2018, available at [<https://www.azernews.az/region/121747.html>], 19 July, 2019.

¹² See: Chen Aizhu, "China, Uzbek Joint Gas Field Ready to Pump," edited by Richard Pullin, Reuters, 5 December, 2017, available at [<https://www.reuters.com/article/china-uzbekistan-gas-idAFL3N1O5205>], 1 February, 2019; "Russia's Lukoil Increases Gas Production at South-West Gissar Project in Uzbekistan," *The Tashkent Times*, 22 August, 2017, available at [<http://tashkenttimes.uz/economy/1333-russia-s-lukoil-increases-gas-production-at-south-west-gissar-project-in-uzbekistan>], 26 July, 2019.

located in the Caspian Sea region. The biggest deposits are Kashagan (1 tcm of gas), Karachaganak (1.2 tcm of gas) and Tengiz (1 tcm of gas).¹³

Export Possibilities

Turkmenistan

Throughout the history, Turkmenistan has exported gas to Iran, Russia, and China. However, the main end-user of Turkmen gas at the moment is China. Gas is transported to Chinese Western regions through the Central Asia-China pipeline.¹⁴ Recently, two parties agreed to transport some 65 bcm by 2020.¹⁵ However, even the increased export will not be enough for Turkmenistan to make a significant profit, given the fact that half of these revenues will cover billions of Chinese loans provided to Ashgabad earlier.

In the past, Russia was the main importer of Turkmen gas (via Central Asia-Center pipeline). However, throughout the years, gas supplies were held off due to the strained relations between the two countries over the unpaid bills, pipeline explosion, etc. Turkmenistan resumed gas export to Russia only in 2019.¹⁶

Similar issues arose with Iran. Iran was importing about 8-9 bcm of gas from Turkmenistan annually. However, exports were cut off due to the unpaid bill allegations against Tehran.¹⁷

There are some potential buyers for Turkmen gas too. EU may become one of them in case of successful realization of the Trans-Caspian Gas (TCG) pipeline project (TCG is a part of the Southern Gas Corridor initiative providing Europe with alternative gas supplies). The initiated pipeline will be 300 km long, transporting gas from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to Europe through Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey. In 2017, Turkmenistan completed the construction of the East-West Pipeline connecting Galkynysh field to Turkmenistan's Western regions. This pipeline will be later connected to TCG.¹⁸

Turkmenistan is also involved in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) project. It is planned to build a 1,814 km long pipeline with the capacity of 33 bcm per year transporting Galkynysh gas to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. As a result of the TAPI realization, Turkmenistan will be able to export 5 bcm gas per year to Afghanistan, and to Pakistan and India 14 bcm each.¹⁹ In

¹³ See: R. Nurshayeva, "Kazakhs, Chevron-Led Group Approve \$37 Billion Tengiz Field Expansion," Reuters, 5 July, 2016, available at [<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-chevron-kazakhstan/kazakhs-chevron-led-group-approve-37-billion-tengiz-field-expansion-idUSKCN0ZL0X4>], 29 July, 2019.

¹⁴ See: Chen Xiangming, F. Fazilov, "Re-centering Central Asia: China's 'New Great Game' in the Old Eurasian Heartland," *Palgrave Communications*, Vol. 4, No. 71, 2018, available at [<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-018-0125-5>], 2 July, 2019.

¹⁵ See: F. Aminjonov, "Natural Gas Pipeline Infrastructure in Central Asia," *Eurasian Research Institute*, No. 67, 2016, available at [http://www.ayu.edu.tr/static/aae_haftalik/aae_bulten_en_67.pdf], 31 July, 2019.

¹⁶ See: I. Slav, "Why Gazprom Just Resumed Purchases of Turkmen Gas," Oilprice.com, 16 April, 2019, available at [<https://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Why-Gazprom-Just-Resumed-Purchases-Of-Turkmen-Gas.html>], 18 July, 2019.

¹⁷ See: O. Hryniuk, "The Escalation of Iran-Turkmenistan Gas Dispute: Will the Battle Begin?" CIS Arbitration Forum, 6 March, 2018, available at [<http://www.cisarbitration.com/2018/03/06/the-escalation-of-iran-turkmenistan-gas-dispute-will-the-battle-begin/>], 2 July 2019.

¹⁸ See: C. Putz, "Turkmenistan Completes East-West Pipeline: What's Next?" *The Diplomat*, 29 December, 2015, available at [<https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/turkmenistan-completes-east-west-pipeline-whats-next/>], 2 July 2019.

¹⁹ See: D. Jorgic, "China Interested in Joining TAPI Pipeline Project—Pakistan Official," Reuters, 8 August, 2018, available at [<https://www.reuters.com/article/pakistan-china-tapi/china-interested-in-joining-tapi-pipeline-project-pakistan-official-idUSL5N1UY1GR>], 2 July, 2019.

2015, Turkmenistan began the construction of TAPI. However, there are still some unresolved problems related to this project, namely, funding and the security situation in the territory of participant states.²⁰

U z b e k i s t a n

Currently about 20% of Uzbek gas is exported. The main buyers of Uzbek gas are Russia and China. Uzbekistan supplies its gas to Russia through Bukhara-Ural and Central Asia-Center pipelines. As per the 2017 deal, Russian Gazprom shall buy 4 bcm of Uzbek gas every year.²¹

Another destination for Uzbek gas is China. Currently Tashkent exports more than 5 bcm of gas to China via the Central Asia-China pipeline. It is planned to increase the export volume up to 10 bcm. The additional “D” link of the Central Asia-China pipeline will provide Uzbekistan with the possibility to increase the export volume.²²

Uzbekistan also exports gas to neighboring Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan through Bukhara-Tashkent-Bishkek-Almaty pipeline. Gas supplies have been resumed to Tajikistan via Muzrabad-Dushanbe pipeline as well.²³

K a z a k h s t a n

Kazakhstan exports gas to China and Russia. The latter receives Kazakh gas through the Central Asia-Center pipeline. For a long time, Russia was the sole importer of Kazakh gas, however, in 2017, Kazakhstan started exporting its gas to China through the Central Asia-China pipeline. At present, the export volumes are low but Kazakhstan plans to increase them up to 10 bcm by 2019 as per the agreement between the state-owned companies of two countries—KazTransGas and Petro-China.²⁴

Different Result— Different Foreign Policy

As mentioned above, this article discusses foreign policy choices of Central Asian states in the context of gas resources. It is argued that the gas-rich countries pursue more “flexible” policy, which in this case means staying away from the participation in military alliances and regional/international organizations created by Great Powers, while gas-poor states remain aligned with a historic “patron”—Russia. Analysis of each country’s foreign policy is given below.

²⁰ See: E. Najafizada, “\$7.5 Billion Pipeline Has Surprise Patrons: Taliban Militants,” *Bloomberg*, 9 March, 2018, available at [<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-08/a-7-5-billion-pipeline-has-surprise-patrons-taliban-militants>], 12 July, 2019.

²¹ A. Gorokhov, “Golubaia mehta: kuda poidet uzbekskii gaz,” *SputnikNews*, 8 June, 2017, available at [<https://uz.sputniknews.ru/analytics/20170608/5583119/Kuda-poidet-uzbekskii-gaz.html>], 12 July, 2019.

²² See: C. Michel “Line D of the Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline Delayed,” *The Diplomat*, 31 May, 2016, available at [<https://thediplomat.com/2016/05/line-d-of-the-central-asia-china-gas-pipeline-delayed/>], 14 July, 2019.

²³ See: F. Aminjonov, “Limitations of the Central Asian Energy Security Policy: Priorities and Prospects for Improvement,” *CIGI Paper*, 20 May, 2016, No. 103, available at [https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/paper_no103web_0.pdf], 17 July, 2019.

²⁴ N. Rodova, “Kazakhstan to Double Natural Gas Exports to China to 10 Bcm/year in 2019,” *S&P Global, Natural Gas*, 15 October, 2018, available at [<https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/natural-gas/101518-kazakhstan-to-double-natural-gas-exports-to-china-to-10-bcmyear-in-2019>], 20 July, 2019.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan has always been dependent on Russia in terms of military and economic security. The country is a member of every Russian-led international organization. In 1992, Tajikistan was one of the first parties signing the treaty of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).²⁵ Moreover, Tajikistan joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991. Participation in multilateral organizations is also included in the state's official documents, such as Foreign Policy Concept.²⁶

Tajikistan was a member of Russian-led Eurasian Economic Community, which ceased to exist in 2014. Now Dushanbe is invited to join the successor of this organization—Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Even though the membership of any Russian-led organization threatens the sovereignty of Tajikistan, almost 70% of Tajik population have already expressed the willingness to join EAEU.²⁷

The readiness and willingness of Tajikistan to join the EAEU can be related to the gas factor. The membership of EAEU could mean the energy security for Tajikistan. As already mentioned, the country is heavily dependent on Uzbek gas supplies, which, in often cases can be unpredictable. Therefore, there is always a chance that Uzbekistan cuts off gas supplies to the neighbor due to political reasons. Under such conditions, Russia remains the only alternative to provide gas (mainly LNG). Even today, when the import of Uzbek gas have been resumed, Tajik population still receives Russian gas; Uzbek supplies are provided only to business entities.

According to the 2003 contract, Gazprom promised to secure Tajikistan's energy security improving gas infrastructure and carrying out exploration works throughout the country. However, in the end of the works, Gazprom officially announced that there was no gas in Tajikistan. Apparently, it is not in geopolitical interests of Russia to discover new deposits in Tajikistan. This would lead Dushanbe to enhance export possibilities and closely cooperate with foreign companies, which would eventually free Tajikistan from Russia's patronage. Tajik experts believe that "if Tajikistan had been more accommodating, if it had not resisted joining the [Russian-led] Eurasian Economic Union [EAEU], there would be oil and gas."²⁸

Finally, the membership of EAEU would make gas more affordable and accessible for Tajikistan due to the fact that it is planned to create common energy market between the EAEU member states by 2025.²⁹ This means harmonization of standards, competitive price setting and equal access to gas throughout EAEU. Thus, it will make Russian gas more accessible to Tajikistan.

Kyrgyzstan

Similar to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan does not possess significant gas reserves. At the same time, the country is heavily dependent on Russia both in terms of economy and security. Since 1991, Kyrgyzstan has been an active member of the CIS. In 1992, the country signed the CSTO treaty too. Russian influence became especially strong after Kyrgyzstan joined the Customs Union and EAEU.

²⁵ See: "About 2,500 CSTO Troops to Take Part in Rubezh Exercise in Tajikistan," TASS, 9 August, 2018, available at [<http://tass.com/defense/1016624>], 21 July, 2019.

²⁶ See: Foreign Policy Concept of Tajikistan (2015), available at [<http://mfa.tj/?l=ru&art=1072>].

²⁷ See: "Tajikistan: Feeling the Eurasian Union's Gravitational Pull," Eurasianet, 31 January, 2017, available at [<https://eurasianet.org/tajikistan-feeling-eurasian-unions-gravitational-pull>], 23 July, 2019.

²⁸ N. Mirsaidov, "Gazprom Dashes Tajikistan's Hopes for Resource Wealth," *Central-Asia-News*, 10 August, 2018, available at [http://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2018/08/10/feature-01], 6 July, 2019.

²⁹ See: M. Russell, "Eurasian Economic Union: The Rocky Road to Integration," EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service, PE 599.432, 2017, available at [[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599432/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)599432_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599432/EPRS_BRI(2017)599432_EN.pdf)], 25 July, 2019.

Bishkek's decision to be part of the Russian-led international organizations is related to the energy security issues. Similar to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan has been dependent on Uzbek gas supplies, which, given the past experience, can be unreliable. Moreover, in 2014, Kyrgyz government sold the entire gas sector to Russian Gazprom at a one-dollar price. Given the fact that Russia often uses gas as a political leverage against post-Soviet states, the Russia-Kyrgyzstan gas deal was more of a geo-political importance for Moscow.

In exchange for giving up the entire gas sector, Kyrgyzstan received Gazprom's guarantee to ensure the supply security. This would be achieved through bilateral talks between Gazprom and Uzbekistan, i.e. Kyrgyzstan as a party would be replaced Russia, which could have more political weight against Uzbekistan. Thus, it could secure Kyrgyzstan's energy security. In fact, Gazprom managed to reduce the imported gas price to 150 dollar per 1,000 cu m in 2016. Moreover, Russia paid more than 40 million dollars of Kyrgyzstan's gas debt to neighboring states. In exchange for that, Gazprom received an exclusive gas import rights and absolute independence from the Kyrgyz government in dealing with suppliers.³⁰

The 2014 deal between Gazprom and Kyrgyzstan posed an imminent threat to Kyrgyzstan's sovereignty. Kyrgyz government let Russia acquire serious geopolitical leverage on Kyrgyzstan, which, in turn, was a long-standing goal of the Russian government. Since the 1990s, Moscow has been trying to acquire control over Kyrgyz economy, which was impossible until 2014 due to the political instability in Kyrgyzstan. Russia's mission was finally accomplished in 2014 with the "help" of Kyrgyz government. On the one hand, Kyrgyzstan made a choice to align with Russia in order to solve the gas-related problems with Uzbekistan, but, on the other hand, the country fell into more serious trouble sacrificing the sovereignty.

The alignment with Russia was explained by the former president Atambayev in the following way: "Kyrgyzstan does not have future without Russia,"³¹ which means that the Customs Union/EAEU membership was not really a choice for Kyrgyzstan. The country simply did not have other option rather than to "bandwagon" with Moscow. After the closure of a U.S. base in Manas airport, U.S. influence on Central Asian region significantly decreased, while Russia still seemed interested in its "near abroad". Thus, there was only one choice for Kyrgyzstan. In 2014, former President Atambayev stated: "We need to join the Customs Union because we don't have any other choice and we have to do that as soon as possible while we can still do it ourselves."³²

U z b e k i s t a n

Since independence, Uzbekistan's foreign policy has been oriented towards enhancing sovereignty and increasing its role as a regional leader. "Mustaqillik" has been Uzbekistan's main motto, which generally means self-reliance. Even in the 1990s, President Karimov believed that the relationship with Russia should have been based on a principle of equality preventing Moscow to play a role of a "big brother."³³ Uzbekistan's first president publicly spoke against Russia's involvement in internal affairs of the Central Asian states and condemned Moscow's participation in Tajik civil war as well.³⁴ Moreover, Karimov decided to leave CSTO and join the anti-Russian GUAM in 1999-2005.

³⁰ See: S. Peyrouse, "Kyrgyzstan's Membership in the Eurasian Economic Union: A Marriage of Convenience?" *Russian Political Digest*, No. 165, 2015, pp. 10-13.

³¹ "Almazbek Atambayev: 'Bez Rossii u nas net otdelnogo budushchego'," *Knews*, 20 September, 2012, available at [<https://knews.kg/2012/09/20/almazbek-atambaev-bez-rossii-u-nas-net-otdelnogo-budushchego/>], 4 July, 2019.

³² "No Option for Kyrgyzstan but to Join Customs Union — Kyrgyzstan President," TASS.ru, 27 October, 2014, available at [<http://tass.ru/en/economy/7566666>], 23 July, 2019 (see: also: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jEPjW-1KGw]).

³³ I. Karimov, *Uzbekistan—The Road of Independence and Progress*, Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 1992.

³⁴ See: I. Rotar, "Moscow and Tashkent Battle for Supremacy in Central Asia," Jamestown Foundation Prism, Vol. 5, Issue 4, 1999, available at [<https://jamestown.org/program/moscow-and-tashkent-battle-for-supremacy-in-central-asia/>].

It meant that Tashkent was willing to stay away from Russia's "protection" even in times when Uzbekistan was facing terrorism threats (1999 and 2004 terrorist attacks in Tashkent) and could greatly benefit from CSTO—an antiterrorist organization.

Karimov only got closer to Russia in 2005 when the survival of his own regime became questionable: after the Andijan massacre (an anti-government rally with more than a thousand casualties), Uzbekistan's government was harshly criticized by U.S. and EU. Karimov could use Moscow's support to balance the Western pressure. This explains Uzbekistan's temporary membership in CSTO and Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), which ended right after the U.S.-EU sanctions were released. It should also be noted that Karimov never considered participation in the Russian-led Customs Union as he thought that this would hurt Uzbekistan's national interests and jeopardize its sovereignty.

The self-reliant foreign policy of Uzbekistan is greatly supported by the energy independence of the country. According to the former President Karimov, "a country can be regarded as really independent once it gains the energy independence."³⁵ Unlike Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Uzbekistan would never face the necessity to become a part of the Russian-led EAEU. Russia lacks the main political leverage on Uzbekistan, which Moscow has with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan—gas dependence. Uzbekistan is able not only to meet the domestic demand but also to export gas and, thus, have some political influence on other countries (gas as a political weapon against neighboring Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).

Uzbekistan does not allow any foreign influence on its foreign policy but the country uses the relations with foreign energy companies for strengthening the sovereignty. Rich gas reserves of Uzbekistan attract Russian, U.S., EU, and Chinese companies. Their involvement in the Uzbek economy enables Tashkent not to depend on any Great Power and, thus, stay away from alignment with Russia. Also, Uzbekistan receives significant revenues from gas exports. For example, in the first half of 2018, gas revenues equaled to more than \$1 billion.³⁶

Uzbek government understands the importance of gas resources and, thus, envisages to further develop the sector. According to the current President Mirziyoyev, it is planned to increase the production up to 70 bcm by 2025. Moreover, there is a possibility for Uzbekistan to join the TAPI project too.³⁷ As a result, the more diversified the export, the less dependency on a single customer. This, in turn, ensures Uzbekistan's economic independence and more "flexible" foreign policy.

Turkmenistan

The main concepts of Turkmenistan's foreign policy are "positive neutrality" and the "open door" policy. Positive Neutrality means Turkmenistan's non-involvement in international conflicts, while Open Door Policy mainly supports the foreign investment inflow and boosts export potential.

Positive Neutrality excludes Turkmenistan being a member of any military and economic multinational organization. Therefore, Turkmenistan did not become Russia's close ally within the post-Soviet regional organizations. The country did sign the CIS treaty but never ratified it as Turkmenistan's neutrality was officially recognized by the U.N. in 1995. Accordingly, Turkmenistan has never been a member of CSTO or Customs Union/EAEU.

³⁵ Ja. Omorov, Th. Lynch, "Energy Demand/Supply Balance and Infrastructure Constraints Diagnostics Study," RETA-6488: CAREC Energy Sector Action Plan, Asian Development Bank, October 2010, p. 24.

³⁶ See: "Uzbekistan za polgoda eksportiroval gaz na \$1.1 mlrd," *Gazeta.uz*, 27 July, 2018, available at [<https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2018/07/27/export/>], 2 July, 2019.

³⁷ See: "Uzbekistan to Join TAPI Pipeline Project," *Interfax Global Energy*, 24 April, 2018, available at [<http://interfaxenergy.com/article/30566/uzbekistan-to-join-tapi-pipeline-project>], 5 July, 2019.

Turkmenistan's Open Door Policy is mainly based on successful exploitation of the country's energy potential. According to the President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, rational utilization of energy resources, attraction of investors and, thus, increasing economic potential of the country are the main strategic priorities of the Turkmen government.³⁸ Indeed, Turkmenistan's energy sector is attractive for many international companies representing different states. The U.S. and EU consider Turkmenistan to be an alternative supplier for Europe—the planned TCG should enable the transportation of Turkmen gas to the EU and replace Russian supplies. Moreover, the importance of Turkmenistan is vital in terms of TAPI project, which is a pure American initiative, as many experts believe. TAPI is regarded as a political project with nothing to do with economic benefits;³⁹ it should strengthen U.S. influence on Turkmenistan and on the region, in general.

The increase of U.S. influence on Central and South Asian regions contradicts the interests of Russia, in turn. This explains an eager intention of Moscow to participate in TAPI project, which was successfully blocked by Ashgabad.⁴⁰ By becoming a TAPI shareholder, Moscow could control the project and balance the U.S. influence.

Russia is also against Turkmenistan's plan to export gas to Europe. This would threaten Gazprom's current supplies, which currently form almost 40% of Europe's gas import. Declining gas export opportunities, in turn, would mean Moscow's limited political leverage on European states. Therefore, it is Russia's geopolitical interest to block Turkmen gas exports to Europe.

China is another reason why Russia sees Turkmenistan as a competitor. Gazprom is building a 4,000 km Power of Siberia pipeline to Chinese border which would enable the export of 38 bcm of Russian gas to China. The current main supplier of China is Turkmenistan. It is in Gazprom's interests to somehow block the future increase in export of Turkmen gas to China. This could even be one of the reasons why Russia resumed the imports of Turkmen gas in 2019.⁴¹ Moscow prefers to be the main importer of Turkmen gas so that Ashgabad does not look for other consumers. This could also explain Russia's position in the Caspian Status negotiations in 2018 when Moscow allowed Caspian littoral states, including Turkmenistan, to build undersea pipelines in the Caspian Sea. With the Russian import resumed, Ashgabad probably would not have enough gas to supply TCG, which is what Russia is striving for.

From the Turkmen perspective, resuming gas exports to Russia could be quite beneficial. The country faces a severe economic downturn which can be mitigated by receiving some immediate revenues (given the fact that 70% of Turkmenistan's income is generated from gas exports⁴²) rather than waiting for realization of less realistic projects—TAPI (related to security and funding issues) or TCG (infrastructure and political problems).

Turkmenistan greatly benefits from the interests of different international players in the country's gas sector. However, Ashgabad does not allow any foreign party to have significant impact on the country. Moreover, Turkmenistan imposed some restrictions on international investors: according to the Turkmen legislation, foreign companies are allowed to work only on offshore fields cooperating only with the state-owned TurkmenGaz.

³⁸ See: "Berdymukhamedov obratilsia s privetstviem k uchastnikam foruma 'Neft i gaz Turkmenistana-2018,'" Turkmenportal, 20 November, 2018, available at [<https://turkmenportal.com/blog/16504/berdymuhamedov-obratilsya-s-privetstviem-k-uchastnikam-foruma-neft-i-gaz-turkmenistana2018>], 4 July 2019.

³⁹ See: V. Panfilova, "Turkmenskiy gaz—pod kontrolem SShA," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 15 December, 2015, available at [http://www.ng.ru/cis/2015-12-15/1_turkmen.html], 5 July, 2019.

⁴⁰ See: St. Blank, "Russia and the TAPI Pipeline," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 12, Issue 227, 2018.

⁴¹ See: A. Batyrov, "Gazprom Resumes Gas Imports from Turkmenistan after 3-Year Break," *Caspian News*, 17 April, 2019, available at [<https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/gazprom-resumes-gas-imports-from-turkmenistan-after-3-year-break-2019-4-17-27/>], 2 August, 2019.

⁴² See: R. Gente, "Причины для беспокойства по поводу поставок туркменского газа в Китай", *Chronicles of Turkmenistan*, 10 December, 2018, available at [<https://www.hronikatm.com/2018/12/prichinyi-dlya-bespokoystva-po-povodu-postavok-turkmenskogo-gaza-v-kitay/>], 12 July, 2019.

Kazakhstan—An Exception

Unlike other gas-rich Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has not been able to pursue “flexible” foreign policy and stay away from the Russian influence. The country is a part of all Russian-led international organizations including CSTO, EurAsEC, Customs Union/EAEU. However, the membership of these organizations has not been quite beneficial for Kazakhstan in terms of higher tariffs (in the trade with the third countries), currency devaluation, etc.⁴³ Despite the negative results, Kazakhstan still remains a member of the Russian-led organizations, even though, at the first glance, the country has the same opportunities to become economically independent as other gas-rich Central Asian states.

Since the 1990s, Kazakhstan has begun to attract Western investments in its economy, especially in the energy sector. President Nazarbayev thought that “in today’s world weapons cannot do anything to protect a country,” therefore, “security will be a powerful Western business presence in Kazakhstan.”⁴⁴ The same position was confirmed by Kasymzhomart Tokayev, the former Minister of the Foreign Affairs stating that U.S. economic involvement in the region was “in the Kazakh interest as regards national security.”⁴⁵ The Kazakh government believed that Western energy companies could bring important diplomatic support from their parent countries.⁴⁶ This, as a result, could balance the Russian influence on Kazakhstan.

The possibility to attract Western investors in Kazakh gas sector seemed even more realistic in 2018 when the problem of the Caspian Sea status was resolved. Prior to that event, the Kazakh parliament decided to grant U.S. access to Aktau and Kuryk ports providing the U.S. military with logistical support for the Afghanistan operations.⁴⁷ This decision was quite alarming for Moscow as it literally meant Washington’s progress in cementing its influence and military presence in Central Asia. Therefore, the Caspian Sea status decision could be a result of this event—Kazakhstan promised Moscow not to allow the U.S. military presence in the region and received the solution (i.e. possibility to construct undersea gas pipelines) of the Caspian Sea problem in exchange.

Given the above-mentioned, it is interesting to pose a question on why Kazakhstan cannot pursue more “flexible” foreign policy even if there is a possibility to balance Russian influence through implementation of international gas projects. The immediate answer to this question would be the immaturity of Kazakh gas sector (especially in comparison to Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan). Kazakhstan focuses more on oil than on gas as it is the second largest post-Soviet country in terms of oil reserves and its production. The annual oil revenues are almost 40 billion dollars, while the gas income is less than 2 billion. Also, the oil share in the entire export is more than 52%, while the gas share remains only 5%.⁴⁸ That is why oil remains the main focus of Kazakhstan.

⁴³ See: A.E. Kramer, “Russia and 2 Neighbors Form Economic Union,” *The New York Times*, 5 July, 2010, available at [<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/06/business/global/06customs.html>], 24 July 2019.

⁴⁴ E.M. Lederer, “Western Business Will Be Kazakhstan’s Main Security Guarantee,” 22 March, 1994, available at [<http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1994/Western-Business-Will-Be-Kazakhstan-sMain-Security-Guarantee/id-fff025b-c745b6f628fb56a6e35802048>], 5 August, 2019.

⁴⁵ “Caution Ahead of Caspian Summit,” BBC News, 23 April, 2002, available at [<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1946236.stm>], 4 August, 2019.

⁴⁶ See: M.B. Olcott, *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., 2002.

⁴⁷ See: N. Aliyev, “U.S.-Kazakhstan Transit Agreement Faces Challenges from Russia,” *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 20 September, 2018, available at [<https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13534-us-kazakhstan-transit-agreement-faces-challenges-from-russia.html>], 3 August, 2019.

⁴⁸ A. Nikonorov, “V 2018 godu eksport nefiti sostavil 2/3 dokhodov ot zarubezhnykh prodazh,” 365Info.kz, 15 February, 2019, available at [<https://365info.kz/2019/02/v-2018-godu-eksport-nefti-sostavil-2-3-dokhodov-ot-zarubezhnyh-prodazh/>], 1 August, 2019.

Another factor explaining the Kazakh exception is the less diversified nature of Kazakh gas export. Throughout the decades, the sole consumer of Kazakh gas was Russia. It was only in 2017 when Kazakhstan began to export a low amount of gas (5 bcm) to China. However, the successful implementation of the planned TCG project will enable Kazakhstan to significantly diversify export.

Other factors which could also explain the uniqueness of Kazakhstan are related to demographic and geographic conditions. Kazakhstan hosts the largest number of ethnic Russians representing 20% of the population, while the share of Russians is quite low in other gas-rich Central Asian states (Uzbekistan (8%) and Turkmenistan (4%)). Russians build the majority (more than 50%) of the population in the northern regions of Kazakhstan, which is not the case in any other post-Soviet country. Moreover, Kazakhstan is connected to Russia through the largest 7,000 km border, while other gas-rich states (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) do not have common borders to Russia. Given these conditions, Kazakhstan has always tried to pursue a careful policy towards Russia. There have already been some precedents when Russian citizens became reasons for Russian aggression (2008 Russia-Georgian war and the 2014 Crimea annexation). Therefore, ethnic Russians could pose similar threats to national security of Kazakhstan too.

Conclusion

The article has studied the relationship between gas and the foreign policies of the Central Asian states. The comparison of five countries—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan—has shown that rich gas reserves together with profitable export opportunities have enabled Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to pursue “flexible” foreign policy, which in this case means the possibility to stay away from military alliances and economic/political international organizations created by Great Powers—Russia in this case, while the countries with poor gas resources (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) do not have such possibility.

The article has also discussed the case of Kazakhstan, a country with rich gas reserves but less “flexible” foreign policy. This exception was explained by the following factors: Kazakhstan’s gas sector is still immature, while the export is not as diversified as in other gas-rich Central Asian states; Kazakhstan shares the largest border with Russia hosting the majority of ethnic Russians, who could create potential threats to national security.

WATER DISPUTE IN CENTRAL ASIA: CONFLICT POTENTIAL

Anurag TRIPATHI

*Ph.D. (International Relations), Assistant Professor,
Department of International Studies and History, Christ University
(Bangalore, India)*

Punit GAUR

*Ph.D. (International Relations), Director,
Center for G-Global and the Great Silk Road Projects Development,
L.N. Gumilev Eurasian National University;
Associate Professor (Invited), Department of Regional Studies,
L.N. Gumilev Eurasian National University
(Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan)*

ABSTRACT

The Central Asian republics (CARs), which emerged as independent states in the post-Soviet phase, faced several challenges. During the Soviet era, the CARs were agriculturally oriented towards the Soviet economy and, accordingly, river water management was also centralized under the command economic model. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the CARs had to review the existing water management arrangements. This is where the absence of a Moscow-centric central authority has proven detrimental to the region endowed with

two major rivers and their several subsidiaries. In this context, the paper suggests an emphasis on multilateralism, rather than bilateralism, as a more feasible approach to river water management. Clearly, multilateralism would promote a more equitable solution compared to bilateralism, which does not adopt a holistic approach to the region. Considering the fact that the region is characterized by a water crisis in addition to the fragility of the environment makes a multilateral arrangement significantly more appropriate for the region in the long term.

KEYWORDS: CARs, Soviet, water management, Moscow, multilateralism, bilateralism, environment.

Introduction

Rivers are indispensable for both the environment and human existence due to their water resources, which are integral to life. In the international relations sphere, rivers which flow across national boundaries assume importance due to their potential for conflict between riparian nation states.

Rivers are also representative of national wealth due to their hydropower potential in generating electricity.

The physical characteristics of rivers, i.e., where and how they flow, determine their relevance not only for domestic affairs, but also for international politics. According to recent studies, approximately 40% of the global population faces the problem of water stress, which means that the index of annual per capita freshwater availability varies from 1,000 to 1,700 cubic meters.¹ It occurs against the general background of the steadily growing exploitation of water resources: for nine decades of the last century mankind has increased water consumption from river basins sixfold.² Under the circumstances of water stress and increasing demand for water supplies, states are predisposed to regard access to and control over water systems as “a matter of national security,” which, in turn, contributes to discord and clashes between co-riparian countries. Currently, almost every region has its volatile water issues on the political agenda. In the case of Central Asia, the conflict is very much evident.

In international politics, managing water conflicts has become a focus in the states’ political agenda. Miriam Lowi in her writing identified water conflicts as “low politics” and war as the “high politics,” while in contemporary times it has become appropriate to refer to a global “high politics of water.”³ The systematic study of conflict and cooperation between states over riparian resources has developed as a discipline in international relations. According to 21st-century research scholars, conflict and cooperation can coexist in any given international river basin,⁴ and scholars have emphasized how critical inter-disciplinary perspectives can further the understanding of transboundary water politics. This in-built interdisciplinarity, along with relatively recent academic attention, makes the study of water resources an extremely challenging and exciting matter, as many avenues must still be explored or discovered. This paper will discuss the two aspects that can provide important insights in the analysis of the transboundary water relations between states.

- (1) The interrelation between domestic politics and international relations in the context of water disputes.
- (2) The requirement of multilateral, rather than bilateral cooperation among the Central Asian countries in the context of water dispute.

The Central Asian region is located in the middle of the Eurasian continent and comprises five republics: Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The region is abundantly rich in natural resources with large reserves of natural gas, coal, freshwater resources, and oil. These resources are, however, distributed unequally within the region. While Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan are full of energy resources, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have abundant freshwater resources. It is the rivers that define relations among the Central Asian states. Under the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.), the upstream states, namely, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which have an abundance of water, would release some from their reservoirs in the spring and summer to generate electricity and irrigate crops both on their land and in the downstream republics. In turn, the downstream republics, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan would reciprocate the favor and provide gas and coal for their neighbors each winter. However, with the disintegration of the U.S.S.R., this streamlined system suffered a complete collapse.

¹ See: A. Swain, “Water Scarcity as a Source of Crises,” in: *War, Hunger, and Displacement*, ed. by W. Nafziger, F. Stewart, R. Väyrynen, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000, p. 179.

² See: World Resources Institute in collaboration with the United Nations Environmental Program, “The United Nations Development Program and the World Bank,” *World Resources 2000-2001*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000, p. 104.

³ Quoted from: F. Menga, “Domestic and International Dimensions of Transboundary Water Politics,” *Water Alternatives*, Vol. 9, Issue 3, 2016, p. 704.

⁴ See: J. Allan, N. Mirumachi, “Why Negotiate? Asymmetric Endowments, Asymmetric Power and the Invisible Nexus of Water, Trade and Power that Brings Apparent Water Security,” in: *Transboundary Water Management Principles and Practice*, ed. by A. Earle, A. Jägerskog, J. Öjendal, Earthscan, London, Washington DC, USA, 2010, pp. 13-26.

Political Geography: Rivers' Origin and Transit Routes

Today Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan face constant blackouts and hope to build huge dams to provide for their energy needs.⁵ After the collapse of the U.S.S.R., due to lack of regional dialog and cooperation among the Central Asian republics, numerous conflicts occur in the region. One area of conflict that deserves attention relates to river waters. Regional cooperation on the management of water is both a complex and multifaceted issue. The two rivers, Syr Darya and Amu Darya, are the key sources of water in Central Asia. The Amu Darya originates in Tajikistan and flows along the border between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, going further to Turkmenistan before it returns to Uzbekistan and discharges into the Aral Sea. It spans 2,540 km and has a catchment area of 309,000 sq. km, making it Central Asia's largest river. Its vast drainage system extends through Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.⁶ Tajikistan contributes 80% of the flow generated in the Amu Darya river basin, followed by Afghanistan (8%), Uzbekistan (6%), and Kyrgyzstan (3%). Turkmenistan and Iran together contribute around 3%.⁷

Meanwhile, the Syr Darya originates in the Tian Shan Mountains in Kyrgyzstan and flows for 2,212 kilometers west and north-west through Uzbekistan and southern Kazakhstan to the northern remnants of the Aral Sea. Its total length is around 2,800 km. Around 20 million people inhabit this river catchment area, which covers around 400,000 sq. km. The natural run-off pattern, with annual flows of 23.5-51 cubic kilometers, is characterized by a spring/summer flood that usually starts in April and peaks in June or July. Reservoirs regulate around 90% of the Syr Darya's mean annual flows.⁸

Besides, 20 other transboundary rivers in the region include the Ili and the Irtysh, which flow between China and Kazakhstan.⁹ China shares the Tarim with Kyrgyzstan, as well as others that have their sources in Kyrgyzstan and flow into China. Afghanistan is the upstream state for the Murghab and the Tedzhen, which it shares with Turkmenistan. The Chu, Talas, and Assa rivers flow through Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Lastly, the Atrek runs between Turkmenistan and Iran.¹⁰

Theoretical Dimension: Water Crisis in Central Asia

There are many popular theoretical approaches to comprehend the water conflict in Central Asia. Among the more applicable approaches in International Relations Theory is the liberal approach, which suggests that resources should be managed collectively for the common good of all nation states. The approaches relevant to Central Asia in terms of the water dispute are as follows:

1. The territorial sovereignty approach favors upstream states, which are deemed to have no obligations to any other states. In the context of this approach it is difficult to resolve the existing issues because upstream countries will make decisions that suit their interests.

⁵ See: D. Trilling, "Water Wars in Central Asia," *Foreign Affairs*, available at [<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/galleries/2016-08-24/water-wars-central-asia>], 24 August, 2016.

⁶ See: K. Wegerich, "The New Great Game: Water Allocation in Post-Soviet Central Asia," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Summer/Fall 2009.

⁷ See: P. Micklin, "Managing Water in Central Asia," Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 2000, p. 7.

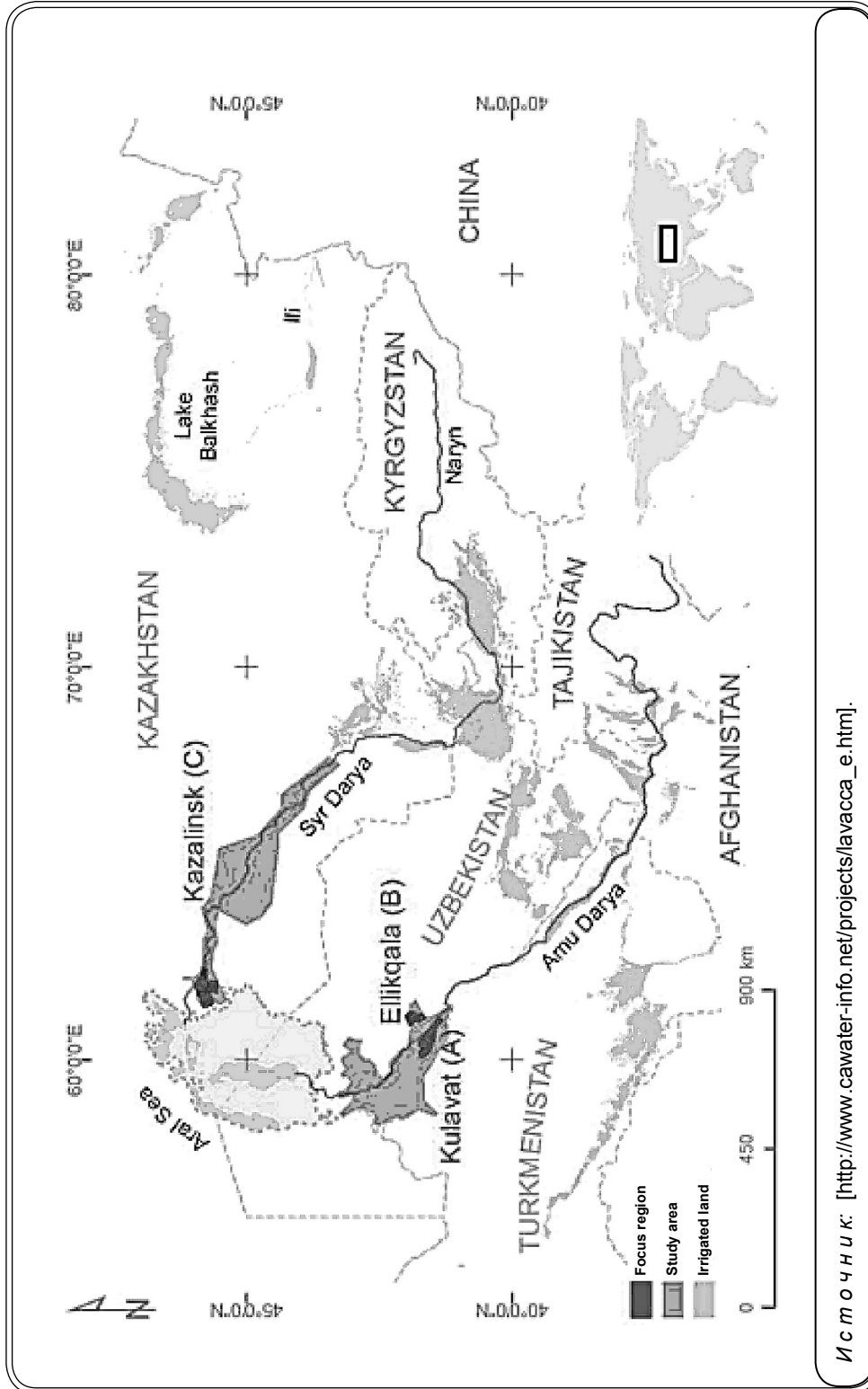
⁸ See: Th. Bernauer, T. Siegfried, "Climate Change and International Water Conflict in Central Asia," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January 2012, pp. 227-239.

⁹ See: S. Peyrouse, "Flowing Downstream: The Sino-Kazakh Water Dispute," *China Brief*, Vol. 7, Issue 10, 2007.

¹⁰ See: J. Allouche, "The Governance of Central Asian Waters: National Interests Versus Regional Cooperation," *Disarmament Forum*, available at [https://www.peacepalacelibrary.nl/ebooks/files/UNIDIR_pdf-art2687.pdf], 2007.

Map

Study Area in the Irrigated Lowlands of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers



Источник: [http://www.cawater-info.net/projects/lavacca_e.htm].

2. The territorial integrity approach emphasizes the right of each nation to enjoy its sovereignty and not to be subject to the predation by other states. This requires an upstream riparian state to consult with downstream states to a certain extent; that effectively requires their permission to extract or change the quality of water.

These two approaches are extreme ones in that they grossly favor either upper- or lower-riparian states, but are alike in that they may be seen to suit a realistic view of irreconcilable interstate competition. To that extent, a regional/world order dictated by a hegemonic state that is able and willing to disregard the views and needs of its neighbors drives the second approach.

3. The Equitable Utilization approach is based on the concept of equal rights for each riparian state. This does not mean that each must have an equal share. It is based on Karl Marx's principles which states: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." The principle of equitable utilization is relatively simple to apply to an aspect of utilization such as navigation rights, because every nation can enjoy the full freedom of navigation rights without affecting another's rights until such time that the volume of traffic becomes unsustainable. Therefore, far more intensive negotiations are required to satisfy Art 5 of the U.N. Watercourses Convention¹¹.
4. The approach that entails common management of watercourses aims for equitable utilization through long-term engagement of all interested parties. It is often difficult to fulfill the need to transcend nationalism and sovereignty issues, therefore, this approach proves suitable in the context of the neo-liberal theory of international relations. It highlights the fact that nations need to cooperate with each other in terms of complex interdependence.¹² The neo-liberal concept examines the ways in which interstate relations are formed through negotiations and interactions at various levels that may spin-off other benefits that are typified by the liberal approach to interstate relations.¹³

Clearly an analysis of all four approaches makes it evident that cooperation is a compulsion for the CARs in the long term. If the CARs aim to promote their interests related to water and energy resources they have to come together and focus on multilateral arrangements rather than bilateral ones.

Soviet Period

During the Soviet Union period, Central Asia was oriented towards the larger-scale needs of the then-existing Soviet economy because the country was aware of the geostrategic and geopolitical importance of the region. At that time, water management was highly centralized¹⁴. The agricultural sector was considered the backbone of the economy. Each republic specialized in the produc-

¹¹ "Art 5 of the U.N. Watercourses Convention seeks to achieve 'optimal and sustainable utilization' across the broad range of factors under Art 6; these include population dependency, social and economic needs of the state and the availability and cost of alternative sources," see: [https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/un_watercourses_convention_-_users_guide.pdf], 2012.

¹² Complex Interdependence is a theory which stresses the complex ways in which as a result of growing ties, the transnational actors become mutually dependent, vulnerable to each other's actions and sensitive to each other's needs. Complex Interdependence is defined as: "An economic transnational concept that assumes that states are not the only important actors, social welfare issues share center stage with security issues on the global agenda, and cooperation is as dominant a characteristic of international politics as conflict," available at [<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6149/df52c27a3fd2e175e8e8556e0bea89405aaa.pdf>], 2 February, 2015.

¹³ See: Wing Commander David I. Stewart raf, "Water Conflict in Central Asia—Is There Potential for the Desiccation of the Aral Sea or Competition for the Waters of Kazakhstan's Cross-Border Ili and Irtysh Rivers to Bring about Conflict; and Should the UK be Concerned?" *Defence Studies*, Vol. 14, Issue 1, 2014.

¹⁴ See: J. Allouche, "Géopolitique de l'eau en Asie centrale : de la colonisation russe à la conférence internationale d'aide à l'Afghanistan (1865-2002)," *CEMOTI, La question de l'enclavementen Asie centrale*, Vol. 35, 2003, pp. 123-154.

tion of specific commodities. Accordingly, the agricultural sector in the region was modernized to increase the output of these commodities. Moreover, an increase in agricultural production was based primarily to increase the arable land area and the amount of water used for irrigation. The area of arable land increased due to irrigation facilities, and since 1950 the acreage of irrigated land has almost tripled. The number of irrigation canals and the amount of water drawn from rivers for irrigation increased substantially, although many of the irrigation systems were poorly designed, with much water wastage.

The Soviet leadership attempted to modernize agricultural production in the region through hydropower generation projects, which aimed at self-sufficiency in food resources. As a result, the infusion of technology into the region transformed it and also focused on the other regional resources, namely oil, water, and gas, that remained untapped. The Soviets focused on the expansion of arable land to enhance agricultural output, generate electricity through hydropower resources and build massive hydraulic projects throughout Central Asia. Records show that over 1,200 dams were built during the Soviet era. For instance, among them is the Nurek Dam, which is the second largest dam in the world. As a result of modernization, Central Asia was transformed from a land of poverty to a prosperous area through the use of agricultural irrigation. Further developments resulted in diversion of the Syr Darya and the Amu Darya, which flowed in this territory and fed the Aral Sea.

Moreover, massive amounts of freshwater from glaciers in the Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic mountain ranges were diverted downstream to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. In the Soviet period, dams that were located in the basins of transboundary rivers were used for hydropower generation, which resulted in an integrated Soviet structure for allocation of energy resources.¹⁵ This approach towards regional water resource management had inevitably paved the path towards irreversible environmental damage.

Almaty Agreement 1992

Since 1991, water has emerged as a major cause of dispute among CARs. Due to the absence of a central planner to solve this dispute, all the newly independent CARs were compelled to conclude voluntary cooperative agreements because they did not want to jeopardize agricultural irrigation in the process of political transition. Therefore, the five CARs hurriedly signed the Almaty Agreement in 1992 only a few weeks after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The objective of the agreement is to cooperate in regard to joint water resource management and conservation of interstate sources of river water. Highlights of the agreement are as follows:

1. The necessity of the approved and organized solution of the problems of joint management of water of interstate river water sources, and further pursuance of agreed policy of economic development and raising the peoples' standard of living;
2. Equal rights and responsibility for providing rational use and protection of water resources;
3. Joint use of water resources on the basis of common principles for the whole region and equitable regulation of their consumption.

While this agreement enabled the CARs to agree on the joint management and ownership of regional water resources, these states individually retained their sovereign control over industrial goods, electric power, and crops.¹⁶

¹⁵ See: "Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict," International Crisis Group, 2002, p. 8.

¹⁶ *Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan on Cooperation in the Field of Joint Management on Utilization and Protection of Water Re-*

As signatories to the Almaty Agreement, the CARs had chosen to retain the Soviet allocations, which meant that most of the region's water resources were allocated to downstream states. However, this would leave the upstream countries with bare minimum access to the water generated in their territory. Moreover, the 1992 Almaty Agreement made no provision for Afghanistan in spite of the fact that around 6% of the flow within the Aral Sea Basin was generated in its territory. After the Agreement had been signed, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan realized that their allocation of water was not appropriate for the future planned expansions in agriculture. Kyrgyzstan argued that not only was it denied fair access to water that flows from its territory, but it was also expected to pay for the maintenance of reservoirs and dams that controlled the flow of the Syr Darya. Meanwhile, the downstream countries, especially Uzbekistan, reaped the benefits.¹⁷

Limitations of the 1992 Almaty Agreement

The only joint agreement that all five countries signed is the 1992 Almaty Agreement. There are a lot of discussions on its present status. The key issue is how the upstream countries have been denied their fair share in the resource distribution of river waters. Now they have been increasing their domestic water use and reduced the amount sent to the downstream countries. There is a crucial need to update this five-country agreement, especially as it has the potential to ensure the maintenance of regional stability. Another important factor in play is climate change: the region's main glaciers are shrinking, decreasing the overall water supply to the region. These factors highlight the need for the CARs to acknowledge the need to maintain existing water levels to ensure their future requirements.

Despite the 1992 Almaty Agreement, the CARs still face tension over river water management. The key areas of tension among the CARs are listed below.

1. Lack of coherent water management
2. Failure to abide by or adapt water quotas
3. Non-implemented and untimely barter agreements and payments
4. Uncertainty over future infrastructure plans
5. There is no representation of agricultural or industrial consumers, non-governmental organizations or other parties¹⁸.

The agreement further reinstated the need for cooperation. But this agreement, as well as the annual agreements for release of water in exchange for fossil fuels and electricity, had proven to be ineffective. It could not arrest the increasing orientation towards power production through the Toktogul operation.¹⁹ The fact, however, is that rising nationalism and competition over water resources in the parched Central Asia has impeded the development of a regional alternative to the Soviet-era water management system. The old system survived because of the strong central authority of the former U.S.S.R. Now the three lower but militarily powerful riparian states—Uzbekistan, Kazakh-

sources from Interstate Sources, available at [<http://www.icwc-aral.uz/statute1.htm>], 18 February, 1992.

¹⁷ See: B. Janusz-Pawletta, M. Gubaidullina, "Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia," *Cahiers d'Asie centrale*, Vol. 25, 2015, available at [<http://journals.openedition.org/asiacentrale/3180>], 2015.

¹⁸ See: "Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict," p. 8.

¹⁹ "The Toktogul Dam in Kyrgyzstan was built on the Naryn River (tributary of the Syr Darya) during the 1970s as a central piece of the Soviet Union's efforts to conquer nature in its drive to modernize Central Asia; and served to control the inter-annual variability of water resources and to ensure that there would always be sufficient water for irrigation. The Toktogul dam became fully operational in the late 1980s. It is one component of a cascade of five hydroelectric stations downstream, which all together produce 90% of Kyrgyzstan's power. As the dam regulates transboundary water flows, it has caused several frictions among Central Asian countries," see: [<https://ejatlas.org/conflict/toktogul-dam-kyrgyzstan>].

stan, and Turkmenistan—wield the threat of force against the small and weak Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which are the sources of the Syr Darya and the Amu Darya, respectively.

Long-Term Framework Agreement

In March 1998, three CARs, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, entered into a Long-Term Framework Agreement (LTFA), which recognized explicitly that the year-on-year irrigation water storage had a cost that needed to be compensated, either in cash or through a barter exchange of fossil fuels and electricity. But, generally, the supply of fossil fuels fell short of the agreed quantities and quality of water among the CARs. For instance, Kyrgyzstan was compelled to increase the discharge of water in winter as the downstream riparian states received lower levels of water flows because the source glaciers remain frozen. Whereas during the monsoons, the downstream states did not require the agreed volumes of water compared to the summer discharge levels. As a result, this affected the export of electricity and the commensurate quantities of fossil fuels, which was transferred from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to Kyrgyzstan. The latter was exposed to a severe risk in meeting the winter demand for power and heating. To reduce this risk, Kyrgyzstan reduced summer releases to 45% on an average of the annual discharge and there was an increase to 55% in the winter releases during the 1990s.²⁰

Importantly, conflicts among the CARs arose not in relation to water allocation, but in relation to the shift from operating the Toktogul reservoir for downstream irrigation in the summer months to winter releases in order to increase the availability of energy upstream (hydropower). The barter of water for energy production did not change the regional allocation of water, only the timing of releases. In addition, Kyrgyzstan began to demand payment from the downstream states—Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan—for the use of water from its reservoirs. However, pressure from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) resulted in the establishment of a barter agreement.²¹

Failure of Long-Term Framework Agreement

Regional cooperation efforts deteriorated further when the countries failed to conclude annual agreements in 2003 and 2004. To some extent, this can be attributed to above-average precipitation in those years, but more fundamentally, the collapse of the agreement system was due to a change in Uzbekistan's position on a decisive unilateral stance. It has been expressed most explicitly in the decision to construct a series of re-regulating reservoirs. Uzbekistan is currently proceeding with the design of new water storage capacity of the Karamansay reservoir (0.69 BCM), as well as the construction of the Razaksay (0.65-0.75 BCM) and Kangkulsay (0.3 BCM) reservoirs. These facilities together with the natural reservoir in the Arnasai depression (0.8 BCM) will provide an additional storage with the volume of approximately 2.5 BCM.²²

The impact of Uzbekistan's decision has been substantial for Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The Kyrgyz challenge is that even when conducted in the non-cooperative 'power mode,' production is

²⁰ See: *Water Energy Nexus in Central Asia—Improving Regional Cooperation in the Syr Darya Basin*, Europe and Central Asia Region, The World Bank, Washington D.C., available at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTUZBEKISTAN/Resources/Water_Energy_Nexus_final.pdf], January 2014.

²¹ On 17 March, 1998, the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan adopted an interstate agreement on use of water and energy resources of the Syr Darya river basin.

²² See: K. Abbink, L.Ch. Moller, S. O'Hara, "The Syr Darya River Conflict: An Experimental Case Study," University of Nottingham, available at [<https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/67965/1/49675923X.pdf>], 2005.

insufficient to cover domestic winter electricity demand. In the absence of a regional agreement, the Kyrgyz government must aim to cover this deficit through a combination of domestic reforms and construction of new power-generating facilities—both of which represent daunting challenges. Kazakhstan, which had otherwise pursued a cooperative strategy towards Kyrgyzstan, has had to come to terms with the fact that this strategy ultimately depended on Uzbek willingness to cooperate. Since the latter was not upcoming, Kazakhstan has shown a renewed interest in the construction of re-regulating reservoirs in its own territory. Plans exist to construct a 3 BCM reservoir (Koksarai) near Shymkent at a cost of \$200 million, although no final political decision has been made to initiate construction.²³

The fundamental problem for the interstate agreements has been one of trust. Short of military action there are no other means to enforce a contract between sovereign republics which are generally suspicious of each other. If Kyrgyzstan discharges additional water in summer, it must trust the downstream riparian states to deliver fossil fuels in winter, otherwise it will face a severe problem of not being able to meet its energy demand in the subsequent winter.²⁴

National Water Policies: Implication for Water Conflict

After collapse of the U.S.S.R., most of the CARs would like to expand the acreage of irrigated land in their territories. Tajikistan has increased its irrigated area by 200,000 hectares, and it intends to expand this area further. Both upstream states in Central Asia are more concerned with increasing their hydropower capacity. At the opening of the Second South Asian Electricity Trade Conference in 2006, the Tajik president recalled that the total capacity of the functioning of hydroelectric power plants in Tajikistan amounted to a meager 3.2% of the hydro energy resources and stated that this share should be increased. The Tajik government relaunched the Soviet hydroplant projects on the Vakhsh River at Sangtuda and Rogun. The Rogun plant started in the 1980s, but stopped when the Tajik civil war started. Massive floods in 1993 subsequently destroyed most of what was already built.

Earlier Uzbekistan had objected to the construction of the Rogun dam, particularly the final stage 335 meters high, as it claims it would give Tajikistan control of the flow of water to Uzbekistan's Qashqadaryo and Surxondaryo provinces. The first two stages of the project will deny Tajikistan full control of the river as live storage will be below 40% of the mean annual flow and the Vakhsh River comprises only 25% of total Amu Darya flow. According to Reuters, on 9 March, 2018, Uzbekistan withdrew its objections to the construction of the world's tallest dam in Tajikistan on the river shared by the two CARs, as their presidents indicated after a meeting. Tajik leader Imomali Rakhmon told reporters after meeting Mirziyoyev: "We share the view that the existing hydropower facilities and those under construction will help resolve the region's water and power issues. In this regard, we welcome Uzbekistan's support for the development of hydropower facilities in Tajikistan, including Rogun." Mirziyoyev, in turn, said Uzbekistan would seek to boost the share of hydropower in its consumption by purchasing it from Tajikistan. "We will never leave our neighbors without water," Rakhmon reassured him.

Importantly, the land and water rights are also a point of concern in relations with its neighbors for Tajikistan. There have been several low-level disputes on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border, specifically in the Tajik enclave of Vorukh in Kyrgyzstan and Ferghana Valley. The tensions were thought to have been resolved after low-level talks and the June 2001 agreement between the Kyrgyz province of Batken and Tajik province of Sughd. In 2003, however, many incidents were reported on the border, and the Vorukh enclave still seems to be the point of discord for both governments.

²³ See: Personal communication with Leonid Dmitriev, Kazgiprovodhoz, Almaty, 15 December, 2004.

²⁴ See: K. Abbink, L.Ch. Moller, S. O'hara, op. cit.

Kyrgyzstan's condition is more critical, at least in the relation with downstream states. Control of the strategic water infrastructure is an essential stake in its relations with the downstream states. According to media reports, in 1996, Uzbekistan threatened to resort to military force to seize the Toktogul reservoir and dam on the Kyrgyz section of Syr Darya if Kyrgyzstan attempted to alter the existing distribution policy. The Kyrgyz government would like to increase its hydropower generating capacity with the Toktogul II project. However, the downstream countries object, since they believe that Kyrgyzstan already releases too much water from the current dam during the winter period and not enough during the summer (cotton fields in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were flooded in the winters of 1993, 1998 and 2001). In 2001, an official meeting on water allocation was held, but no agreement was reached.

Like Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan also wishes to expand irrigation, with possible increases in intake from the transboundary rivers in the Chu, Dzhahalal-Abad and Osh provinces. This project has not yet been criticized by downstream countries, as the hydropower project remains their primary preoccupation. In fact, there has been some cooperation: in yet another new institutional arrangement, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have formed a Commission for the Chu and Talas Rivers, aimed at discussing better usage of transborder water resources.²⁵

For Turkmenistan, the main objective is to ensure food security. The government formulated plans to irrigate 450,000 hectares through recycling runoff and drainage water. However, rapid population explosion in Turkmenistan (over 10% since 2000) resulted in increased use of water due to irresponsible usage, to the extent that Turkmenistan currently figures as the most inefficient user of water in the world, with its citizens and businesses using 13 times as much water per capita as the U.S. The other countries in the region are not far behind.²⁶

Turkmenistan's relations with Uzbekistan are tense over water usage as both countries depend heavily on agriculture through irrigation and both rely entirely on the Amu Darya for this purpose. There have been persistent reports of Uzbekistan troops taking control of water installations on the Turkmen bank of the river by force, as well as military tensions along the Lebap-Bukhara border. Though these reports are not substantiated, they are indicative of the simmering tensions between the two states. The two countries have routinely engaged in mutual accusations of overuse and misuse of water supply. Tensions have been intensified by the complicated personal relationship between the Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan presidents.

Importantly, in July 2009, the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov officially opened the construction of Altyn Asyr (Golden Age), an artificial lake created to solve some of the country's irrigation problems. It also heightened tensions among the CARs. Many reports suggest that it has the potential for an environment disaster in the future.²⁷

Uzbekistan is the second largest cotton exporter in the world, selling more than 800,000 metric tons annually. Cotton, therefore, is the key source of hard currency for the Uzbek government and an essential component of state control over its population as the land tenure and cotton sales are very tightly managed by the quasi state or state bodies.²⁸ To ensure production, the Uzbek government would like to develop more irrigated areas to produce food surplus for export to neighboring states. For this purpose, Uzbekistan is trying to build more canals that would adversely impact the environmental situation.

²⁵ See: "Central Asian Summit to Focus on Water Resources," RIA Novosti, 28 August, 2006; "Reviving CIS," *Times of Central Asia*, 24 August, 2006.

²⁶ See: P. Goble, "Water Conflicts Now More Explosive Than Ethnic Or Territorial Ones in Central Asia—OpEd," *Eurasia Review*, available at [<https://www.eurasiareview.com/29092018-water-conflicts-now-more-explosive-than-ethnic-or-territorial-ones-in-central-asia-oped/>], 29 September, 2018.

²⁷ See: Z. Baizakova, "Turkmenistan's 'Golden Age' Lake: A Potential Environmental Disaster," *The Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO)*, available at [https://aquadoc.typepad.com/files/report_golden_age_lake.pdf].

²⁸ See: "The Curse of Cotton: Central Asia's Destructive Monoculture," *ICG Asia Report*, No. 93, 2005.

In the case of Kazakhstan, it has conflicting relations over use of water with Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan has accused Uzbekistan of controlling the river's flow arbitrarily, which periodically affects agriculture in southern Kazakhstan. Thus, water rights and border issues are another area of concern. The demarcation of this border is unclear, and as reported by the International Crisis Group, "The border issue is of specific concern for Kazakhstan as the southern provinces are among the most heavily populated areas of this country and disagreements about arable lands, water and pastures in this area came at a time when the social tensions were already palpable due to high unemployment, economic recession and declining living standards."²⁹

Regional Politics: Role of Funding Agencies

Water tensions among Central Asian states have adversely affected regional relations. After the collapse of the U.S.S.R., three Central Asian leaders left the Communist Party and continued the top-down governance model used during the Soviet era. The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan had established a parliamentary form of democracy. However, it has yet to be seen how effective these efforts will be in the future. Importantly, three republics—Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan each have constitutions which state that water is a state resource. Moreover, the downstream countries have claimed that international rivers should be a common resource that all countries need to share. This illustrates the problem of whether or not water is a public good. Another element to this debate is whether to use domestic or international water law in order to find a resolution of the regional dispute. Various water agreements have been broken due to the reasons mentioned above. As these countries pursue often conflicting sovereign interests, the incentive to uphold any agreement remains weak. Moreover, lack of funding and enforcement mechanisms within the agreements further weakens their effectiveness.³⁰

Two important institutions of cooperation, the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) and International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS),³¹ have been limited in their effectiveness in part because of the rivalry and conflict over the staffing patterns and questions that were biased towards Uzbekistan. There have been suspicions that because officials from Uzbekistan were heavily represented, these organizations favored its national interests. The dialog is thus hindered due to mistrust and competition. Further cooperation problems have been exacerbated by retaliatory actions, i.e., when Kyrgyzstan suddenly stopped water supplies to Kazakhstan from the Kirov reservoir in April 2010. Almost 80% of its total capacity is used by Kazakhstan for agricultural purposes alone. In June 2010, Uzbekistan reduced the passage of water from Kyrgyzstan to Kazakhstan in the cross-border Dostyk channel.³²

As far as donor agencies are concerned, the World Bank has initiated a comprehensive Central Asia Water & Energy Program (CAWEP) in the region in 2009, which aims to improve support to manage their water and energy resources. The CAWEP also aims to coordinate and leverage the contributions of other development partners, to provide critical technical support as well as financial resources for the program. Several development partners are currently involved in Central Asia, in both water and energy, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Islamic Development

²⁹ "Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict," p. 8.

³⁰ See: D. Castillo, L.M. Izquierdo, G. Jimenez, M. Stangerhaugen, R. Nixon, "Water Crisis in Central Asia: Key Challenges and Opportunities," *Graduate Program in International Affairs / New School University*, December 2010.

³¹ The basic institutional structure of the water management system in the Aral Sea Basin would appear to be organized around two principal agencies. The ICWC is the technical authority, regulating and supervising the allocation of water resources and related infrastructure. The IFAS is the political authority that guides and sanctions the work of the ICWC via principles and policies agreed upon by the member states," see: [<https://www.waterunites-ca.org/themes/17-ifas-organizational-structure.html>].

³² See: D. Castillo, L.M. Izquierdo, G. Jimenez, M. Stangerhaugen, R. Nixon, op. cit.

Bank (IsDB), the European Commission (EC), Eurasian Development Bank, UNDP, UNECE, Germany (GTZ), Switzerland (SECO), U.K. (DFID), the U.S. (USAID), and the Aga Khan Foundation.³³

The World Bank is discussing the CAEWDP with these and other potential partners in an effort to establish a multi-donor trust fund to support the core elements of the program. This partnership will build on the current joint energy activities, such as co-chairing with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the implementation of the Energy Action Plan of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Energy Sector Coordinating Committee for Central Asia. The World Bank is also partnering with a broad group of donors to support the work of the IFAS, coordinating the multilateral development banks' climate adaptation program for Tajikistan and a Regional Hydrometeorology Program across the region.

Some of the important results from the CAWEP include:

1. More than 13,000 farmers in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were able to implement climate-smart solutions and improve their crop production with the support of the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation project in the Aral Sea Basin.
2. 87 weather stations and 19 river stations have been rehabilitated in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, improving the accuracy of weather forecasting in these countries by up to 30% under the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization project.
3. In Tajikistan, CAWEP helped to design the Nurek Rehabilitation project. Operational at only 77%, the Nurek Hydropower plant will undergo a major rehabilitation and increase winter power generation by 33 million kWh.
4. The Central Asia Youth for Water Network was established, which now connects students and practitioners from around the world, helping researchers to find solutions to the most pressing issues in their countries³⁴.

Recently, on 23 May, 2019, The European Union and the World Bank signed an agreement for a new €7 million grant to support water and energy security in Central Asia. The funding will contribute to the Central Asia Water & Energy Program. Along with the European Union, the Program is also supported by Switzerland and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

Although numerous agencies are active in the region, i.e., ADB, the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Swiss Development Commission, most of them, unfortunately, are in a transition period. Their objectives and principles as donor agencies are not very effective due to the lack of coordination and uniform approaches.

Upstream-Downstream Priorities

The current methodology of water allocation, based on the Soviet era rules, has not taken into account the emerging priorities of the independent CARs. For instance, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan often claim that the old rules of water allocation have limited the development of irrigation on their land, and that a reassessment of their future water allocation needs is required. The downstream countries complain that poor water quality in the lower and middle reaches of the Basins reduces agricultural production and also damages public health. Therefore, this merits re-mediation of the

³³ See: "Central Asia Energy—Water Development Program," available at [http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01419/WEB/0__CO-12.HTM], 14 October, 2019

³⁴ Ibidem.

problem. Additionally, the growing water demands of Afghanistan may cause new tensions in the system of allocation of water. Today agriculture and energy sector policies of Central Asian governments have a huge impact on water management in the region, however, there is a lack of any effective and tangible mechanisms to coordinate the inter-sectoral issue within most CARs. To that extent not only are domestic inter-agency channels necessary in the CARs, but a similar regional mechanism also has to be established to ensure peace and prosperity.

Financing Regional Water Management Projects

Several regional water management projects have been proposed for consideration for joint financing by governments of Central Asia. These include the Kambarata I and II dams in Kyrgyzstan, which is unable to finance this project alone and has proposed a regional consortium for joint financing. Also Kazakhstan has expressed an interest in participating in the consortium if the conditions are favorable. After joining the consortium, Kazakhstan will change its water management position and try to resolve the problem with the uppermost countries taking the interests of the downstream and upstream countries into account. This will enable it to exert control over the decisions of water management. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are both interested in involving Uzbekistan in the Kambarata consortium, but the direct benefits of being a part of the consortium for Uzbekistan are not as clear as those for Kazakhstan. On 23 November, 2017, Sapar Isakov, the Kyrgyz Prime Minister, announced that Uzbekistan intends to help build the Kambarata I hydropower power project on the Naryn River in the northern part of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Decisions regarding the investments in major water management systems affect the entire regional regime of water management and should be made with full participation of all the affected countries; otherwise it will undermine the trust and basis for cooperation in the regional sphere. Future management regimes adopted for the Amu Darya and Syr Darya must be based on a comprehensive evaluation of the options which include the upgrading of existing physical infrastructure and improved water management by the riparian states across the Basin³⁵.

Conclusion

Conflicts among the Central Asia republics over water are far more explosive than even conflicts among different ethnic groups or territorial disputes. Since 1998, none of new agreements on water have even reached the heads of state for signature, and none are currently under development. Askar Muminov, an eminent author, writes in Kazakhstan's *Central Asia Monitor* that the situation will lead to a major war among two or more regional countries within this century. At present, the regional states have been unable to come up with anything similar to the arrangement of Soviet times, when the two water surplus republics provided water to the downstream ones in the summer in exchange for a reverse flow of energy in the winter.³⁶

It is high time that all the countries negotiate with each other, since there are no longer any other options. Rafael Sattarov, a Kazakh political analyst, agrees, but is pessimistic about the prospects of an agreement anytime soon. At present, he says, talks are effectively frozen; and despite

³⁵ See: "Uzbek Interest Announced in Kambarata I Project", *The Economist*, available at [<http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=756165059&Country=Kyrgyz%20Republic&topic=Economy&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=Policy+trends&u=1&pid=1146175298&oid=1146175298&uid=1>], 27 November, 2017.

³⁶ See: P. Goble, op. cit.

hopes and expectations, regime changes in some of these countries have failed to break the deadlock.³⁷

However, a high level of political will is needed to achieve such cooperative water resource management, and that is the will that seems to be lacking in the Central Asian region. Government officials of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have often demonstrated a desire to handle water management systems and several other regional issues solely through development of bilateral agreements and arrangements. Yet a consensus is needed among the Central Asian presidents and high-level advisors for regional cooperation that can lead to increased stability, benefits, and security for each country. Regional development assistance can demonstrate the mutual economic advantages that can be derived from a multi-sectoral approach to the regional cooperation in the management of water resources. A new regional water-related cooperation paradigm is needed in Central Asia. Managers of the water sectors cannot solve issues of regional cooperation alone. It is the political leaders in the CARs who need to initiate such an approach, otherwise the industries involved will not be able to participate.

The preceding water management rules were based on the priority of irrigated agriculture and did not conform to the present power generation needs of the upstream states, namely Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Attempts to resolve the problem on the basis of interstate energy barter has been moderately successful, despite the fulfillment of annual barter agreements. Renewed efforts are needed to prepare annual agreements in a stipulated timely manner; include compensation for storage services as well as flow regulation; develop multi-year schedules for compensation and gradually depart from the barter system to a monetized exchange among states.

Suitable and enhanced technology is essential in increasing agricultural production. But this does not promote or address regional cooperation, rather, by and large, a drop of water saved by the four Aral Sea Basin nations is viewed as one more drop for the expansion of agricultural production, rather than for draining it into the Aral Sea. Irrigation efficiency improvements in the upstream areas will not necessarily result in greater water flow to the Aral Sea, instead, the saved water would be diverted to the newly irrigated areas. In several cases, improvements in efficiency can generate significant economic advantages for participating nations through a regional approach to water resource management. The Central Asian states of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan had expressed a strong desire to create new agreements that would satisfy the international norms on water sharing. But there is reluctance on the part of major riparian CARs (Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) to discuss this issue.

Also, international donor agencies should try to promote a consensus at the Presidential or Prime Ministerial level over the principles of regional cooperation. In the Syr Darya Basin, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan already understand this approach, but only Uzbekistan remains unconvinced regarding the matter. In the Amu Darya Basin, the increased downstream water pressures in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, due to the upstream Afghan water diversions, may convince the countries to confront this problem with the required political will. The coordination between donors is desperately required in the Central Asian regional management activities related to river water. Though donor coordination cannot occur in the absence of government representatives, there is a dire need for a donor-led mechanism for information exchange and coordination.

³⁷ See: P. Goble, op. cit.

ETHNIC RELATIONS AND MIGRATION

THE SPACE OF ETHNONATIONAL IDENTITIES OF KAZAKHSTAN SOCIETY: PRINCIPLES AND MODELS OF STRATIFICATION

Vladimir DUNAEV

*D.Sc. (Philos.), Professor,
Chief Research Fellow, Institute of Philosophy,
Political Science and Religious Studies, Committee for Science,
Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan
(Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan)*

Akhan BIZHANOV

*D.Sc. (Political Science), Professor, Director, Institute of Philosophy,
Political Science and Religious Studies, Committee for Science,
Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan
(Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan)*

Mukhtarbek SHAYKEMELEV

*D.Sc. (Philos.), Head of the Department of Political Studies,
Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies,
Committee for Science, Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan
(Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan)*

ABSTRACT

The authors discuss the general patterns and specific features of the process of shaping the ethnocultural and national identities in the multiethnic society of contemporary Kazakhstan. For the first time in Kazakhstan's political sociology the problem is studied using the methodology applied to construct reflexive analytical social space models. The authors offer a model of inter-

ethnic cooperation space stratification in the republic based on seven fundamentally important features; analyze the singularities of the Kazakhs' subethnic identity space in the process of the emergence of a common Kazakhstan identity and reveal the role of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan as a unique form of institutionalized organization of space of civil and ethnocultural identity.

KEYWORDS: *identity, nation, ethnicity, social space, stratification.*

Introduction

The development of global information and communication systems and removal of ideological and political barriers between nations and cultures have greatly expanded contacts between different cultures, values, social attitudes and lifestyles. The individuals drawn into global information and communication processes that weaken or even destroy their identification with big and small communities (nation/state, social/professional, ethnic, religious and territorial) acquire new identities. At the same time, the information revolution generates new types of challenges to national security and state sovereignty.

Today, competitive identity has become a commodity of sorts on the global market of cultural and philosophical paradigms and ideologies. Today, more likely than not, political ideologies are based on definitions of "identities" and claims to present them. The scope of identification models ranges from extremist ethnic nationalism that borders on the most odious racist and xenophobic teachings to cosmopolitanism as an ideology of nation-building. Singapore is the best example of the latter: since the 1990s, its cultural policies have been using the "cosmopolitan Singapore" term as the central paradigm: "Singapore's nation-building appeals to cosmopolitanism as the eventual national spirit."¹ While Singapore has adjusted its ethnocultural identity to the cosmopolitan nature of global systems, the United States regards cosmopolitanism as a globalized system of values of American (Western) democracy.

Regardless of one's opinion about the concepts of the post-national turn of the social world and "cosmopolitanization of nations" (Ulrich Beck and Daniel Levy)²—the number of their critics is more or less equal to the number of their apologists, both groups being highly respected by the academic community—it is crucial to admit that cultural distinctions and the group identification are still very important for people, society and the state. Globalization has confirmed what Huntington had written at one time: "...culture and cultural identities, which at the broadest level are civilization identities, are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world."³

¹ Chang Pi-Chun, "Going Global and Staying Local: Nation-Building Discourses in Singapore's Cultural Policies," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, Vol. 19, No. 6, 2012, p. 693.

² U. Beck, D. Levy, "Cosmopolitanized Nations: Re-imagining Collectivity in World Risk Society," *Theory, Culture and Society*, No. 30 (2), 2013, pp. 3-31.

³ S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996, p. 20.

Given pluralism of ideas about the world that coexists with the ideological vacuum, hypertrophied and, more than that, politically engaged ethnocultural or confessional identities, may trigger anti-social moods and socially destructive practices. In fact, changes in the sphere of ethnicity and religion, no matter how insignificant in the context of historical fluctuations, have shattered states and triggered unpredictable social changes. This has prompted this article and showed the direction of our studies.

The authors have chosen the methodology of a social space analysis and the building up of its reflexive models elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu and his school of genetic structuralism.⁴ It should be said that despite a great number of publications dealing with the problems of ethnonational identity this approach to the studies of its specifics in Kazakhstan has not yet been tested.

We have created a multidimensional model of stratification of the ethnonational identity space in the Kazakhstan society that makes it possible to reassess and explicate in a new way and in many respects the phenomenon that Marlene Laruelle defined as Kazakhstan's "hybrid state identity."⁵ This is our original contribution to the discussion of the problem.

1. Stratification of the Social Space of Identity

According to the commonly accepted definition, social stratification is understood as hierarchically arranged social inequality and a process by which individuals and groups acquire their places in this hierarchy according to their socially important descriptions.

Not infrequently, researchers use the term "social space" to describe this stratification. The concept goes back to Pitirim Sorokin who coined it to define the social position of an individual, a group of people or a social event.⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, who specified the concept of social space and coined the concept of social field, considerably enriched contemporary sociology by moving outside the pinching limits of both functional and phenomenological approaches by rationalizing the activeness of the subject of stratification.

He used what he called "capitals" as coordinates of the social space: bureaucratic capital, capital of physical coercion, economic, cultural, social, information and symbolic (prestige, reputation, name, etc.), and juridical. Pitirim Sorokin used social, economic, political and professional stratification as the coordinate axis of social space.

The above means that social space can be stratified through system differentiation and social hierarchy of status groups. Additionally, it can be noted that in this context the subject of discussion should be several hierarchical systems of socially important differences and, therefore, social statuses, rather than a homogenous foundation of social space stratification.

A relational concept considers space to be a type of relationship or a form of coordination between interacting objects. Accordingly, in Bourdieu's genetic structuralism social space is understood as a structure of social positions, while its topological properties are determined by

- (a) objective characteristics of the studied phenomena and processes;
- (b) symbolic codes or classification schemes;
- (c) tools and goals of sociological research.

⁴ See: P. Bourdieu, *Sotsialnoe prostranstvo: polia i praktiki*, Institute of Experimental Psychology, Moscow; Aleteyia, St. Petersburg, 2007.

⁵ M. Laruelle, Forthcoming. "The Three Repertoires of State Identity in Kazakhstan. Kazakhness, Kazakhstanness and Transnationalism," in: *Kazakhstan beyond Economic Success: Exploring Social and Cultural Changes in Eurasia*, ed. by M. Laruelle, S. Peyrouse, M.E. Sharpe, New York, 2015.

⁶ See: P.A. Sorokin, "Sotsialnaia i kulturnaia mobilnost," in: P.A. Sorokin, *Chelovek. Tsvivilizatsia. Obshchestvo*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1992, pp. 297-424.

Relevance of the social space construction parameters to the basic objective, subjective and intersubjective structures (habitus) of social reality is the main methodological problem.

To correctly formulate the question of ethnonational identification space stratification, we should define the concept of stratum. In Ancient Roman social and political literature, the term stratum (“coverlet” or “blanket” in Latin) was used to describe the part of social space where man was comfortably “at home.” This means that in the contemporary social discourse the term “strata” should be understood as forms of *self-organization* of people into referent groups or *self-identified* entities which emerged on the basis of the specifics of the world outlook and coherent collective behavior in full conformity with the initial and profound meaning of the term. This interpretation clarifies the difference between stratum and class, estate, caste and other objectively differentiated and institutionalized social entities.

Pierre Bourdieu’s model of social space includes a set of social fields, that is, relatively autonomous systems of social relationship subfields between the positions of individual or group agents. The topology of social space is determined by the power fields operating in it, rather than by direct interactions of collective and individual subjects. The space of social identifications includes several fields of force: ethnocultural, sociolinguistic, civil, confessional, social-status, political-ideological and philosophical.

The space of identities in each of the sociocultural systems is multidimensional; each individual has a multiple identity and exists in parallel spaces or worlds of identities. It is fundamentally important to proceed from the idea about identity as the key element of subjective reality formed, at the same time, by social processes. “Conversely, the identities produced by the interplay of organism, individual consciousness and social structure react upon the given social structure, maintaining it, modifying it, or even reshaping it.”⁷

The space of social identities is one of the promising spaces in which the methodology of studies of social fields and practices developed by Bourdieu’s school can be used. This methodology makes it possible to analyze both the genesis and the inner structure of any of the fields of identity, as well as the configuration of the interaction of these fields as sub-spaces of a single social space. The phenomenon of identity is registered and studied at three interconnected levels:

- (a) the level of objectivized conditions of social identification;
- (b) the level of symbolic matrices and inter-subjective communicating practices;
- (c) the level of subjective ideas of individuals and social groups about their identities.

Bourdieu’s methodology of genetic structuralism intended to apply a comprehensive approach to the studies of social reality makes it possible to map the social identification landscape, to build up topological models of its space and conceptual schemes of identification processes.

2. Dispositions of the Field of Ethnic Identity in Kazakhstan Society

The space of ethnosocial stratification in Kazakhstan is a complex structured whole; it is unbalanced in many respects, disharmonic and contradictory. This makes the standard division of population of any country into an ethnic majority and ethnic minorities, or into autochthonous and non-au-

⁷ P.L. Berger, Th. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1966, p. 194.

tochthonous population accepted in international practice, in official documents of the U.N., OSCE, UNESCO and academic writings insufficient and inadequate.

The ethnic communities in Kazakhstan differ from one another by the nature of their involvement in nation-building and the specifics that determine their sociocultural development. These differences are created by the very complicated structure of ethnosocial stratification that consists of several basic levels where the processes of ethnic identification and differentiation take place objectively and subjectively.

We are convinced that the field of ethnocultural identification of Kazakhstan's population is mapped by seven typologically important elements; schemes (models) of this segmentation can be found below (see Tables 1-6, 8).

Table 1

The First Model of Segmentation of Ethnocultural Identification Space in the Republic of Kazakhstan

I	Autochthonous population, titular nation: Kazakhs
	All other ethnic groups

The first version of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan defined Kazakhs as the state-forming nation. This definition was removed from the second edition, but the dichotomy still prevails in the minds of many citizens and even within the scientific-expert community of Kazakhstan. There are two alternative strategies of nation-building and the policy of identity that fully correspond to this segmentation type and remain in the center of socio-political discourse in Kazakhstan.⁸

The first strategy is targeted at building up a single Kazakhstan nation out of a polyethnic society on the basis of civil self-identification of members of all ethnic groups. The civil identity of any nation presupposes formal and legal equality of all ethnic groups; it takes shape irrespective of ethnocultural identity. Jürgen Habermas has offered the most consistent position in his doctrine of reasonable-legal republicanism and constitutional patriotism.

Those who support the strategy of nation-building are convinced that the idea of a single (“civil”) nation in Kazakhstan is contradictory because ethnic self-identification of any individual will inevitably prevail over his identity in communication with members of other ethnic groups, hence over his civil identity. In view of the special role of the titular nation in state construction, Kazakh culture should serve as the foundation of Kazakhstan society that will unite the cultures of all diasporas around itself.

Wang Zhuojun and He Hualing have identified two fundamentally different approaches (the conflict approach and the consistency approach) to the correlation between ethnocultural and national identities: “The conflict approach asserts that although national identity and ethnocultural identity are connected, they are essentially conflicting opposites, because the integration of national identity requires that ethnic groups’ distinctive features be suppressed. For this reason, the heterogeneity of different ethnic groups needs to be restricted or eliminated for the sake of the integration of a unified ‘state people’ or political community. The consistency approach, on the other hand, believes

⁸ See, for example: V.Yu. Dunaev, V.D. Kurganskaya, “Poniatie natsii i strategii natsionalno-gosudarstvennogo stroitelstva,” in: *Sovremennye globalnye vyzovy i natsionalnye interesy: XV Mezhdunarodnye Likhachevskie nauchnye chtenia, 14-15 May, 2015*, St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, 2015, pp. 312-315; *Obshchenatsionalnaia ideia Kazakhstana: opyt filosofskogo i politologicheskogo analiza*, Institute of Philosophy and Law, Ministry of Education and Science, RK, Almaty, 2006, pp. 5-11.

that the state is a community created through the positive action of people who have a ‘we-group consciousness’.”⁹

Kazakhstan as a state is coping with the dilemma of civil and ethnocultural identity models, unification of communities of compatriots and of citizens on the basis of compromise, the efforts to draw extremes closer together and find a common denominator of contradictory we-group interests. This strategy has demonstrated its efficiency; on the other hand, it is an object of criticism from both sides.

The model based on the “meaningful interpretation of civil identity in which not only a patchwork of ethnic cultures, but also the spiritual and moral content and the basic values of homogenous common Kazakhstan culture take the legal form of a civil nation”¹⁰ is an alternative to the formalism of civil nationalism and particularism of ethnocultural nationalism. This model of *qualified citizenship* that “organically combines the features of civil and cultural self-identification”¹¹ rests on a firm foundation and has viable prospects.

Dispositions of the spatial organization of ethnocultural space can be found in modern societies as well, Kazakhstan being no exception. The first of the models is an example of a concentric system in which Kazakhs occupy the center while all other ethnic groups are spread across periphery. The other six models offer mainly decentralized or polycentric dichotomies or trichotomies within the ethnocultural identity space of Kazakhstan society. The concentric scheme, however, in an apparent or latent form, is present in all segmented models; this makes them heteronomous and unbalanced.

Table 2

The Second Model of Segmentation of Ethnocultural Identification Space in the Republic of Kazakhstan

II	Autochthonous ethnicity: Kazakhs
	Ethnic groups that live in Kazakhstan and have their own national states: Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Uzbeks, Azeris, Germans, Poles, Koreans, Greeks, Jews and others
	Ethnicities that live in the Republic of Kazakhstan and have no national states in their historical homeland: Kurds, Uyghurs, Dungans

All these groups differ significantly when it comes to their attitude to the Kazakhstani national-state identity. Kazakhs look at Kazakhstan as the only country where they can achieve national-state self-determination. Members of the second group establish a compromise between Kazakhstan and their “historical homeland” as part of their identification strategies. The third group aims to attain autonomy of some sorts as one of their goals very much needed to preserve their social and cultural identities.

The specifics of the Kazakhstan model of state ethnic politics and self-regulation of interethnic cooperation is determined, to a great extent, by the rivalry between two ethnic groups—Kazakhs and Russians—for a better social niche, wider access to resources, higher status and privileges in all spheres of social life; both want to consolidate their cultural standards and spread them as widely as possible, etc.

⁹ W. Zhuojun, H. Hualing, “National Identity in the Era of Globalization: Crisis and Reconstruction,” *Social Sciences in China*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 2014, p. 141

¹⁰ *Formirovanie Kazakhstanskoy identichnosti v kontekste zadach modernizatsii obshchestvennogo soznaniia*, Book 1, Institute of Philosophy and Law, Ministry of Education and Science, RK, Almaty, 2018, p. 136.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

The ethnic composition of the Republic of Kazakhstan can be classified according to the pattern normally used in sociological polls.

Table 3

The Third Model of Segmentation of Ethnocultural Identification Space in the Republic of Kazakhstan

III	Kazakhs and Russians as the largest ethnic groups
	Other ethnicities as ethnic minorities

Table 4

The Fourth Model of Segmentation of Ethnocultural Identification Space in the Republic of Kazakhstan

IV	Kazakhs
	Russians
	Other ethnicities (ethnic minorities)

In ethnic competition ethnic minorities normally trail behind both Kazakhs and Russians. The Constitution and the laws of Kazakhstan ban all form of discrimination for ethnic, racial and religious reasons. The real position of ethnic minorities in Kazakhstan fully corresponds to the concept of an ethnic minority as a social group the members of which are limited by the social functioning parameters. Situated at the periphery of state and political life, national minorities are even more concerned about getting access to the ideological, political, economic and sociocultural resources of power than the ethnic majority.

Table 5

The Fifth Model of Segmentation of Ethnocultural Identification Space in the Republic of Kazakhstan

V	Ethnicities that treat Hanafi Islam as their national religion
	Ethnicities whose culture has been historically oriented towards Orthodox Christianity
	Ethnocultural groups that feel related to other confessions and denominations than Hanafi Islam and Orthodoxy

Religion is not very important in the social and political life of Kazakhstan, which is a secular state; but it plays a great role in the existential self-identification of Kazakhstanis. The sociological poll conducted by the Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies in 2018 showed the following distribution of answers about the importance of different identity types (see Diagram 1).¹²

Religion perfectly copes with the function of ethnic differentiation and identification at the everyday level through rites, rituals, symbols, holydays, etc. Self-identification of the Kazakhstanis is very specific: ethnic and confessional identities practically coincide in mass consciousness.

¹² See: *Formirovanie Kazakhstanskoy identichnosti...*, p. 142.

Diagram 1

Which of the Identities is the Most Important for You?
(% to the polled)

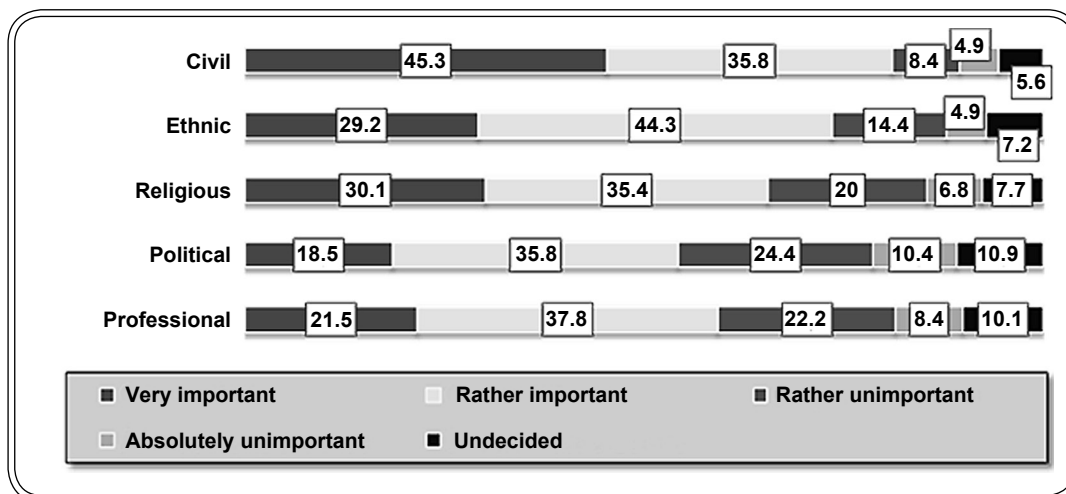


Table 6

The Sixth Model of Segmentation of Ethnocultural Identification Space
in the Republic of Kazakhstan

VI	Turkic-speaking ethnic groups
	Russian-speaking ethnic groups
	Bi- and trilingual ethnolinguistic groups

The sociological poll conducted by the Institute of Democracy identified the following linguistic identification characteristics among the ethnic groups of Kazakhstan¹³:

- (a) more varied linguistic identification among the respondents of other ethnic groups against the Russian and Kazakh respondents;
- (b) the highest self-assessment by bi-lingual Kazakhs;
- (c) the greater number of respondents of other ethnicities who spoke of themselves as trilingual;
- (d) practically identical linguistic and ethnic identities among Russian respondents (see Table 7).

According to sociological studies, it is the linguistic identification that causes the deepest emotional ethnocultural and intraethnic contradiction (see below). On the whole, it is the sociolinguistic

¹³ See: З.К. Шәукенова, Е.Е. Булова, Ә.К. Назарбетова, *Қазақстан Республикасы этностық және діни топтарының азаматтық қауымдастыққа топтасуының құндылықтық-мағыналық және рухани-адамгершілік негіздері*, Монография, ҚР БҒМ ҒК Философия, саясаттану және дінтану институты, Алматы, 2014, pp. 17-18 (Z.K. Shaukenova, E.E. Burova, A.K. Nazarbetova, *Value-semantic and Spiritual-moral Foundations of the Consolidation of Ethnic and Religious Groups of the Republic of Kazakhstan into a Civil Community*, Monograph, Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies, KN MON RK, Almaty, 2014, pp. 17-18).

matrix that determines the structure of axiological philosophical, social, economic and political fields of Kazakhstan society. At the same time, the attitude of citizens and authorities to population groups that use different languages directly depends on the state's ethnic politics.

Table 7

How do You Principally Identify Yourself Linguistically? (%)

	Turkic Speaker	Russian Speaker	Bilingual	Trilingual	Undecided
Kazakhs	48.5	5	40.3	3.8	2.4
Russians	1.3	91.4	4.8	1.1	1.4
Others	13	51.9	22.7	11.7	0.7

The term that any ethnicity spent in the territory of any given state affects, to a certain extent, the modalities of its identification with the national state. The seventh model is being built on this very basis.

Table 8

The Seventh Model of Segmentation of Ethnocultural Identification Space in the Republic of Kazakhstan

VII	Ethnic groups deported to Kazakhstan: peoples of the Caucasus and Baltic states; Germans, Koreans, Poles
	Ethnic groups that settled in Kazakhstan in different historical periods: Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Dungans
	Ethnicities that have been living in Kazakhstan (irredenta) from time immemorial: Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Uyghurs

This means that there are certain factors involved in the division of Kazakhstan society into ethnic segments; each has its specifics, it is differently understood by people and creates highly specific problems in ethnocultural and national self-identification, in interethnic and intercultural interactions and in the relations between ethnic groups and the institutions of state power.

3. Stratification of Space of the Intraethnic Identity of the Kazakhs

As distinct from the extensive Cartesian-Kantian space, the space of identification is a field of intensities. In its system of coordinates the condition of a certain normal or positive identity serves as the reckoning point from which two vectors are drawn in opposite directions—the vectors of hyper- and hypo-identities. Ranking can be as detailed as is needed by the aims of the project and the meth-

odology used, yet the general principle of assessment can be described as identification of the scopes of detraction from the norm along the hyper- and hypo-identities vector. In full conformity with this approach, the type of ethnic identity typical of contemporary Kazakhs can be defined as a fairly clear *hyper-identity*.¹⁴

It should be said that hypertrophied interests of Kazakhs seeking and attempting to restore their ethnocultural identity is rooted in the centuries-long suppression and marginalization of this identity. The weaker interethnic rivalry¹⁵ intensifies intraethnic competition and adds value to subethnic identities.

In recent years, this subject has been attracting a steadily growing number of researchers. Academic publications and the media are full of new definitions of the strata within the Kazakh ethnicity. The popular metaphors derived from literature—*mankurt*, *shala-kazak* and *nagyz kazak*¹⁶—found their places in publicist writings and academic discourse.¹⁷

Kazakh identity includes numerous dispositions of supraethnic and subethnic fields of social identity. For example, the urban and countryside types of settlement: urban and countryside subcultures are also regarded as cultures of polyethnic and monoethnic environments. Recently, considerable flows of mainly young people have been moving from villages to cities. The traditional type of thinking of the “new urban dwellers” cannot compete with the contemporary critical, purposeful and rational thinking that the urbanized part of Kazakhstan community is mastering more or less successfully.

As distinct from the absolute majority of the ethnicities in Kazakhstan, the identification strategies of the Kazakhs include division into tribes and clans along with the phenomenon of neo-tribalism. Members of rich and noble families or influential clans have significantly more chances to successfully identify themselves and, therefore, occupy a prestigious place in the social hierarchy. Today, very much as before, personal and group relationships between traditional Kazakhs who arrive from auls (villages) are based on the genealogical principle of identification, regional (territorial) division or on *Zemliachestvo* (mutual assistance of people from the same aul.—*Ed.*). Urban Kazakhs who have lost their ethnotypical features pay little attention to genealogical identification in personal relationships.

Genealogical and territorial identity as important elements of the Kazakh ethnic identification intensifies the revival of the traditional division into tribes and deepens intraethnic stratification inside the linguistically divided people. The gradual increase of symbolic importance of tribal, Zhuz and regional identifications as a historically inalienable part of ethnocultural identity of the Kazakhs might in the future disunite the Kazakh ethnic nation, prevent social mobility and slow down its progress on the path to becoming a political nation.

Language was and remains the main factor of shaping Kazakh national identity. The Kazakh-speaking and the Russian-speaking spaces as well as the bilingual and monolingual environments are the main forms of stratification of the space of ethnic identification of Kazakhstan society as a whole and the Kazakh nation.

¹⁴ See: M.S. Shaykemelev, *Kazakhskaia identichnost*, monograph. Ed. by Z.K. Shaukenova, Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies, KN MON RK, Almaty, 2013, p. 41.

¹⁵ This is caused by several processes. First, a growing share of Kazakhs in the Republic’s population, as well as the preferences extended to people with good command of the state language when it comes to key posts in the social, political, and cultural spheres.

¹⁶ *Mankurtism*, a neologism coined by famous Kyrgyz writer Chinghiz Aitmantov to define a morally inconsistent person who lost touch with his history. *Shala-kazak*—Kazakh by half, an individual who does not speak his native tongue (historically, this term was applied to children born into mixed families (in which one of the parents was Bashkir, Nogai, etc.); *nagyz kazak*—true Kazakh.

¹⁷ See: M.S. Shaykemelev, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

We have divided the Kazakhs into three groups according to their language command:

- (1) Kazakhs who live in the countryside, speak perfect Kazakh, but find it hard to communicate with Russian speakers;
- (2) Bilingual Kazakhs who know both tongues well enough to freely communicate with all ethnic groups in Kazakhstan;
- (3) Marginal Kazakhs who do not know the Kazakh language or know it at the level of personal communication.¹⁸

The Kazakhs from the first group are the main carriers of the mental pattern typical of the ethnic nation, of its language, traditions, customs and ethnic temperament. In this stratum, ethnic identity is obvious and fairly aggressive.

The group of bilingual Kazakhs dominates because of its size, pragmatism and extreme adaptability. Unlike the members of the first group, they do not fear to dilute or lose their identity, and watch the pendulum of nation-building with a great degree of pragmatism

The marginal Kazakhs comprise the smallest group that is perfectly adapted to urban culture and market psychology. Its members are not quite comfortable in collective or personal communication with members of the first group.

The seventh of our models of stratification of spaces of ethnic identity relies on the period and historical causes of the presence of any of the ethnic groups in the state of Kazakhstan. An analysis of the specifics of Kazakh identity gives us a chance to complicate this model still further by including the Kazakh ethnic repatriates as yet another stratum.

Nearly one million of repatriates who moved to Kazakhstan when it became independent caused a paradoxical change in the stratification of the space of Kazakh identity. American researcher Alexander C. Diener who studied the status of Kazakh repatriates from Mongolia has pointed out: "... changes in the cultural and demographic character of Kazakhstan have impeded the integration within that country (following return migration) of members of a multi-generational ethnic Kazakh community from Mongolia."¹⁹ In particular, "Mongolian Kazakhs" were confronted with the wide use of spoken and written Russian language in the places of their settlement, which, unlike the Kazakhs of Kazakhstan, they did not know. Different mentalities and different cultures (Alexander Diener points to the cultural "purity in exile" of the traditional "Kazakhness" of the Mongolian Kazakhs) did not allow many of the repatriates to integrate in the multicultural and rapidly modernizing society of their "historical homeland." Alexander Diener offers a very typical opinion of one of the repatriates: "Many of us grew up as herdsmen. We live as Kazakhs lived in history; our homes and tools are things you see in Kazakhstan's museums, but we use them in our lives. We speak Kazakh in our streets—not just in our kitchens. I think Kazakhs in Kazakhstan changed during socialism, they became more sophisticated, more like Russians, and we remain as Kazakhs."²⁰

This means that "...the preservation of 'traditional Kazakh culture' has become a point of pride among the Kazakh-Mongolian community in general, serving as an obstacle to integration of migrants in their historic homeland."²¹ This is a unique situation, the only one of its kind; this confirms that the space of ethnonational identity of the titular nation in contemporary Kazakhstan is highly complex and paradoxical.

¹⁸ See: *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹⁹ A.C. Diener, "Problematic Integration of Mongolian-Kazakh Return Migrants in Kazakhstan," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 46, No. 6, 2005, p. 466.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 471.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

4. The Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan as an Institutional Form of the Space of Ethnonational Identity

Western experts insist that the regime in Kazakhstan does not suit the majority of procedural demands of democracy²² and that its liberal-democratic institutional forms are devoid of a legitimate liberal-democratic content.²³ American sociologists Kristoffer Michael Rees and Nora Webb Williams have written: “The institutional structure of the Assembly can be interpreted as a way for the regime to superficially demonstrate alignment with internationally accepted normative ideals of multiculturalism and interethnic unity. In other words, the Assembly is one of the soft-authoritarian institutions, that is, liberal-democratic in form.”²⁴

They explain the emergence of the Assembly and its functioning as an institution of “façade democracy of the semi-authoritarian state”²⁵ by direct influence of Western normative theories of formal articulation (for an international audience) of the policy of Kazakhstan identity. Therefore when discussing “the role of the Assembly as a ‘unique’ Kazakhstani approach to ensuring interethnic harmony”²⁶ they use inverted commas for the word unique. Meanwhile, the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan is,

- first of all, a unique institutional form of ethnopolitics that is absolutely authentic for our republic; it is endogenous and is not a model of multiculturalism borrowed from the arsenal of liberal democracies of the West.²⁷
- Secondly, it is a fuller and more solid implementation of the liberal-democratic principles and values than many of the institutions of ethnopolitics of the so-called “consolidated democracies.”

In our country the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan is the main instrument of regulation of interethnic relations. Not a state institution *de jure*, it was set up to deal with the state’s nationalities policies, while *de facto* it is one of the elements of the comprehensive state-public regulation of interethnic and interconfessional relationships.

As an institution or a social infrastructure designed to consolidate public cohesion and unity of the polyethnic and multicultural society, it is unique because it is integrated into the system of civil society and state authority, as well as because of the homogenous nature of its impact on the sphere of regulation of interethnic relations stemming from its status. There are several basic levels at which

²² See: “Freedom in the World 2015: Kazakhstan,” Freedom House, 11 October, 2015, available at [<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2015#.VhrB93pVhBc>], 17 July, 2019.

²³ See: E. Schatz, “The Soft Authoritarian Tool Kit: Agenda-Setting Power in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan,” *Comparative Politics*, No. 41 (2), 2009, pp. 203-222.

²⁴ See: K.M. Rees, N.W. Williams, “Explaining Kazakhstani Identity: Supraethnic Identity, Ethnicity, Language, and Citizenship,” 2016, available at [https://www.academia.edu/28507832/Explaining_Kazakhstani_Identity_Supraethnic_identity_ethnicity_language_and_citizenship], 15 July, 2019, p. 13.

²⁵ See: *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁶ See: *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁷ In Western countries, transfer to the policy of multiculturalism was accompanied by creation of all sorts of institutional forms of support of associations of ethnocultural minorities, special services and programs. In many countries, however, there are no special state institutions designed to regulate ethnic relationships which is also nothing of the ordinary. In some polyethnic states, there are state structures for the affairs of nationalities, national politics, multiculturalism, etc. Such is, for example, the Ministry for Multiculturalism and the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism (later renamed Ethnocultural Council) set up by the Federal Government of Canada in 1973.

the Assembly institutionalizes interethnic relationships and perfects the technologies of political management:

1. By coordinating the activities of national-cultural associations, the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK) develops *the institutions of self-administration of civil society* in the sphere of interethnic relations. In the European discourse and in the political practice of multiculturalism, intercultural dialog is reduced to communication between the culture of the host society and cultures of various immigrant groups.

2. Today, multiculturalism is an evident characteristic of social reality at the level of everyday existence and the norm of organization of the public communicative space. At the same time, the changes in cultural configurations of national-territorial communities are gradually escaping the control of national states. To a gradually growing extent, these changes are determined not so much by the core of national culture as a product of history, but by transborder network structures of distribution of cultural norms and patterns.

The network type of intercultural communication is an alternative and a challenge to the hierarchically organized political institutions of a national state. The network forms of cultural identity are legitimized by the liberal democratic principles of multicultural politics. The APK is a unique institution of intercultural dialog: it *institutionalizes the network form of intercultural communication between ethnic groups*.

3. The Constitutional reform of 2007 consolidated the positions of the APK as an institution with a Constitutional status which guaranteed Kazakhstan's ethnicities representation in the parliament.

This made the APK a Constitutional structure with a Constitutional status of *an entity of representative democracy*. These political functions define its Constitutional status as

(a) *coordinator* and

(b) *independent entity of state ethnic policies* (all decisions of its highest structure—the Session—should be discussed and fulfilled by all bodies of state power).

4. The First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan acquired the right to head the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan for life and to determine the trends of its work. This has made the Assembly an *institution of direct or identitarian democracy* in the sphere of realization of the ethnocultural policy of the state.

The identitarian democracy concept as a “transmuted form” of direct rule by people relies on the axiologically meaningful ideals of civil self-government as a genuinely legitimate institution of political power and the only subject of political will.

According to the theory of the homogenous nature of the “political organism” formulated by Jean Jacques Rousseau the First President represents the principle of common will and common welfare; he stands above all private unities and limited interests that set in motion the mechanisms of representative democracy. The identitarian modality of democracy is obviously indispensable when it comes to coping with social fragmentation as the main set of risks created by multiculturalism.

5. Neither the state per se nor civil society on its own can create an efficient mechanism of managing the risks of multiculturalism and a system of mechanisms aimed to prevent negative trends in the sphere of interethnic relationships and neutralization of all possible threats. The Concept of the Development of the Assembly until 2025 has formulated the following tasks:

- (1) greater role of the APK as the coordinator of the efforts of all state structures at all levels and civil society institutions in consolidating public accord, Kazakhstan identity and unity as the key factor of successful realization of the Kazakhstan-2050 Strategy;
- (2) introduction of new formats of interaction between the state and ethnocultural and other public associations for the sake of stronger public accord and national unity.²⁸

The Concept has established that the APK is de facto an institution of comprehensive state-public regulation of interethnic relations and an *important link* between the political system and civil society. As such it should *institutionalize direct ties and feedback* between the structures of state governance and public organizations to ensure their efficient interaction in the sphere of harmonization of interethnic relationships.

This means that in the course of its institutionalized development, the APK became a full-fledged *institution of the republic's political system*; on the other hand, it has been transformed into an *institution of people's diplomacy*. This combination allows the APK to manage the risks of multiculturalism comprehensively and, therefore, efficiently.

Rees and Williams have rightly identified the dilemma of ethnocentric and civil identities as the main one in the process of nation-building in the multiethnic Kazakhstan state: "We begin by reviewing treatments of these nation-building dilemmas by liberal theorists of multiculturalism to provide an analytical framework against which we can evaluate the efforts of the Kazakhstani state to create a civically defined Kazakhstani nation."²⁹ The term "multiculturalism" that had gained popularity in the 1960s has acquired the status of the main concept of neo-liberal ideology twenty years later, towards the end of the 1980s. After Switzerland, Canada, Australia and the United States, many countries confronted by the growing cultural heterogeneity accepted the ideas of multiculturalism that they described as "the flagship project of liberal democracy."³⁰ By the end of the 20th century the situation started moving in the opposite direction. The national patriotic circles resolutely rejected multiculturalism, while the intellectual elites' refined criticism, as well as the panic stirred up in the ranks of the leaders of some of the largest European countries by the results of the multiculturalism policy, added oil to the fire. The threats and challenges that stemmed from the policy of multiculturalism revealed the vulnerability and obvious inefficiency of its conceptual foundations and of the social and political technologies of the neoliberal project of the multicultural society. Inadequate inclusion of immigrants in social, cultural, economic and civil life of host societies was one of the obstacles on the road towards new supraethnic identity.

This makes the decision of Rees and Williams to build their analysis of the Kazakhstan experience of nation-building on the concept of liberal multiculturalism highly doubtful. It seems that an opposite approach looks relevant and methodologically justified: this experience may serve as the new foundation of transformations of the ideology of multiculturalism.

Today, the policy of multiculturalism as an encouragement of ethnocultural variety seems like a challenge to national and state unity. We have tried to demonstrate that the strategic priority of state policy that supports ethnocultural variety is a consolidation of civilian, political, cultural and spiritual unity of people "*based upon acknowledging a common system of values and principles for all citizens of the country*."³¹ The APK has become indispensable as one of the forms of institutionalization of basic values shared by all ethnocultural groups in the Kazakhstan society and as a structural element of nation-building and identity policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

²⁸ See: Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan 148 28.12.2015 "Ob utverzhenii Kontseptsii razvitiia Assamblei Kazakhstana do 2025 goda," available at [<http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U1500000148>], 17 July, 2019.

²⁹ K.M. Rees, N.W. Williams, op. cit., p. 4.

³⁰ S. Stirner, "Questioning Multiculturalism, 2012," available at [<http://www.metamodernism.com/2012/03/28/liberal-multiculturalism-and-the-metanarrative-trap/>], 14 July, 2019.

³¹ Doctrine of the National Unity of Kazakhstan, available at [http://www.kazakhstan-bern.ch/en/?page_id=426].

Conclusion

The above suggests the following general conclusions:

1. The polyethnic nature of the society of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which is the result of its history, makes the task of shaping the community of Kazakhstan ethnicities into a structure of common citizenship essential, even though difficult. As distinct from several forms of realization of the idea of multiculturalism that have already discredited themselves, Kazakhstan's model of interethnic interaction and national harmony remains its philosophical and conceptual foundation. Other countries can learn a lot from the republic's experience of creating new fields of synthetic and polycultural identities as an approach to the problem that so far defies efficient and adequate algorithms.
2. The space of ethnonational identities of Kazakhstan society can be defined as fragmented rather than atomized or integrated even if a variety of atomistic (*Gemeinschaft*) and organic (*Gesellschaft*) modalities of social ties are present at the level of individual ethnicities. Construction of the best model of stratification of ethnonational identities' social spaces can be described as a movement towards the optimal methods of proliferation in the minds of the ideas of humanism, principles of ethnic tolerance, equality of citizens and nations before the law; prevention of outcrops of national extremism, national phobias and ethnic discrimination.
3. The general picture of stratification of the ethnonational identities' space of Kazakhstan society should be based on a sociological analysis of deformations of the internal space of the Kazakhs' national identity. This space interferes with the fields of interethnic cooperation and common Kazakhstan identity, while being strongly affected by supranational global trends of identification models.
4. Specifics of the space of intraethnic identity of the Kazakhs create several fairly complicated theoretical and practical problems in public politics. For example, the specifics of the traditional Kazakh culture and their mentality are often seen as the reasons why Kazakhs should implement their mission of consolidating Kazakhstan's ethnicities into a united political nation. So far, little attention is paid to the structural aspects of consolidation models. We attempted to demonstrate that the structure of intraethnic identity of the Kazakhs that is taking shape is fairly contradictory and that, therefore, the projects of transferring the ethnocultural identity of the titular nation to the structures of common Kazakhstan identity should take into account the fact that the quality of space of intraethnic identity should be transformed.
5. This transformation is needed to bring the intraethnic space of identity into conformity with the parameters of the supraethnic space of qualified citizenship. This is the most essential trend in political culture of the population of Kazakhstan; it should be built on pluralism of ideas about the world, cultural polyphony, unity and cohesion of social subjects.

THE IRANIAN EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC MOBILITY MODEL

Mehdi AFZALI

*Graduate student, Junior Research Associate,
Institute of Socio-Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences,
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Sergey RYAZANTSEV

*D.Sc. (Econ.), Corresponding Member,
Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor, Director of the Institute of
Socio-Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences,
Head of the Department of Demographic and Migration Policy,
MGIMO-University, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Elena PISMENNAYA

*D.Sc. (Sociol.), Associate Professor,
Professor of the Finance University under the Government of
the Russian Federation, Leading Research Fellow of the Institute of
Socio-Political Research, Russian Academy of Sciences
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Tamara ROSTOVSKAYA

*D.Sc. (Sociol.), Professor,
Deputy Director of the Institute of Socio-Political Research of
the Russian Academy of Sciences, Head of the Department of
Social Pedagogy and Youth Outreach, Russian State Social University
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the evolution of the educational model and trends of academic mobility in the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). It analyzes the socio-demographic structure of the population, the dynamics of the number of young people, as well as the dynamics and composition of the country's school in the country. There is also

This study has been conducted with the support of RFFI Grant (Project 18-29-15043).

an examination of the ways in which the process of emigration from Iran had evolved in the context of the country's socio-political history of the state in the 20th-21st centuries. Various levels of the Iranian education system are considered. The author examines the internationalization trends in higher education. The forms and trends of academic mobility, including exit and entry mobility, are delineated. In recent years, the visiting academic mobility of Iranian students has been targeted at the U.S., Turkey, Italy, Canada, and the UAE. There is a contemplation of the methods used for selecting Iranian students for studying abroad at the state budget's expense, which is based on a system of state quotas and fairly high requirements for applicants. Iranian students studying abroad receive an academic scholarship. Those who receive such a scholarship must pay a deposit before being issued

a final permit, and commit to returning to Iran after graduation and working for up to six years. Recently, increasing the number of foreign students in Iran has become one of the priorities of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology.

The admission of foreign students has presently become one of the most important tasks undertaken by universities. One way to attract more foreign students and compete for them is to raise the status of universities and the country. Iran is growing more attractive as a recipient of international students from certain neighboring countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan, and China). The role of academic mobility in the integration of Iran into the international educational and scientific space and the contribution of academic exchanges to the development of the national culture of Iran are emphasized.

KEYWORDS: *Iran, academic mobility, education system, foreign students, study abroad, student mobility.*

Introduction

Over the past two decades, there has been an increased demand for higher education in the world: in 2000-2015, the number of students studying at higher educational institutions increased from 97 to 263 million people.¹ Moreover, the number of foreign students studying in other countries increased from 1.3 million in 1990 to 4.3 million in 2011.² Admission of foreign students to different tiers of educational institutions is considered as an important factor in the transformation of the higher education system, as well as a cultural, social, economic, and political factor in state development.

There is a mutual understanding of cultures in the world in the context of globalization, and scientific and cultural exchange is intensifying.³ A fairly effective tool for integrating countries into the international educational and scientific space is academic mobility, which the present authors consider both "the totality of attitudes and readiness to move (that is, the potential) and the actual geographical mobility (that is, academic migration) of both students and faculty in the educational and scientific system for the purposes of obtaining an education and advanced scientific and educa-

¹ See: "Reform and Innovation in Medical Education: Periodic Report of Vice Minister of Education of Iran," 2 March, 2016, available at [<http://www.Dme.behdasht.gov.ir>] (in Persian).

² See: Ibidem.

³ See: M.R. Sarkarani, "Internationalization of Higher Education," *Journal of Political and Economic Information*, No. 306, 2002, pp. 183-184 (in Persian).

tional training.⁴ Academic mobility allows students to interact with the population of the host country, acquire new self-organization skills, and master both verbal and non-verbal communication. In addition, not only do foreign students need to adapt to the new environment in the host country, but local students must also adapt to the presence of foreigners.⁵

Academic mobility is the most common form of internationalization of education, which is the political aim of the leaders of the countries involved. By 2025, the number of foreign students will reach 8 million according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Russia and Iran are making a significant contribution to this process.⁶ The efficiency of cooperation between Russia and Iran in regard to ensuring academic mobility and recognition of foreign education and/or foreign qualifications is determined by the extent to which the actions of the Russian and Iranian parties and the resources utilized meet their priorities and allow to achieve their internal and external goals.

The process of internationalization of higher education plays an important role in the development of national education systems. Some Asian countries have adopted cross-border policies to satisfy the growing educational needs, including university development, teacher recruitment and placement, and the promotion of private sector's participation in higher education through the establishment of private universities.⁷ Iran is also becoming increasingly involved in these processes.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Iran experienced a brain drain and emigration of elite social classes due to the 1905 reform that led to Iran's constitutional revolution. Highly qualified specialists and highly qualified scientists were in demand during the reign of the Pahlavi monarchy due to the modernization of the country and the changing trends in socio-economic development. Prior to the Islamic Revolution, the main purpose of emigration was to obtain a degree, thus, many Iranians went to the United States for short visits, which included educational purposes and internships.

Although Iran was isolated from the world following the Islamic Revolution (1979), its borders were never closed for immigration and emigration, including educational migration. But after the transition from the Pahlavi monarchy to the Islamic state in 1979, migration trends began to change.⁸ After the Islamic Revolution, Iran experienced socio-economic problems and lost much of its human capital, which was valuable for economic development. Arrests, confiscations, discrimination, religious conflicts began after the Iranian revolution, when many Iranians were forced to emigrate.⁹ Iran did not have enough specialists and infrastructure to educate undergraduate and graduate students domestically. Many emigrants, including those who emigrated for educational purposes, remained abroad for good, never returning to Iran.

Another wave of educational emigration from Iran occurred in 1980 during the Iran-Iraq conflict. This war has become a catalyst for the emigration of highly educated and intelligent people and youth to the neighboring and western countries. Additionally, soon after the war, many families

⁴ S.V. Ryazantsev, T.K. Rostovskaya, V.I. Skorobogatova, V.A. Bezverbnyi, "Mezhdunarodnaia akademicheskaia mobilnost v Rossii. Tendentsii, vidy, gosudarstvennoye stimulirovaniye," *Ekonomika regiona*, Vol. 15, Issue 2, 2019, pp. 420-435.

⁵ See: O.V. Bubnovskaya, "Academic Mobility and the Problem of Educational Programs' Continuity," *Mezhdunarodnyi zhurnal eksperimentalnogo obrazovaniia*, No. 2, 2014, pp. 11-12.

⁶ See: "Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators," OECD Publishing, available at [<https://www.oecd.org/edu/Education-at-a-Glance-2017.pdf>].

⁷ See: P.G. Altbach, L. Reisberg, L.E. Rumbley, *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution*, UNESCO, Paris, 2009.

⁸ See: S. Hakimzadeh, "Iran: A Vast Diaspora Abroad and Millions of Refugees at Home," *Migration Information Source*, 2006, available at [www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=424].

⁹ See: A.E. Torbat, "The Brain Drain from Iran to the United States," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 2, 2002, pp. 272-295.

emigrated due to political, social and economic issues.¹⁰ According to a World Bank report, the peak of emigration from Iran occurred in 1989-1993, when 2.2 million Iranians left the country. During 1988-1998, about 180,000 Iranians requested a Canadian work visa.

Migration trends changed during the reign of Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005). Many Iranians returned to the country. Their return was influenced by the policy focused on the development and attraction of investments to the country. First of all, Khatami was able to attract several wealthy Iranian families whose assets and companies were appropriated in the post-revolutionary period. The return of this category of migrants became an important event for Iran and, combined with the gradual stabilization of their socio-economic status within the country, it served as an incentive for mass return migration of members of the Iranian diaspora to Iran.

During the reign of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013), emigration intensified due to Iran's confrontation with the U.S. and Israel, and because of Iran's refusal to cooperate in the process of nuclear program monitoring.¹¹ As stated in 2006, approximately 150,000-180,000 specialists and educated people emigrated abroad annually.¹² During this time, many Iranian students applied for admission to universities in the United States and Canada.

With the development of Internet technologies, the social conditions of emigration from Iran have changed. People actively use the Internet, satellite channels and social networks to make emigration-related decisions. They communicate with their compatriots abroad, watch and listen to the news, compare socio-economic conditions in different countries. Therefore, the socio-economic structure of emigration from Iran is changing: previously, emigration was available only to those with a high level of income, but now it has also become accessible to people with an average income.¹³

Socio-Demographic Aspect

The population of Iran in 2016 was about 80 million people. Figure 1 demonstrates the age and gender pyramid of the Iranian population. The country's population is quite young. The share of the population group aged 30 to 34 years (8.6 million people or about 11% of the country's population) is the most numerous. The second age bracket is 25-29 years of age, which accounts for about 10% of the country's population. The age bracket that encompasses people between 0 and 40 years of age numbers 54.9 million people. The share of people over the age of 90 accounts for only 0.01% of the country's population.¹⁴

Iranian Minister of Education Mohammad Bathaei stated in 2016 that there are 91,700 schools in Iran. The number of schools with tuition fees is 15,400. Currently, Iran has 13.4 million students, including kindergarten children under the age of six. Primary school from the first to fifth grades boasts the largest number of students—7.4 million people in 2015-2016. There are also 688,000 children in Iranian kindergartens. About 13,200 Iranian students study at foreign schools (see Table 1).

¹⁰ See: S. Hakimzadeh, op. cit.

¹¹ See: "Afzayesh-e panahandeguiy-e Iranian beh gharb (An Increase in the Number of Iranians Seeking Asylum in the West)", Mardomak, 2010, 12 Esfand 1388, available at [www.mardomak.us/news/Iranian_Refugee_Rate_Growth/].

¹² See: N. Karimi, S. Gharaati, "Why Do Brains Drain? Brain Drain in Iran's Political Discourse," *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, Vol. 6 (2), 2013, p. 156, available at [<http://cadaad.net/journal>].

¹³ See: "220,000 Academics Leave Iran in One Year, Brain Drain Rising—Moin Warns," *Payvand News*, 2 May, 2001, available at [www.payvand.com/news/01/may/1010.html].

¹⁴ Statistical Center of Iran, available at [www.amar.org.ir].

Figure 1

Age and Gender Structure of Iran's Population in 2016

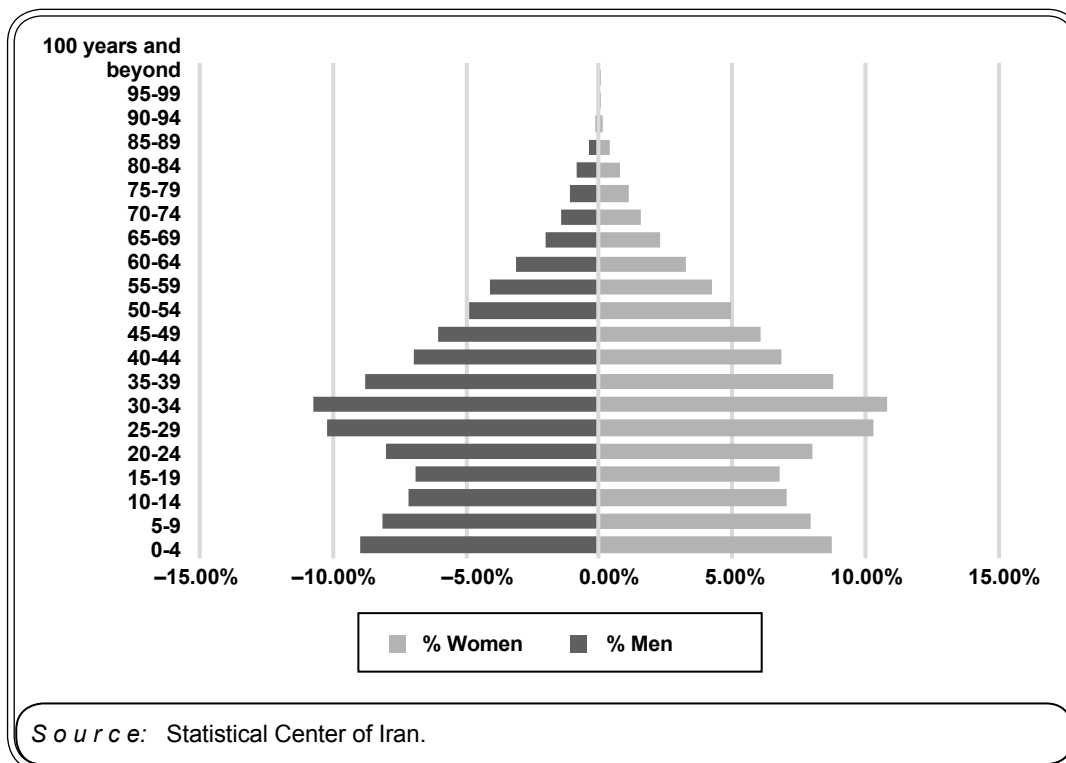


Table 1

Number of Students in Iran, 2015-2016

Education Level	Gender	Number (people)	Number of Iranians Studying Abroad (people)
Total	Boys	6,891,232	13,242
	Girls	6,504,307	
Kindergarten	Boys	349,748	0
	Girls	338,704	
Primary school (Grades 1-5)	Boys	3,819,488	7,756
	Girls	3,603,017	
Middle school (Grades 6-8)	Boys	1,591,299	3,115
	Girls	1,463,060	
High school (Grades 9-12)	Boys	1,130,697	2,371
	Girls	1,099,526	

Source: Statistical center of Iran.

Education System and Infrastructure in Iran

Currently, most students in Iran attend private universities. More than a third of all Iranian students attend the private Islamic Azad University (IAU), the country's largest university, which is one of the world's mega-universities. The university has many campuses in Iran and abroad (U.K., UAE, Lebanon, Afghanistan). Admission to Azad University is much easier to achieve than admission to public universities. At the same time, a rather high tuition fee is charged. The Iranian government controls the curriculum and the university administration system. Other private universities include Shahrood University of Medical Sciences and the University of Qom.¹⁵

In Iran, there are various universities with different goals, some of them under the control of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and some of them under the control of the Ministry of Health. In total, Iran has 903 universities of applied sciences and technology, as well as 530 Islamic Azad universities, which are universities with tuition fees. There are also 141 universities under the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, where the education is free, however you need to pass entrance exams to be accepted to these universities. In 2014, the number of students at these universities was about 3.8 million people, of which about 2 million were men and about 1.7 million were women. The IAU has 1.6 million students, while technical and vocational universities have 197,300 students (see Table 2).

Table 2

Number and Gender Makeup of Students at the Largest Iranian Universities in 2014 (people)

	Number of Universities	Women	Men	Total
Ministry of Science, Research and Technology	141	357,255	329,781	687,036
Payame-e Noor University	466	353,021	193,865	546,886
University of Applied Science and Technology	953	153,733	320,065	473,798
Non-private and non-public higher educational institutions	309	161,525	177,800	339,325
Islamic Azad University	530	637,317	912,753	1,550,070
Technical and Vocational University	170	60,418	136,887	197,305
Total		1,723,269	2,071,151	3,794,420

Source: Statistical Center of Iran.

In 2015-2016, the number of university students increased to 4.4 million, which comprised 2.4 million men and 2 million women. The largest group of students were baccalaureate students—2.6 million people (1.3 million men and women each). The smallest group was constituted by

¹⁵ Ibidem.

graduate students (78,000 people). The two most popular specializations in Iran are social research (2 million people) and engineering and technology (1.3 million people). The least popular are agriculture and veterinary science—only 188,600 students. For graduate students, the most popular are medical sciences and related spheres. There are more women (44,200) than men (33,800) among graduate students (see Table 3).¹⁶

According to UNESCO data, in 2014 Iran spent about 3% of GDP or 20% of government spending on all levels of education. This is a relatively high percentage compared with international statistics: in 2012, all governments in the world spent an average of 14.3% of government spending on education.

Iran boasts a fairly high level of literacy by regional standards, and compared to countries with the same level of socio-economic development, it has a very educated society. The adult literacy rate in the country in 2013 was 84.6% (85% worldwide and 78% in neighboring Arab countries).¹⁷ The literacy rate among young people aged 15-24 was 98% in 2015. According to UNESCO, school enrollment in Iran in 2015 was 89.2%, while in neighboring Pakistan it was only 44.5%.

In 2015, 99.1% of preschoolers who had reached the primary school age went on to attend primary school. It is a very high share of enrollment compared to other Western Asian countries. In 2014, the number of schoolchildren who completed elementary school (5 years of education) equaled 97.5% of the corresponding age group.

Iran's education policy is approved and monitored by a number of bodies, including parliament, the cabinet of ministers and the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, a body appointed by the Supreme Leader of Iran. The implementation of Iran's educational policies is monitored by the provincial authorities and district offices.

Enrollment in Iran's public universities is based on the Konkoor entrance exam. Many private universities also use this exam to select applicants. Azad University conducts its own entrance exam, which is very similar to the Konkoor.

The Konkoor exam is held annually in June; it is a comprehensive exam lasting 4.5 hours with multiple choice questions. The exam tests the students' knowledge of the Persian language and literature, history, a foreign language and mathematics. Applicants who fail may retake the exam annually without restrictions. The best students usually enter the engineering and medical specialties. There is a separate Konkoor exam to enroll in graduate programs.

There are several levels of degrees awarded in Iran:

- College (Kardani) 72-78 credit hours over 2 years;
- Bachelor's degree (Karshenasi) at least 130 credit hours, 4 years;
- Master's degree (Karshenasi-Arshad Napayvasteh) 28-45 credit hours, 2 years;
- Doctor of Philosophy ("Doctor") 12-36 credit hours, 3-6 years;
- Professional degrees (Doctor or "Karshenasi-Arshad Payvasteh"), 6-7 years.

Applicants who pass the Konkoor exam after secondary school (12 years of study) with the highest exam score (1-1,000 students on average), have the right to immediately apply for six-year studies at the university, without taking the bachelor's exams and entrance exams to the master's degree program.

¹⁶ Statistical Center of Iran, available at [www.amar.org.ir].

¹⁷ See: "Adult and Youth Literacy," UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015, available at [http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Documents/fs32-2015-literacy.pdf].

Table 3

Number and Socio-Demographic Makeup of University Students in Iran, 2015-2016 (people)

	Total			College (Kardani) (2-3 Years)			Baccalaureate Students			Master's Degree Students			Graduate Students			Doctoral Students			
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	
Total	341,039	145,155	195,884	132,784	63,197	69,587	163,116	113,199	44,847	68,352	43,113	17,579	25,534	0	0	0	2,026	1,085	941
Medicine	247,468	85,623	161,845	10,495	7,360	3,135	126,782	92,408	34,374	19,190	6,007	13,183	41,057	28,051	12,062	21,893	9,831	12,062	
Social sciences	2,003,593	944,848	1,058,745	319,657	193,143	126,514	1,230,942	713,310	517,632	410,990	207,748	203,242	207,748	0	0	42,004	26,325	15,679	
Fundamental sciences	255,056	79,150	175,906	262	63	199	173,655	122,015	51,640	63,916	20,350	43,566	20,350	0	0	17,223	7,097	10,126	
Engineering and technology	1,312,595	1,003,774	308,821	346,078	295,658	50,420	750,372	546,207	196,098	196,098	146,490	49,608	146,490	0	0	20,047	15,419	4,628	
Agriculture and veterinary science	188,632	87,274	101,358	13,069	10,695	2,374	113,199	54,847	68,352	41,459	19,054	22,405	19,054	5,765	3,142	11,998	6,913	5,085	
Art	188,632	87,274	101,358	13,069	10,695	2,374	113,199	54,847	68,352	41,459	19,054	22,405	19,054	5,765	3,142	11,998	6,913	5,085	

Source: Statistical Center of Iran.

Iran's Higher Education System

Currently, higher education in Iran includes the following types of institutions:

- by specialization: general or comprehensive; specialized (visual arts, technology, medicine);
- by affiliation: public or private;
- according to the training system: full-time or distance learning (for example, Payam-e Noor University).

There are also technical institutions in Iran that are not universities, but still belong to the higher education system.

In 1977, there were 16 universities in Iran with a student population of 154,300. In the late 1980s, the Iranian government revised its stance on private universities due to a population explosion, and in 1988, allowed private universities to apply for state registration and certification of professional universities with the Iranian Ministry of Education.

Many Iranian universities occupy the highest positions, and engineering universities have a good reputation among them. Tehran University is one of the best universities in the world, ranked in the Times (by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)) between the 301st and 400th places. Amirkabir Technical University ranks between the 401st and 500th places. The Sharif University of Technology currently ranks between the 501st and 600th places.¹⁸

The Islamic Azad University has the largest number of students studying in undergraduate (786,000), graduate schools (827,000) and undertaking doctoral studies (26,000), respectively. Most specialized graduate students study at the free universities of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran (59,000). The largest number of College-level (Kardani) students are studying at the University of Applied Science and Technology (263,000) (see Table 4).

Table 4

Number of Students Studying at Various Types of Universities in Iran in 2014 (people)

	Specialist Degree (2-3 Years)	Bachelor's Degree Students	Master's Degree Students	Graduate Students	Doctoral Students	Total
Ministry of Science, Research and Technology	3,324	427,483	193,511	3,666	59,052	687,036
Payam-e Noor University	2	500,089	45,107	0	1,688	546,886
University of Applied Science and Technology	263,305	210,442	51	0	0	473,798
Non-commercial and non-public higher educational institutions	56,828	213,440	66,867	0	2,190	339,325
Islamic Azad University	258,832	785,486	427,000	26,074	52,678	1,550,070
Technical and Vocational University	157,933	39,372	0	0	0	197,305

Source: Statistical Center of Iran.

¹⁸ See: "Times Higher Education," *QS World University Rankings*, 2018, available at [<https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings>].

Outgoing Academic Mobility: Iranian Students Studying Abroad

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 2016 there were 52,300 Iranian students abroad, of which 41% studied in graduate schools; 43%—in master's level programs; 16%—at the undergraduate level. The engineering specialty was the most popular among Iranians studying abroad, preferred by 53% of the students. The main study destinations for Iranian students are the U.S., Turkey, Italy, Canada and the UAE.¹⁹ Russia is not yet one of the leading countries for teaching Iranian students, despite all the declarations of geopolitical partnership and economic cooperation.

The Iranian Ministry of Education coordinates and supervises Iranian students' studies abroad.²⁰ Iranian nationals applying for education abroad at the expense of state funds must meet the following requirements:

- first of all, to believe in Islam and other religions recognized by the government, to be loyal to the political system of Iran and the Constitution;
- secondly, to be pious, that is, not to be a member of any party, atheist or militant groups;
- thirdly, to be under 26 years of age (for a bachelor's degree), or under 29 for doctoral studies;
- fourthly, in the selection of applicants among men who apply to continue their studies abroad, with all other conditions being equal, priority is given to married applicants.

The process of selecting Iranian students to study abroad is based on a system of state quotas and fairly high requirements for applicants. There is an "exchange" that accumulates applicant data, the central council selects and evaluates candidates based on several criteria, including entrance examination grades and knowledge of a foreign language. The main conditions for Iranians to obtain a scholarship to study at universities abroad are admission to a university recognized by the Iranian Ministry of Education.

Iranian students studying abroad are provided with an academic disbursement, which includes a scholarship, spending on teaching aids, medical checkups, visa payments, subsistence allowances (including for the spouse and children), reimbursement of expenses for traveling home and back (once during the training), as well as the cost of school attendance for the children.²¹ The amount of the scholarship is determined annually by the Iranian Ministry of Education and approved by the Iranian Government. To determine academic payments, annual studies of the average cost of student life abroad are conducted. According to the conditions, Iranian students who received a scholarship to study abroad must pay a deposit before being issued a final permit, and commit to returning to Iran after graduation and working for up to six years. Thus, Iranian authorities regulate the return of educational migrants to the country.

Inbound Academic Mobility: Foreign Students Studying in Iran

Iran is increasingly attracting and educating foreign students at its national universities. In recent years, attracting foreign students has become one of the priorities of the Ministry of Science,

¹⁹ See: "Adult and Youth Literacy."

²⁰ See: Ministry of Science and Research Technology of Iran, see [<https://www.msrt.ir/en/>].

²¹ See: *Ibidem*.

Research and Technology of Iran. “The ministry is trying to double the number of foreign students in Iran and pave the way for expanding international academic cooperation,” Minister Mohammad Farhadi stated in 2017.²²

Hossein Salar Moghadam, Deputy Minister of Science and Research, informed that there are 55,000 foreign students studying in the country, including 27,000 students studying under the supervision of the Ministry. About 2,500 foreigners study at the medical and dental faculties of Iranian universities. Meanwhile, UNESCO data indicate that a significantly smaller number of foreign students study in Iran—18,700 (see Table 5). Such significant differences are due to the fact that most students actually study at universities that are not under the ministry’s supervision. Foreign students are often study Islam; their studies take place at religious universities or schools.²³

Table 5

Academic Mobility and the Dynamics of the Number of Foreign Students in Iran

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Iranians studying abroad	51,552	49,457	50,819	51,134	52,307	50,392
Dynamics in the number of foreign students in Iran	4,512	7,057	11,288	—	18,698	—

Source: UNESCO Statistics Institute.

Approximately 50% of foreign students study humanities (including Farsi), 30% study technical and engineering courses, 17% study medical sciences, 3% are art students. Most foreign students have come to Iran from the neighboring Islamic countries (Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Syria, and Turkey). Students from regions of the world that are novel for Iran have also appeared: European countries (Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Rumania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine), Asian states (China, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam), South Caucasian countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan), the countries of America (Canada, Mexico, the U.S.), African countries (Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan) and Australia (see Table 6). According to the officials, Iran is ready to accept more students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Although the admission of foreign students has become one of the most important tasks of Iranian universities, the Iranian higher education system is now faced with growing competition in the international educational service market increasingly more often. Foreign students have a wide range of choice of countries and specialties, they have become more demanding to the quality of education and life in the country of choice, and are interested in the economic, social, cultural and political conditions of the countries of destination. According to researchers, raising the status and ranking of both universities and the country in general is a currently important aspect of successful competition for foreign students. Also, an equally important competitive advantage is the status and comfort of foreign students in the country of study.

About 84% of foreign students in Iran study through scholarships and grants, so they have either not experienced any particular difficulties in financing their lives, or financial difficulties were not their primary problem in the country of study.

²² See: “Iran Economy Newsletter,” available at [http://ireconomy.ir/fa/page/23711/ببذج+اب+ایم+ع+س+امل+پ+ی+د+ی+ج+را+خ+ن+ای+و+ج+ش+ن+اد.html] (in Persian).

²³ See: Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran.

**Countries of Destination for Iranian Students and
Countries of Origin of Foreign Students Studying in Iran in 2016**

Countries Where Iranian Students Study	Number of People	Countries of Origin of Foreign Students Studying in Iran	Number of People
U.S.	11,455	Afghanistan	13,797
Turkey	5,661	Iraq	2,314
Italy	3,935	Syria	633
Canada	3,735	Lebanon	468
UAE	2,297	Pakistan	189
Australia	2,258	China	163
Great Britain	1,522	Tajikistan	139
India	1,459	Yemen	109
France	1,415	India	98
Malaysia	1,313	Turkey	88
Austria	1,232	Azerbaijan	72
Sweden	1,226	Nigeria	47
Hungary	1,116	Palestine	44
Belarus	866	Italy	37
Finland	607	Bahrain	30

Source: UNESCO Statistics Institute.

Based on a 2015 study, out of 95 foreign students studying at the universities of Tehran, Mashhad, Shahid Beheshti, Tarbiat Modarres, Imam Khomeini, Qazvin and Mashhad Medical University, 88% mentioned average relations between Iranian students and themselves, while others said that relations and connections with Iranians are very poor, 81% of them believe that the Iranians (the Iranian society) discriminated against them, 78% believe that they were mainly discriminated against by Iranian students, and 58% believe that they were mainly discriminated against by Iranian professors.²⁴ According to one of research studies, 99 out of 200 foreign students admitted that they felt discriminated against by professors. The most interesting is that students of different nationalities felt the same discrimination in relation to themselves.²⁵

Most foreign students have a stable educational situation, 80% of them have never failed a single exam, and 66% completed their studies on time. About 13% of students called their poor command of Farsi an obstacle to their success, although they noted that they have studied Farsi prior to beginning their course; those who believed that they had problems in learning, attributed them to

²⁴ See: M. Teymouri, M. Sorkhabi, "Living Condition of Foreign Students in Public Universities of Iran in 2014-2015," *Journal of Iranian Higher Education Association*, 7th year, Vol. 2, Spring 2015 (in Persian).

²⁵ See: S. Marginson *et al.*, *International Student Security*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

language and motivational issues, and in addition, named professors' inability to explain the subject matter and the difficulty of the subjects as the reasons.²⁶

For the most part, foreign students feel safe in Iran. Those who did not feel safe associate their insecurity with insufficient knowledge of Farsi. They felt less secure outside the university, where they were mainly insulted, robbed or mocked by poor people in the streets. Other studies have also shown that language plays an important role in teaching foreign students.²⁷

Conclusion

Currently, the idea that universities in developed and developing countries can improve the quality of education and the conditions of their functioning by stimulating international cooperation is gaining widespread acceptance. It is recognized that internationalization of higher education is an effective reform mechanism.²⁸ From an economic point of view, the internationalization of higher education helps to develop national economy.

- First and foremost, this is due to the fact that the rate of exchange of scientific developments and knowledge is increasing.
- Secondly, it promotes the exchange of experience and economic connections.
- Thirdly, it stimulates industrial development and the growth of gross national income.²⁹

As far as the cultural aspect is concerned, the most important function of the internationalization of higher education is the expansion and dissemination of the values of national culture in the international arena. The use of academic exchanges to develop national culture is a priority in certain states' foreign policy and their international activity. This concept is often referred to in a diplomatic memorandum of understanding between governments.³⁰ The internationalization of higher education and the expansion of academic exchanges are also accompanied by academic and social development, an increase in the sphere of social experience and cultural knowledge of students and scientists from different countries and cultures.³¹ It is no coincidence that Iran and Iranian universities have recently prioritized their policies aimed to attract foreign students.³²

²⁶ See: S. Marginson et al., op. cit.

²⁷ See: F. Maringe, N. Foskett, "Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education," *Theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives*, 2010.

²⁸ See: D. Glauco, P. Case, "Rethinking the Internationalization Agenda in UK Higher Education," *Journal of Further Higher Education*, Vol. 27 (4), 2003, pp. 383-398.

²⁹ See: N. Fazeli, "Globalization and Higher Education: A View of Global Trend of Reform in Higher Education and Higher Education in Iran," *Higher Education*, 2016, available at [www.farhangshenasi.com], 25 October, 2017 (in Persian).

³⁰ See: H. de Wit, *Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States and Europe*, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 2002.

³¹ See: N. Fazeli, op. cit.

³² See: E. Hazelkorn, *The Impact of Global Rankings on Higher Education Research and the Production of Knowledge*, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2009.

RELIGION IN SOCIETY

THE POLITICS OF SECULARITY/RELIGIOSITY IN KAZAKHSTAN

Akhan BIZHANOV

*D.Sc. (Political Science), Professor, Institute of Philosophy,
Political Science and Religious Studies, Committee for Science,
Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

Aydar AMREBAEV

*Ph.D. (Philos.), Coordinator of International Projects and Public Relations,
Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies,
Committee for Science, Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

Elena BUROVA

*D.Sc. (Philos.), Professor, Leading Researcher, Institute of Philosophy,
Political Science and Religious Studies, Committee for Science,
Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

Natalya SEITAKHMETOVA

*D.Sc. (Philos.), Professor, Corresponding Member, NAS RK,
Leading Researcher, Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and
Religious Studies, Committee for Science,
Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

ABSTRACT

In Kazakhstan the religious situation, with its steadily growing impact on social development, mentality and lifestyle, is unfolding spontaneously. Expert discussions of religious influence and the degree of clericalization of the secular society are multifaceted and highly contradictory. State politics and the state structure responsible for the interaction with religious institutions are in a state of perpetual transformations, which adds turbulence to the

situation and makes the implementation of different scenarios of changes in the religious (mainly Islamic) landscape possible. The state responds to the threat of radicalization of society using quasi-religious patterns with the use of force, employment of preventive educational efforts and rehabilitation of certain groups of the republic's population. On the whole, the balance between secularity and religiosity requires a consistent and non-contradictory state policy.

KEYWORDS: *legal regulation of the religious sphere, secularity/religiosity balance, spiritual security, modernization of religious consciousness, expert discourse on religions, radicalization of religious consciousness, clericalization trends, statistics and sociology of religiosity.*

Introduction

Kazakhstan is furthering its religious diversity and creates conditions in which officially registered religious associations can function under its Concept of State Policies in the Religious Sphere for 2017-2020 adopted to consolidate stability and security in the context of new geopolitical realities, internal and external challenges.

The state

- (1) is improving the laws and methods of cooperation between the state and religious associations;
- (2) is consolidating its secular principles;
- (3) is developing the system of opposition to religious extremism and destructive religious trends.

The state has declared protection of the freedom of conscience and respect for the religious principles of its citizens as its foundational principles. It has created conditions under which registered religious associations can function, while those religious trends that undermine national security, the state's constitutional foundations and radicalize certain population groups are banned.

The Government of Kazakhstan has adopted a state program of opposition to religious extremism and terrorism for 2018-2022 to protect individuals, society, and the state against violent outcrops of extremism and terrorist threats. There is awareness at the state level that prevention of religious extremism and terrorism should be refined, and that the influence of external radicalization factors within the republic should be suppressed, while the methods used to identify and liquidate religious extremism and terrorism should be improved, etc. By 2020 the society is expected to become fully aware of the basic secular values and learn to reject all manifestations of radicalism and extremism

rooted in the quasi-religious soil. The five-year state program is realized using the funds of the republican and local budgets (a total of over \$700,000). The sum will be adjusted according to the situation. In 2019, Kazakhstan allocated adequate sums to repatriate its citizens and their families from Syria and is funding their adaptation and reintegration at rehabilitation centers in different regions of the republic.

This attention to the measures designed to prevent radicalization based on false religious principles and promote the rehabilitation of those who have fallen victim to these efforts is explained by the danger of transformation of sustainable Islamic into a violent Islamist paradigm. This danger is real in both Kazakhstan and its Central Asian neighbors. In fact, Islamization of secular societies has become one of the global trends. In some regions of Kazakhstan, pre-school children were subjected to radical interpretation of the surahs in kindergartens since the age of 4 and were taught to read namaz since the age of 6. This radical, rather than traditional interpretation of Islam has been stopped short.

Modernization as an inevitable trend apparent in all spheres of life is present in the ideological segment as well as others. Globalization and transformation of the ideas about the world and acceleration of the course of history demand that the place of religion and religious values should be reassessed. The Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK) responded to the global trend by adjusting, to a certain extent, the order of Friday sermons: today, at some regional mosques the concluding part of the sermon is read in Kazakh and repeated in Russian for Muslims of other nationalities who use Russian for everyday communication.

In the process of its development, the secular Kazakhstani society has acquired a wide variety of philosophies and ideas about the world, while the process of growing religiosity gained momentum. The state has to respond to the mounting and increasingly more purpose-oriented changes, which add urgency to the problem of secularity/religiosity.

The Religious Iceberg of Kazakhstan

According to state statistics, there are 3,720 registered religious subjects that belong to 18 different confessions: 2,593 of them are Muslim; 339, Orthodox; 86, Catholic; 591, Protestant; 8 belong to Society of Krishna Conscience; 7 are Jews; 6—Baha'i; 2—Buddhist; 2 belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons); 1—to the Unification Church (Moonies).

There 3,502 cultic structures in the republic, of which 2,592 are mosques; 301 Orthodox churches; 110 Catholic churches; 407 Protestant prayer houses; 26 prayer houses of the New Apostolic Church; there are also 6 synagogues, 3 prayer houses of Bahai, 2 prayer houses of the Society of Krishna Conscience and 1 Buddhist temple. There are 554 officially registered missionaries in the republic: 268 of them belong to the Roman Catholic Church; 84, to the Orthodox Church of Kazakhstan; 30, to the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Kazakhstan; 39, to the Pentecostal Church; 31, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and the Presbyterian Church; 30, to the New Apostolic Church; there are 15 Baptist and 9 Lutheran churches; 7 churches belong to the Adventists of Seventh Day and the Society of Krishna Conscience; there are 3 Jewish synagogues, 1 Buddhist temple and 1 Jehovah's Witnesses' church. There are 435 foreign citizens among the subjects; 119 are citizens of Kazakhstan. There are 15 religious education organizations; 400 primary courses held at mosques and church Sunday schools; there are 383 premises used for religious events outside cultic buildings, including prayer rooms for Muslims and Christians; there are also 257 stationary spots for the distribution of religious literature and other religious information materials and objects.

According to expert information, there are unregistered religious organizations that belong to different confessions, including the so-called Islamic “dormant cells,” unregistered Islamic jamaats (the number is unknown) with up to 20,000 members.

Constitutionally, Kazakhstan is a secular state; the majority (76.6%) of the respondents described it as a multi-confessional state; 12.6% disagreed with its multi-confessional nature, while one out of ten remained undecided. The biggest shares of those who belong to religious communities and follow religious norms live in the Zhambyl Region (33.3%); Atyrau (29.9%) and Kyzylorda (25.2%). In southern Kazakhstan, on the whole, the share of the faithful actively involved in religious life is fairly big (as compared with other regions): Almaty Region—18.9%; South-Kazakhstan—12.6% and the city of Almaty—18.3%.¹

Globalization affects, to a certain extent, the process of emergence of Kazakhstani civil identity, wherein local people are drawn into communities that have nothing in common with the country’s ethno-confessional subculture. The country’s western regions (with the exception of the Atyrau and West-Kazakhstan regions) are not highly religious (only 4.8% of the respondents in the Aktobe Region belonged to religious communities and followed religious norms); there were 7.9% of such people among the respondents in the Mangystau Region. The so-called extra-religious religiosity and non-traditional Islamic identity are taking shape. The population of northern Kazakhstan and the country’s capital Nur-Sultan is significantly less religious. The share of atheists is fairly big: while 14.7% described themselves as atheists in Almaty, in Nur-Sultan there are 36.0% of such self-described subjects.

Legal Regulation of the Religious Sphere

Religious diversity in Kazakhstan is regulated by the corresponding laws and by-laws which are altered periodically and contain detailed requirements related to the registration and activities of religious organizations. International missions regularly inform the world about violations of religious freedoms in Kazakhstan. In 2018, Forum 18² organized a monitoring of violations of administrative laws by individual citizens (members of religious organizations) and structures (charity foundations and business centers) and revealed that the Kazakhstani and foreign missionaries regularly violate administrative laws and norms by

- (a) distributing religious literature and attributes;
- (b) violating the order of performing religious rites;
- (c) drawing minors into religious practices;
- (d) violating the order of missionary activities.

The reasons for these violations remain unclear, which means that they either occurred accidentally or were premeditated, or the leaders of religious organizations were not fully aware of their legal

¹ Here and elsewhere we use information of formalized questionnaire population poll carried out by the Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies at the Ministry of Education and Science in 2018 among 3,500 respondents by the national representative sampling: adult (18+) population of Kazakhstan of the most important social-demographic groups that took into account gender, age, ethnicity, education, social-professional status, the level of income, belonging to definite settlement type, incomes, religiosity, etc. The polls were conducted as personal formalized interviews in the respondents’ flats “face to face” with the use of paper questionnaire (PAPI technology).

² [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2448].

responsibilities. Administrative blunders create an illusion of an infringement on the rights of the believers, but in fact, they stem from inadequate legal awareness of the leaders and members of religious organizations.

According to public opinion polls, 60.0% of the polled assessed state policies as adequate to the constitutional principles of the state/religion relationships; 14.2% were convinced that religious organizations enjoy too much freedom, while 3.1% pointed to excessive limitations introduced by the state; 2.9% believed that religious organizations were being ignored; 18.9% remained undecided.

The religious sphere remains in a turbulent zone partly because the state has not yet arrived at an adequate regulation and satisfactory laws. In December 2017, a draft Law on Amendments and Additions to Certain Legal Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan related to religious activities and religious associations specified the problems of religious rites and wedding or divorce ceremonies, the rules of wearing religious clothes in public places, organizing religious events, production and distribution of religious books, charity activities, construction of religious buildings, religious education, missionary activities, theological rehabilitation services to people in prisons, prevention of religious extremism and terrorism, etc. The draft law defined new concepts—destructive religious behavior, religious radicalism, etc.³

These changes were actively discussed at all levels: society was aware that religiously motivated radicalization should be kept within certain limits, state structures held discussions with heads of religious organizations, while experts, as could be expected, offered diametrically opposite opinions on the content and forms of the suggested changes. Public opinion polls carried out in all regions produced the following results: 54.5% of the respondents positively assessed the amendments; 29.2% were indifferent; 8.1% were negative, and 8.1% undecided.

Throughout 2018, the ministers of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society (N. Ermekbaev and later D. Kaletaev) and the Committee for Religious Affairs (later transformed into Committee for Public Accord) have twice presented the amendments to the lower chamber of the parliament (Majilis).

Those involved in parliamentary and extra-parliamentary discussions agreed that the suggested amendments needed considerable clarifications. Society (believers, unbelievers and subjects of the religious process), state structures responsible for the state policies in this sphere have been waiting for two years for the amended laws designed to regulate the interaction between the state and religious associations.

In December 2018, the draft was recalled⁴ (due to the need for further refinement according to the expert community) from the Majilis.

In early 2019, the Ministry of Religious Affairs was reorganized once again, and somewhat later, received a new minister.

The experts and public figures agreed that the draft law was recalled because:

- It offered legal measures to keep in check the destructive religious minorities that may bring numerous negative repercussions;
- As could be expected, social rather than religious problems attracted the most attention on the eve of presidential elections; religious aspects were pushed aside until the law had finally been redacted;
- In the summer of 2018 some of the partners put pressure on Kazakhstan at the governmental meetings between foreign ministers of some countries.

³ [https://tengrinews.kz/zakon/pravitelstvo_respubliki_kazahstan_premier_ministr_rk/konstitutsionnyiy_stroy_i_osnovyi_gosudarstvennogo_upravleniya/id-P1700000907].

⁴ [<https://egov.kz/cms/ru/law/list/P1900000025>].

The State and Religion in Kazakhstan: More Turbulence?

Today, the state, which has been cooperating with traditional religious institutions, spares no effort in explaining secular priorities and pointing to religious diversity. Generally, people consider themselves Muslims; religiosity in the republic is on the rise, which has been confirmed by monitoring and by what can be seen in the streets.

“Sustainable development of any state and reproduction of social stability is possible only if the religious situation is taken into account; if it is studied, analyzed and its trends identified. Inadequate knowledge of religious trends and tendencies makes religiosity a factor of social and political risks, cripples manageability of social processes; unpredictable developments cannot be ruled out if the religious factor is used as an instrument of political influence.”⁵

Islam’s increasingly greater role and Islamization of the secular consciousness are associated not so much with social and economic problems—poverty, unequal access to education, malfunctioning social lifts—but by the fact that the religious policy of Kazakhstan is far from perfect, it is one-sided and ranges from absolute liberalism of the 1990s to the restrictions introduced in the early 2000s.

Discourse analysis has identified several approaches typical of oppositional, moderate, and pro-government experts. The majority agrees that the state’s religious policy is not consistent, that it is confrontational rather than compromising; that it lacks ideas, has no continuity and is suppressed by excessive administration. The opposition and the monitoring missions criticize the excessive regulation of the religious sphere.

Moderate experts pay attention to the rift between the state policy and the political trends prevalent in the world; they point out that the state fails to act when immediate actions are needed and that society is very critical of the state religious policies. Certain journalists and publicist writers are very negative because authorities

- (1) have no idea of how they should fight religious extremism
- (2) draw its citizens into an ideological confrontation via its so-called “humanitarian missions” carried out jointly with Russia, the United States and other countries to remove compatriots (religious radicals, who moved of their free will to the zones of conflict to kill the “infidels,” and their families) from the zones of conflicts (Syria).

The uncontrolled clericalization of mass consciousness cannot but cause concern: Islamic clerics are actively involved in all large-scale events; they discuss theology in unsuitable places and try to correct the principles of secular life. The basic descriptions of audiences—their educational and cultural potentials—are not always taken into account, while the secular foundations of the lifestyle of the majority are ignored along with the plurality of ideas about the world and the meaning of life. Many experts disagree with the statements claiming that the spiritual and moral potential is limited to religion; more and more people state that the institute of religion should not replace the sphere of education, enlightenment and culture; that society needs a balance between secularity and religiosity, that the mental specifics of Kazakhs should be taken into account when their spiritual reference points are identified.

Kazakhstan’s clerics are doing their best to preserve the traditional Islamic landscape, which is not that easy. Religious conscience is becoming radicalized partly because of the deficit of traditional religious literature that objectively interprets the history of Islam. The void is filled with radical interpretive practices.

⁵ A. Amrebaev, A. Bizhanov, E. Burova, “Political Science and Sociology on the Role of Religion in the Axiological and Meaningful Space of Kazakhstan Society,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus. English Edition*, Vol. 19, Issue 4, 2018, p. 86.

“In Kazakhstan, the discourse related to Islamic studies testifies that the society had reached the stage of spiritual revival, religious and civilizational re-identification in the post-secular cultural and communicative space. The problems discussed in Kazakhstan—history of Islam in Kazakhstan, prevention of religious extremism, continuity of Kazakh-style Islamic traditions, cultural and axiological alignments, orientation towards the Hanafi madhhab and Yassawi tariqa traditional for Kazakhstan—are suggested by the pragmatic desire to maintain inter-confessional stability in the multi-cultural and polyethnic society with the help of religion that ensured a safe performance of all social rites.”⁶

There are attempts to transform the Kazakhstani model of Sunni Islam into its Arab/Salafi variant; further liberalization of religious politics will encourage those actively engaged in the process. Radical ideology and its promotion in Kazakhstan is a challenge created by the globalist Islamic ideology that wants to adjust the Islamic tradition of Kazakhstan to its own patterns. The Muslims of Kazakhstan should be fully aware of their right to profess Islam of their own madhhab; they should be absolutely sure that by preserving the balance between Islam and secularity the state protects them from radicalism and terrorism.

The mounting rivalry between radical ideological invasions and the Hanafi madhhab is caused by the more or less widespread ignorance of the nature of their madhhab and its correlation with the national spiritual traditions.

The religious sphere is filled with very diverse practices and is far from being geographically unified. The state is determined to consolidate the traditional positions of Hanafi madhhab and Russian Orthodoxy preferred by the majority and the cornerstones of stability. The majority agrees that Kazakhstanis should support traditional religions or those supported by the state, yet there is no unanimity: 66.8% are ready to support them; 16.4% are against them, while 16.7% are undecided.

The following regions attract particular attention: the Mangystau Region (28.6%); East Kazakhstan (25%), Kostanay (24.2%), the city of Almaty (25.9%), where one out of four respondents *does not agree* with the statement that the faithful should support traditional religions. On the other hand, 41.2% in the West-Kazakhstan Region; 30% in the Atyrau Region, 29% in the North-Kazakhstan Region, 24% in Aktobe Region, 21.7% in East-Kazakhstan Region; 20.3% in the Zhambyl Region, 17.9% in Almaty Region, 15.2% in the city of Almaty and 11.9% in the country’s capital positively assess the role of new religious organizations.

Focus groups expressed the opinion that “the Hanafi madhhab cannot and should not be the only religion for all: there cannot and should not be a rule; each person should be free to realize his right to freely choose his religion. Kazakhstan is a secular state, which means that no religion or the demand to follow traditional religions can be imposed upon its citizens. Freedom of conscience and convictions belongs to all and everyone; it includes the right to choose any religion. This principle had been accepted by the international and national law.”

Rationality in the Islamic Discourse and Challenges to the Traditional Islamic Paradigm

The situation in the Islamic world and in Western Europe has pushed Islamic discourse in secular societies to the fore. The time has come to examine how Islam, Islamic science, and Islamic edu-

⁶ Zh. Turganbayeva, N. Seitakhmetova, M. Bektenova, Sh. Zhandossova, “Islamic Identity in the Context of History and its Prospects: Religious and Political Aspects,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus. English Edition*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, 2019, p. 105.

cation can help formulate a tolerant concept of the world based on values and humanitarian and spiritual priorities.

Throughout its history, Islamic discourse was taking shape within the context of rationalism that relied on the conceptualization of the mind as an inalienable quality of a free individual. This explains how the madhhab doctrines appeared: they are rationalist concepts that ensure the rights and freedoms of religious practices in the sociocultural and political space of Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

The above-mentioned problems are concentrated around religious, or even marginal, studies of the Hanafi madhhab and the results of fundamental studies carried out abroad, which, as we have seen, are suggested by all sorts of political, social, and cultural interests.

This creates ideological lacunae that are gradually filled with Islamist ideologies that threaten the traditional religious stability. The issue of the “correct” and “incorrect” interpretations of the Koran and hadiths is the main trap: this inevitably leads to the question of the correct and incorrect practice of Islam, the rites and rituals, fasting, Islamic holidays and prohibition of all secular holidays.

In order to promote Hanafi ideology, the SAMK needs Islamic educational centers. The Abu-Hanifah educational center set up at the Nur-Mubarak University has not yet become sufficiently developed to influence the religious context to any noticeable extent. A Central Asian Hanafiah Center is very much needed to provide theological unaggressive education in Central Asia with due regard for the specifics of the Hanafi madhhab. The studies of the Hanafi madhhab should be realized in the context of the Islamic education philosophy by identifying the educational integrating potential of Hanafiah.

Factors of Radicalization and Experience of De-Radicalization

Today, the religious space of Kazakhstan is gradually turning into a metaphoric battlefield between different philosophical strategies not only along the secular/religious dividing line, but also along the lines of traditional/new religions and moderate/radical impacts. Different interpretations and assessments of religion as a positive or negative factor by the common people have become apparent: a large share of the respondents (56.5%) believe that religion, on the whole, cannot promote aggressiveness and cannot radicalize public relations because it positively affects society. On the other hand, 12.6% believe that religion can be aggressive and can radicalize society. Approximately the same share (12.2%) has agreed with the following statement: “Today the level of radicalism is fairly low, but it will grow.”

Public consciousness is radicalized because the majority of Muslims cannot detect differences between the madhhabs, persuasions and trends in Islam. Experts point to social vulnerability of certain population groups: inadequate working conditions, inadequate educational and family socialization.

This applies, primarily, to the younger generations. An awareness of emotional imbalance, which causes an awareness of social injustice and stirs up strong negative feelings, as well as immature value orientations and vague ideas about the world and religious ignorance also lead to radical activities. The following categories of citizens might be potentially involved in radical activities: the youth, labor migrants who face serious economic and political stress and prisoners.

Today, sustainable religious feelings within the limits of the Islamic landscape, sustainable tolerance of other confessions and cultures are very much needed to de-radicalize the Islamic ummah and Islamic identity. The issues of religious and theological education have been placed on the agen-

da: Islamic education is the main instrument of preventing the deconstruction of Islamic Kazakhstani identity.

Practicing theologians with experience in de-radicalization criticize the official representatives of traditional Islam. Experts have pointed to the mounting crisis of confidence in the official clergy. There are no spiritual authorities—ulema of worldwide fame; there is no openness or transparency; there is no competence in religious questions, no communicative skills and an ability to talk and build up bridges between communities. Traditional clergy is not free from corruption; they squabble over religious statuses. Not infrequently, religious figures are unable to produce the required content, expected results or values. They limit themselves to self-promotion with the help of PR technologies. This is what theologian Askar Sabdin, Director of the Mysl Center of Applied Studies has written.⁷

Experts have openly admitted that the traditional Islamic clergy cannot compete with camouflaged jamaats, trends and sects that reject the local national code and identity. This explains the continued spiritual colonization of the believers by extra-confessional religious structures and leads to an obvious polarization of the faithful.

The official site of the public association Counterterrorist Committee [ctc-rk.kz] refers to the vice-minister responsible for the sphere of religion, who has assessed the scope of the work conducted to prevent radicalism. In 2018, 100 extra-staff lecturers, members of the republican informational-explanatory group (IEG) organized 312 events in the regions, attracting a total audience of 18,500 people; 113 of the events were intended for female believers and drawing 4,500 people. The regional IEG structures organized 38,391 events that attracted 2,139,074 people. It should be said that since the majority of events involve large groups of people, their efficiency should be assessed.

Certain experience has been gained by the rehabilitation/de-radicalization centers working with individuals or small groups. In 2018, 18,159 events of that sort were conducted, engaging 26,263 people; about 2,500 people have been rehabilitated. Rehabilitation and explanation are used in the structures of the penitentiary system of the Administration for Religious Affairs: 7,645 events involved 32,826 people; 286 have abandoned radical ideas.

The regional Administrations for Religious Affairs (recently they were integrated with the Administrations for Internal Policies and the Youth. Today they are called the Administrations of Public Accord within the system of Administrations of Social Development) along with the branches of the SAMK offer theological consultations to those who have suffered from destructive and radical religious trends.

We need integrated programs and methods of de-radicalization and rehabilitation, as well as standards and criteria for persuasion and adaptation of radicals. Objects and subjects of de-radicalization need standards and criteria to an equal extent. Communication and an open exchange of opinions designed to reveal the destructive nature of radical ideology, rather than the use of force, should be studied and implemented.

Different target groups—people imprisoned for the crimes of terror perpetrated in the territory of Kazakhstan, radicals who returned from the zones of terrorist activities, their wives and children—need different rehabilitation approaches and methods, as well as generally humane treatment.

The greater part of the rehabilitation efforts has been transferred to NGOs that should prove their adequacy through a system of state tenders carried every year; sometimes funding is extended to three years.

Obviously, all and everyone engaged in this sphere—people employed by the law and order structures and the penitentiary system, as well as those employed by the NGOs—should have ade-

⁷ [<http://ctc-rk.kz/tag/аскар-сабдин>].

quate knowledge and possess adequate skills. Imams, theologians and other people involved in rehabilitation projects should take special courses to learn more about the psychology and sociology of religion, age and gender psychology, rhetoric, anthropology, conflict resolution studies, etc.

Modernization of Consciousness

Despite the attempts to move religion into the sphere of public policies, it is the state structures that initiate contacts between religion and society, while the religious sphere is spreading beyond the limits of individual space, attracting believers and secular citizens alike, a signal of the imperfect state of public consciousness, the ideological component of which is not corrected by secular means—the family, the system of education and enlightenment, and ideology.

The expert community has pointed out to two sources of radicalization: activities of radical Islamists and an active expansion of numerous foreign missionary movements and quasi-religious organizations.

Today, the analysts have agreed that *quasi-religious Islamic and non-Islamic extremism can potentially spread across the republic*, even if its ideology is an imported rather than a local phenomenon. The state is fighting this negative trend along a wide front stretching from propaganda, including online counter-propaganda, to the use of force.

High technologies limited the role of traditional communication methods, while online platforms of all sorts have become the main source of religious education for the younger generation. There are several discourses on religious subjects in the social networks. Among the officially recognized religious organizations, the SAMK [muslim.kz, hikmet.kz], Asyl Arna TV channel and the Hazret Sultan Mosque are the most active. These and other generators of the official religious online content prefer presenting their material in a formal manner; their non-traditional rivals rely on easily understood and, therefore, attractive methods of information/enlightenment that presume feedback.

Young people are strongly attracted by videos of a negative or shocking nature that normally invites two different responses:

- (1) concern for those who profess true religion and
- (2) religious intolerance of the believers as a whole or of followers of certain confessions/religions.

Religious problems do not raise a wave of answers in the Kazakhstani social media segment: the active and popular users limit themselves to rare and short responses to prominent events in the religious sphere unfolding in the country or in the world. This relates to the latest terrorist acts in New Zealand and Sri Lanka; the majority offered warm comments and compassion. A small part of the Internet audience promoted the idea that what happened in New Zealand should be qualified as “Christian terrorism”; they argued that terrorism is not limited to Islam and that the New Zealand event’s close association with terrorism and extremism in the minds stems from the propaganda war waged by the Western Christian world. These people insisted that the West should classify this tragedy as a “religious terrorist act.”

Religious subjects are discussed, albeit indirectly, in political transit discourses. At the same time, certain rank-and-file users have pointed out that the date of presidential elections was selected deliberately to synchronize the election campaign with the month of Ramadan. The opposition

feared that authorities have relied on the instruments of soft ideological pressure: wittingly or unwittingly, Islamic clergy would promote the interests of the authorities at the evening namaz (Salah), thus undermining the protest potential in the minds and on the squares at the rallies organized from abroad. The opposition pointed out that, on the one hand, Islam sides with strong authoritarian power and preaches abeyance and, on the other, bans conflicts and negative actions during fasts, etc. Another part of the Internet users interprets the economic and political crisis in the country as the best time for the radical Islamization of society. The most respected bloggers, however, stated nothing of the kind.

An analysis of the discourse of religious subjects in social networks in 2019 shows that it is not tied to specific events and is, on the whole, not popular. Discussions are not related to religious leaders or ideologically orientated users; the audience is interested in political events and the transit of power in Kazakhstan.

The non-traditional religious trends (associations) use social networks to promote information rather than become involved in open discussions or open proliferation of confessional materials. Instead, they attract people with more or less shared interests and gradually draw them into their spheres of influence.

This means that the traditional religious organizations should create their own efficient content; they should improve their information presentation style and rely on the potential of online dialog.

Starting in 2018 a humanitarian mission Zhusan has been carried out in Kazakhstan to repatriate those who have travelled to the zone of terrorist activities for different reasons. It was announced that all adults, whose involvement in terrorist activities abroad was proven would be stripped of Kazakhstan citizenship. Today, about 300 citizens of Kazakhstan (including wives and widows of fighters and their children mainly of pre-school and primary-school ages, as well as orphans) have been repatriated.

The users are of diametrically different opinions about the mission: some believe that Kazakhstan should support its citizens no matter what; children that found themselves in the zone of terrorist activities should be rescued by all means. Those who oppose this measure are afraid of ideological and physical threats; they are convinced that the returning fighters will spread extremist ideas in prisons and train others to become fighters.

Conclusions

Religious feelings are growing stronger in Kazakhstan, yet the country is obviously tired of radically minded adepts of any religion. It should be said that

- (a) people are more liberally minded when it comes to personal, group or social perception of religion;
- (b) the number of people who demonstrate their disagreement with the state religious policy may increase, albeit insignificantly; people might be especially opposed to the declared need to follow the historical-cultural paradigms and traditions;
- (c) social discourse, which has become wider due to regional involvement, is very critical about the activities of those who represent the traditional religions and are very positive about new religious practices;
- (d) religious radicalism is expected to emerge.

These trends fully correspond to greater religiosity of modernizing societies and require efficient approaches and acceptable political decisions. The rising impact of quasi-religiosity requires a

modernization of religious consciousness to ensure spiritual security and religious tolerance; it is highly important to promote sustainable tolerant consciousness, Islamic integration in secular society, and Islamic modernization in the sphere of science, culture, and education.

Modernization should promote communication between cultures to achieve a natural balance between religious traditions and technological innovations; it should create a sustainable religious (traditional) identity and a philosophy of a tolerant Islamic personality. This means that we need to conduct a fundamental study of the issue of the transformation of Islam in the course of modernization, which creates new cultural interaction practices.

Radicalization of Islamic consciousness and inter-cultural and inter-confessional intolerance have created the zones of intolerance in which religious problems cannot be settled.

In Kazakhstan, the ultimate result of the development of religiosity is vague. So far, traditional Islam is still the main paradigm and should retain its place in people's minds through the combined interests and capabilities of theologians and experts in Islamic education, enlightenment, and information. Politicization of the Islamic discourse may cause unwelcome effects and a loss of balance between the secular and the religious.

The ideological requirements of new strategies of interaction between cultures and religions have been formulated by new global realities. The correlation between the secular and the religious cannot be understood outside the axiological paradigm that, in its turn, needs better methodologies. Religious policy is gradually developing into an instrument of impact on decision-making; religious ideas are used to realize different strategies fraught with a loss of traditional cultural landscapes and serious instability in society and the state.

The Hanafi ideology is one of the factors of integration of the joint efforts of the state and Islamic institutions adjusted to the highly specific Kazakhstani realities. Turkish or Arabic patterns are unacceptable: they might destroy the Islamic identity of the Kazakhstani ummah. Consolidation of the Muslims of Kazakhstan through Hanafiah will preserve religious sovereignty, Islamic immunity, an awareness of belonging to the Islamic ummah and promote integration in the secular society.

To achieve this, we should perfect our laws related to religion, take into account the realities of religious life in the Republic of Kazakhstan which are complicated, dynamic and concealed from outside observers. This means that comprehensive approaches are required. We should perfect the corpus of laws that regulate religious relations, starting with the definitions of religion, religious activities, religiously motivated extremism, etc. as perceived by law makers and common people. Confessional images of religious associations should be specified.

To add consistency and deepness to the religious policy of Kazakhstan and to preserve the balance between secularity and religiosity, we should limit the role of Islam in politics. It is highly important to redefine the main principles related to religion and its role in a secular state. We should not exclude the possibility that the law-making paradigm will pay more attention to the understanding of the secular and the religious context of Kazakhstani realities.

REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN: ETHNORELIGIOUS IDENTITY AS AN INTEGRATION FACTOR

Nurgul TUTINOVA

*Ph.D. Student, Department of Religious and Cultural Studies,
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
(Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan)*

Bekzhan MEIRBAYEV

*Ph.D. (Philos.), Assistant Professor,
Department of Religious and Cultural Studies,
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
(Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan)*

Albert FROLOV

*Ph.D. (Philos.), Research Associate,
Department of Historical Studies, University of Toronto
(3359 Mississauga Road, Canada)*

Kudaiberdi BAGASHAROV

*Ph.D. (Religious Studies),
Senior Lecturer, Department of Religious and Cultural Studies,
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
(Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan)*

ABSTRACT

The authors have analyzed the ways in which the country was consolidating its independence and sovereignty by strengthening and improving its national statehood, identifying the cultural and religious values of the Kazakhs and assessing their spiritual potential. In some twenty years, that is in a historically short period of time, the republic became easily recognizable in the world thanks to its geopolitical principles, clear ideas about its development path, a well-defined awareness of the spe-

cifics of its national culture and ethnoreligious identity as the society's subjective idea about itself and the world. This brought to the forefront not merely the problem of revival of its historical roots and spiritual value, which has gained ideological significance amid the world crisis in all spheres of social life. It has also become existentially important to revive, enrich and further develop the national culture and ethnic and religious customs and traditions and align them with the current realities.

KEYWORDS: *ethnicity, ethnic identity, religious identity, tradition, integration, nation.*

1. Introduction

Plunged into global transformations, the world is suffering an identity crisis. The enormous and fast social changes do not give society a chance to adjust to the rapidly changing social practices. Changes in the very foundations of social-cultural orders and methods of living combined with the variety of ongoing conflicts deprived individuals of their idea about the traditionally sustainable homogeneity of the human world. This added particular importance to identification processes.

Each ethnicity is unique. It has an identity of its own, which makes it similar to an individual personality. Confronted with challenges of historic dimensions, any nation seeks answers to the questions: Who are we? What sort of nation do we want to become or remain? A wrong choice is fraught with loss of identity. It is concentrated in the nation's history and is the result of its self-preservation. Any member of any nation has a certain basic set of images that forms his social identity structured at the individual and social levels. In the rapidly unfolding globalization, amidst the increasing variety of social contacts and new forms of socialization of national and ethnic divergences, identity betrays itself as an unstable or even virtual phenomenon that merely imitates variety by clothing type or behavior style. It is not conditioned by the context of the discursive tradition. Self-identification that defines historical individuality has become an indispensable condition of survival and functioning of society and each of its members.

The Soviet Union's disintegration and social upheavals that accompanied it plunged the former Soviet republics into instability with dim prospects of survival. This situation was even more complicated: the economic, social, political, national, and state crisis was aggravated by the spiritual and ideological crisis caused by the long period of communist ideology that had reshaped and reproduced the identities of all Soviet peoples during a period devoid of spiritual and national self-awareness.

Development of independence and sovereignty made the consolidation and improvement of the national statehood of Kazakhstan absolutely indispensable. The same fully applies to the identification of cultural and religious values of the Kazakhs and their spiritual potential. In twenty years, an amazingly short historical period, the world community learned about the republic's geopolitical principles, obtained clear ideas about its ways and aims, as well as about the specifics of its national culture and ethnoreligious identity (subjective ideas of Kazakhs about themselves and the world around them). This means that Kazakhstan has found a place of its own among other states and ethnicities. Today, it has become extremely important to rediscover historical roots and spiritual values (especially important amid the worldwide crisis that has spread far and wide into all spheres of social life). It is equally or even more important to revive, enrich and improve national culture and ethnoreligious customs and traditions, aligning them with the new realities. Kazakhstan, which for approximately 300 years remained within the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, had few chances to address these problems on its own. As an independent state it has obtained a chance to deal with the problems as it sees it fit. It is impossible to imitate any of its neighbors, since practically all newly independent post-Soviet states are coping with their own problems, as well as they can, Russia being no exception. In these conditions, the new cultural ethnoreligious values were planted and multiplied through the consistent promotion of the idea of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional unity, harmony, and religious tolerance as state ideology among the believers and the younger generations in the first place.

Here we will discuss religious identity, which is gaining importance in view of the process of ethnic and civil identification unfolding in Kazakhstan.

2. Methods and Materials

We have relied on hermeneutical and linguistic analyses, induction and deduction methods, books and articles written by prominent scholars and paid particular attention to those related to the idea of integration of peoples and cultures.

3. Results

Tolerance, one of the most important philosophical categories, is the first step towards mutual understanding and agreement. Religions have to work hard to find a common language among themselves. This should be done if conflicts and mutual reproaches are to be avoided. According to the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, the desire to understand begins with a confrontation with something alien, challenging and disorienting.¹ To achieve understanding, we should arrive at a context of a common meaning. In our case, understanding can be achieved through the efforts of the state and society to identify the conflict situation as a whole.

The examples and the conclusions offered below reflect individual sides of the positive changes that are going on in our country. These suggest that the culture of the religious tolerance has become an important factor of ensuring inter-ethnic agreement, inter-confessional cooperation, social and political stability and sustainable social development in Kazakhstan.

3.1. “Ethnic” as a Category

Ethnic distinctions cannot be reduced to values per se; they are rooted in the system of assessments and the unconscious, which betrays itself through ethnicity (the moral foundation of a community of people) that constitutes the ethnic structure of personality. Friedrich Nietzsche at one time pointed out that no people could survive without assessing what is good and what is evil.² Without an ethnicity as the core of a system of assessing imperatives, it is much harder to assess axiological parameters. Meanwhile, the socio-historical development of an ethnicity reassesses the values, thus changing the fundamental, the constructive and the creative, which leads to the accidental yet mandatory idea of an ethnicity; its new interpretation, as was shown by Lev Gumilev at one time, creates a possibility of an emergence of a different people. According to Gumilev, ethnic system is an emotional, psychic and behavioral entity that has all potentials of and demonstrates trends towards growth horizontally and vertically both as a territorial and philosophical unit through transformation of culture, religion, ideology, art, and traditions. He identified the transcendental core of the ethnicity which consists of local behavior patterns, that is, culture. His theory, however, relies on passionarity as the most important element and the basic concept described as “a characteristic dominant, an irreversible inner urge (conscious and unconscious) to purposeful activity.”³

The axiological aspect of ethnicity is expressed in material, cultural and spiritual (ethnic, aesthetic, religious, etc.) values created by an ethnicity to survive as a community and consolidate humanism in the individual by expressing these values in ethnic culture and preserving them in memory.

¹ See: H.-H. Gadamer, *Aktualnost prekrasnogo*, Iskusstvo Publishers, Moscow, 1991. P. 43-59 (H.-G. Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, Cambridge University Press, 1986).

² See: F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Macmillan, New York, 1911.

³ L.N. Gumilev, *Etinogenez i biosfera zemli*, Gidrometeoizdat, Moscow, 1990. P. 325 (L.N. Gumilev, *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere*, 1978).

3.2. Religious Identity of Kazakhs as a Symbiosis of Settled and Nomadic Cultures

The historical evolution of religious tolerance of Turkic-speaking peoples who lived in the territory of Kazakhstan was strongly affected by the fairly complex symbiosis of settled and nomadic cultures that flourished among ancient Turks, a patchwork of many ethnicities that borrowed cultural elements from each other. The emergence of the Great Silk Route played a great role in this. Mukhanmadiar Orynbekov, a prominent scholar who studied Kazakh philosophy, wrote in his last monograph *Genezis religioznosti v Kazakhstane* (The Genesis of Religious Feelings in Kazakhstan): “The Early Middle Ages were marked by the mind-boggling synchronous coexistence on the territory of Kazakhstan of different confessions. The smaller religious cosmos concentrated in Semirechie (Southern Kazakhstan) was, in fact, a detailed picture of all main confessions that positively affected the spiritual life of those who lived in the steppe under the favorable influence of moral rules and commandments. Religious tolerance in Kazakhstan has survived from that time as one of the most typical features of the steppe population.”⁴

3.3. The Role of Religion in Shaping Ethnic Identity

Religion as a form of social consciousness betrayed itself through consistent efforts to create socio-philosophical and invariably existent interactions between religion and art, religion and morals, religion and science, religion and law, religion and culture of an ethnicity to exert huge psychological, moral, esthetical and emotional pressure on the conscience, thinking and way of life of a religious as well as an ethnic community. The interaction between the religious and the ethnic may exist in many ways. This is especially obvious in the spiritual world of the Kazakhs; first and foremost, in the form of philosophical foundations of thinking and mentality, the national way of life, folk art, ethnic history, memory and self-identity.

3.4. Tolerance as the Cornerstone of Stability

Syncretism of religious ideas of the proto-Kazakhs is an amazing blend of religious notions, mainly caused by the openness of those who lived in the Steppe. Later, this openness transformed into tolerance towards all other peoples. Indeed, the fact that today Kazakhstan is home to over 140 ethnicities who live peacefully side by side without clashes and contradictions is, to a great extent, due to the tolerance of the Kazakhs. Kazakhs are an exceptionally welcoming and kind people; they welcomed those who were driven to their land by the cruel totalitarian regime. Kazakhstan, which, very much like all other post-Soviet states, lost a certain share of its population through emigration, has preserved its image of a friendly state where numerous ethnicities actively cooperate. Abdimalik Nysanbaev, Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of the RK, has written in his monograph *Globalizatsia i problemy mezhkulturnogo dialoga* (Globalization and the Problems of Intercultural Dialog) that “the experience of preserving the culture of agreement and intercultural communication has emerged and is still functioning in the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. This experience has been highly assessed by other post-Soviet states and can serve as a model of inter-ethnic harmony and coexistence of ethnicities in the countries far abroad.”⁵

⁴ M.S. Orynbekov, *Genezis religioznosti v Kazakhstane*, Dayk-Press, Almaty, 2005, p. 288.

⁵ A.N. Nysanbaev, *Globalizatsia i problemy mezhkulturnogo dialoga*, Vol. 1, Almaty, 2004, p. 262.

3.5. Post-Soviet “Return of Religion”

The country is gradually returning to its traditional religiosity, with religious Kazakhs highly valuing Islam, its ideas and practices. These people attend classes on Islam, study Arabic, buy leaflets explaining the rules and practices of the namaz and observe posts (uraza), hence their interest in different interpretations of Islam and different paths leading to religious experience. An increasingly larger number of people are choosing religion as the road to individual salvation. This explains the steadily widening range of religious trends—from puritan jamaats of the Salafis to urban groups of Sufis, not to mention the Islamic forums and blogs in the Internet.

3.6. Motherland or God?

For certain historical and cultural reasons, the highly contradictory process of searching for national/civil consolidation is still going on in Kazakhstan. As could be expected, an upsurge of religious feelings increased the role of religion in Kazakhstan, yet the majority remains convinced that for many reasons (one of them being the constitutional principle of the secular nature of the state) this role should remain within the limits of private life. In this context, acquisition of religious identity, very typical of the post-Soviet development stage, proves that people are free in their ethnocultural quest and their ideas about the world. Any attempt to make religion the main instrument of national/civil consolidation might bring negative results.

4. Discussion

4.1. What is “Ethnic Identity” and What are the Main Philosophical, Sociological and Psychological Methods of its Interpretation?

This is a social-philosophical, biological, psychological, culturological and intellectual construct in its ontological, epistemological and axiological dimensions up to and including such concepts as “ethnicity,” “ethnogenesis,” “ethnic memory,” and “ethnic identification” discussed in this article. Philosophers of the past offered very different interpretations of ethnicity and ethnic life. Plato spoke about the unity of clan and tribe, common languages, laws and rights that tied these social communities together.⁶ Charles Montesquieu looked at the spirit of the people as a sum-total of socio-psychological (mind, emotions, customs and habits), cultural (language and religion), political (laws and principles of guidance) and geographic (climate and territory) phenomena.⁷ Pitirim Sorokin, world-famous thinker and sociologist, pointed to the priority of the tongue, religion, natural and biological features as the foundation for the emergence of an ethnicity. He concluded that the language, religious and racial groups that emerge on this foundation were primary groups, and that a socially uniform society was being formed, while all national distinctions were bound to gradually disappear.⁸

⁶ See: Plato, *Sochinenia v trekh tomakh*, Vol. 3, Part 1, Mysl Publishers, Moscow, 1971. P. 91

⁷ See: Ch. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, Batoche Books, Kitchener, 2001.

⁸ See: P.A. Sorokin, *Sistema sotsiologii*, in two vols., Vol. 2: Sotsialnaia analitika. Uchenie o stroenii slozhnykh sotsialnykh agregatov, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1993. P. 99-105.

Hegel was among those who wrote that the sociopolitical interpretation of an ethnic nature pointed to the presence of a state. For him, the national was a partial realization of the Absolute Spirit in the form of a national state.⁹ Max Weber spoke about a nation as a community moving towards a state of its own.¹⁰ Nikolay Berdyaev was convinced that the state was a form of existence of any nation, the loss of which was the greatest misfortune that crippled the soul of the nation.¹¹ These different approaches are conditioned by the firm conviction that the nature of ethnic phenomena is subjective and spiritual. Some thinkers associate it with the Divine; others—with psychology, while still others link it to culture. A theological approach identifies the essence of the ethnic as God; the main principle of any people as homogeneity of forms of life guided by the Divine decree, while people as a sum-total of individuals who live their common life according to the law of the development of the Divine and who reproduce themselves physically and spiritually. Vladimir Solovyev looked at the nations as organic and eternal parts of humanity, each of which fulfilled its Divine predestination: “The idea of a nation is not what it thinks of itself in time, but instead what God thinks of it in eternity.”¹²

Today ethnic processes are driven by the desire of each ethnicity to preserve its specifics; to achieve intra-ethnic consolidation and to stay apart from all other ethnicities. This is gradually developing into a pattern of an ethnic context that is growing global by spreading to different societies with very different social and economic characteristics.

The idea that nature plays the main role in forming an ethnicity is the dominant one in the concept of geographical determinism of Ludwig Woltmann (the racial temperament theory) and Ernest Renan’s national idea. While by its objective characteristics ethnicity is viewed as a natural phenomenon, its methods of self-organization make it a socio-cultural phenomenon in which culture is the criterion and a constant of ethnic sustainability. Changes in internal cultural determination alter the ethnicity: ethnic self-awareness reflects the concerted activities of the human society that determine its lifestyle, the specifics and uniqueness of ideas about the world and cognizing the world by a people. In ethnogenesis, religious psychology united and represented a very special world of the believer as an individual, and the world of religious tradition—as an intrinsic link between the past and present, while the collective religious-psychological experience of the past was one of the organizing principles. One of the historical reasons for the continued existence of religion is its mission of transmission from one generation to another, throughout millennia, of secular and theological information in the form of linguistic heritage, symbolic and realistic representation of life in paintings, graphics, ornaments, sculpture, music, ritual behavior (traditions, rites and customs), in cultic systems, and in the sanctification of the images of saints. All of the above reflects the epistemological, ontological, axiological, and anthropological aspects of the ideas about the world, and “the more refined, cohesive and adapted to the specifics of the spiritual quest of an ethnicity a religion is, the firmer it is as the foundation of an ethnicity’s identification and the more obviously ethnic are any of its active manifestations.”¹³

Phenomenological analysis of the problem of definition of ethnicity, along with other approaches, gives us a chance to arrive at a final definition: ethnicity is a social community based on and functioning within a common system of values, moral positions that are reflected in national culture and life style both rationally and through images and symbols. This means that ethnicity is, primarily, a cultural unity accepted by all members of any group that identifies itself as a single whole that has never been divided in the past and present and that has certain objective characteristics of its belonging, i.e., territory, language, religion, world outlook, culture, psychology, and life style.

⁹ See: G.W.F. Hegel, *Works of Different Years*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1970, P. 285-385 (in Russian).

¹⁰ See: M. Weber, *The Nation, Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, 1994. P. 25.

¹¹ See: N.A. Berdyaev, *Filosofia neravenstva*, IMA-Press Publishing House, Moscow, 1990, p. 85.

¹² V.S. Solovyev, *Sochinenia*, in two volumes, Vol. 2, Pravda Publishers, Moscow, 1989. P. 220.

¹³ N.M. Sadykov, “Etnos i religia kak identifikatsionnye faktory,” *Saiasat*, No. 5, 1998, p.39.

4.2. How Do Ethnicity and Religion Correlate in Kazakhstan?

An ethnoconfessional community is a special type of community of people with a specific lifestyle with religion at its core, and whose ethnic self-awareness serves as religious self-awareness; in specific sociocultural conditions it becomes an ethnic denominator. This community rests on a dual foundation of confessional and secular organizations, each with its unique as well as common connections with its own confessional group. The main trends in tying a religious-cultic entity and an ethnic community together are related to the common interactions between religion and ethnicity which played an important role in forming any given ethnicity. On the other hand, having blended with folk beliefs (that are highly ethno-genic), certain components of the religious-cultic complex (its rituals, religious rites and traditions, in the first place) penetrate the national forms of social life and become ethnic phenomena.

These are the two main trends that lead to interconnections between religion and an ethnicity, as a result of which the ties between the confession and certain specific features of an ethnicity (traditional forms of economic activities and lifestyle, the cultural and everyday specifics, tongue, ethnic self-awareness, etc.) invariably cause a fusion of religion and social experience. This means that religion performs a certain role in the process of ethnic formation, which becomes especially apparent in a mono-confessional context. In his monograph *Predfilosofia protokazakhov* (Pre-Philosophy of the Proto-Kazakhs) Mukhammadiar Orynbekov wrote: “The deepest layer of human memory is closely connected with an awareness of belonging to a certain ethnicity, its traditions and ideas about the world, of which individuals are not always fully aware. National religious feelings are related to man’s biological nature in the closest way possible, which explains the outbursts of basic instincts and impulses in human minds when their thoughts and actions slide into the ethnoconfessional sphere under the pressure of large-scale social shocks and shifts. It makes ethnicity and religion the last shelter.”¹⁴

4.3. What is Tolerance in the Context of Inter-Cultural Integration and How is it Manifested in Kazakhstan?

Today, tolerance has become indispensable; it can be seen in different spheres of human activities and is achieved through dialogs. It is not a retreat from, connivance with or indulgence of any ideological system or a political position. The philosophy of tolerance is not indifferent to any ideas and actions; it is not a retreat under the pressure of public evil or its everyday manifestations. Maria Mchedlova was absolutely right when she wrote that “there can be no harmony between the truth and lies, between what is good and what is evil.”¹⁵

As a Russian philosopher Vladislav Lektorsky has written, “tolerance is respect for the position of others combined with the readiness to readjust one’s own positions; in some cases this means re-adjustment of individual and cultural identity as a result of a critical dialog.”¹⁶

The problem of tolerance has come to the fore in scholarly writings of the last decade, yet the meaning and usage remain fairly vague, because the term “identity” is related not only to the highly

¹⁴ M. Orynbekov, *Predfilosofia protokazakhov*, Olke Publishing House, Almaty, 1994, p.114.

¹⁵ M.M. Mchedlova, “Religioznaia identichnost,” in: *Politichskaia identichnost i politika identichnosti*, in 2 vols., ed. by I.S. Semenenko, Vol. 1, *Identichnost kak kateteria politicheskoy nauki: slovar terminov i poniaty*, Moscow, 2012, p. 123.

¹⁶ V.A. Lektorsky, “O telerantnosti, pluralizme i krititsizme,” *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 11, 1997, p. 54.

varied, but also to the highly contradictory philosophical-psychological phenomenology. In his *Identity: Youth and Crisis* Erik Erikson identified social solidarity, individuality and equivalence as certain aspects of the analysis of identity.¹⁷

Erik Erikson and Erich Fromm considered identity not only a result of socialization, but also a product of personality individualization.¹⁸

Religion is the content and an instrument of the identification process. Maria Mchedlova has defined religious identity as the result of self-identification of an individual or a reference community with a certain religious teaching or its part.¹⁹

In all cases and variants religious identity presupposes that an individual identifies himself as a social creature in any specific historical period; objectively religious identity invariably includes a real presupposed (but not necessarily stated and pronounced) social position, identification with the structures of society and, therefore, a social (as a product of identification) identity as an indispensable component of the identity of an individual, the never ending efforts to try on and to discuss one's unique "I" in the social sphere of its functioning.²⁰

Tolerance, a devotion to humanitarian values and a long history of close contacts served as a firm foundation for the interaction of different religions. Christianity had come to the land of our ancestors in the 3rd century AD; small churches appeared much later, in the mid-19th century. The Turkestan Eparchy was established in 1871; in the following year, Archbishop Zephaniah, the first hierarch in Kazakhstan, was appointed head of the Verny and Semirechie eparchies.

Soviet power that came to these parts in 1917 launched a wide-scale atheistic campaign that continued for seventy years. Churches and cathedrals were pulled down, church property confiscated. In the 1920s-1930s, priests were either liquidated or sent to prison for many years.

Kazakhstan, very much like all other Soviet republics, had its share of these processes. Starting in the 1930s, it became a territory of exile for priests and laity alike. Collectivization was unfolding approximately at the same time; it destroyed the nomadic lifestyle of the Kazakhs and their auls (villages), as well as the households of Russian settlers causing hunger on the scale previously unknown with millions dying of starvation across the country.

Today, the authorities used the religious-cultural heritage to prevent the politicization of Islam; certain religious symbols were legitimized as part of social life. The process was unfolding at the level of mass cultural consciousness bordering on cultural identity. In Kazakhstan, religious holidays Uraza Bayram and Qurban Bayram are official days off. Christmas, one of the main Christian holidays, likewise, is a day off.

The objective conditions in which revival of religious and ethnic identities in post-Soviet time became possible were created by the political elites, their positive ideas about Islam, their desire to capitalize on them to consolidate their own positions and revive the identity of the local peoples. This created the extremely favorable conditions in which local communities were very positive about the religious factor that was steadily widening and gaining influence.

Religious revival is directly associated with ethnic self-awareness: religion as a social phenomenon and one of the important elements of sub-ethnic culture loaded with eternal moral values became the reckoning point for hundreds of thousands of people. Having found themselves in ideological *anomie* (the term coined by Émile Durkheim²¹), the post-Soviet mass consciousness pushed atheism

¹⁷ See: E. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, W.W. Norton Company, New York, 1968.

¹⁸ See: E. Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, McDougal, 1941; E. Erikson, op. cit.

¹⁹ See: M.M. Mchedlova, op. cit.

²⁰ See: S.Zh. Dosanova, A.A. Agabek, "Konstrukt religioznoy identichnosti s pozitsiy sinergeticheskoy kontseptsii sotsializatsii," *Vestnik KazNU. Seria Filosofia. Seria kulturologia. Seria Politologia*, No. 1 (34), 2010, pp. 129-130.

²¹ See: É. Durkheim, "Kollektivnyi ritual," in: *Religia i obshchestvo: Khrestomatia po sotsiologii religii*, compiled by V.I. Garadzha, E.D. Rutkevich, Aspekt Press, Moscow, 1996. P. 438-441.

away and embraced religion.²² It became one of the defining elements of culture indirectly connected with the nation's ethnohistorical traditions and spiritual heritage. Since the first days of independence, the leaders of the post-Soviet Kazakhstan have been treating greater inter-ethnic and inter-confessional harmony as one of their priorities. In the early 1990s, when the Soviet Union was falling apart there was a fear of massive clashes between members of different religions and confessions, but nothing of the sort has ever happened.

Today, Kazakhstan is one of the biggest poly-ethnic and poly-confessional states that occupies vast territories in Eurasia. The presence of different religious faiths, customs and traditions in its territory is one of its system-forming elements. In fact, none of its Central Asian neighbors can boast an equally multinational and poly-confessional population. On the whole, 98% of their populations is Muslim.

At present, the Kazakhstan society can be described as a unique example of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional pluralism and tolerance: its population consists of representatives of 140 ethnicities and of over 18 confessions. Peace and civil harmony, religious tolerance and equal participation of members of different cultures in social life form the foundation of our national policy as an independent state and serve as a distinctive feature by which Kazakhstan is known all over the world. The world is aware of Kazakhstan as the country on the crossroads of the Great Silk Route and the meeting place of the Eastern and Western civilizations.

New religions changed the attitude of the state to religion: it no longer interferes in the spiritual quest of its citizens; today, the level of religiosity in Kazakhstan is much higher than it used to be. This process was connected with the liberal-democratic reforms that removed the pinching ideological limits of Soviet times and helped revive traditional religious values and immanent forms of spirituality as the main content of culture of the country's population.

In Soviet times, when all spheres of life were radically secularized and hostility to religion was nothing out of the ordinary, a religious community's awareness did not contradict civil identity. To be born as a Kazakh or Uyghur did mean that this person was a Muslim, but it did not contradict an awareness of a Soviet citizen. Islam was seen not so much as a religious doctrine, but, rather, as an ethnic cultural tradition inherited from the ancestors. One could consider himself as a Communist and a Muslim. Historically, the relationships between religious identity and ethnic and civil loyalties were fairly harmonious and did not contradict one another.

In the post-Soviet years, the republic was persistently reviving the spiritual values of the past and shaping tolerance of the highest level between different peoples and confessions. The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Law on the Freedom of Religion and Religious Associations adopted on 15 January 1992 confirmed the right of all and everyone to profess any religion or not to profess any of them. These documents are conducive to further improving the experience accumulated in the sphere of ensuring inter-ethnic and inter-confessional pluralism and tolerance. The law guarantees religious freedom formulated by the Constitution and international acts and agreements on human rights (Art 1); equality of all citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan regardless of their attitude to religion (Art 3); under Art 4 the state is separated from religious organizations, which means that no religion should have advantages over the others; the state should not interfere in religious affairs; religious political parties are not allowed, etc. There are other documents related to religious organizations, their rights and duties.

The secular nature of the law created the legal basis and conditions for the realization of religious freedoms. It was for the first time after a long period of institutionalized neglect that the rights and freedoms of believers were guaranteed, while the state replaced total control of Soviet times with principles of cooperation.²³

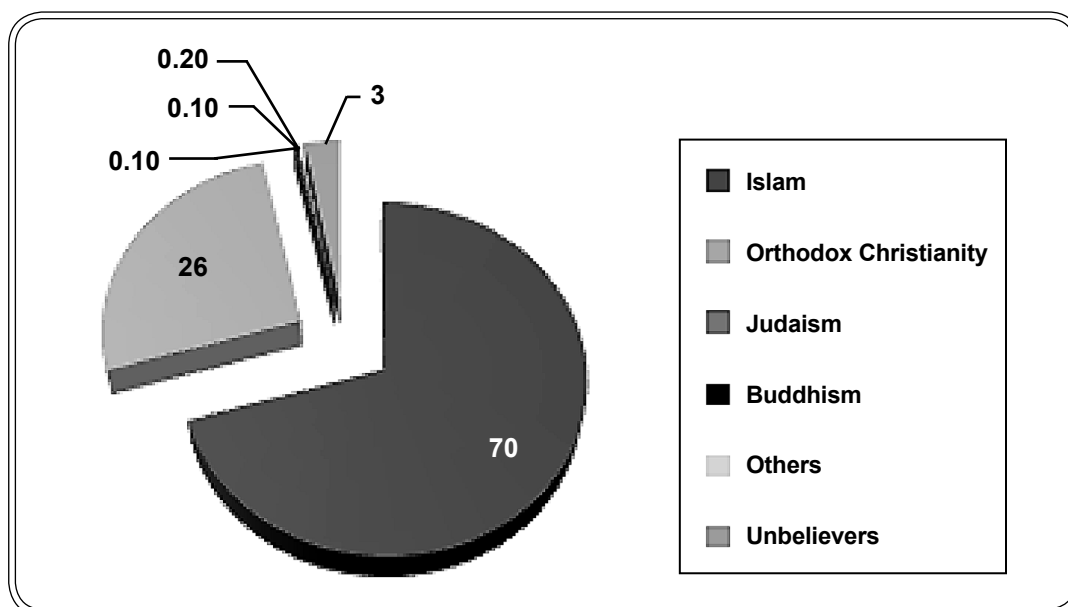
²² See: L.G. Novikov, "Osnovnye kharakteristiki dinamiki religioznosti naselenia," *Sotsis*, No. 9, 1998, pp. 93-98.

²³ See: R.A. Podoprigora, "Istoria, itogi i perspektivy zakonodatestva o svobode veroisповедania i religioznykh ob'edineniy," *Pravovaia reforma v Kazakhstane*, No. 3, 2002, pp. 10-11.

As we have written above, the number of religious associations in Kazakhstan was rapidly increasing from 661 in 1989 to 2,192 in 1998 and 3,658 as of 1 January, 2017. Traditionally, Hanafi Islam and Orthodox Christianity are the most numerous among such groups in Kazakhstan. There are Catholic and Protestant churches, Judaist, Buddhist and other communities.²⁴

Figure 1

The Structure of Confessional Orientation of the Population of Kazakhstan (%)



The religious landscape of Kazakhstan is shaped by the correlation between 18 confessions. Islam, with 70% of the republic's believers, is the biggest of them followed by Christians (20%) and Judaism and Buddhism with 0.1% each of the total number of believers. All other religions comprise 0.2% each. Only 3% of the republic's population considers themselves unbelievers. It should be said that the country's religious potential is steadily growing and that traditional religions—Sunni Islam and the Russian Orthodox Church occupy an important place on the map of the country's confessions.²⁵

Today, confessional institutions are legalized; the media publish numerous religious materials, while involvement in religious life no longer interferes with a successful career and does not preclude a high personal status. The number of missionary and religious educational centers is steadily growing together with religious charities and religious educational establishments; religious organizations can count on certain preferences. Every year the number of those who perform hajj in organized groups is growing; cultural exchange with the Muslim world is widening.

At present, people consider religion not only an element of spiritual life, but also a form of traditional ethnic culture: it is a symbol of ethnic affiliation and an ethno-integrating element. Islam as a traditional religious system with a centuries-old history confirms that its ethno-social, cultural-civilizational characteristics and those related to human lives are perpetual and very different from the political, social and economic realities that were in place in Kazakhstan at an early stage of nation-

²⁴ [<http://carmo-pvl.kz/ru/article/koncepciya-gosudarstvennoy-politiki-v-religioznoy-sfere-respubliki-kazahstan>].

²⁵ See: G.G. Solovieva, *Religia v Kazakhstane. Istorija i sovremennost*, Textbook, ed. by A.Kh. Bizhanov, Institute of Philosophy, Political and Religious Science, Committee of Science, Ministry of Education and Science, Almaty, 2018, 346 pp.

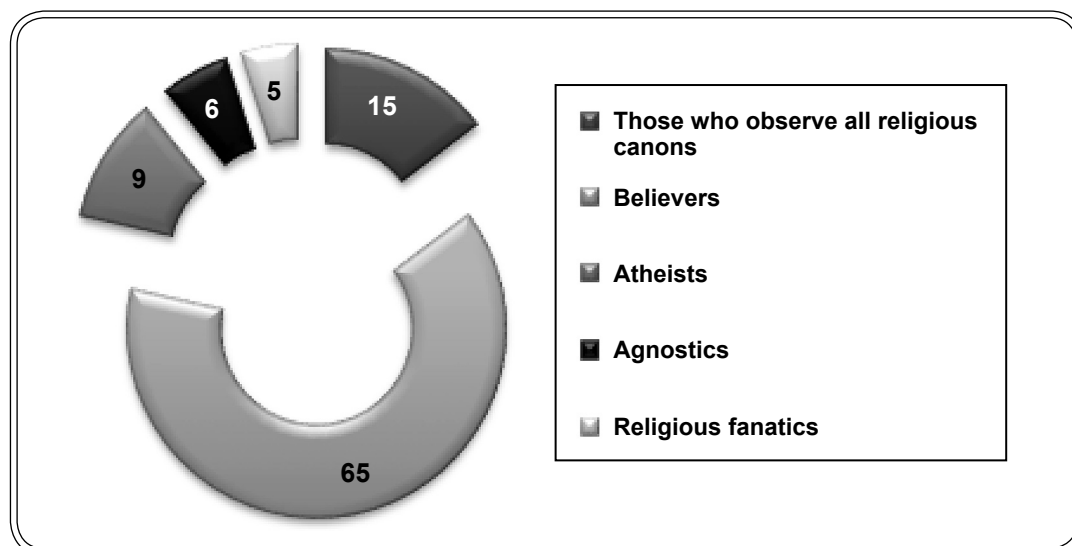
building. Sociologist Aygul Zabirowa has rightly noted that Kazakhs turned to Islam in particular because the old axiological-normative system had been destroyed; people became acutely aware of their vulnerability; they were worried and exhausted; in short, each and every one knew that they were helpless and that nothing could be done. Here the term *anomie* can be used to define the protest potential of society dressed in religious garbs.²⁶

Religious potential is indispensable when it comes to social stability and agreement in inter-ethnic relations. This means that representatives of different confessions should be drawn into all sorts of political events and round-table discussions, Days of Spiritual Concord, the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan and small assemblies; joint charity actions that promoted better mutual understanding.

In 2009 (for the first time after the population census of 1937), the respondents were asked about their attitude to religion. Census results revealed that the majority of Kazakhstan residents described themselves as followers of religions (97% of the total population); 11% of them spoke of themselves as faithful; they belonged to religious communities, obeyed all religious canons; 70.1% of the polled identified themselves as Muslims, 26.1% as Christians and a mere 3% said that they were unbelievers or refused to answer the question.²⁷

Figure 2

The Shares of Followers of Different Confessions



We cannot ignore the fact that Muslims are not in the majority among the believers, which was and remains a typical feature of Kazakhstan as a poly-confessional state. The following figures illustrate the growth of the number of Muslims in the republic: 46 communities in 1989; 679, in 1996; over 1,000 in 1998; 1,653 in 2003; 1,766 in 2006.²⁸ As of 1 January, 2011 there were 2,811 Muslim religious organizations, by the end of state registration in 2012 their number rose to 2,229²⁹.

²⁶ See: A.T. Zabirowa, "Formirovanie, legitimatsia i vosproizvodstvo identichnosti v postsovetskom Kazakhstane," *Sotsiologicheskie issledovania*, No. 12, 2003, pp. 118-126.

²⁷ See: "Itogi natsionalnoy perepisi naselenia 2009 goda. Natsionalny sostav, veroispovedanie i vladenie yazykami v Respublike Kazakhstan," [www.stat.kz/p_perepis/Documents/010411_нац_состав_рус.doc].

²⁸ See: A.K. Sultangalieva, *Islam v Kazakhstane: istoria, etnichnost i obshchestvo*, KISI, Almaty, 1998, p. 60.

²⁹ [https://e-history.kz/ru/contents/view/485].

According to official figures, the volumes and structure of religiosity of the local population as assessed by experts, a fairly small number (about 10 to 15%) can be described as religious (that is, they follow all religious canons and obey prohibitions). The dominant share (about 65%) is best described as nominally faithful. About one quarter of the population (7-11%) speaks of themselves as atheists, 5-6% are agnostics; the share of religious fanatics is small, about 4-5%³⁰ (see Fig. 2).

4.4. "Religion Returns" to Kazakhstan?

The increasingly complicated religious life in the republic is moving away from the superficial perception of Islam, which was typical of the past. The relationships between religious, ethnic and civil identities acquire new hues, which complicates them further. For example, some people change their religious identities: a person born into a Russian Orthodox family might move to Islam or Buddhism. Society has not yet arrived at a commonly accepted opinion about what to think about this phenomenon, which still remains fairly rare. Some people consider converts traitors who betrayed their ethnic group, even if a Kazakh who became a Baptist thinks of himself as a Kazakh and remains loyal to his ethnic self-awareness. In some cases, people opt for a universal religious community and, in the majority of cases, consider their affiliation with it more important than loyalty to their ethnic group. This mostly happens among the newly converted Muslims who do not care whether the Kazakh women wear shawls of a Middle Eastern pattern to conceal their faces or not. These "new Muslims" are mostly concerned whether they fit the Islamic norms prescribed to all Muslims by the Koran and traditions of the prophets.

This means that a fairly big share of the republic's population treat their ethnic identity as highly important. Members of the majority of ethnic groups treat religious rites as part of ethnic culture rather than phenomena on their own right. Chechens, Uyghurs and Uzbeks differ greatly from the Kazakhs in this respect.

According to the 2009 population census, registered Muslims comprise 70.1% of the total population, which means that the majority of the Kazakhs identify with Islam. Here we are talking about ethnic Muslims (that is, people born Kazakhs, Uyghurs, Tatars or Uzbeks). This figure does not reflect the true degree of religiosity. Indeed, even if a person is born into a Muslim (or a Russian Orthodox) family he will not necessarily follow the dogmas and rituals of his faith.

In the twenty post-Soviet years, the share of Muslims who attend mosques more or less regularly increased by mere 3% (from 14.8% to 17.4%). About 43% of Kazakhs describe themselves as religious people, but do not follow religious commands. Only 5.4% of citizens of Kazakhstan who find themselves in a difficult predicament will seek advice in holy books or turn to mullahs and priests. The majority will rely on their own efforts (37.1%), the law (22.9%), social norms (19.6%) and advice of closest people (13.5%).

4.5. Can We Say that Kazakhstanis Should Choose between Religion and Patriotism?

Ethnic nationalism has found its place as an ideology of a new independent statehood with Islam being its component part. The Preamble to the new variant of the Law on Religious Associations of

³⁰ See: *Religioznye konversii v postsekuliarnom obshchestve (opyt fenomenologicheskoi rekonstruktsii)*, Collective monograph, ed. by A.Kh. Bizhanov, Institute of Philosophy, Political and Religious Science, Committee of Science, Ministry of Education and Science, Almaty, 2017. P. 153.

2011 speaks of the historical role of Hanafi Islam and Orthodox Christianity in the cultural development and spiritual life of the people of Kazakhstan. Over the course of time, the ideology of nationalism has lost part of its attractiveness: people were disappointed with the economic and social effects of independence: the old system of state guarantees that protected people from the first to the last day of their lives (free health care and education, guaranteed employment and safeguarded old age) fell apart. The new generation that appeared in the twenty years of post-Soviet “Islamic revival” looks at re-Islamization as one of the gains of independence. Islam can be understood not only as part of culture, but also as an independent social force. In the late Soviet years, the faith in supra-natural power of witchcraft, healing, psychic abilities, yoga, astrology, runes, tarot cards, etc. became widespread. This explains why a fairly narrow circle of intellectuals of the older Soviet generation discuss the importance of Tengrism, belief in the *aruakhs*—the spirits of ancestors, shamanism and other ancient philosophical systems. Members of the new, post-Soviet generation more and more often speak of themselves as Muslims not because they inherited their religious affiliation from the ancestors, but because they chose it as their spiritual path. They do not look at their profound religiosity as something nontraditional. The majority, however, treats them with a lot of suspicion, which leads to marginalization and self-isolation of “true believers.” The majority of them occupy the lower steps of the social ladder: for them Islam is a religion and a method of socialization, in some cases the only one in the society with disintegrated social ties. For them it is not enough to be a Muslim: their faith means a very special lifestyle, obedience to religious norms and rituals in everything, including behavior, clothes and the choice of social milieu. This explains why the majority of Islamic publications deal with the ritual side of Islam and the correct ways of praying.³¹ The discovery of the external Islamic world created the phenomenon of import of a special interpretation of Islam known among the Kazakhs as Arabic Islam. Such are, for example, public demonstrations of religiosity (girls in head scarfs or men praying in the street if the time of praying caught them there) typical of Egypt and Pakistan yet, until recently, absent from Kazakhstan. We can even say without the slightest exaggeration that in Kazakhstan, as well as in other post-Soviet republics, the return to Islam assumed neophyte forms: the ardor with which external signs of religiosity are embraced, while folk Kazakh music and pilgrimage to “holy places” are vigorously condemned as not fitting “true Islam”. This group of believers zealously verifies whether their rites are religiously correct, they supervise alcohol-free feasts at which mullahs replace toastmasters and where men and women are seated separately. The “new Muslims” cherish their belonging to the global Muslim community more than their belonging to any other group. This brings us to the problem of correlation between religious and civil identities: are you a Muslim (a follower of Krishna, a Protestant, etc.) or a citizen of Kazakhstan? There is no straightforward answer to this question, which became especially apparent when the Law on Religious Associations was discussed in 2011; some of the believers, for example, were highly displeased by the ban on prayer rooms in state organizations.

A choice between obligations of a believer and duties of a citizen, which has become possible, is not necessarily resolved in favor of the former. At the same time, we should not overestimate the role of religion and the degree of religiosity. In Kazakhstan, very much like in the other post-Soviet Central Asian republics, the majority of Muslims are more aware of their belonging to an ethnic group or state rather than the universal Islamic community (ummah) that has no borders.³²

Judging by the results of sociological polls, they do not think that it is necessary to prove every day that they are Muslims: it is enough to be born into a Muslim family. There is a widespread opin-

³¹ See: A.J. Frank, “Popular Islamic Literature in Kazakhstan. An Annotated Bibliography,” *Dunwoody Press*, No. 2, 2015, pp. 51-70.

³² See: O. Roy, *Holy Ignorance: When Religion and Culture Part Ways*, 2010, p. 305; M. Atkin, “Religious, National and Other Identities in Central Asia,” in: *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change*, ed. by Jo-Ann Cross, 1992, pp. 46-72.

ion that an awareness of belonging to the ummah is not confirmed only by the observance of the five main Islamic precepts. It is enough to have faith in God.³³

The principle of delimitation between religion and the state is registered in the political context as one of the Constitutional provisions. In Kazakhstan, the secular world-view prevails: the majority looks at religious identity as part of their ethnocultural identity. In the conditions of the post-Soviet religious upsurge, the trend towards putting one's religious identity above civil identity is gradually coming to the fore. Under certain conditions when, for example, certain groups (people in power in particular) decide to use the religious factor in their interests, this trend, superficial for now, might complicate the integration processes unfolding in the republic on the basis of civilian values. In some countries with Muslim majorities, state authorities have mastered the policy of "construction of Muslim identities" to achieve a political mobilization of society and seize the initiative from Islamist opposition. This slowed down the process of development of civil self-awareness and freedoms and speeded up the growth of the social role of Islam: according to sociological polls (2006), for Malaysians Islamic identity comes first, and ethnic and civil identities—second.³⁴

5. Conclusion

A common past and present and a common future are powerful consolidating factors. The shared history of political repressions, hunger and the war, naturally amalgamated the ethnicities of Kazakhstan into a single people. Despite the difficult challenges, unity is the most important goal of any state. Different origins and equal opportunities—this formula means that each citizen of Kazakhstan has equal rights, duties and opportunities. Further democratization of society and prevention of ethnic, confessional and social tension are two key trends of the country's development.

It is highly important to consolidate tolerance, mutual understanding and mutual respect, quest for compromises, peace and harmony as the basic ideas confirmed as philosophical ideals and norms of everyday life. This will allow Kazakhstan to avoid possible upheavals and U-turns, to pursue well-balanced and realistic foreign policy and steer the country towards gradual and consistent liberal economic reforms and democratization.

It should be said that the foundation of inter-ethnic harmony will promote the internal development of Kazakhstan society, create a positive and attractive image of the country on the international arena and help it integrate at the global and regional levels. This is especially important today, when humanity survives in a crisis of spirituality, having lost its axiological milestones.

In these conditions, the mechanisms of agreement and tolerance that have been created in the Republic of Kazakhstan can positively affect the efforts to settle the systemic problems of the contemporary world order created by the crisis of multiculturalism and by what members of different peoples and cultures think about each other.

³³ See: M.E. Louw, *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia*, Routledge, London, New York, 2007, 219 pp.

³⁴ See: C. Furlow, "Malaysian Modernities: Cultural Politics and the Construction of Muslim Technoscientific Identities," *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 1, 2009.

Contents of
the *Central Asia and the Caucasus* Issues
English Edition
Volume 20, 2019

Issue 1

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Larisa Aleksanyan, Svetlana Gavrilova.</i> ENERGY POLICIES IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS	7
<i>Sergey Zhiltsov, Igor Zonn, Elena Markova.</i> THE GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF EURASIA UNDER THE PRESSURE OF CASPIAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN POWER PROJECTS	25
<i>Mario Baumann.</i> EURASIANIST RHETORIC IN RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN. NEGOTIATING HEGEMONY THROUGH DIFFERENT VISIONS OF SOCIETY	34
<i>Yenglik Dossymkhan, Maira Dyussebekova, Manshuk Mukasheva, Aigul Kozhahmetova.</i> RISKS AND PROSPECTS OF KAZAKHSTAN'S PARTICIPATION IN INTEGRATIVE INTERACTIONS WITHIN THE EAEU	43
<i>Punit Gaur, Akbota Zholdasbekova.</i> NEW SILK ROAD DIPLOMACY: INDIA'S CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES	56
<i>Gulnar Nassimova, Shugyla Kilybayeva, Kadyrjan Smagulov, Zhuldyz Basygaruyeva.</i> THE YOUTH OF KAZAKHSTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM	62
<i>Erkin Baydarov, Sagynysh Amirbekova, Zibagul Ilyassova, Bolatbek Batyrkhan.</i> KAZAKHSTAN IN THE ARAB SPRING CONTEXT	76
<i>Alexander Knysh, Nagima Baitenova, Azamat Nurshanov, Dias Pardabekov.</i> THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LITERACY IN COUNTERACTING NEW ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS IN KAZAKHSTAN	88
<i>Sergey Ryazantsev, Elena Pismennaya, Timur Miryazov, Olga Dudina.</i> EXPORT OF LABOR RESOURCES FROM KYRGYZSTAN: TENDENCIES AND CONSEQUENCES	98
<i>Lyaziza Adilova, Zhyldyz Amrebayeva, Serik Seidumanov.</i> INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE SPHERE OF SOCIAL POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERNIZATION IN KAZAKHSTAN	112

Issue 2

<i>Gulmira Ilevova, Imanbay Zhandos.</i> THE “CHINESE BOX”: THE SILK ROAD ECONOMIC BELT INITIATIVE IN KAZAKHSTAN	7
<i>Vladimer Papava.</i> THE CENTRAL CAUCASO-ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THE PROSPECTS OF ACCESSION TO THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION	16
<i>Yerlan Madiyev.</i> THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE AND CHINA’S FOREIGN POLICY IMAGE	23
<i>Oleg Ivanov, Elena Zavyalova, Sergey Ryazantsev.</i> PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION	33
<i>Dolores Tyulebekova, Marina Onuchko, Taisiya Marmontova.</i> THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ESTABLISHING COMMON EAEU GAS, OIL AND PETROLEUM PRODUCT MARKETS FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN	48
<i>Ramakrushna Pradhan, Akbota Zholdasbekova, Seyit Ali Avcu, Marina Lapenko.</i> CENTRAL ASIA IN INDIA’S ENERGY QUEST	58
<i>Daniyar Madiyev, Nabidzhan Mukhametkhanuly, Oshan Zhanymkhan, Kaliolla Ardak.</i> XINJIANG DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ITS BORDER AREAS	69
<i>Sergey Ryazantsev, Elena Pismennaya, Oleg Pichkov, Farzona Garibova.</i> TAJIKISTAN’S FOREIGN TRADE WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES: NEW TRENDS AND SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IMPACTS	81
<i>Feruz Bafoev.</i> LIBERAL ISLAM IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: NEW LANDMARKS OF TRUMP’S ADMINISTRATION	90
<i>Zhanara Turganbayeva, Nataliya Seitakhmetova, Madina Bektenova, Sholpan Zhandossova.</i> ISLAMIC IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORY AND ITS PROSPECTS: RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ASPECTS	99
<i>Dinara Aitzhanova.</i> FEMALE RADICALISM: METHODS OF PREVENTION	111
<i>Evgeniya Sigareva, Svetlana Sivoplyasova, Sergey Ryazantsev.</i> DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS	119
<i>Andrey Nikiforov, Levan Chikhladze.</i> COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEGAL SUPPORT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN PLACES OF COMPACT RESIDENCE OF INDIGENOUS SMALL-NUMBERED PEOPLES IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS AND THE NORTHERN SPECIAL-STATUS TERRITORIES OF THE KRASNOYARSK KRAI	141

Issue 3

<i>Sergey Zhiltsov, Larisa Alexanian, Svetlana Gavrilova, Elena Markova.</i> CHINA IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS	7
<i>Kanat Ydyrys, Nur Çetin, Rashid Tazhibayev, Makpal Anlamassova.</i> RUSSIA AND CHINA: NATIONAL SECURITY AND ENERGY STRATEGY ASPECTS	24
<i>Adilbek Yermekbayev, Galiya Shotanova, Laura Abzhaparova, Akmaral Sultanova.</i> RUSSIA AND TURKEY: ENERGY PARTNERSHIP	34
<i>Zalina Pliyeva, Zalina Kanukova, Berta Tuayeva, Madina Gutiyeva.</i> THE OSSETIAN VECTOR IN IRAN'S CONTEMPORARY FOREIGN POLICY	42
<i>Moldir Bolysbekova, Muslim Khassenov, Gulsum Kenzhalina.</i> CONVERGENCE IN THE PERCEPTION OF EURASIAN INTEGRATION IN THE POLITICAL AND EXPERT COMMUNITY OF KAZAKHSTAN	51
<i>Liliya Zainiyeva.</i> YOUTH INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN EURASIA	59
<i>Giorgi Kuparadze.</i> EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPETITION AND ANTIMONOPOLY REGULATION POLICIES IN GEORGIA: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH EU COUNTRIES	69
<i>Khasan Dzutsev, Aminat Debirova, Natalia Kornienko.</i> LABOR AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH OSSETIA-ALANIA OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION	85
<i>Mukhtar Yahyayev, Zalina Sultanakhmedova.</i> PROBLEMS OF EFFICIENCY IN COUNTERING EXTREMISM	100
<i>Gaziz Dosmakhambetuly, Marina Onuchko, Dauren Primbetov.</i> RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AMONG CENTRAL ASIAN YOUTH: SPECIFICS, PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS	111
<i>Zaur Jalilov, Bolatbek Batyrkhan.</i> ISLAM IN KAZAKHSTAN: HISTORY OF REVIVAL UNDER CONDITIONS OF INDEPENDENCE	124
<i>Assem Berdalina, Valentina Kurganskaya, Ayazhan Sagikyzy.</i> TOLERANCE IN INTER-ETHNIC AND INTER-CONFESSIONAL RELATIONS IN KAZAKHSTAN	134

Issue 4

<i>Leonid Bezrukov.</i> EURASIAN CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION: PREREQUISITES AND DIFFICULTIES	7
<i>Sergey Ryazantsev, Zafar Vazirov, Elena Pismennaya, Leila Delovarova.</i> CHINA IN CENTRAL ASIA: GEOPOLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIOCULTURAL VECTORS OF INFLUENCE	18

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Azhar Serikkaliyeva, Aidarbek Amirbek, Rashid Tazhibayev, Olzhas Beisenbayev.</i> GLOBAL GOVERNANCE, CHINESE-STYLE: THE CENTRAL ASIAN PROJECTS OF THE ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK	32
<i>Agnieszka Miarka.</i> VELVET REVOLUTION IN ARMENIA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STATE POLICY: SELECTED ASPECTS	41
<i>Oleg Karpovich, Adelina Nogmova, Larisa Aleksanyan.</i> CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL PROCESS IN GEORGIA	51
<i>Sergey Zhiltsov, Igor Zonn.</i> POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF KAZAKHSTAN: RESULTS AND PROSPECTS	62
<i>Roman Temnikov.</i> CASPIAN PIPELINE GEOPOLITICS. <i>Competition between Western and Northern Oil and Gas Transport Routes to Europe</i>	70
<i>Nata Garakanidze.</i> GAS AND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES	81
<i>Anurag Tripathi, Punit Gaur.</i> WATER DISPUTE IN CENTRAL ASIA: CONFLICT POTENTIAL	93
<i>Vladimir Dunaev, Akhan Bizhanov, Mukhtarbek Shaykemelev.</i> THE SPACE OF ETHNONATIONAL IDENTITIES OF KAZAKHSTAN SOCIETY: PRINCIPLES AND MODELS OF STRATIFICATION	107
<i>Mehdi Afzali, Sergey Ryazantsev, Elena Pismennaya, Tamara Rostovskaya.</i> THE IRANIAN EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC MOBILITY MODEL	122
<i>Akhan Bizhanov, Aydar Amrebaev, Elena Burova, Natalya Seitakhmetova.</i> THE POLITICS OF SECULARITY/RELIGIOSITY IN KAZAKHSTAN	135
<i>Nurgul Tutinova, Bekzhan Meirbayev, Albert Frolov, Kudaiberdi Bagasharov.</i> REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN: ETHNORELIGIOUS IDENTITY AS AN INTEGRATION FACTOR	147