

# CENTRAL ASIAN POLITICS: INTERPLAY OF GOVERNANCE, IDEOLOGY, AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

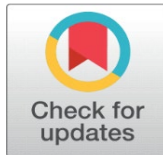
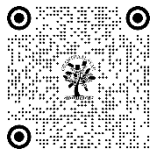
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## ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this research paper is to analyse governance models and power dynamics in Central Asia, highlighting their ideological underpinnings and influence on state organisation and regional stability. This thorough examination looks into Central Asia's complicated and varied political terrain, explicitly emphasising the concept of statehood, the evolution and ramifications of ideological constructs, and the profoundly complex power dynamics within the region. Through meticulous analysis, the inquiry aims to illuminate the interplay among different state institutions, the influence of constitutional frameworks, and the intricate distribution of political authority that characterises the politics of Central Asia. The study also explores the degree to which external influences shape domestic politics, drawing on theoretical perspectives on authoritarian regimes and democratic transitions, historical connections after the disintegration of the USSR, and external factors such as security considerations in the Central Asian region. Moreover, the paper scrutinises the formation and impact of ideological constructs, including their role in policy-making and governance. Employing a rigorous and comprehensive analytical approach, this research endeavour seeks to enhance our understanding of Central Asia's intricate and deeply complex political dynamics.

**Keywords:** Central Asia, Governance models, Authoritarianism, Ideology, Power

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Strategically positioned at the crossroads of Afghanistan, Iran, the Russian Federation, and China, Central Asia is a vast and sparsely populated region. The region under consideration was historically pivotal for collective farming during the Soviet era. This region has experienced significant industrialisation, strengthening its economic stability and potential. Central Asia's adjacency to Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan creates an intricate web of geopolitical implications that should be noticed (Kazantsev, Medvedeva & Safranchuk, 2021).<sup>1</sup> Its vast expanse and valuable resources appeal to more prominent and influential neighbours who recognise its tremendous value in resources and strategic positioning. Central Asia's extensive network of oil and gas pipelines forms vital arteries of energy supply, with the capacity to meet the energy needs of Europe, the Indian subcontinent, and the Asia-Pacific rim states. These pipelines underscore the region's importance and ability to influence global energy dynamics

(Khudaykulov, 2020).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, amidst the complexities of Central Asia, it is crucial to recognise its significant role in the international heroin trade. This aspect further cements the region's status as a significant player on the global stage, involved in illicit activities with far-reaching impact (Montgomery, 2022).<sup>3</sup>

This exceptionally significant and alluring region, renowned for its multifaceted attributes, has undoubtedly captivated an extraordinarily diverse and morally questionable assembly of participants in the sphere of external actors, adhering steadfastly to the fundamental principles of realism. Prominent nation-states such as the mighty United States of America, the distinguished Russian Federation, the illustrious People's Republic of China, the notably influential Iran, and even the remarkable Pakistan have all unequivocally demonstrated an unequivocal and unparalleled vested interest in this captivating region, thus embarking on a fierce and spirited quest to assert their respective hegemonic dominance in a domain that they perceive primarily as an arena teeming with security interests, rather than a vibrant and spirited contest of competing ideologies and divergent visions about the essential constituents of a virtuous and prosperous political society (Nazirov, 2021).<sup>4</sup> Remarkably, the diligent inhabitants of these Central Asian territories have been compelled to endure being condescendingly patronised as mere receptacles for the propagation of adverse and detrimental ideals, occasionally attracting fleeting glances and sporadic attention from the mighty world powers - reminiscent of their brief acknowledgement during the fervent propagation of the all-encompassing military endeavour against the notorious Al-Qaida and the formidable Taliban forces in the war-ravaged and tumultuous nation of Afghanistan, which occurred during the years spanning 2001 to 2003 (Elzinga, 2021).<sup>5</sup>

The complex intricacies of this enthralling region necessitate a thorough examination to unravel the underlying complexities that have captivated and ensnared the perennial attention of external actors. The multifaceted attributes of this extraordinary territory have been lauded as a veritable trove of invaluable resources, enticing numerous global powers to assert their claim in pursuit of reaping substantial economic and geopolitical benefits (Rumer, 2023).<sup>6</sup> The abundance of natural resources, encompassing vast reserves of minerals, oil, and gas, has ignited a fierce struggle for control and dominance, thus transforming the region into a hotbed of economic competition and strategic manoeuvring. Furthermore, the region holds immense strategic significance beyond the allure of material wealth. Situated in the heart of Asia, it functions as a critical crossroads linking various continents and serving as a gateway between the East and the West. This geographical advantage further intensifies the appeal for nations endeavouring to expand their influence and secure advantageous positions in the global power hierarchy (Oldfield, 2020).<sup>7</sup> Unsurprisingly, all-powerful countries have directed their ambitions and resources toward this captivating arena, driven by their unwavering determination to achieve regional supremacy. However, amid this captivating struggle for dominance, it is imperative to acknowledge the plight of the resilient inhabitants of these Central Asian territories.

The extensive military efforts against the notorious Al-Qaida and the formidable Taliban forces in war-torn Afghanistan have been overlooked by influential global entities. This critical endeavour requires sustained attention and support to stabilise the Central Asian region. The remarkable efforts of the local population in securing their borders, fighting terrorism, and working towards stability have been given limited recognition, quickly fading into obscurity as new global priorities emerge. The captivating Central Asian region continues to serve as a theatre where the ambitions of dominant nations converge, driven by the pursuit of hegemonic supremacy, economic gain, and strategic advantages. This exceptional territory's multifaceted characteristics, abundant resources, and geographical significance have ensured its perpetual contention among external actors. Nevertheless, the voices and aspirations of the resilient inhabitants entangled in this captivating struggle must not be quelled, as their agency and vision hold the key to a virtuous and prosperous political society, emancipated from the looming spectre of power politics.

## 2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The evolution from fundamental investigative principles to practical political analyses in Central Asia has prompted political scientists to draw upon various political theories in international politics to explicate the intricate political terrain across multiple levels of governance, within diverse political systems, and specific policy contexts. By employing crucial theoretical frameworks such as structural realism, liberal institutionalism, and social constructivism, scholars can comprehensively scrutinise the complex dynamics of Central Asian politics through different theoretical perspectives. As expounded by Kenneth Waltz, structural realism asserts that the anarchic international system compels states to prioritise their security and self-preservation (Waltz, 2008).<sup>8</sup> When applied to Central Asia, structural realism furnishes invaluable insights into the region's geopolitical dynamics by accentuating state power, the pursuit of national interests, and the ramifications of power imbalances on regional stability. Furthermore, the theory elucidates the impact of external actors and the intricate interplay of interests within the political landscape of Central Asia.

The academic discipline of liberal institutionalism, which falls under the broader framework of liberalism, places significant emphasis on the pivotal role played by international institutions and the cooperation among sovereign states. When considered within the specific context of the Central Asian region, liberal institutionalism serves as a valuable analytical tool through which one may scrutinise potential endeavours towards regional integration, collaborative efforts in economic spheres, and the impact of diplomatic relations in promoting stability and advancement in the area. Within this theoretical framework, the weight placed on interdependence and coordinated action underscores the potential for devising cooperative arrangements and engaging in multilateral interactions among Central Asian states. Moreover, the principles of social constructivism, as expounded by eminent scholars such as Alexander Wendt, underscore the profound influence of ideas, identities, and norms in moulding the conduct of actors within the international system (Wendt, 1995).<sup>9</sup> In the milieu of Central Asia, social constructivism enriches our comprehension of the cultural, historical, and societal forces that exert influence over political decision-making, the regional perspectives on security, and the construction of collective identities. By turning attention towards the shared meanings and socially constructed identities within the region, this theory offers critical perspectives into the intricacies of regional politics and the shaping of regional narratives.

These distinct theoretical frameworks are informed by unique ontological and epistemological assumptions, necessitating sophisticated methodologies for data collection, interpretative techniques, and exploration of alternative interpretations. Despite their strengths, none of these theoretical perspectives in isolation fully captures the multifaceted nature of Central Asian politics. As such, a comprehensive scholarly approach to analysing the politics of the five Central Asian republics encompasses the utilisation of these theoretical paradigms within the broader framework of statehood, political theory, political regimes, and stability, thereby enriching policy analysis and outcomes.

### 3. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNANCE

In contradistinction to its ostensible predilection for authoritarian presidential prerogative, the Republic of Uzbekistan has astutely instituted a singular parliamentary convocation recognised as the Oliy Majlis, serving as a conspicuous embodiment of the nation's democratic legacy and dedication to inclusivity. This institution amalgamates representatives from both chambers of the Uzbek parliament - the Majlis and the Senate, adeptly harnessing heterogeneous individuals' collective sagacity and expertise (Nikolai, 2005).<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the Oliy Majlis transcends conventional parliamentary frameworks by incorporating members from regional assemblies and sundry public organisations, thus ensuring the representation of a broad spectrum of perspectives and interests. The Oliy Majlis stands as a paragon of unity, endeavouring to bridge the chasm between the central government and the regions of Uzbekistan (Canfield & Rasuly-Paleczek, 2010).<sup>11</sup> These myriad entities, functioning as founts of authority, actively bolster the President and collaborate to exemplify the virtues of inclusivity, diversity, and representation. By engaging with regional assemblies and public organisations, the Oliy Majlis comprehensively addresses the multifaceted exigencies and aspirations of both rural and urban regions, thereby fortifying the democratic bedrock of the nation.

Nonetheless, it is imperative to recognise that the Oliy Majlis encounters specific challenges when realising its mandate. While its objective is to facilitate evidence-based comprehension and engender profound deliberation of governmental policies, the assembly frequently grapples with temporal constraints and fluctuating attendance rates. The restricted meeting duration of the Oliy Majlis intermittently impedes its capacity to scrutinise and engage in profound discourse on pivotal issues thoroughly. However, notwithstanding these constraints, the assembly strives to optimise its proceedings and augment its efficacy, acknowledging the paramount significance of robust and comprehensive conversations in shaping the nation's trajectory (Nikolai, 2005).<sup>12</sup>

The Republic of Uzbekistan has established the Oliy Majlis, a unique parliamentary assembly that embodies the nation's dedication to inclusivity, representation, and democratic principles. By bringing together representatives from different chambers, regional assemblies, and public organisations, this assembly serves as a stronghold of unity, bridging the gap between the central government and the regions (Masaru, 2006).<sup>13</sup> While grappling with challenges such as limited meeting time and fluctuating attendance rates, the Oliy Majlis remains unwavering in its pursuit of evidence-based comprehension and thorough deliberation. By persistently striving to enhance its operations, the assembly cements its position as a vital institution in shaping Uzbekistan's future. It endeavours to fortify its inclusivity mechanisms and broaden its representation sphere to ensure an even more diverse and inclusive democratic process. Through active engagement with regional assemblies and public organisations, the Oliy Majlis is dedicated to effectively addressing the multifaceted needs and aspirations of both rural and urban regions and the concerns and issues of various societal

groups across Uzbekistan. Embracing transparency and accountability, the assembly acknowledges that these values underpin a robust democratic foundation (Abdullaev, 2016).<sup>14</sup>

The Oliy Majlis is dedicated to encouraging public engagement through extensive consultations and inclusive decision-making processes, fostering a deeper understanding of the diverse voices and interests within the nation. It aims to provide platforms for dialogue and debate, allowing ideas, perspectives, and concerns to converge and flourish. The assembly is committed to fostering respect, tolerance, and empathy, creating an environment where every citizen's voice is heard and valued. The Oliy Majlis remains steadfast in its dedication to maintaining a culture of inclusivity and innovation to ensure Uzbekistan's sustainable and prosperous future. It symbolises hope, progress, and unity, reflecting the nation's unwavering commitment to a democratic system prioritising the well-being and aspirations of all its citizens. The president and the central bureaucracy hold significant power in specific areas of governance. While the official duties of members of the presidential family are limited, they still wield informal influence over crucial sectors of the domestic economy, which were previously under state control. Rather than passively following the president's directives, influential groups can undermine domestic and international plans if they find certain aspects unsatisfactory. While they operate within boundaries established by the president and their close associates, they have some flexibility in distributing profits, particularly at the regional level (Kılıç, 2012).<sup>15</sup>

#### 4. CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

The comparative cases of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan offer an intriguing illustration of the transition from a presidential to a purported parliamentary system of governance. This shift presents a less potent and authoritative version in Kyrgyzstan, reminiscent of the governance in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, while evolving into a considerably more influential system akin to what Uzbekistan has achieved (Dinç, 2020).<sup>16</sup> The nature of the presidential institution in the new constitutions, combined with the evident desire for change by both incumbent presidents and their astute grasp of its ramifications, endows them with the ability to tailor the new systems to suit their personal needs. Through this, they ensure heightened control and authority, consolidating their power. This phenomenon signifies that both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan integrate a substantial and noteworthy element of inherent regime stability into their respective political frameworks, thus bolstering the sustainability and durability of their political structures (Anderson, 1997).<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the formal transition from a feeble and relatively ineffective Kyrgyzstan presidency, characterised by a lack of autonomy and authority, to a revamped presidency with added autocratic features results in a noteworthy shift in the power structure. Similarly, replacing a weak Tajikistan presidency with a quasi-weak government within the newly established power framework further enriches the system's dynamics (Engvall, 2022).<sup>18</sup> In this context, the terms "semi" and "quasi" partially encapsulate the nature of these systems. As the newly appointed presidents assume their roles, they can exercise more significant influence and wield more power than expected. This newfound authority grants them a level of autonomy that extends beyond the realms of their counterparts in other branches of government. While it is essential to recognise that their formal and informal powers might be exaggerated in the ever-evolving post-Soviet political landscapes of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, their significance lies in their formal powers. These formal powers enable them to stand alongside other Central Asian republics, not merely as mere followers of one another but as active participants in the development of autocratic and personalistic models of governance (Abramova & Vilisov, 2020).<sup>19</sup> In doing so, they establish their unique styles of governance and contribute to shaping the political trajectory of their respective nations.

#### 5. POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asia's political and ideological discourse during the formative years of the successor states did not reflect the expected diversity given the communist experience. Instead, political elites in the Central Asian republics revived their pre-revolutionary state ideological heritage. The Islamic political ideology that shaped the struggle against Tsarist power was resurrected and presented to the indigenous population as a diluted version of the former (Mandaville, 2020).<sup>20</sup> Political authority was inherited from the past and is now vested in the governing elite, leaving little room for the population to reclaim its right to a new secular form of political authority. While the ideological discourse may have changed for political leaders of Central Asia, their ultimate objective remained the same: an association with central political power through the resurrection of a totalitarian state structure. During the formative period of the successor states in Central Asia, the political and ideological landscape was complex and intriguing (Snyder, 2002).<sup>21</sup> Many expected a diverse range of political and ideological thought to emerge due to the communist experience in the region.



However, the political elites of the Central Asian republics surprised many by choosing to embrace and promote their pre-revolutionary state ideological heritage. This decision overshadowed any potential developments in political thought. It led to a revival of Islamic political ideology, which had previously played a significant role in the anti-colonial struggle against Tsarist power. Although this ideology was presented to the indigenous population, it appeared somewhat diluted compared to its former prominence. The prevailing political authority in the region remained an inheritance from the past. Still, it now rested in the hands of the governing elite, limiting the population's ability to establish a new secular form of political authority (Jones, 2017).<sup>22</sup> Despite some modifications in the ideological discourse, the main goal of the political leaders in Central Asia remained constant - to solidify their identity and maintain control over central political power. They sought to assert dominance over the region and its inhabitants by resurrecting a totalitarian structure.

The adoption and integration of political Islamic ideas into society, alongside a deep-seated fear and unease surrounding Islam due to tumultuous disturbances during ritual ceremonies in the culturally rich Fergana Valley, has elevated Islam as a convenient adversary in the struggle against societal demands for inherent rights and freedoms. While acknowledging the limitations of these arguments, it becomes apparent that the clash and confrontation with Islam primarily stemmed from a pragmatic standpoint (Ahlin, 2018).<sup>23</sup> Ill-advised attempts to emulate anti-Islamic policies in the state-building procedure ultimately led to resounding failure. As the nation grappled with economic and moral degeneration, preexisting trepidation and societal apprehension intensified. Scenes of individuals igniting a mosque during the holy month of Ramadan struck a chord within the regime, resulting in the adoption of stringent policies toward religious symbols. In the struggle against what was perceived as a monumental threat, the inherent fragility of the Arab sources of ideology prevented the public from comprehending that the principles being put into motion were incongruent with the essence of the religious doctrine in its authentic form. The infusion of Aristotelian and Muslim influences, purged from other realms of Muslim societies, dominated public discourse, narrating the experiences of individuals defying surrender to a higher power. These individuals faced ruthless punishment rather than being imbued with unwavering faith capable of animating the human spirit.

The region's recent developments have ignited a vigorous ongoing debate regarding harmonising Islam with democracy and modernity. This discourse reverberates worldwide as contemporary Islamic political thinkers grapple with similar deliberations. Notably, the impact of these debates is felt even in relatively secular states, such as Turkey or Tunisia, which boast long-standing Muslim majorities (Yilmaz, 2021).<sup>24</sup> Despite the diversity in religious beliefs and practices in Central Asia, it is evident that none of the region's inhabitants aspire to see an Islamist state akin to Saudi Arabia. In all Central Asian states, except Tajikistan, a distinctive system of governance referred to as municipal consensus presidencies has emerged. This system integrates various components, aiming to safeguard the common good while ensuring the efficient functioning of state authorities (Matveeva, 1999).<sup>25</sup> It is important to note that these more lenient forms of authoritarian rule differ from the overtly oppressive regimes in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In comparison, establishing these municipal consensus presidencies appears to be a more feasible objective than creating and sustaining vibrant democracies. The Central Asian region is a complex intersection where political, religious, and societal dynamics intertwine. As these discussions continue to unfold, it remains to be seen how this evolving landscape will shape the future of Islam, democracy, and modernity in the region and beyond. Across all states, including the ruling authorities, there is a visible determination to prevent the integration of Islam into political affairs. Various statutes and forms of control have been implemented to achieve this goal, marking a distinct contrast with the approach of prominent Presidents of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), particularly İlham Aliyev in Azerbaijan. It is worth noting that electoral concerns may not solely drive the softer approach to Islamization in the latter case but also national security issues concerning Nagorno-Karabakh.

The pan-Turkic orientation of the leadership in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan might suggest a resurgence of focus on this alternative model of Islamization following the tragic events of 9/11. However, it is imperative to acknowledge, through the lens of social theory, that secularisation in politics may endure (Hashim, 2022).<sup>26</sup> The administrations of Nazarbayev and Niyazov, which have placed significant emphasis on establishing a secular state since gaining independence, exhibit no signs of evolving into politically Islamic entities in the foreseeable future, despite the potential for such a transformation to bolster their legitimacy. The strategic use of modernisation as an electoral rationale to legitimise any ensuing conflicts becomes increasingly plausible within such a regime. This plausibility is rooted in the inherent nature of modernisation as a legitimising mechanism in electoral campaigns, set against a regime unequivocally dedicated to preserving a secular political framework.

## 6. POWER DYNAMICS IN CENTRAL ASIAN POLITICS

In recent years, there has been a discernible upsurge in the scholarly fascination with delving into the intricate dynamics of power within the deeply entrenched authoritarian regimes prevalent in the Central Asian 'stans'. The varied and layered manifestations of 'dictatorship' in these territories have been further delineated and classified as neo-patrimonial, personalistic, militaristic, totalitarian, transformational, and autonomic, offering distinct insights into the nature of governance (Baturu, Anceschi & Cavatorta, 2024).<sup>27</sup> These regimes have also been characterised as corrupt, structural, domination-based systems, facilitating a more holistic comprehension of their attributes. It is imperative to underscore that there are currently no barriers to hinder the application of standardised qualitative and quantitative analyses, resulting in a paradoxical scenario where scholarly inquiry and exploration of Central Asia persist. Within the domain of scholarly discourse focused on Central Asia, it becomes increasingly pivotal to establish clear demarcations between the diverse analytical and normative frameworks associated with these designations. This pursuit significantly contributes to the comprehensive understanding and comparative examination of the myriad political frameworks existing within the region, providing valuable insights when contrasted with other non-democratic polities. By meticulously scrutinising the nuances embedded within these analytical frameworks, researchers can elevate their comprehension of power dynamics in Central Asia and illuminate the intricacies defining its political terrain.

The analysis of political power sources within a regime is critical for understanding the complexities and nuances of different political systems. By examining the interplay between coercion and legitimisation, we can gain valuable insights into the inner workings of regimes and their impact on societal dynamics. Exploring additional layers of information alongside structural analysis can shed light on the nuanced characteristics that shape the functioning of different regimes. For example, 'neo-patrimonial' regimes highlight the influence of personal loyalties, familial connections, and patronage networks on exercising power (Cengiz, 2020).<sup>28</sup> Similarly, 'democratic openings' showcase democratic practices while maintaining authoritarian control behind the scenes. 'Totalitarian fusion' examines the fusion of ideologies, creating a unique blend that consolidates power in the hands of a few. However, these themes do not exist in isolation and intersect with various other factors within a regime. Political discourses play a pivotal role in shaping regime typologies and establishing hierarchical structures that reinforce the authority of the ruling regime. In the context of Central Asian politics, the portrayal of identity through political systems further adds complexity to the analysis. Different political frameworks in countries like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan can give rise to varied interpretations and articulations of identity. This includes manifesting diverse ideologies, cultural practices, and societal values within politics (Magyar & Madlovics, 2020).<sup>29</sup> As a result, the colours, emotions, and theories associated with a regime's synergy are subject to continuous change and adaptation in Central Asia.

The dynamic nature of political discourses in Central Asia highlights their importance as sources of political power. Political actors in Central Asia can influence public opinion, consolidate support, and maintain control by utilising and controlling the narratives, symbols, and rhetoric that define a regime. Therefore, a comprehensive examination of Central Asian regimes should focus on the structural aspects of power and delve into the discourses that permeate societies and influence political systems' trajectory. Understanding the multifaceted nature of political power sources in Central Asia is essential to unravelling the intricate tapestry of regimes and comprehending their impact on governance, societal dynamics, and the potential for change. A thorough analysis of Central Asian regimes requires an exploration of both the structural and discursive dimensions of power (Lemon & Thibault, 2020).<sup>30</sup> While structural analysis provides insights into the foundational characteristics of regimes, examining the discourses surrounding ideology, identity, and political power sources reveals the complexities and nuanced dynamics at play. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach encompassing these dimensions, researchers and analysts can develop a more holistic understanding of Central Asian regimes, their evolution, and their influence on diverse societies.

The essence of post-Soviet Central Asian politics lies in personalism and patronage networks. These networks are crucial for comprehending the functioning of the state, the structure of the state order, and the dynamics between rulers and the governed. The Central Asian rulers meticulously constructed patronage networks through their connections within the nomenklatura even before the collapse of the Soviet system. They cultivated ties with religious and tribal leaders, enlisted support for their regimes' security apparatus, and co-opted local and regional officials. The peripheral economies of Central Asian republics, having considerable experience in dealing with central authority, actively contributed to developing a Soviet internal market (Laruelle, 2021).<sup>31</sup> This led to substantial growth in enterprises and industrial capacity and a marked rotation of patronage from the centre. Consequently, the new power brokers and

supplanters of the bureaucratic elite in Central Asia need to possess unrestrained dominance over society seen in other post-Soviet states such as Russia, Belarus, Moldova, or Kazakhstan.

The nature of patron-client relationships within the state order also sheds light on the personal power of political leaders and the vertical organisation of authority in Central Asia. Peter Mandaville's analysis of patron-client relationships at different levels of Central Asian society suggests that 'tribes' or 'clans' can be a helpful heuristic at the highest level (Mandaville, 2009).<sup>32</sup> Simultaneously, religious influence over business control may not always exhibit a top-down character. Instead, these seemingly subordinate concepts are constructed and upheld by leaders to maintain binary and hierarchical distinctions despite their potentially fuzzy and horizontally organised nature. Notably, these ideas of 'tribe' or 'clan' are intentionally shaped as retro-Stalinist constructs. The personal control wielded by leaders in power determines the allocation of state resources, which is reciprocated by allegiance from those at the top of the pyramid, around whom the organisation of elites is centralised. The control and distribution of resources should align with the inner circle of the bureaucracy, emulating the centralising forces at play, particularly among the generals in the security forces, where authority does not necessarily entail responsibility. Instead, a well-established bureaucracy effectively manages the country independently.

Nevertheless, the various social actors whose support is crucial for the functioning of the state exert significant influence over the government's actions. However, 1991 does not represent a substantial shift in the relationship between the state and society, suggesting that they are part of a shared fundamental process. As creators or facilitators of public goods and services, both the state and society may be utilised by different groups to gain influence over the government. In Central Asia's transition to a market economy, this pattern is often associated with chaos, mainly when there is internal conflict within the security ministries as individuals compete for positions of power (Skalamera, 2023).<sup>33</sup> This behaviour can be seen in Putin and those following in his footsteps from within the security ministry, exemplifying the struggles within weak administrative hierarchies where lower-ranking officials waste their time in power struggles. Additionally, influential administrators at the intermediate and local levels of the state often take their cues from the hierarchical power structure below them, resulting in divisions along legal, functional, and ethno-political lines that are not equally recognised from a sociological perspective.

## 7. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Analysing and examining the intricate dynamics within Central Asian politics is crucial for a deep understanding of the region. Central Asia is marked by heightened political and military tensions, causing international concerns and increasing the potential for conflict. Some scholars have developed robust connections to specific Central Asian countries like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, dedicating significant time to thoroughly immerse themselves in the region. However, this focus sometimes overlooks these countries' domestic political systems and politics, leading scholars to occasionally observe the noticeable influence of external forces in shaping the narrative of Central Asia.

The impact of political events in countries like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan reverberates far beyond their borders, affecting the lives of individuals and communities. A thorough understanding of the region's political landscape requires engaging with political actors and delving into their experiences, interests, and objectives to form a more objective assessment. Additionally, the abundant natural resources in nations such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, including oil, minerals, and precious stones, significantly underpin their economic prosperity. Despite efforts to diversify their economies, these nations still heavily rely on commodity exports for financial stability. This presents a considerable challenge as a large portion of the Central Asian population faces poverty while authoritarian regimes navigate the complexities of their economies.

The realm of Central Asian politics is characterised by a multitude of complexities, frequent challenges, and often conflicting developments. Therefore, a thorough and conscientious approach is essential to prevent the spread of pseudo-scientific initiatives. Genuine scholarly pursuits, free from superficiality, provide profound insights and significantly enhance our understanding of the region's political modernisation and advancement. The repercussions of political events in nations such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan extend far beyond immediate effects, impacting the lives of individuals and their communities. Consequently, engaging with political figures and comprehending their experiences, interests, and goals is pivotal for objectively evaluating the region's political dynamics.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The analysis underscores the critical importance of situating Central Asian politics within the extensive body of literature that shapes our understanding of political dynamics in the region. It highlights the complex nature of political systems in Central Asia, which have shown notable resistance to change, even as times evolve. It eloquently emphasises the significant impact of the breakdown of traditional relationships and institutions on the modern state, often resulting in paralysis and necessitating coercive measures to address the resulting imbalance. It adeptly challenges the notion of the modern nation-state as unique or marginal in the broader political history of human civilisation while shedding light on the artificial processes that underlie nation-building. The text astutely argues that the apparent stability and cooperation amid evolving global dynamics require states to adapt rapidly, necessitating a comprehensive revaluation and recalibration of the fundamental principles of the modern state in light of immense pressures.

It eloquently delineates the dissolution of long-standing societal connections that had previously functioned to uphold stability and adaptability, emphasising the conscious undertaking to shape individuals following national identities. About present-day political environments, the passage persuasively contends that the contemporary world frequently ignores the exploratory aspect of its political pursuits, yielding to a shared amnesia that obstructs the comprehension of advancement.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

None.

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