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Tomasz Pugacewicz/
Marcin Grabowski (eds.)

Great and Small Games in Central Asia and the South Caucasus

14

PETER LANG

With 30 years having passed since Central Asia and the South Caucasus emerged on the international stage, a new approach to understanding its contemporary dynamics is required. This volume argues for a multidimensional analysis of international, regional, and domestic cooperation and conflicts in the region. The authors analyze the foreign policies of great powers such as Russia, China, the U.S., the EU, Japan, and Iran toward this part of the world. The work looks at regional issues and regionalism, including the Eurasian Union and the Belt and Road Initiative. A series of chapters study domestic processes ranging from clan politics, identity construction, the media, to non-state actors. The publication applies theoretical pluralism and utilizes realism, liberalism, constructivism, and FPA.

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Great and Small Games in Central Asia and the South Caucasus

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Tomasz Pugacewicz, Marcin Grabowski

Introduction

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, we can observe an acceleration of the transformation of the international order, with Russia's and China's more assertive policies in their neighborhoods and the willingness of those two powers to undermine US-established rules and institutions, especially discernible since the turn of 2013 and 2014. How these two actors behave in Central Asia and the South Caucasus – a region with the overlapping and contrasting interest of both sides – is a fascinating topic. Additionally, it is also curious to what extent this global change is affecting the position of a state which was praised not so long ago as a (liberal) hegemon, i.e. United States. After the Cold War, the U.S. was able to exercise its power in such geographically remote areas of the world as post-Soviet Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

During our discussions, we became increasingly aware that there are many clichés in studies on the policies of great powers toward this region, among which the concept of the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus being mere pawns in the hands of more powerful external actors playing their periodic great game was the most popular. This led us to the initial conclusion that without reference to small games, as we began to call them, we are unable to fully understand the dynamics of international politics in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. By small games we understand all developments which are not strictly or in the first instance connected with the involvement of out-of-the-region powers – i.e. the intraregional dynamic between states constituting Central Asia and the South Caucasus, and the intrastate relations among domestic actors (e.g. interclan politics). Based on the preliminary investigation of those intraregional and domestic issues, we concluded that the global power transition in the case of Central Asia and the South Caucasus is accompanied by (still slow but yet) transformation at the level of the abovementioned small games as e.g. the generation of ruling-politicians who established independent republics is dying out.

Understanding that the driving factors of international politics in Central Asia and the South Caucasus are multilevel, one can also observe conflict alongside cooperation and with one of the key factors being regionalism. Regional issues and regionalism have gained increasing importance in the early twenty-first century in tandem with the decline of globalization. Therefore, we have observed a growing role of regional integration, also with the participation of the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus. This phenomenon has been determined by global changes, encouraging countries located in Central Asia and the South Caucasus to cooperate more closely and integrate, but also supported by crucial regional players, namely Russia and China, using regional integration as a leverage tool to increase their influence in the region.

In the context of all the above-described processes shaping the current state of affairs in Central Asia and the South Caucasus – i.e. multiagency rivalry and cooperation on different levels of analysis – a relevant research gap could easily be identified. Even though this region emerged on the international stage around 30 years ago, trends taking shape at the international (inter- and intra-)regional and domestic levels in the last seven years highlight the need to reexamine the role of this part of the world in international relations. At the global level, the U.S. – focused for many years on projecting its power in this region – is more restrained as it faces opposition from Russia and China, two powers who are cooperating (more) whilst (still) remaining rivals. At the same time, the growing capabilities and assertiveness of out-of-this part of world regional powers – such as Turkey or India – are ready to transform the international environment of Central Asia and the South Caucasus. In the context of intraregional forces, we can observe a growing differentiation between energy resource-rich countries against those without these kinds of means at their disposal. This is changing the regional balance of power, as we could see in 2020 in reference to the Azeri-Armenian conflict in Nagorno Karabakh. Finally, processes in domestic politics are also changing Central Asia and the South Caucasus as the post-Soviet generation of leaders is leaving the stage (e.g. Islam Karimov died in 2016) and previously frozen conflict are thawing (e.g. part of the 1997 peace accord in Tajikistan was broken as the Islamic Renaissance Party was banned in 2015). In conclusion, questions on the processes shaping Central Asia and the South Caucasus at the end of the second and the beginning of the third decade of the twenty first century are almost as important as they were in the middle of the 1990s when the region first emerged.

Understanding that we are living in a period when we can simultaneously observe a transition in great and small games in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, we decided to invite other scholars to join us in researching this phenomenon. Based on a call for papers, scholars interested in the project delivered short research proposals. Twelve were selected, and articles based on those proposals finally constitute the chapters of this volume, with the addition of an introductory chapter focused on multidimensional analysis of the region. The scope, research questions and hypotheses, theoretical perspectives, structure of individual chapters are outlined below.

A few general remarks are necessary in reference to the scope of the Central Asia and South Caucasus states and outside powers, as well as about some of the theoretical perspectives and methodological issues discussed in this volume. As it was not possible to cover all the affairs connected with the chosen perspective, this volume presents some processes in more depth than others. In the case of Central Asia and the South Caucasus, almost half of the authors referred to at least half of the states constituting this region (Piotr Bajor, Marcin Grabowski and Jakub Stefanowski, Michał Lubina, Przemysław Osiewicz, Magdalena Kania, and Agnieszka Batko), others focused on Kazakhstan (Randall Newnham, Justyna Misiągiewicz, and Rafał Kuś), Kyrgyzstan (Randall Newnham, and Paulina Niechciał), Tajikistan (Paulina Niechciał), Turkmenistan (Justyna Misiągiewicz), Uzbekistan (Tomasz Pugacewicz), and Georgia (Alessia Chiriatti). In regard to the out-of-region actors involved in Central Asia, the main points of reference were China (Justyna Misiągiewicz, Marcin Grabowski and Jakub Stefanowski, Michał Lubina), Russia (Randall Newnham, Piotr Bajor, Michał Lubina), the United States (Tomasz Pugacewicz, Michał Lubina), the European Union (Magdalena Kania), Turkey (Alessia Chiriatti), Iran (Przemyslaw Osiewicz) and Japan (Agnieszka Batko). The authors directly referred or intuitively used categories developed in International Relations from the following theoretical traditions: realism (Piotr Bajor; Marcin Grabowski and Jakub Stefanowski, and Michał Lubina), both realism and liberalism (Magdalena Kania, Agnieszka Batko), liberalism (Randall Newnham), the Copenhagen School (Justyna Misiągiewicz, Alessia Chiriatti), constructivism (Przemyslaw Osiewicz, Paulina Niechciał, and Rafał Kuś), and Foreign Policy Analysis (Tomasz Pugacewicz, Przemysław Osiewicz, and Michał Lubina). As pure theoretical approaches are becoming less popular, we can also observe a growing tendency toward theoretical pluralism or even eclecticism in this volume (understood as it is by Sil and Katzenstein), allowing authors to analyze discussed phenomena from various perspectives and finding new explanations. At the level of research design, all chapters are based on single or multiple case studies and, as a result, the whole volume should be perceived as one comparative case study. In almost all of the chapters, qualitative text analysis and sometimes descriptive statistics are the primary method of data collection and analysis. The main sources of data were academic literature, the media, interviews with politicians, and publicly available documents.

In the introductory chapter, entitled *Multidimensional Analysis of International, (Intra-)regional and Domestic Politics in Central Asia and the South Caucasus*, the **editors** describe the main ideas employed to understand post-Cold War Central Asia and the South Caucasus. At the international level, five concepts of Central Asia and the South Caucasus were presented: (1) “flank” of out-of-region neighboring countries; (2) the Caspian Sea basin; (3) the new Silk Road; (4) the new Great Game; and (5) a new region and space for regionalism. Secondly, at the intraregional level, border disputes, and water and energy management disagreements were introduced as the main tools to understand regional relations. Finally, at the intrastate (domestic) level different conflicts between elites (reform v. rent-seeking, secular v. religious, inter-clan rivalry) and ethnic groups were characterized.

The whole volume is divided into three parts devoted to the great powers, regional issues and regionalism, and domestic politics in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Great Powers in Central Asia and South Caucasus

Central Asia and the South Caucasus have been a playing field for great games for centuries, and especially since the rivalry between the great powers intensified in the nineteenth century. This was clearly discernible in the British-Russian rivalry prior to the First World War or in the Soviet-American competition during the Cold War. The latter period was naturally focused on Afghanistan, as other Central Asian states were part of the Soviet Union, as was the South Caucasus region. Therefore, the end of the Cold War opened up a new era in the rivalry of the great powers or great games in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, one engaging global players like the United States, Russia and China, but at the same time also the regional players, analyzed in this book.

Piotr Bajor, in his chapter entitled *The Policy of the Russian Federation towards Central Asia,* introduces a research question concerning the key factors determining Russia's policy towards Central Asia. The author proposes multiple hypotheses focused on political, economic and security issues and Bajor declares an adherence to a realist theoretical framework of analysis. In the first part of the chapter, the conditions under which Russian policy toward Central Asia has developed are elaborated. Next, based on strategic governmental documents, the declared goals of the Russia Federation toward this region are presented. Subsequently, the implementation of the abovementioned aims are analyzed in reference to bilateral and multilateral relations between Russia and the states of Central Asia. Finally, the latest trends impacting the discussed issues are characterized.

Tomasz Pugacewicz in his chapter *U.S. Decision-making on the Use of Drones before 9/11: A Case Study on UAVs Operating from Uzbekistan over Afghanistan*, focuses on explaining five decisions taken between 2000 and 2001 regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) departing from the territory of Uzbekistan for actions in the airspace of Afghanistan. Much work has been published on U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and counter-terrorism prior to the Sep. 11, 2001 attacks, but relatively few have focused directly on the abovementioned decision-making process. In order to explain this phenomenon, Pugacewicz utilizes two theories of foreign policy decision-making: the bureaucratic politics model and the advisory system framework. Those two explanatory theories were selected based on the decisional unit approach and the identified decision-makers involved in the analyzed process. The chapter is divided into four parts. In the introduction, the theoretical concepts, a literature review, and the empirical context are discussed. In the first part, actors involved in the decision-making on the mentioned issue are identified along with their preferences. In the next part, the decision-making process is reconstructed according to two foreign policy theories associated with the decisional unit composition identified. In the conclusion, the explanatory power of the applied approaches is assessed.

The main focus of **Przemysław Osiewicz's chapter *The Importance of Central Asia in Iranian Foreign Policy: Between Idealism and Reality*** centers around the issue of whether one can observe continuity or change in the framework of Iran's attitude toward Central Asia in the post-Cold War era. Primarily, he is interested in the question of whether Iranian presidents pay attention to political and economic developments in Central Asia and to what extent they continue or change the strategies and actions developed by their predecessors. Osiewicz's central hypothesis states that Iran's foreign policy toward this region after 1991 was formulated *ad hoc* by successive presidents and, as a result, Teheran's policy does not constitute a coherent strategy. Osiewicz points out that despite the intensive development of studies on Iran's policy toward the Middle East, Iranian-American relations and international sanctions, the issue of Teheran's policy in Central Asia is undeveloped and constitutes a research gap. The author shows the different theoretical lenses employed by scholars researching Iran's foreign policy, including realism, constructivism and domestic politics. The chapter is divided into four parts. Firstly, various foreign policy approaches in reference to Iran's post-Cold War foreign policy toward Central Asia are presented. The remaining three sections are dedicated to Iran policy toward this region under different presidents: Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mohammad Khatami (1991–2005), Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005–2013) and Hassan Rouhani (2013–2021).

The research question introduced in **Magdalena Kania's chapter *EU Development Assistance to Central Asia: an Interest-driven and Value-driven Hybrid*** refers to the motives behind the EU's development engagement in Central Asia since 2002. Notably, the author is interested in "to what extent the EU's development assistance is driven by the value-based approach and to what extent it remains an instrument of the realization of self-interest". Kania's hypothesis states that the EU should be more interested in value-driven policy as it is presenting its own identity at the international stage in terms of normative/civilian power. She also indicates a research gap in the academic literature as publications on the EU's development assistance are focused on this phenomenon from the perspective of policy studies. As a result, the number of chapters focused on EU-recipient countries relations is limited, especially in the case of Central Asia. The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first one, theoretical international relations approaches toward development assistance are discussed (realism, the nexus between security and development, normative concepts, and the idea of the EU as normative power). In the second section, the growing relevance of Central Asia for the European Union is presented, and EU documents regarding its policy toward this region are analyzed in detail.

Agnieszka Batko, in her chapter *Striving for the Recognition: Japanese Foreign Policy Towards Central Asia*, seeks to answer the questions of "what are the central objectives of Japanese foreign policy towards Central Asia and how the goals are achieved?" The author introduces two hypotheses. In the first one, she argues that Japan's activity in Central Asia are focused on preventing the great powers, in particular China, from monopolizing access to this region. Secondly, Batko indicates that even though Japan is taking into account its economic interest in Central Asia, at the same time this country is offering a new model of developmental aid for the mentioned region. In reference to the theoretical framework, the author decided to employ a realist and liberal approach. The chapter is divided into three parts. Firstly, aspects of Japan's policy toward Central Asia oriented on national interests and developmental goals are presented in the context of the theoretical concepts. Next, the evolution of the abovementioned Japanese policy is described in detail. Finally, the characteristic aspects of Japan's unique "aid and development model" is analyzed.

Regional Issues and Regionalism

Central Asia and the South Caucasus had been under Russian or Soviet dominance for generations, hence to large extent this dominance shaped similar political developments, political elites and influences in tis different countries. Therefore, the external unifying factors served to a large extent as a regional identity builder. At the same time, there are many dividing factors in those sub-regions (especially discernible in the South Caucasus), and a regional identity is far from being created. Even though there are similarities between those two sub-regions, mostly connected with the development of modern states under Russian or Soviet dominances, there are distinctive features for both (Central Asia vs. the South Caucasus). Central Asia, paradoxically, may be treated as a more coherent region, with higher integrational potential, one which is actually used being more by crucial regional players, namely China and Russia. The South Caucasus, also due to its regional divisions, is definitely far from the creation of a proper regional organization. Nevertheless, regionalism and the regional level of analysis is becoming important, especially for the consideration of the great games of great powers in Central Asia and the South Caucasus (predominantly the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, and to a lesser extent the United States).

Randall Newnham, in his chapter *Russian Economic Linkage and the Eurasian Union in Central Asia,* poses a research question as to whether the Russian Federation, similar to other great powers, is using (in positive and negative form) economic instruments in reference to Central Asia's states in the context of the Eurasian Union. If the answer to this is in the affirmative, the second research question is to what extent those foreign policy tools are country-specific or only generally region-oriented. Concerning those issues, Newnham proposes two hypotheses: (1) Russia is employing varied and country-oriented types of economic leverage against Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and (2) these kinds of instruments have been important in delivering the successful implementation of its foreign policy goals associated with the membership of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan of the Eurasian Union. In the introductory part, the author identifies two main research gaps. Firstly, studies on economic linkages are overly focused on the so-called "hard" cases (e.g. using sanctions enforcing changes in domestic politics) and ignore situations where those interconnections were employed to encourage the employment of less crucial steps. Secondly, research on the post-Soviet space is too often limited to the perception of Russian foreign economic policy in this region to the concept of "weapon," in result ignoring the complexity and nuanced mix of the tools employed. Next, Newnham summarizes the origins of Russian economic dominance in the Eurasian Union. Finally, he analyses two case studies of the Russian Federation's economic links with post-Soviet states in detail (i.e. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), and how those interconnections were used to encourage those two countries to join the Eurasian Union.

Marcin Grabowski and Jakub Stefanowski, in their chapter *Belt and Road Initiative: A Tool for Reshaping the Structure of the Central Asian System?* take BRI as an instrument to reshape the Central Asian regional system in order to reinforce the Chinese position there. The authors indicate that while there is an extensive literature on BRI, the role of this initiative in changing the regional system's structure is barely analyzed, if at all. The chapter is based on two research questions: (1) can the BRI reshape the structure of system in Central Asia at all and (2) is China capable of driving structural change in this part of the world? Two hypotheses are introduced: (1) the BRI is a crucial element in reshaping the systemic structure in Central Asia and (2) China has the capabilities and resources to gradually change the shape of the regional system. The research employs structural realism (neorealist theory) and in the result is based on the system level of analysis. The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first section, the theoretical setting (including the level of analysis problem) of the researched issues is described in detail. Next, the BRI/One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative is introduced in the broader context of its general aims, i.e. exceeding those associated only with Central Asia states. Finally, the role of BRI project in Central Asia is analyzed at the level of the regional system and in the context of the following issues: military, energy, trade, foreign direct investments flow, and regional integration setting.

Alessia Chiriatti's chapter on *Georgia, South Caucasus Equilibrium and the Turkish Role. How do Non-state Actors Act and React?* is focused on understanding the ability of non-state actors to by-pass and influence the foreign policy of the central government and their power to act as an alternative structure to the state in the conflict resolution process. In the chapter, the following research questions are formulated: how do non-state actors work at the regional level?; how do mentioned actors affect governmental institutions?; what is Turkey's role in South Caucasian security in the context of this state's struggle to become the leading power in this region? The concept of the Regional Security Complexes developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver is declared as a theoretical perspective behind the research design. Additionally, the literature on "shadow regionalism" and "diffuse regionhood" is utilized. The chapter is divided into two parts. Firstly, the regional security environment in the South Caucasus is characterized, based on a case study of Georgia with a particular emphasis on Abkhazia and South Ossetian separatism and the transnational non-state actors (trafficking drugs, arms and humans) involved in it. Next, Turkey's role in the Caucasian security environment is elaborated based on this state's proactive foreign policy in this region.

Justyna Misiągiewicz's chapter on *Caspian Sea Littoral States in the Energy Security Policy of the People's Republic of China* poses its main research question as being about the role played by two primary energy producers in the Caspian region – Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan – in Chinese energy security policy. As the same time, she asks whether the energy field is the most crucial dimension of China's relations with those two Caspian states. Two of Misiągiewicz's hypotheses are as follows: (1) China, as the largest energy consumer in the world, has given the Caspian region increasing economic importance, nevertheless (2) the energy field is not only vital to economic development but also to the future geopolitical order of the region. The author follows the assumptions of the Copenhagen school of international relations. The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first, the energy resources of the Caspian region states are analyzed in the context of the world reserves. Additionally, the context of the international rivalry of great powers around this region is briefly addressed. Next, China's domestic demand and foreign supplies of energy are discussed, and the consequences of those for energy security policy are presented. Finally, the gas and oil infrastructure connecting Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan with the Chinese market is elaborated.

Domestic Politics in Central Asia and Caucasus

Great power politics and great games in Central Asia and the South Caucasus depend to a large extent on the region itself, a region composed of groups of states with interesting mechanisms that have shaped their socio-political and economic systems in reference to a set of cultural and historical factors, as well as Soviet or communist heritage, frequently resulting in non-democratic systems. Understanding those mechanisms and ways of influencing them seems to be crucial for conducting efficient and effective policies in the region. It is similarly important for researchers to explore and explain the region, its structure and mechanisms driving basic units of regional and international systems, namely nation states. Therefore, a set of three chapters explaining clan politics, nationalism and media politics in this region has been prepared.

Michał Lubina, in his chapter *From Clan Politics to Grand Politics: Central Asian Policies vis-à-vis Great Powers,* tries to answer the question of the impact of domestic interclan politics on foreign policy and how international politics influences the domestic distribution of power among different clans. According to the hypothesis formulated by the author, we should expect feedback between those two as interclan politics shape foreign policies and the outcomes of those actions factor into intrastate relations among elites. Lubina indicates that even though there are studies on the correlation between domestic politics and foreign policy in Central Asia, this kind of research is still underdeveloped. The chapter employs neoclassical realism and a two-level game theoretical perspective. The chapter is divided into six parts. Firstly, the general characterization of clan politics is introduced. In the next five sections, correlations between interclan and international politics in Central Asia's five states are analyzed.

The research question introduced by Paulina Niechciał in her chapter *Patterns of Nationalism and National Identity Construction in Central Asian Republics* concerns the leading patterns of the local nation-building programs in the states of post-Cold War Central Asia as employed by their primary constructors. The author proposes a hypothesis assuming that the current nation-building process in this part of the world closely resembles the one developed during the Soviet period. Niechciał points out that, while there are many single cases and comparative studies on nationalism in Central Asia, this region is still an attractive research field. Social constructivism is chosen in the chapter as the employed theoretical framework and the chapter is divided into two parts. In the first, the nation-building process in Soviet Central Asia is described. In the second section, the same mechanism is analyzed but after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The scholar decided to limit the scope of her research to two cases: Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Rafał Kuś, in his chapter entitled *Between Public Service and Serving the State. The Role of the Media in the Political System of Kazakhstan* introduces the research question of whether Kazakhstan's media system is an effective tool of government's policy. The author hypothesizes that, due to the politicization of the aforementioned media, Kazakh means of communication have such potential and are effectively used by the authorities in their undertakings. Kuś identifies a research gap, since most studies on Kazakhstan's media environment are descriptive, and there is a lack of studies employing theoretical frameworks developed in media studies. The author argues that the studied mechanism could be associated with constructivism in International Relations. The chapter is divided into four parts. Firstly, the main components of classification developed by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini are presented. Next, two sections discuss the mentioned theoretical framework in the context of Kazakhstan (the media and the political context). Finally, Kazakh government media strategies are analyzed in the context of the domestic and foreign policies adopted by the state.

In the **Conclusion**, we present the main takeaways from the individual chapters and discuss some general remarks based on the whole volume. The volume brings different dimensions which are crucial for an understanding of the contemporary Central Asia and South Caucasus, without having the ambition to cover all of the issues, but definitely those most important, especially at the international level (especially great powers) and regional level (with selected organizations), as well as chosen case studies at the domestic level. It certainly constitutes an excellent starting point for further research in each of those dimensions.

The structure of the volume corresponds with the difficult task of supplying a comprehensive introduction to the current problems in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, both at the international, (intra-)regional, and domestic levels. The editors decided to distinguish the above parts, even though they understand the fact that those levels and their different dimensions certainly overlap and influence on another in the real world.

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Tomasz Pugacewicz, Marcin Grabowski

1. Multidimensional Analysis of International, (Intra-)regional and Domestic Politics in Central Asia and the South Caucasus

Abstract: The chapter aims at describing different concepts employed to understand Central Asia and the South Caucasus at the international, (intra-)regional, and domestic (intrastate) levels. At the international level, five concepts of Central Asia and the South Caucasus were presented: (1) out-of-this-region neighboring countries "flank," (2) Caspian Sea basin, (3) the new Silk Road; (4) new Great Game, and (5) new region and space for regionalism. Secondly, at the intraregional level, border disputes, and water and energy management disagreements as the main tools to understand regional relations are introduced. Finally, at the intrastate (domestic) level different conflicts between elites (reform v. rent-seeking, secular v. religious, inter-clan rivalry) and ethnic groups are characterized. The authors highlight the fact that actors from those (analytically) separated levels (in real-world) interact in the form of cooperation or conflict. The paper concludes that processes developed at those three levels in Central Asia and the South Caucasus (e.g. great powers competition, intraregional conflicts and intra-elite disagreements) are undermining Western concept of statehood (based on the idea of the unity and sovereignty of states) and international relations. In conclusion, the authors claim that this region forces researchers to focus on non-Western international relations theories which could be able to handle the international, (intra-)regional, and domestic actors shaping its fate.

Keywords: levels of analysis, international system, regional issues, domestic politics, Central Asia, South Caucasus

Contemporary changes in the international order, i.e. the U.S. decline and the so-called Rise of the Rest (especially China), is gradually influencing Central Asia and the South Caucasus as this region is located at the point of contact of Eurasian powers and is a subject of interest for many other states. However, this region's role in international relations is not only a function of the activity of out-of-regional actors – like great powers politics or their integrative initiatives (e.g. Russia, China or the U.S.) and the involvement of middle range states (e.g. Turkey or Iran) – but also a result of the processes developed in this region itself (e.g. intraregional rivalry and clan politics).

The objective of this volume is to describe cutting edge research on: (1) foreign & security policy developed toward Central Asia and the South Caucasus by states involved in the region, and (2) other global, regional and domestic processes shaping the domestic situation in the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus and their role in international relations.

There is a need for in-depth studies of Central Asia and the South Caucasus because even though this region emerged in international relations around 30 years ago, in the last seven years its international and domestic environment has undergone significant transformations. At the international level, the decreasing role in global affairs played by the U.S. has been accompanied by more assertive policies developed by the Russian Federation, China, and even regional powers like Turkey and Iran. At the same time, we can observe changes at the domestic level – e.g. the generation of ruling-politicians who created independent republics is on its way out (e.g. Islam Karimov died in 2016 and Nursultan Nazarbayev resigned in 2019 and was ousted in 2022) and in other countries elements of long-established political arrangements are being undermined (e.g. the Islamic Renaissance Party, one of the main elements of peace accords in Tajikistan, was banned in 2015). As a result, the question of international and domestic processes in Central Asia and the South Caucasus is as valid today as it was 30 years ago.

The Central Asia and South Caucasus region is understood in this edited volume as three countries from the South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and five states from Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) which emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.[1] Sometimes, the term Central Eurasia is employed in this context. On the one hand, "Central Eurasia" could be perceived as a historical term only relevant for contemporary Central Asia (and e.g. Afghanistan).[2] On the other hand, researchers have used this term as synonymous with Central Asia and the South Caucasus region.[3]

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[1] E.g. Ellen L. Frost wrote: "[The term – TP/MG] "Central Asia," virtually erased by the Soviet occupation, rose again in the 1990s." Frost, Ellen L.: *Asia's New Regionalism.* Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder, CO 2008, p. 25, 28.

[2] Weisbrode, Kenneth: *Central Eurasia: Prize or Quicksand? Contending Views of Instability in Karabakh, Ferghana and Afghanistan.* Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York 2001, p. 7; Kavalski, Emilian / Cho, Young Chul: "The European Union in Central Eurasia: still searching for strategy". *Asia Europe Journal* 16, 2018, pp. 51–63. S. F. Starr dubbed the term "greater Central Asia" for five post-Soviet Central Asia states and Afghanistan. Starr, S. Frederick: "A Partnership for Central Asia". *Foreign Affairs* 84 (4), 2005, pp. 164–178.

[3] Amineh, Mehdi Parvizi / Houweling, Henk (eds.): *Central Eurasia in Global Politics: Conflict, Security, and Development.*. Brill: Leiden and Boston 2005; Pham, J. Peter: "Beijing's Great Game: Understanding Chinese Strategy in Central Eurasia". *American Foreign Policy Interests* 28, 2005, pp. 53–67; Ismailov, Eldar: "New Regionalism in the Caucasus: A Conceptual Approach". *The Caucasus & Globalization* 1 (1), 2006, p. 17; Pabst, Adrian: "Central Eurasia in the Emerging Global Balance of Power". *American Foreign Policy Interests* 31, 2009, pp. 166–176; Beckwith, Christopher I.: *Empires of the Silk Road: a History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present.* Princeton University Press: Princeton 2009; Papava, Vladimer: "The Eurasianism of Russian Anti-Westernism and the Concept of 'Central Caucaso-Asia' ". *Russian Politics and Law* 51 (6), 2013, pp. 45–86. Additionally, May 2004 issue

Correlating Central Asia with the South Caucasus was popular for many years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.[4]

Taking into account both of the mentioned terms – Central Asia and the South Caucasus – the former is often more broadly understood than the second one. That is why the focus on associating Central Asia with only the five post-Soviet republics should not permit us to lose sight of other geographical interpretations of this region. Based on other theoretical notions and practical-oriented needs, many researchers, not to mention decision-makers, identify Central Asia with other countries or their parts.[5] In those cases, this region has also encompassed Afghanistan, Azerbaijan (or even the whole of the South Caucasus), Mongolia, parts of China (Xinjiang, traditionally known as Eastern Turkistan, now an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China), India, Iran, Pakistan and Russia.[6] More on different understandings of Central Asia (and South Caucasus) is presented below in the context of specific terms used to describe those states.

The main concepts of international, regional and domestic politics in Central Asia and South Caucasus are presented and named in this paper as "great games"

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of *International Affairs* journal (Volume 80, Issue 3) was called "Regionalism and the Changing International Order in Central Eurasia" and focused on the Central Asia and South Caucasus states.

[4] E.g. Cohen, Ariel: "The New 'Great Game': Oil Politics in the Caucasus and Central Asia". *Heritage Foundation*, January 25, 1996, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.heritage.org/europe/report/the-new-great-game-oil-politics-the-caucasus-and-central-asia. Still, in the first decade of the 21st century, we can observe the process of the decoupling of those two regions. A symbol of this decoupling of Central Asia and the South Caucasus could be the decision made at the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006 at the U.S. State Department level moving Central Asian issues to the South Asia Bureau while preserving a South Caucasian desk at the European and Eurasian Bureau. "The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs". *U.S. Department of State*, Feb. 9, 2006, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://2001–2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/60885.htm. See also the paragraph on failed intraregional cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus in this chapter (p. 48).

[5] See the discussion on this issue in: Cummings, Sally N.: *Understanding Central Asia: Politics and Contested Transformations.* Routledge: New York 2012, pp. 11–22 (chapter: "The region of Central Asia: What's in a name?"); Cornell, Svante E. / Starr, S. Frederick: *Modernization and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia: A New Spring?* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program: Washington, DC 2018, pp. 11–14.

[6] See e.g. the scope of the *Central Asian Affairs* journal established in 2014: Laruelle, Marlene: "Editor's Note". *Central Asian Affairs* 1 (1), 2014, p. 2. See also: Van den Bosch, Jeroen "Central Asia is Dead, Long Live Eurasia? – Evolution of the (De)construction of Central Asia's Regionness". In: Marszałek-Kawa, Joanna (ed.): *Political and Security Policy in Asia: Challenges, Perspectives, Implications.* Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek: Torun 2016, pp. 158–186.

and "small games."[7] This distinction hinges on the selective application of a level of analysis typology developed in International Relations. Initially, this kind of typology was based on three levels (international system, state and individual), but with the time the number of separated levels has increased and we can now name at least five (i.e. international system, regional, state, bureaucratic, and individual).[8]

From the perspective of the level of analysis, in the literature on Central Asia and South Caucasus we could easily distinguish works focused how the international system (e.g. out-of-region powers) influence the region's states. We called this international level "great games", because one of the dominating assumptions of this kind of approach is the focus on how great (or regional) powers and the interactions between them shape the region in question. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that those "games" do not always mean rivalry, since in some cases they result in cooperation (e.g. see the description below on the term "region").

As works on the international level (those "great games") constitute a cornerstone of International Relations research on Central Asia and the South Caucasus, we decided to term research focused on other levels as "small games" (i.e. those played by not-so-great powers). We hope that the resulting dichotomy between "great" and "small" games sheds light on research focused on levels of analysis other than the "international" and could bring more balance in International Relations studies on Central Asia and the South Caucasus. In this paper, when writing on "small games" we concentrated on two levels of analysis: intraregional (i.e. interstate relations between the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus) and domestic (e.g. interclan relations in the power elite of a particular state from Central Asia or the South Caucasus). Of course, as in the case with "great games", these "small" ones can also result not only in rivalry, but in a form of cooperation (e.g. on dividing profits from foreign investments between ruling elites).

In the context of our typology of "great" and "small" games, a brief comment is needed on the issue of the so called "regional" level of analysis. As you can read below, we have divided this issue into two types and addressed it separately in the part on "great" and "small" games. As most of the writing on regional issues in the context of Central Asia and the South Caucasus usually implies that those states are part of other, broader regions, including great powers (e.g. post-Soviet region including Russia) or regional powers (e.g. Turkic language region, including Turkey), we described those activities associated with such understood regions under the umbrella of "great games". In the case of developments occurring only between the eight states belonging to Central Asia and the South Caucasus region, we talk about "intraregional" processes and refer to them as an example of "small games."[9]

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[7] See other authors making a similar distinction between "great" and "little" (or "local") games: Clarke, Michael: "'Glocality', 'Silk Roads' and new and little 'great games' in Xinjiang and Central Asia". In: Mackerras, Colin / Clarke, Michael (eds.): *China, Xinjiang and Central Asia. History, Transition and Crossborder Interaction into the 21st Century*. Routledge: London and New York 2009, pp. 173–186; Cooley, Alexander: *Great Games, Local Rules: the New Great Power Contest in Central Asia.* Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York 2012; Laruelle, Marlene: "Envisioning a region. The US 'Silk Road' as an object of academic enquiry". *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 56 (4), 2015, pp. 357–359.

[8] Jørgensen, Knud Erik: *International Relations Theory: A New Introduction.* 2nd ed., Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke and New York 2018, pp. 17–18.

Finally, we should understand all of those abovementioned typologies in the context of the agent-structure problem in International Relations studies.[10] Firstly, we need to notice that level of analysis typology is an analytical one and that, in the real world, factors from many different levels overlap and contribute to the processes developed on other levels (e.g. processes on international and intraregional levels shape decisions made by individual political leaders in Central Asia and South Caucasus). As a result, we are forced to avoid simplistic assumptions based on the acknowledgement that only one level is responsible for developments on the other one. Secondly, as research in International Relations has concluded, we should avoid one-direction assumption that only structures (e.g. the international system) shape agents behavior (e.g. state actor) or vice versa (e.g. states' foreign policy constitutes international system). Instead, we should trace feedback between the structure and agents in order to determine the way in which they constitute themselves. As a result, in the case of the states of Central Asia and South Caucasus, we need to avoid simplified approaches focused e.g. on how international system (e.g. rivalry and cooperation between the U.S., China, and Russia) reassigns roles played by the eight states analyzed in this volume or vice versa.[11] The correct way to conduct research on Central Asia and the South Caucasus is to notice that there is an interplay between actors from different levels of analysis, so even individual leaders from this region – sometimes perceived only as pawns on the chessboard of great powers – have something to say on global processes.[12]

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[9] See other scholars writing e.g. on "intra-regional" cooperation of five Central Asia's states as other type of regionalism than the one involving great powers like Russia, China or the US. Patnaik, Ajay: "Regionalism and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia". *International Studies* 56 (2–3), 2019, pp. 147–162; Qoraboyev, Ikboljon / Moldashev, Kairat: "The Belt and Road Initiative and Comprehensive Regionalism in Central Asia". In: Mayer, Maximilian (ed.): *Rethinking the Silk Road: China's Belt and Road Initiative and Emerging Eurasian Relations*. Springer Singapore (Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan): Singapore 2018, p. 122.

[10] Jørgensen, K. E.: op. cit., pp. 17–18.

[11] Nevertheless, in the process of the cooperation between great powers involved in this region "the autonomy of the Eurasian political space, especially in the Caucasus and Central Asia" is limited. E.g. for short time, after the 9/11 attacks and the realignment of Putin's Russia toward the United States, it was possible to project US military power toward the analyzed region, which was previously characterized with restricted accessibility for Washington. In this case, national leaders from Central Asia and South Caucasus have limited voice on military cooperation with the US due to developments on the international level. Stent, Angela / Shevtsova, Lilia: "America, Russia and Europe: a realignment?". *Survival* 44 (4), 2002, pp. 123–125, 129–131; Väyrynen, Raimo: "Regionalism: Old and New". *International Studies Review* 5 (1), 2003, pp. 28–29.

Great Games: Central Asia and the South Caucasus at the International Level

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, different names for Central Asia and the South Caucasus, as a part of the world, emerged and which in most cases did not describe geographical space but presented a specific perspective on this region, quite often correlated with the interests of actors promoting such terms. Five such concepts are described below, perceiving those eight states as (1) out-of-this-region neighboring countries "flank" (mainly Russia's southern flank), (2) Caspian Sea basin, (3) new Silk Road(s); (4) new Great Game, and (5) new region and space for regionalism.[13] Even though those perceptions are analyzed below separately, it should be noted that quite often those were interrelated (e.g. the idea of Central Asia and the South Caucasus as a part of Russia's southern flank correlated with the concept that the new Great Game is developed in this region).

Flanking Neighboring Countries

According to one of the first interpretations, this region was seen as just a territory flanking neighboring countries (mostly associated with Russia, but also others with the passing of time e.g. China).

This concept of Central Asia and the South Caucasus in the first instance referred to the "southern flank" of the newly-established Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).[14] Even though it was mostly referred to as CIS's flank, it was perceived as Russia's since the Commonwealth was largely dominated by the latter. This was a continuation of a trend present during the Cold War when this region was perceived as the "Soviet Union's southern flank" toward West-oriented Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), including Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, and existing between 1955 and 1979.[15] However, in the post-Cold War era, it was perceived as a Russian tool to defend itself against the "Islamic threat" from the so-called "arc of instability" (not only including the Central Asian and South Caucasus states but also Afghanistan and Pakistan).[16]

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[12] As E. Kavalski points out, to survive state leaders are forced to employ specific domestic and foreign policies due to the domestic and international constrains, but, on the other hand, the same domestic and international forces create space for different options and, as a result, those leaders are stakeholders in the process of not only domestic, but also international politics structuring. Kavalski, E.: "Uncovering the 'New' Central Asia: The Dynamics of External Agency in a Turbulent Region". In: Kavalski, Emilian (ed.): *New Central Asia: the Regional Impact of International Actors*. World Scientific Pub.: New Jersey 2010, pp. 13–17.

[13] Compare with the main concepts identified with Centra Asia by: Laruelle, M.: "Envisioning …," p. 357.

[14] E.g. Narinskii, M. M. / Mal'gin, A. V.: *The CIS Southern Flank: Central Asia, Caspian, Caucasus: Prospects and Challenges for Russia*. Logos: Moscow 2003; Warikoo, Kulbhushan: "Russians in post-Soviet Central Asia. Issues and Concerns". In: Atabaki, Touraj / Mehendale, Sanjyot: *Central Asia and the Caucasus: Transnationalism and Diaspora*, Routledge: London and New York 2005, p. 71; Pain, Emil A.: "Contagious Ethnic Conflicts and Border Disputes Along Russia's Southern Flank". In: Menon,

In this sense, "flank" meant two things. In the first instance, and narrowly, the term "flank" suggested a military or more broadly security perspective on the role of those states and implied such a focus on Central Asia and the South Caucasus.[17] Simultaneously, and more broadly, it was also synonymous with being in the Russian sphere of influence as it meant that the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus are not independent actors, but only a tool in Russian security policy and, more broadly, its foreign policy. As a result, Central Asia and the South Caucasus as a southern flank could only be perceived in reference to its more prominent northern neighbor, i.e. Russia. From this point of view, it was not possible to talk about this region without referring to Russia. This perspective of understanding Central Asia and South Caucasus was not only popular in Russia,[18] but also in the West[19] and

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Rajan / Fedorov, Yuri E. / Nodia, Ghia (eds.): *Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia: the 21st Century Security Environment.* M.E. Sharpe: Armonk, NY 1999, pp. 177–202.

[15] Kaser, Michael: "The Five States of Central Asia". In: Heenan, Patrick / Lamontagne, Monique (eds.): *The CIS Handbook.* Fitzroy Dearborn: London 1999, p. 87.

[16] Stent, A. / Shevtsova, L.: op. cit., pp. 123–125; Mesbahi, Mohiaddin: "Russian Foreign Policy and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus". *Central Asian Survey* 12 (2), 1993, pp. 181–215. On Russian efforts to stabilize the northern part of Eurasia's Islamic crescent (i.e. South Caucasus and Central Asia), because of threat emerging from the southern of the abovementioned crescent, see Barylski, Robert V.: "The Russian Federation and Eurasia's Islamic crescent". *Europe-Asia Studies* 46 (3), 1994, pp. 389–417.

[17] See e.g. Russian military expert perspective from the 1990s on Central Asia as a "military and strategic space" which should be "the external border of the CIS." Warikoo, K.: op. cit., p. 71.

[18] Cf. Narinskii, M. M. / Mal'gin, A. V.: op. cit.; Warikoo, K.: op. cit., p. 71. See also: Pain, E. A.: op. cit., pp. 177–202; Trofimov, Dmitry: "Russia and the United States in Central Asia: Problems, Prospects, and Interests". *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 19 (1), 2003, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.ca-c.org/journal/2003/journal_eng/cac-01/09.troeng.shtml.

[19] Blank, Stephen: "Central Asia and the Transformation of Asia's Strategic Geography". *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 17 (2), 2003, p. 338; Cummings, S. N.: "Happier bedfellows? Russia and Central Asia under Putin". *Asian Affairs* 32 (2), 2001, p. 150; Rumer, Boris: "The Powers in Central Asia". *Survival* 44 (3), 2002, p. 62; Menon, R. / Barkey, Henri J.: "The Transformation of Central Asia: Implications for Regional and International Security". *Survival* 34 (4), 1992, p. 69.

Asia.[20] Additionally, along mentioned thinking on this region securitization was the Eurasianist idea of defending the Russian minority (especially) in Central Asia.[21]

From the second point of view (i.e. geographical one), Central Asia and the South Caucasus is not only Russia's southern flank, but also the western flank of China, the northern flank of Iran and Afghanistan (or more broadly of South Asia), and the eastern frontier of Greater Middle East (especially Turkey).[22] With the growing presence of the West since the 9/11 in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, including its military, the perception of the region as China's western flank built up in the beginning of the twenty-first century.[23] Similarly to Russia, this region was perceived as a potential Islamist threat influencing China's western province of Xinjiang (itself seen as a "security buffer" between mentioned "western flank" and "China proper").[24] At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Central Asia and the South Caucasus (and parts of South Asia) was called by the Chinese "Western Regions."[25] In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the concept of China's western flank was broadened and now not only includes security issues but also economic cooperation (see more on China's new Silk Road idea below).[26]

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[20] Singh, Rai: "Russia and its Southern Flank". *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 50 (3), 1994, pp. 72, 74, 80.

[21] Warikoo, K.: op. cit., p. 71.

[22] Laruelle, M.: "Envisioning…," p. 357.

[23] Harris, Lillian Craig: "Xinjiang, Central Asia and the Implications for China's Policy in the Islamic World". *The China Quarterly* 133, 1993, pp. 111–129.; "Beijing Warily Eyes its Western Flank". *Asiaweek* 23 (32), 1997, p. 8; Rumer, B.: "The Powers…," pp. 57–68; Rumer, B.: "Central Asia at the End of the Transition". In: Rumer, B. (ed.): *Central Asia at the End of the Transition*, M.E. Sharpe: Armonk, NY 2005, p. 40; Marketos, Thrassy N.: *China's Energy Geopolitics: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Central Asia.* Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon and New York 2009, p. 28; Wong, Edward: "China Quietly Extends Footprints Into Central Asia". *The New York Times* Jan. 2, 2011, pp. 1–3; Aris, Stephen: "Spreading the 'Shanghai Spirit': A Chinese Model of Regionalization in Post-Soviet Central Asia". In: Kavalski, E. (ed.): *China and the Global Politics of Regionalization.* Ashgate Publishing: Farnham, England; Burlington, VT 2009, p. 153; Lillis, Joanna: "Central Asia: China Flexes Political and Economic Muscle". *Eurasianet*, Sep 12, 2013, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://eurasianet.org/central-asia-china-flexes-political-and-economic-muscle; Li, Mingjiang: "From Look-West to Act-West: Xinjiang's role in China–Central Asian relations". *Journal of Contemporary China* 25 (100), 2016, pp. 515–517, 526; Pantucci, Raffaello: "US Unlikely to Change Minds by Shouting at China's Neighbours". *Financial Times*, Feb. 24 2020, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.ft.com/content/19d181eb-082d-444e-908d-2d477f6b039e; Chung, Chien-peng: "The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's Changing Influence in Central Asia". *The China Quarterly* 180, 2004, p. 1003.

[24] Rumer, Boris: "Central Asia…," p. 40; Li, M.: op. cit., p. 517; Sharma, Raj Kumar: "Dragon rises in Central Asia – Security and Economic Dimensions". *Nikkei Asia*, August 3, 2015, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Dragon-rises-in-Central-Asia-security-and-economic-dimensions.

[25] Frost, E. L.: op. cit., p. 26.

Caspian Sea Basin as Oil and Gas Bonanza

The second concept of Central Asia and the South Caucasus is connected with the idea of the Caspian Sea Basin, Caspian Basin or Transcaspian (sometimes interchangeably as the Caspian Sea region or just the Caspian region). This geographical term, and thus in theory politically neutral, was, in reality, understood from a political perspective. This is obvious when we compare the three understandings of the "Caspian Sea Basin" described below from a purely geographical perspective with – presented in the next paragraph – a commonly used understanding of this idea. Firstly, from a strictly geographical point of view, the Caspian Sea, in fact a lake, has five riparian countries: Russia (21 % of the coastline), Kazakhstan (34 %), Turkmenistan (18 %), Iran (15 %) and Azerbaijan (12 %).[27] Secondly, in terms of the Caspian Sea (drainage) basin (catchment area or watershed), i.e. the "area from which all precipitation flows to a single stream or set of streams,"[28] the five riparian counties should be supplemented with Armenia and Georgia.[29] Finally, it could be understood as the Caspian Sea (geological) basin,[30] usually associated with a set of basins geographically located strictly under or around the Caspian Sea (e.g. South Caspian, North Caspian, North Ustyurt, Mangyshlak, and Amu Darya geological basins), including Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Azerbaijan and Georgia.[31] Nevertheless, those three geographical configurations of states (riparian, drainage and geological) were rarely identified with the Caspian Sea basin (region) in International Relations literature. An exception in this case are some papers where the five riparian states are associated with the Caspian Sea Basin idea in the context of dissuasion on maritime border delimitation.[32]

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[26] Li, M.: op. cit., p. 526; Sharma, R. K.: op. cit..

[27] "Caspian Sea and the World: the Stage and the Actors". *GRID-Arendal*, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.grida.no/resources/6106.

[28] "Drainage basin". *Britannica*, 16 Jan. 2020, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.britannica.com/science/drainage-basin; "Basin". *National Geographic*, Jan. 21, 2011, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/basin/.

[29] "The Caspian Sea drainage basin". *GRID-Arendal*, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.grida.no/resources/6130. Cf. "Annual flow of water to the Caspian Sea". *GRID-Arendal*, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.grida.no/resources/6099.

[30] "Basin". *Schlumberger*, https://www.glossary.oilfield.slb.com/en/Terms/b/basin.aspx.

[31] Belopolsky, Andrei V. / Talwani, Manik: "Assessment of the Greater Caspian Region Petroleum Reserves and Their Role in World Energy". In: Yilmaz, Pinar O. / Isaksen, Gary H. (eds.): *Oil and Gas of the Greater Caspian Area*. American Association of Petroleum Geologists: Tulsa, OK, 2007, pp. 5–6.

[32] Vinogradov, Sergei / Wouters Patricia: "The Caspian Sea: Quest for a New Legal Regime". *Leiden Journal of International Law* 9 (1), 1996, pp. 87–98; O'Lear,

Instead, in practice, the "Caspian Sea basin" was seen from the perspective of the energy resources of this "basin," i.e. oil and gas deposits. Narrowly (and rarely) it was understood only as post-Soviet newly independent states receiving first foreign investments in the energy exploitation sector – like Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.[33] More broadly (and commonly) it was associated with all postcommunist states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus.[34] It should not be surprising that in this case there was no reference to riparian, drainage, and geological basin states like Iran or Russia, as the "Caspian Sea Basin" term was popular in studies on U.S. (or more broadly Western) policy toward this region with the recommendation on limiting Russian and Iranian influence and boosting the position of the West, including (perceived at that time as highly pro-Western) Turkey.[35] As a result, the Caspian Sea Basin idea which included Russia and Iran was rarely invoked.[36]

In the same context, the term "Caspian Sea region" emerged to describe a group of states from Central Asia and the South Caucasus connected with Western

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Shannon: "Resources and conflict in the Caspian Sea". *Geopolitics* 9 (1), pp. 161–186; Janusz-Pawletta, Barbara: *Legal Status of the Caspian Sea: Current Challenges and Prospects for Future Development.* Springer Berlin Heidelberg (Imprint: Springer), Berlin and Heidelberg 2015.

[33] Barylski, R. V.: op. cit., pp. 389–417 and in the 21st century: Belopolsky, A. V. / Talwani, M.: op. cit., p. 7.

[34] Barylski, R. V.: op. cit., pp. 389–417. For similar optics see: Moffett, George: "Assessing a Russia without Yeltsin at Helm". *Christian Science Monitor*, 87 (245), Nov. 14, 1995, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.csmonitor.com/1995/1114/14013.html; Edwards, Mike: "The Fractured Caucasus". *National Geographic* 189 (2), 1996, pp. 126–131; Snyder, Jed C.: "Eurasia after the Third Empire". *Orbis* 41 (1), (1997), pp. 148–162; Brzezinski, Zbigniew: "A Geostrategy for Eurasia". *Foreign Affairs* 76 (5), 1997, pp. 50–64; Croissant, Michael P.: "U.S. interests in the Caspian Sea Basin". *Comparative Strategy* 16 (4), 1997, pp. 353–368; Hill, Fiona / Spector, Regine: "The Caspian Basin and Asian Energy Markets". The Brookings Institution, Sep. 1, 2001, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-caspian-basin-and-asian-energy-markets/.

[35] Snyder, J. C.: op. cit., pp. 148–162; Brzezinski, Z.: "A Geostrategy …," pp. 50–64; Croissant, M. P.: op. cit., p. 353–168; Pugacewicz, Tomasz: "Mechanizm kształtowania polityki Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki wobec regionu Morza Kaspijskiego po 1991 roku". ["U.S. foreign policy decision making towards the countries of the Caspian region after 1991".] PhD thesis defended at the JU, Krakow 2015, pp. 10–11; Manning, Robert A.: "The Myth of the Caspian Great Game and the 'New Persian Gulf' ". *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 7 (2), 2000, pp. 15–33.

[36] Lenczowski, George: "The Caspian Oil and Gas Basin: A New Source of Wealth?". *Middle East Policy* 5 (1), 1997, pp. 111–119; Chufrin, Gennady: "Introduction". In Chufrin, G. (ed.): *Security of the Caspian Sea Region.* Oxford University Press: Oxford; New York 2001, p. 1.

energy interests.[37] Even after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan – clearing shedding new light on this part of the world – the Caspian Sea region was perceived to be based on the aforementioned economic interests.[38] Only recently has the term "Caspian Sea region" become associated more commonly with Russia and Iran.[39]

New Silk Road(s)

In the third case, Central Asia and the South Caucasus were perceived as the territorial space where ("new") ancient "Silk Road" is being reestablished. From the historical point of view, the Silk Road was a (mainly land and partly maritime) trade route between the West (i.e. ancient Rome) and China between the second century BCE and the fifteenth century. The term itself was coined by Ferdinand von Richthofen in the nineteenth century as "Seidenstrasse". Even the current name refers to one product (silk) transported from China to the West; there were many different goods transported in both directions. In fact, there was never one "road", but rather many "routes" and only some of which were going toward Central Asia and the South Caucasus.[40]

When the trans-Siberian railway was built at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, tsarist Russia became the main route connecting the (Far) East and Europe. Still, with the emergence of the Soviet Union, which was antagonistic toward the West, this corridor (including the states of

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[37] Mack, Tom: "Moscow to Houston: Help!". *Forbes* 145 (5), 1990, p. 72; Cohen, A.: "Engaged Realism". *Harvard International Review* 19 (1), 1996/1997, pp. 32–35; Garten, Jeffrey E.: "Business and Foreign Policy". *Foreign Affairs* 76 (3), 1997, p. 71.

[38] See e.g. "It is interesting to note that even after the beginning of the counter-terrorist operation in Afghanistan the American foreign policy planners continued looking at the CIS southern flank as a single unit. This confirms that the United States is interested in the Caspian area in the first place and, therefore, looks at the eight states as the Caspian states". Trofimov, D.: op. cit.

[39] "Oil and Natural Gas Production is Growing in Caspian Sea region". *U.S. Energy Information Administration*, Sep. 11, 2013, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=12911.

[40] "About the Silk Roads". *UNESCO*, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/about-silk-roads. See one of many post-Cold War studies on cultural exchange along the lines of the Silk Road*: The Silk Roads Project: Integral study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue, 1988–1997*, UNESCO: [no data] 2020. What is interesting this UNESCO project was developed at the end of Cold War and it was against traditional for this period lines of conflict. This interest of the UNESCO in the Silk Road was continued in the 21st century: Kang, In-Uk: "Peace in Central Asia: Prognosis and Solutions for UNESCO's Silk Road Project". In: Kang, In-Uk et al. (eds.): *The Role of UNESCO in the Search for Peace*, Korean National Commission for UNESCO: Seul 2019, pp. 55–68. See also: M. Laruelle on "Silk Road" as product of European Orientalist at the end of 19th century and beginning of the 20th century: Laruelle, M.: "Envisioning...," p. 358.

Central Asia and the South Caucasus) was marginalized until the end of the Cold War. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the states analyzed in this chapter could once again become a part of the West-East transportation corridor. To meet this condition infrastructure was needed as those countries were mostly connected only with the north, i.e. its former imperial center.

Since the 1990s, outside powers interested in building their influence in Central Asia and the South Caucasus have promoted projects securing the connection between this landlocked region and international markets. Often those policies and their associated projects were presented in the same way, i.e. as a renewal of the abovementioned "Silk Road," even when those projects were different and sometimes even opposing in details.[41] This included primarily China in the first half of the 1990s (eastern direction),[42] then Iran opening a railway connection with Central Asia in the middle of the decade (southern route).[43] Still, since the second half of the 1990s, the dominant narrative was centered for many years around a U.S.-backed corridor toward Turkey (western leg).[44] The symbol of this variant was enacting of the Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999 by U.S. Congress,[45] the commercial Northern Distribution Network launched in 2009 for transporting non-military goods from Europe to the U.S. military in Afghanistan and perceived as the first stage of the Modern Silk Road,[46] and also the U.S. New Silk Road Initiative of 2011.[47]

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[41] "… the notion of the Silk Road has changed from a static concept of a historical trade route into a product of social construction upon which various states have built their relations within the CA [Central Asia – TP/MG] region and beyond". Dadabaev, Timur: " 'Silk Road' as foreign policy discourse: The construction of Chinese, Japanese and Korean engagement strategies in Central Asia". *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9 (1), 2018, pp. 30–31.

[42] Munro, Ross H.: "China's waxing spheres of influence". *Orbis* 38 (4), 1994, p. 585; Dadabaev, T.: op. cit., pp. 32 and 37; Karrar, Hasan H.: *The New Silk Road diplomacy: China's Central Asian Foreign Policy since the Cold War*. UBC Press: Vancouver 2009.

[43] "Iran Opens Railway Link Along Silk Road to Asia". *New York Times* May 14, 1996, p. A11.

[44] See e.g. Maresca, John J.: "The New Silk Road". *Wall Street Journal* 225 (18), Jan. 26, 1995, p. A14. More on U.S. concept of New Silk Road see three articles published in 2015 in the: Laruelle, Marlene: "The US Silk Road: Geopolitical Imaginary or the Repackaging of Strategic Interests?". *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 56 (4), 2015, pp. 360–375; Diener, Alexander C.: "Parsing Mobilities in Central Eurasia: Border Management and New Silk Roads". *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 56 (4), 2015, pp. 381–387; Peyrouse, Sébastien / Raballand, Gaël: "Central Asia: the New Silk Road Initiative's Questionable Economic Rationality". *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 56 (4), 2015, pp. 405–420.

[45] "Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999". Public Law 106–113, approved November 29, 1999; Nichol, Jim: "Central Asia's Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests". *CRS Report*, April 26, 2007, p. 39.

In this pursuit, U.S. was heavily reliant on the European Union as this institution had also supported the idea of an East-West corridor since the beginning of 1990s in the form of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Central Asia (TRACECA) program focused on rails and roads and Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe (INOGATE) project.[48] In 2007, simultaneously with the publication of the first strategy toward Central Asia ("Strategy for a New Partnership"),[49] the EU launched the Reorganization of Transport Network by Advanced Rail Freight Concepts (RETRACK) project focused on identifying transportation corridors between Europe and China, including routes toward Central Asia.[50] Five years later, within the TRACECA project, the "Silk Wind" program on railway cargo transport between China and Turkey toward Kazakhstan, the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan and Georgia was initiated with the first freight shipped toward this route between China and Azerbaijan (in 2015) and Azerbaijan and Turkey (in 2017).[51]

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[46] Kuchins, Andrew C. / Sanderson, Thomas M./Gordon, David A.: *The Northern Distribution Network and the Modern Silk Road.* CSIS: Washington, DC 2009.

[47] "U.S. Support for the New Silk Road". *U.S. State Department*, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://web.archive.org/web/20181119091913/https://www.state.gov/p/sca/ci/af/st/newsilkroad/.

[48] In 1998 the European Union co-hosted a major conference in Azerbaijan on the "Restoration of the historical silk road". Starr, S. F. / Cornell, Svante E. / Norling, Nicklas: *The EU, Central Asia, and the Development of Continental Transport and Trade.* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program: Washington, DC and Stockholm-Nacka 2015, p. 10; Nichol, Jim: "Central Asia's Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests". *CRS Report*, April 26, 2007, p.. 17; Partridge, Ben: "Central Asia: U.S. And EU To Cooperate On Caspian Energy Development". *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, May 9, 1998, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.rferl.org/a/1088667.html.

[49] "The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership". *Council of the European Union*, May 31, 2007, retrieved 05.01.2020, from http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2010113%202007%20INIT.

[50] Starr, S. F. / Cornell, S. E. / Norling, N.: op. cit., pp. 31–34; "Reorganisation of Transport Networks by Advanced Rail Freight Concepts". *Transport Research and Innovation Monitoring and Information System*, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://trimis.ec.europa.eu/project/reorganisation-transport-networks-advanced-rail-freight-concepts.

[51] Starr, S. F. / Cornell, S. E. / Norling, N.: op. cit., p. 31; "The 'Silk Wind' project: creation of favourable conditions on the realization and further steps in development". *TRACECA*, Sep. 7, 2012, retrieved 05.01.2020, from http://www.traceca-org.org/en/news/single-news/n/-e4b57d24bc/; "Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway Line Officially Launched". *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, October 30, 2017; retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.rferl.org/a/baku-tbilisi-kars-railway-line-officially-launched-azerbaijan-georgia-turkey/28824764.html. On convergence of interest between China and Europe in this pursuit: Cornell, S. E. / Swanström, Niklas: *Compatible Interests? The EU and China's Belt and Road Initiative.* Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies: Stockholm 2020.

Nevertheless, in 2022, most observers would associate the term "New Silk Road" with the China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) announced in Kazakhstan in 2013 and composed of two projects: the land based Silk Road Economic Belt (toward Central Asia) and the Maritime Silk Road.[52] This is perhaps unsurprising as China – due to its mountains and rainforests – could only connect by land via Russia or Central Asia (also China depends heavily on its sea routes which could be blocked by the U.S. Navy).[53] This direction is especially crucial for China in the context of China's "Go West" strategy introduced in 2000 and focused on the economic development of its western provinces.[54]

Even though China is the most prominent case of an Asian country engaged in "restoring" the ancient Silk Road; it should be noted that other states from this continent are also developing such concepts (e.g. Japan, South Korea and India).[55] Additionally, the Russia-dominated Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), with the membership of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, is perceived by some analysts as a project focused on the reestablishment of a north-oriented Silk Road.[56]

Additionally, not only have states and sui generis organizations like the EU been engaged in these kinds of projects since 1992, but also typical intergovernmental international institutions have been developing programs aimed at restoring the ancient Silk Road. Examples of these kinds of activities are projects developed under the umbrella of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Already in 1992 in Beijing, during the 48th UNESCAP's meeting, the Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID) project was launched.[57] Under its auspices, the Asian Highway Network initiative developed between 1995–2002 the so called northern route "effectively linking Northeast Asia with Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Europe."[58] This undertaking focused on rebuilding transportation with around thirty Asian states, including all of the countries analyzed in this chapter (in the so called TAR3 aka "New Silk Road" initiative) and formalized with the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network (TAR) signed in 2006 (dubbed the "Iron Silk Road").[59] In 1998, the United Nations Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (UN SPECA) was launched jointly by the UNECE and the UNESCAP with a focus on the subregional cooperation of five post-Soviet Central Asia states plus Azerbaijan and Afghanistan.[60] Since 2002 the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) project has been developed as a joint undertaking between the UNECE and the UNESCAP.[61]

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[52] Chatzky, Andrew / McBride, James: "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative". *Council on Foreign Relations*, January 28, 2020; retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative.

[53] Kidd, John / Stumm, Marielle: "Supporting China's GDP with ecologically efficient ultra high-speed freight transport systems". In: Wu, Zhongmin (ed.): *China in the World Economy*. Routledge: London and New York 2009, pp. 58–60.

[54] "New Five-Year Plan Brings Hope to China's West". *Xinhua*, Dec. 27, 2016, retrieved 05.01.2020, from http://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/2016/12/27/content_281475526349906.htm.

[55] Dadabaev, T.: op. cit., pp. 30–41; Shepard, Wade: "Watch Out, China: India Is Building A 'New Silk Road' Of Its Own". *Forbes*, Jun 28, 2017, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2017/06/28/watch-out-china-india-is-building-a-new-silk-road-of-its-own/#39c1ec58a90e; Behera, Subhakanta: "India's Encounter with the Silk Road". *Economic and Political Weekly* 37 (51), 2002, pp. 5077–5080.

[56] "Central Asia's Silk Road Rivalries". *Europe and Central Asia Report* 245, 2017, pp. 15–19.

[57] *Trans-Asian Railway Route Requirements: Development of the Trans-Asian Railway in the Indo-China and ASEAN Subregion (Volume 1)*. United Nations: New York 1996, p. 2.; Bhattacharyay, Biswa N. / De, Prabir: "Restoring the Asian Silk Route: Toward an Integrated Asia". *ADBI Working Paper* 140, 2009, p. 9.

As Timur Dadabaev has pointed out, "The "Silk Road" is … frequently referred to as an engagement strategy [by out-of-region great powers – TP/MG] because it projects the image of decolonization and reflects the agency of CA [Central Asia (and in fact South Caucasus) – TP/MG] states as independent actors, which is easy for the target states to comprehend and thus accept."[62] At the same time, the concept of the (new) Great Game discussed below presents a more gloomy role for Central Asia and South Caucasus states.

New Rules for New Great Game(s)

Fourthly, the Central Asia and South Caucasus countries were interpreted from the perspective of the (new) Great Game. The (old) Great Game was the term given to the rivalry between two great powers – tsarist Russia and United Kingdom – in central Asia (mainly Afghanistan) between c. 1830 and 1907 with a focus on the direct control of territory or bringing it into its sphere of influence (e.g. as a buffer zone).[63] As this "game" occurred mostly in the nineteenth century – the time when many concepts of the realist theory of international relations were developed or practiced (including the balance of power, Realpolitik, spheres of influences and buffer zones) – the Great Game idea is most often a way of interpreting international relations (not only in Central Asia and the South Caucasus) along the realist line of thinking, i.e. the competition between great powers reduces the role played by small regional powers.[64]

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[58] Bhattacharyay, B. N. / De, P.: op. cit., p. 9.

[59] "Ancient Silk Road to Get its Modern Railway Counterpart at UN Regional Conference". *UN News*, Nov. 6, 2006, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://news.un.org/en/story/2006/11/198632-ancient-silk-road-get-its-modern-railway-counterpart-un-regional-conference. Most of the Central Asia and South Caucasus countries declared as "Asian" joined the UNESCAP in 1992 (only Armenia in 1994 and Georgia in 2000 did in later). See book written by Richard Pomfret who between Dec. 1992 and Dec. 1993 worked as regional adviser from UNESCAP to the Central Asia states. Pomfret, Richard: *Central Asia in 1993: When the Silk Road Reopened.* Lulu.com: [no data] 2015, pp. vi-vii; Kidd, J. /Stumm, M.: op. cit., pp. 58–60.

[60] "Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia". *United Nations*, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.unece.org/speca/about.html.

[61] "The Euro-Asian Transport Links". *United Nations*, retrieved 05.01.2020, from http://www.unece.org/ar/trans/main/eatl/about_us.html.

[62] Dadabaev, T.: op. cit., p. 39.

[63] E.g. Fromkin, David: "The Great Game in Asia". *Foreign Affairs* 58 (4), 1980, pp. 936–951. On (old) Great Game: Hopkirk, Peter: *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in*

After the end of the (old) Great Game at the beginning of the twentieth century, the first employment of this concept toward Asian international politics reemerged in two forms after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.[65] Firstly, it spurred interest in the "original" Great Game, as many historical studies were published with more or less intentional references to the Cold War rivalry in the greater Middle East, especially Afghanistan.[66] Secondly, the concept of the new Great Game was developed, using references to the similar region and the same (realist) rules but in the context of contemporary conditions (i.e. the Cold War competition between USSR and U.S. in the greater Middle East, especially Afghanistan).[67]

In the post-Cold War era, there were two waves of this two-fold interest (historical and contemporary) in the application of the Great Game concept toward Central Asia and the South Caucasus.[68] Firstly, in the 1990s, it was more economically-oriented and in line with this perspective, the newly independent

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Central Asia. Kodansha International: Tokyo 1992; Meyer, Karl E. / Brysac, Shareen Blair: *Tournament of Shadows. The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia.* Counterpoint: Washington, DC 1999. See other meanings of (old) Great Game: Hopkirk, P.: "The Great Game Revisited". *Asian Affairs* 33 (1), 2002, pp. 58–64; Becker, Seymour: "The 'Great Game': the History of an Evocative Phrase". *Asian Affairs* 43 (1), 2012, pp. 61–80.

[64] On realism as international relations theory see e.g.: Wohlforth, William C.: "Realism". In: Reus-Smit, Christian / Snidal, Duncan (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations.* Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York 2008, pp. 131–148; Jørgensen, K. E.: op. cit., pp. 101–123. On international relations in the nineteenth century see: Osterhammel, Jürgen: *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century.* Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ 2014, pp. 392–513.

[65] Becker, S.: op. cit., p. 73.

[66] E.g. Fromkin, D.: op. cit., pp. 936–951; Morgan, Gerald: *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Central Asia: 1810–1895.* Frank Cass: London; Totowa, NJ 1981. Cf. review of works written at that time: Ingram, Edward: "Approaches to the Great Game in Asia". *Middle Eastern Studies* 18 (4), 1982, pp. 449–457.

[67] Khalilzad, Zalmay: *The Return of the Great Game: Superpower Rivalry and Domestic Turmoil in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey.* RAND: Santa Monica, CA 1980; Rubinstein, Alvin Z. (ed.): *The Great Game: Rivalry in the Persian Gulf and South Asia.* Praeger: New York 1983; Klass, Rosanne (ed.): *Afghanistan: The Great Game Revisited.* Freedom House: New York, NY 1987 (2nd edition: 1990); Laurens, Henry: *Le grand jeu: Orient arabe et rivalite´s internationales depuis 1945.* A. Colin: Paris 1991.

[68] Becker, S.: op. cit., pp. 73–74.

eight states were perceived as a “new” energy resources-rich Middle East or its extension, including the transfer of the rivalry between the great powers from the Middle East to Central Asia and the South Caucasus region.[69] Secondly, especially after the 9/11 attacks and the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, this interest in the Great Game idea became additionally focused on security issues.[70]

However, the post-Cold War new Great Game was (and is) at many levels different than the one played almost one hundred years earlier. Firstly, the number of powerful players is higher, with not only Russia, as the former dominant power, taking part but also China, Pakistan, India, Iran, Turkey, European states and the United States, as new main actors.[71] In consequence, those interactions are not always a zero-sum game as some states were (or still are) ready to cooperate with each other if it helps achieve their goals at the expense of other actors' interests (e.g. China and Russia, on the one side, and U.S. and Turkey, on the other side).[72]

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[69] To name only those publications which refer to the “great game” in their titles (but not always focusing on only economic aspect of this rivalry): Ehteshami, Anoushiravan (ed.): *From the Gulf to Central Asia: Players in the New Great Game.* University of Exeter Press: Exeter 1994; Cuthbertson, Ian: “The New ‘Great Game’ ”. *World Policy Journal* 11 (4), 1994/95, pp. 31–34; “The New ‘Great Game’ ”. *World Press Review* 41 (4), 1994, p. 27; “The New Great Game in Asia”. *The New York Times* Jan. 2, 1996, p. 14; Ahrari, Mohammed E. / Beal, James: *The New Great Game in Muslim Central Asia.* National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies: Washington, DC 1996; Smith, Dianne L.: *Central Asia: A New Great Game?* Strategic Studies Institute: Carlisle Barracks, PA 1996; Smith, Dianne L.: “Central Asia: A New Great Game?” *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 23 (3), 1996, pp. 147–175; Cohen, A.: “The New ‘Great Game’…”.; Manning, R. A.: op. cit., pp. 15–33; Rashid, Ahmed: *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia.* Yale University Press: New Haven 2000 (only in the new edition the phrase “great game” was added to title: *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia.* Tauris: London 2002); Ahrari, M. E.: *Jihadi Groups, Nuclear Pakistan, and the New Great Game.* Strategic Studies Institute: Carlisle, PA 2001.

[70] As in the previous footnote, the list below includes only those publications which directly refer to “great game” in title (not always focusing only on security, but also e.g. on energy issues): Rasizade, Alec: “The New ‘Great Game’ in Central Asia after Afghanistan”. *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 1 (2), 2002, pp. 125–146; Jalalzai, Musa Khan: *Taliban and the New Great Game in Afghanistan*, Dua Publications: Lahore 2002; Jalalzai, Musa Khan: *The Pipeline War in Afghanistan: Oil, Gas and the New Energy Great Game.* Sang-e-Meel Publications: Lahore 2003; Жильцов, Сергей С. (Zhiltsov, Sergey S.)/Зонн, Игорь С. (Zonn, Igor S.): “Стратегия США в Каспийском регионе”. (“Strategiia SShA v Kaspiiskom regione”.) In: Жильцов, Сергей С. (Zhiltsov, Sergey S.) / Зонн, Игорь С. (Zonn, Igor S.) / Ушков, А. М. (Ushkov, A. M.) (eds.): *Геополитика Каспийского региона.* Международные отношения, Moscow 2003, pp. 201–272; Edwards, Matthew: “The New Great Game and the New Great Gamers: Disciples of Kipling and Mackinder”. *Central Asian Survey* 22 (1), 2003, pp. 83–102;; Казанцев, Андрей А. (Kazantsev, Andrei A.): *«Большая игра» с неизвестными правилами: Мировая политика и Центральная Азия.* (*Bolshaya igra’ s neizvestnimi pravilami: Mirovaya politika i Tsentralnaia Azia.*) изд. МГИМО: Moscow 2008.

[71] E. Kovalski writes about “the proliferation of external agency in Central Asia”. Kavalski, E.: “Uncovering the ‘New’…,” p. 14, 16; Laruelle, M.: “Envisioning …,” p. 358.

Secondly, the rules of competition are different. This time it is not about grabbing territory as newly independent states are not willing to resign from their newly-won (formal) sovereignty (with some exceptions, in the case of certain Chinese activities[73]). As a result, this time the competition is primarily focused on economic issues, especially on access to energy resources of the region. At this level, the rivalry is not only about winning contracts on the extraction of natural resources. It is also about who is going to benefit from the ensuing oil and gas bonanza, i.e. who is going to be the main route for exporting resources from landlocked Central Asia and the South Caucasus to international markets. In this context, the term "pipeline politics" (as pipeline rivalry) was coined. Additionally, those eight analyzed states were also an arena for the conflicting security interests of regional and great powers as those were focused on ensuring: (1) military access (or more broadly security forces) to the region (e.g. in the form of temporary or permanent military installations and exercises in the case of Russia and the U.S.) or toward the area (like overflight rights or access to railroads on privileged conditions in the case of the U.S.), and (2) at the same time limiting the scope of similar activities by other powers in the region (e.g. Russia aiming at the expulsion of the U.S. military base from Kyrgyzstan). Hence, Central Asia and the South Caucasus became an important part of many great power struggles, not only toward its energy resources, but also its geographical location which fosters influence on neighboring countries like Russia, China, Iran and Afghanistan.[74]

Finally, not only has the number of powerful players and the rules they play changed, but also "local" players have acquired actorness. Even so, many new Great Game experts perceive the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus in the manner of the nineteenth-century rivalry (i.e. as pawns lacking agency and played by the great powers) with "very little room for the independent foreign policy" as they could only choose between "bandwagoning and balancing

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The abovementioned scholars are additionally pointing out to the important role played by non-state actors.

[72] "... Central Asia cannot be conceived merely as a region of conflict between great powers, because it is also a space of complementary distribution and negotiation". Laruelle, M.: "Envisioning ...," p. 358.

[73] E.g. Tajikistan, when regulating its border with China, was forced to cede part of its territory to its powerful eastern neighbor: "Tajikistan cedes land to China". *BBC*, Jan. 13, 2011, retrieved on 05.01.2020, from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-12180567.

[74] Frost, E. L.: op. cit., p. 28; Cooley, Alexander: op. cit., 2012; Qoraboyev, I. / Moldashev, K.: op. cit., p. 120.

strategies."[75] Nevertheless, current states in this region – simultaneously facing many conflicting actors on different levels (including the international) – are able to play other players (e.g. great powers) and not only win limited autonomy but sometimes even a high degree of independence.[76] In sum, "the proliferation of external agency has intensified the contest between international actors vying for the attention of regional countries [and] … has provided a facilitating environment for "pick-and-choose" strategies and bandwagoning for profit policies" employed by Central Asia and South Caucasus states.[77]

Searching for the New Region(-alism)

Finally, the last overwhelming narrative on the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus is centered around the idea of "region" and, associated with it processes, i.e. "regionalism" and "regionalization."[78] The concepts of region and regionalism were created and defined in the 1970s by a set of scholars.[79] As for the term "region", Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel define it as a group of neighboring and cooperating states, having some ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social and historical links. The shared identity of these states may be additionally strengthened by other factors, e.g. from the international level (like external toward region great powers).[80] William Thompson defined a "regional subsystem" of an international system as a group of states, characterized by geographic proximity, regularity and intensity of interactions, internal and external recognition as a distinguished area and at least two, but often more, units in this subsystem.[81] In simple terms, Joseph Nye's definition introduces the region as a group of states connected by geographical links and a certain degree of interdependence.[82] T. A. Börzel and T. Risse, in their recently published *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism,* defined *region* simply as a "social construction that make references to territorial location and to geographical or normative contiguity."[83]

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[75] Qoraboyev, I. / Moldashev, K.: op. cit., p. 120; Allison, Roy: "Regionalism, Regional Structures and Security Management in Central Asia". *International Affairs* 80 (3), 2004, pp. 463–483.

[76] As M. Laruelle stated: "the Central Asian states are not mere pawns subject to competition between great powers. They … are able to manipulate external actors' intentions to fit their own agendas". Laruelle, M.: "Envisioning …," p. 357. Likwise E. Kavalski writes on "proliferation of … internal (i.e., regional) agency" in Central Asia and concludes that "the space for such independent agency by Central Asian states reveals the qualitative distinction of the new great game from its 19th century version": Kavalski, E.: "Uncovering the 'New'…," p. 14, 17; Sim, Li-Chen / Aminjonov, Farkhod: "Central Asia in BRI: Policy-taker or Policy-shaper?". In: Fulton, Jonathan: *Regions in the Belt and Road Initiative*. Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY 2020, pp. 54–93.

[77] Kavalski, E.: "Uncovering the 'New'…," p. 17. For instance, in 2005 Uzbekistan was able to expel military presence of one of great powers (i.e. U.S.) due to activity of this great power bringing risk for domestic legitimacy of Uzbek leader (American critics of Uzbek crackdown on opposition).

[78] See more on developments in the studies on regionalism in the post-Cold War era: Väyrynen, R.: op. cit., pp. 25–51.

[79] The following theoretical paragraphs are taken from Grabowski, Marcin: "Regionalism: Cooperation and Conflict". In: Mania, Andrzej / Grabowski, M. / Pugacewicz, Tomasz: *Global Politics in the 21st Century: Between Regional Cooperation and Conflict.* Peter Lang Verlag: Berlin 2019, pp. 20–21; Cf.: Cantori, Louise / Spiegel, Stephen (eds.): *The International Politics of Regions: A Comparative Approach.* Prentice-Hall: Engelwood Cliffs 1970, pp. 7–20, 607.

The so-called new regionalism that emerged at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries may be connected with publications by Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum. Their new regionalism theory focuses especially on regionness and the multidimensional nature of regionalization processes, in reference to regional space, regional complex, regional society, regional community, and region-state, somehow illustrating the evolutionary logic of regionalization.[84] According to Borzel and Risse, *regionalism* is "primarily state-led process of building and sustaining formal regional institutions and organizations [formal institutions with some degree of actorness – TP/MG] among at least three states" belonging to particular region, i.e. regionalism is process of formalization and institutionalization of regional cooperation primary between states.[85] Regionalism may also be perceived as a tool for the implementation and promotion of the goals of specific states in different functional dimensions. We may analyze it in the context of the depth and strength of regionalism processes and thus we graduate from so-called weak regionalism, promoting regional awareness and community, through strong regionalism consolidating regional groups and networks into pan- or subregional formalized groups based on agreements, as well as regional organizations.[86]

Regionalism understood in the abovementioned way should not be mistaken for *regionalization* as the last one means "processes of increasing economic, political, social, or cultural interactions among geographically or culturally contiguous states and societies" between "non-state actors, such as firms, interest groups, and non-governmental organizations."[87] As a result, we may observe a distinction between regionalism, understood as the process of the institutionalization of international cooperation (in the form of regimes or international organizations) and regionalization, understood as the increase of transnational interactions in the region among subregional units.[88]

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[80] Cf.: Cantori, Louise / Spiegel, Stephen (eds.): op. cit., pp. 7–20, 607.

[81] Thompson, William: "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory". *International Studies Quarterly* 17 (1), 1973, pp. 89–117.

[82] Cf.: Nye, Joseph: *International Regionalism.* Little Brown: Boston 1968, p. vii.

[83] Börzel, Tanja A. / Risse, Thomas: "Introduction". In: Börzel, T. A. / Risse, Th. (eds.): *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism.* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2016, p. 7.

[84] Hettne, Björn / Söderbaum, Fredrik: "Theorising the Rise of Regionness". *New Political Economy* 5 (3), 2000, pp. 457–473.

[85] Börzel, T. A. / Risse, Th.: op. cit., pp. 7–8.

[86] Cf.: Fawcett, Louise: "Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism". *International Affairs* 80 (3), 2004, pp. 429–446.

From the perspective of the idea of the region, the South Caucasus and Central Asia could be perceived as two separated regions,[89] e.g. the South Caucasus as a junction between three regional powers (Russia, Turkey and Iran) and two seas (Black and Caspian)[90] and Central Asia as Muslim territories between the Caspian Sea, China, Iran, and Afghanistan (for some time controlled by the United Kingdom and included by some scholars in Central Asia) controlled since the nineteenth century until the end of twentieth century by (Soviet) Russia.[91]

Nevertheless, we assume in this volume that Central Asia and the South Caucasus could be perceived as one research area, as a unified region based on predominately historical connections (and to certain degree identity, including a relatively high level of popularity for the Russian language or political systems shaped in a similar manner) created by around 70 years of Soviet domination.[92]

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[87] Börzel, T. A./ Risse, Th.: op. cit., pp. 8–9.

[88] Ibid., pp. 7–9.

[89] E.g. B. Buzan and O. Weaver see Central Asia and the South Caucasus as two separated subcomplexes (subregions) which are part of the post-Soviet regional security complex (RSC). Buzan, Barry / Wæver, Ole: *Regions and Powers: the Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge and New York 2003, pp. 419–429, especially 419. Cf. Weisbrode, K.: op. cit., pp. 11–13.

[90] E.g. Abushov, Kavus: "Regionalism in the South Caucasus from a theoretical perspective: is the South Caucasus a region?" *Caucasus International* 1 (2), 2011, pp. 167–177; De Waal, Thomas: "A Broken Region: The Persistent Failure of Integration Projects in the South Caucasus". *Europe-Asia Studies* 64 (9), 2012, pp. 1709–1723; German, Tracey: *Regional Cooperation in the South Caucasus: Good Neighbours or Distant Relatives?* Ashgate: Farnham, Surrey, England and Burlington, VT 2012.

[91] E.g. Kubicek, Paul: "Regionalism, nationalism and Realpolitik in central Asia". *Europe-Asia Studies* 49 (4), 1997, pp. 637–655; Dadabaev, T.: op. cit., p. 30.

[92] As Timur Dadabaev puts it in the context of Central Asia: "The collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in the emergence of a number of new regions. The southern periphery of the Soviet Union, consisting of five stans (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), is one of these newly emerging regions". Dadabaev, T.: op. cit., p. 30. See e.g. *Central Asia and the South Caucasus: Reorientations, Internal Transitions, and Strategic Dynamics: Conference Report.* National Intelligence Council: Washington, DC 2000; Rivlin, Paul: "Oil and Gas in the Economies of the Caspian Region". In: Gammer, Moshe (ed.): *The Caspian Region. Volume 1: A Re-Emerging Region.* Routledge: London, 2004, pp. 32–55; Hermann, Werner / Linn, Johannes F. (eds.): *Central Asia and the Caucasus: at the Crossroads of Eurasia in the 21st Century.* SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA 2011; Peyrouse, S.: "Is there any unity to the Trans-Caspian Region? The economic relations between Central Asia and the

As we mentioned in the "small games" part of this chapter, regionalism developments could refer to Central Asia and the South Caucasus being perceived as one region (i.e. "intraregional" formalization and institutionalization of cooperation), but here – in the context of "great games" – we focus on regionalism involving the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus (almost always only part of them) and states out-of-this-region, like e.g. Russia, Turkey or China. This second kind of regionalism became possible as the collapse of Soviet Union ended Moscow-oriented enforced regionalization, and dismissed Soviet republics' restriction on issues and directions of cooperation with neighboring states. Formal independence and the (legal and illegal) openness of boarders created new scope for not only regionalization, but also regionalism and (renewed) concepts of regions involving the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus associated with it. The Central Asia and South Caucasus (sub-)region emerged as the fragmentation of Cold War "great-power blocs" was part of the post-Cold War era processes and "subregional and microregional organization have become more common."[93]

There are different dimensions of regionalism and regionalization involving the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Firstly, it may be based on commonalities, including language and culture (e.g. the Turkey-driven promotion of a common identity based on Turkic language in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan), religion (we can see a shared Islamic heritage among all of the mentioned Turkic language states and Tajikistan resulting in their participation in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) or human rights (all states are formal members of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe). Secondly, the abovementioned processes can be connected with the security sphere, including e.g. combat of transnational threats, like the aforementioned OSCE, Collective Security Treaty Organization or Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Thirdly, it can be associated with economic cooperation, especially in connection with energy resources or the transit of goods (we may associate it with the Eurasian Economic Union or the Belt and Road Initiative).

The formalization and institutionalization of regional cooperation involving Central Asia and South Caucasus states is mostly connected with the activities of regional and great powers, namely (constantly) the Russian Federation, (especially in the 1990s) Western powers (broadly understood as including U.S., EU and Turkey), and (growing with time) the People's Republic of China.[94]

Caucasus". *Asia Europe Journal* 7 (3–4), 2009, pp. 543–557; Cf. Weisbrode, K.: op. cit., pp. 11–13.

[93] Väyrynen, R.: op. cit., p. 26.

[94] As stated previously on the concept of region, these kinds of studies quite often referred to the great powers as supporters of regionalism. Nevertheless, studies developed from the perspective of the realist theory of international relations (i.e. international theory explicitly focused on the role played by the great powers) points out that the development of a specific type of regional cooperation is an instrument of the national interest advancement of great powers. Qoraboyev, I. / Moldashev,

Initial attempts should be associated with an absolute prevalence of Russia due to the Moscow-oriented post-Soviet infrastructure and confirmed by institutions, like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS – created in 1991), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO – created in 1992), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO – created in 1996 as a Shanghai Five, transformed and renamed SCO in 2001), the Eurasian Economic Union (created in 2000 as the Eurasian Economic Community, transformed and renamed in 2015).[95] In this context, the ideas of Eurasian identity and, as a result, region were developed by Russian scholars.[96]

We should not forget that, especially in the 1990s, activities were undertaken by the U.S. and the EU (and to some extent Turkey) focused on introducing Central Asia and the South Caucasus into the "European" region.[97] E.g. all those states became members in Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)[98] and in the NATO-led initiative Partnership for Peace.[99] We also observed

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K.: op. cit., pp. 120–121; Bohr, Annette: "Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order". *International Affairs*, 80 (3), 2004, pp. 485–502; Zhengyuan, Xu: "In the Shadow of Great Powers: A Comparative Study of Various Approaches to Regionalism in Central Asia". *Connections* 9 (4), 2010, pp. 37–52.

[95] Kubicek, P.: "The Commonwealth of Independent States: an example of failed regionalism?" *Review of International Studies* 35 (S1), pp. 237–256; Nikitina, Yulia: "The Collective Security Treaty Organization Through the Looking Glass". *Problems of Post-Communism* 59 (3), 2012, pp. 41–52; Ahmad, Ishtiaq: "Shanghai Cooperation Organization: China, Russia, and Regionalism in Central Asia". In: Loewen, Howard / Zorob, Anja: *Initiatives of Regional Integration in Asia in Comparative Perspective: Concepts, Contents and Prospects.* Springer Netherlands (Imprint: Springer): Dordrecht 2018, pp. 119–135; Podadera Rivera, Pablo/Garashchuk, Anna: "The Eurasian Economic Union: Prospective Regional Integration in the post-Soviet Space or Just Geopolitical Project?" *Eastern Journal of European Studies* 7 (2), 2016, pp. 91–110; Libman, Alexander: "Russia and Eurasian Regionalism. How Does It Fit into Comparative Regionalism Research?". In: Meyer, Thomas/ Sales Marques, José Luís de/ Telò, Mario (eds.): *Regionalism and Multilateralism: Politics, Economics, Culture.* Routledge: London and New York 2019, pp. 129–142.

[96] Moldashev, K. / Aslam, Mohamed: "Russia in the Pursuit of Eurasian Integration: Developmental Regionalism or Identity Project". *International Studies Association*, retrieved 05.01.2020, from http://web.isanet.org/Web/Conferences/GSCIS%20Singapore%202015/Archive/ce8848ad-dc2e-4ebe-b755-e15f82e5a9c1.pdf; Fassi, Enrico / Zotti, Antonio: "The EU and EAEU: Normative Power and Geopolitics in EU-Russia 'Shared Neighbourhood' ". In: Frappi, Carlo/Pashayeva, Gulshan (eds.): *Cooperation in Eurasia: Linking Identity, Security, and Development.* Ledizioni: Milano 2018, pp. 43–50.

[97] Macfarlane, S. Neil: "The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia". *International Affairs* 80 (3), 2004, pp. 447–461; Zhengyuan, Xu: op. cit., pp. 37–52.

[98] Freire, Maria Raquel: "The OSCE in the New Central Asia". In: Kavalski, E. (ed.): *New Central Asia…*, pp. 49–70.

[99] Smith, Simon J. / Kavalski, E.: "NATO's Partnership with Central Asia: Cooperation *à la carte*". In: Kavalski, E. (ed.): *New Central Asia…*, pp. 29–48.

in the previous part of the chapter the efforts of the U.S. and EU on rebuilding Silk Road in the form of the integration of Central Asia and the South Caucasus with Europe and Turkey. The promotion of the previously described "Caspian (Sea) region" idea could also be attributed to the idea of this kind of integration. Nevertheless, with time, it became obvious that the closer to Europe South Caucasus states are favored in this process (e.g. those states were included in EU's European Neighborhood Policy even Kazakhstan's involvement was also briefly discussed[100]) while Central Asia – due to its geographical location – became increasingly perceived in the context of processes involving Russia, China, and Afghanistan.[101]

The rising role of China in both global economics and politics, coupled with the demonopolization of the energy market which had previously been dominated by Russia, also resulted in the gradual reinforcement of China in joint regional institutions, especially within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. China also started to implement its own regional initiatives, namely the Belt and Road Initiative (announced in 2013).[102]

Finally, it should be pointed out that sometimes great powers highlighted the Central Asia and South Caucasus' states growing transnational interconnectedness between non-state actors from their southern neighbors. E.g. this is the case of Russian government promoting the idea of previously mentioned "arc of instability," including Central Asia, South Caucasus, Afghanistan and Pakistan and presented as a "seedbed of ethnic strife and religious [Islamic – TP/MG] fundamentalism along Russia's southern borders that threatened international peace."[103] Some U.S. experts in the 1990s were clearly thinking along the same lines, afraid that the independence of the Soviet republics would mean the emergence of a "greater" Middle East and result in the export of the politics of the Middle East (e.g. U.S.-Iran conflict) to the newly independent Central Asia and South Caucasus states.[104] This was also the case with the post-9/11 period, when U.S. began to perceive Central Asia as interconnected with Afghanistan and Pakistan and leading to the emergence of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs in the U.S. Department of State.[105]

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[100] Vasilyan, Syuzanna: "The EU's Ambitious Regionalization of the South Caucasus". In: Lombaerde, Philippe De/Schulz, Michael (eds.): *EU and World Regionalism: the Makability of Regions in the 21st Century*. Ashgate: Farnham, England; Burlington, VT 2009, pp. 205–220; Prelz Oltramonti, Giulia: "When External Drivers of Regional Integration Turn into Actors of Regional Disintegration. Regionalism and interregionalism in the South Caucasus". In: Lopez-Lucia, Elisa / Mattheis, Frank: *The Unintended Consequences of Interregionalism. Effects on Regional Actors, Societies and Structures*. Routledge: London 2020, pp. 185–201.

[101] Efegil, Ertan: "The European Union's New Central Asian Strategy". In: Kavalski, E. (ed.): *New Central Asia…*, pp. 71–88; Anghelescu, Ana-Maria: "European Union and Central Asia – Past Directions and Future Perspectives". *CES Working Papers* 10 (3), 2018, pp. 271–278.

[102] This paragraph is taken from Grabowski, Marcin / Stefanowski, Jakub: "Regional Integration in Central Asia in the Shadow of Sino-Russian Rivalry". In: Mania, Andrzej / Grabowski, Marcin / Pugacewicz, Tomasz (eds.): *Global Politics in the 21st Century: Between Regional Cooperation and Conflict*. Peter Lang Verlag: Berlin 2019, p. 69. Broader analysis of those institutions, Sino-Russian rivalry and it's theoretical background, cf.: ibid., pp. 69–108. See also: Clarke, Michael: "China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: The Dynamics of 'New Regionalism', 'Vassalization,' and Geopolitics in Central Asia". In: Kavalski, E. (ed.): *New Central Asia…*, pp. 117–149; Qoraboyev, I. / Moldashev, K.: op. cit., pp. 115–126; Sun, Zhuangzhi, "New and Old Regionalism: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Sino-Central Asian Relations". *The Review of International Affairs* 3 (4), 2004, pp. 600–612.

Small Games: Interstate (Intraregional) and Intrastate Conflicts

While a significant part of research on Central Asia and the South Caucasus was (and is) developed from the perspective of the involvement of outside international actors – generally summed up in the previous part as the so-called great games view – many other studies have been devoted to the so-called small games occurring in this part of the world. Those "not-so-great" processes can be divided into two separated groups. The first we have termed as a string of intraregional (yet interstate) developments "including [1] trade wars, [2] border disputes and [3] disagreements over the management and use of water and energy resources"[106] and [4] rivalry for foreign investments and playing the main role as transportation route (especially of oil and gas). Secondly, there exist intrastate conflicts at the domestic level, starting with the [1] (peaceful) struggle between reform and rent-seeking elites, toward [2] secular and religion (e.g. Islam) oriented leaders, and [3] ethnic conflicts (including separatist movements) ending at [4] the level of clan politics. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, those three levels – great games (international) and small games (intraregional and intrastate) – sometimes overlap, and actors from those (analytically) separated levels interact in the form of cooperation or conflict.

Small Games: Interstate/Intraregional Conflicts

In the analyzed region, as mentioned at the end of this part, the level of intraregional cooperation is low, so here we focus on the three main intrastate conflicts with which Central Asia and the South Caucasus could be associated with: (1) Caspian Sea maritime border disputes (and in fact the problem with the management of energy resources and their exploitation and transportation), (2) Fergana Valley borderlines demarcation (especially, in the context of agricultural activity in this region), and finally (3) water resource management. We will skip the intraregional rivalry mentioned earlier for FDIs and pipeline corridors as those issues are interconnected with mentioned "great games".

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[103] Stent, A. / Shevtsova, L.: op. cit., pp. 123–125, 124.

[104] See e.g. idea of Eurasian Balkans developed by American scholar Zbigniew Brzezinski. Qoraboyev, I. / Moldashev, K.: op. cit., p.122; Brzezinski, Z.: *The Grand Chessboard*. Basic Books: New York 2007.

[105] "The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs". op. cit.

[106] Bohr, A.: op. cit., pp. 485–502.

Even with the 2018 "Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea" signed after 22 years of negotiations, the maritime border dispute between littoral states of this lake was (and is) one of the most critical issues associated with boundaries in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. As in many other cases in the post-Soviet space, this dispute resulted from the dissolution of USSR. Based on the 1921 treaty of friendship between the Soviet Union and Iran, the Caspian Sea was understood as a lake, and only navigation rights and fishing issues were regulated. But after 1991 the Caspian Sea was associated with not two but five littoral states – Iran, Russian, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan – and this factor, combined with discoveries of energy resources and the development of the idea of the Azeri-Turkmen trans-Caspian pipeline, has raised the question of seabed demarcation. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russian under agreements signed in 1997, 1998 and 2001, and Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in 2014 agreed on the seabed borders in the northern part of the Caspian Sea. The more troubling aspect concerns the southern part, with conflict between Iran and Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, as well as between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. Additionally, Russia and Iran blocked the idea of the trans-Caspian pipeline, ostensibly for environmental issues, but in fact according to their own economic interests.[107]

The 2018 agreement avoided defining the Caspian Sea as a lake or sea, instead granting it "special legal status". The treaty established 15 nautical miles for territorial waters (with an additional 10-mile for waters with exclusive rights on fishing), but at the same time left the rest of the surface for common use. The seabed (i.e. the right to exploit resources and build underwater pipelines) was not declared as common and is still subordinated to bi- or multilateral agreements between littoral states. The lack of those agreements between Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran means that disputes regarding energy deposits were not resolved. Iran and Russian agreed in this document that "the parties can lay underwater pipelines along the Caspian floor … according to consent by the parties through whose sector the cable or pipeline should be built", apparently giving a green light for the Azeri-Turkmen trans-Caspian pipeline. In reality, the pipeline projects under the Caspian Sea are subordinated by the environmental assessment of any littoral state, including those on whose seabed the pipeline is not going to be built. As a result, Iran and Russia could still block this kind of project even if it is not going along their part of the seabed.[108]

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[107] Vinogradov, S. / Wouters, P.: op. cit., pp. 604–623; Zimnitskaya, Hanna / Geldern, Jamesvon: "Is the Caspian Sea a sea; and why does it matter?" *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2 (1), 2011, pp. 1–14; Garibov, Azad: "Key Disputes Remain Unsettled in the Caspian Sea Despite the Signing of the Convention on Legal Status". *EUCACIS in Brief* 8, 2019, pp. 4–6.

To clarify, the Caspian Sea dispute is not strictly an interregional issue of Central Asia and the South Caucasus as it not only includes disagreements between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, but also out-of-regional powers such as Iran and Russia.[109]

The second most complex border dispute can be observed in the Fergana Valley. The source of this dispute are the complex borders established during the Soviet period, including Uzbek territory in the valley and Kirgiz and Tajik areas surrounding it. Additionally, Tajik state enclaves exist within Kirgizstan and Uzbekistan and Uzbek enclaves within Kyrgyzstan. Imprecisely demarcated borders were not a problem in the Soviet Union, as those were internal (intrastate) administrative regulations. After 1991, those inaccurate lines became a source of conflict as they gained the status of international (interstate) borders, especially as those interfere with natural agricultural activities in this highly populated region and do not follow ethnic divisions (e.g. the Uzbek enclave of Sokh in Kyrgyzstan is mostly populated by Tajiks). The Fergana Valley borders problem is prolonged by the fact that the process of precise demarcation is slow.[110]

The last critical interstate issue in Central Asia and the South Caucasus is management of water resources, especially in reference to the Syr Darya river.[111] During the Soviet period, water management in Central Asia was a domestic issue and centralized with a federally-funded compensation system for individual republics.[112] With the dissolution of the USSR, this internal issue became an interstate problem without the centralized and externally funded management of water and energy.[113] In reference to this conflict, some observers have even stated that "nowhere in the world is the potential for conflict over the use of natural resources as strong as in Central Asia."[114] There are many reasons for this state of affairs: firstly, the conflict on sharing water resources is part of the more significant water-energy-food nexus, as water is an important factor shaping agricultural production (e.g. in Uzbekistan), energy production (e.g. in Kyrgyzstan) and supplying the population with water (e.g. Kazakhstan and the drying up of the Aral Sea).[115] Secondly, the kind of disputes involving an upstream country (mainly Kyrgyzstan) and downstream countries (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) are usually hard to resolve.[116] This is especially true considering the fact that the extension of the irrigation system during the Soviet period for agriculture activity in Uzbekistan and supplying the population with water in Kazakhstan deepened the dependence of those two countries on external water supplies.[117] At the same time, the development of water reservoirs associated with hydropower stations in Kyrgyzstan, beginning with the Toktogul dam in 1976, resulted in this upstream country gaining extra leverage.[118] Unfortunately, the development of the irrigation system mentioned above, using the main Central Asia rivers, resulted in the Aral Sea's desiccation.[119] Additionally, developing countries like those in Central Asia share a low-level of trust, and this causes problems with negotiating and resolving problems and agreements.[120] Simultaneously, there is no longer a hegemon dominating in Central Asia which could enforce a particular solution (as it is e.g. in case of the Nil river).[121] As a result, it should not be surprising that even though there were some attempts in the 1990s to develop an institutional water management system in Central Asia, those never delivered satisfactory solutions.[122]

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[108] Garibov, A.: op. cit., pp. 4–6.

[109] This is perspective employed by: Chufrin, G.: op. cit., p. 1.

[110] *Water Pressures in Central Asia.* International Crisis Group: Brussels 2014, pp. 9–12.

[111] In the case of the second biggest river, Amu Darya, Uzbekistan for almost 25 years was blocking Rogun Dam construction in Tajikistan which would enable water flow control toward Amu Darya and the project started only due to the Uzbek-Tajik agreement. Putz, Catherine: "Tajikistan's Rogun Dam Begins Operations". *The Diplomat*, November 20, 2018, retrieved on 05.01.2020, from https://thediplomat.com/2018/11/tajikistans-megadam-rogun-begins-operations/.

[112] Bernauer, Thomas: "Climate Change and International Water Conflict in Central Asia". *Journal of Peace Research* 49 (1), 2012, pp. 228, 230–31; *Water Pressures…*, p. 3.

[113] Bernauer, Th.: op. cit., p. 231; *Water Pressures…*, p. 3.

[114] Smith, David R.: "Environmental Security and Shared Water Resources in post-Soviet Central Asia". *Post-Soviet Geography* 36 (6), 1995, pp. 351–370. Also more

In the context of the abovementioned intraregional conflicts, it should not be surprising that projects aggregated around the idea of intraregional integration, i.e. involving all or some of the eight analyzed states, have failed. Indeed, it was due to those failures in the 1990s that the phrase "regional non-cooperation pathology" emerged in reference to Central Asian efforts.[123] This situation is also the result of

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recent studies confirm conflict-prone environment in Central Asia surrounding water sharing problems: Bernauer, Th.: op. cit., pp. 228.

[115] Ibid., pp. 228–232.

[116] Ibid., pp. 228, 232.

[117] Ibid., p. 229; *Water Pressures…*, pp. 3–4.

[118] Bernauer, Th.: op. cit., p. 230.

[119] Ibid., p. 229.

[120] Ibid., pp. 232–233.

[121] Ibid., p. 232.

[122] Ibid., pp. 233–235, 237; *Water Pressures…*, p. 3.

[123] Spechler, Martin C.: "Regional Non-cooperation in Central Asia: a Pathology". In: *Economic Developments and Reforms in Cooperation Partner Countries: The Interrelationship Between Regional Economic Cooperation, Security and Stability, Colloquium, 2–4 May 2001, Bucharest, Romania.* NATO: Brussel 2001, p. 272; Rosset, Damian/ Svarin, David: "The Constraints of the Past and the Failure of Central Asian Regionalism, 1991–2004". *REGION: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia* 3 (2), 2014, pp. 245–266.

processes developed at the state level (e.g. national identity building in opposition to neighboring countries) and at the regional level (i.e. regionalism promoted by out-of-Central Asia and South Caucasus powers undermines intraregional initiatives). As a result, some scholars have even pointed out that in the post-Cold War era, Central Asia and the South Caucasus is losing its Soviet (and even pre-Soviet) cohesiveness.[124]

Small Games: Intrastate Conflicts

The main intrastate conflicts in the Central Asia and South Caucasus region are based around a rivalry between reform and rent-seeking elites, clashes between secular and religious leaders, ethnic conflicts and separatism movements, and finally clan politics.

Any discussion on the condition of Central Asian and South Caucasus states should start with the reflection that those countries gained independence and the shape of their borders due to processes which played out in other parts of the world. Decisions made in the centre of the Soviet Union made possible (in the case of the South Caucasus) or even compelled (in the Central Asia case) the communist leaders in this region to declare independence and newly established political units were created, yet along the internal borders of Soviet republics designed by Moscow.[125]

The Central Asia and South Caucasus region observed a struggle between reform and rent-seeking leaders as “economic reform weakens the rent extracting system of the patronage networks that sustain the CCA [Caucasusian and Central Asian – TP/MG] elites.”[126] As the post-Soviet elites were focused on “revenues … to replace lost subventions from Moscow to consolidate their political power … reform has decelerated in most CCA countries.”[127] The whole of the Central Asia and South Caucasus region could be associated with the highest level of rent-seeking in the post-Soviet space.[128] As a result, we can more often observe a conflict between different parts of elites focused on rent-seeking than the struggle between reform- and revenue-oriented political groups. Even though the rent-seeking environment in particular countries is usually associated with intra-elite conflicts,[129] under specific conditions elite cooperation can also be observed in reference to securing revenues.[130] Rent-seeking was not only possible in the context of local businesses but especially in reference to foreign investments (e.g. in the energy resources) and undertakings (including those associated with security issues).[131]

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[124] Patnaik, A.: op. cit., pp. 147–162; Libman, A. / Vinokurov, Evgeny: “Is it really different? Patterns of regionalisation in post-Soviet Central Asia”. *Post-Communist Economies* 23 (4), 2011, pp. 469–492. On how domestic factors and regional cooperation supported by great powers restrains intraregional cooperation see: Kubicek, P.: “Regionalism…,” pp. 637–655; Qoraboyev, I. / Moldashev, K.: op. cit., p. 120; Allison, R.: op. cit., pp. 463–483; Collins, Kathleen: “Economic and Security Regionalism among Patrimonial Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of Central Asia”. *Europe-Asia Studies* 61 (2), 2009, pp. 249–281; Dadabaev, T.: op. cit., p. 39.

[125] Kavalski, E.: “Uncovering the ‘New’…,” p. 6.

[126] Auty, Richard: “Transition to mid-income democracies or to failed states?” In: Auty, R. / de Soysa, Indra (eds.): *Energy, Wealth and Governance in the Caucasus and Central Asia: Lessons not Learned.* Routledge: London and New York 2006, p. 6, 12. Cf. with more complex perspective on reform-rent seeking nexus e.g. in Uzbekistan: Markowitz, Lawrence P.: *State Erosion: Unlootable Resources and Unruly Elites in Central Asia.* Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY 2013, pp. 100–123.

[127] Auty, R.: op. cit., p. 4.

Central Asia and the South Caucasus is also a place were conflicts between secular elites and radical Islamic organizations can be observed, with the transnational Islam Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) as the most prominent case. The IMU has its roots in radical Muslim organizations formed at the beginning of 1990s in the Uzbek part of the Fergana Valley. After members of those organizations were forced out of Uzbekistan in the middle of 1990s, they joined the Islamist side in the Tajik civil war. With the end of this conflict and still high-level repression toward Islamist organizations in Uzbekistan, radical Islamists moved to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan where the IMU was formally established in 1998. This transnational institution emerged as an international actor in Central Asia and the South Caucasus when it moved into Tajik territory in 1999 and 2000 and attacked Kyrgyzstan, its Uzbek enclaves and at some point even Uzbek territory (the so-called Batken conflicts). Since the US-led invasion of Afghanistan ended Taliban dominance, the IMU moved to Pakistan and became part of the international radical Muslim movement. As a result, it only incidentally engaged in terrorist attacks in Central Asia and the South Caucasus (e.g. in 2004 in Uzbekistan) as it was mostly involved in the conflict in Pakistan and Afghanistan. At some point, the IMU became an affiliate of ISIS and organized terrorist attacks on the West using Uzbek recruits from Central Asia and the South Caucasus. The IMU case also shows perfectly how organized crime actors influence processes in this region as this Islamic organization was additionally accused of involvement in drug trafficking.[132]

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A number of examples of intrastate ethnic and separatist conflicts in the Central Asia and South Caucasus region can also be described.

Firstly, between 1992 and 1997 there was a civil war in Tajikistan between government forces and the so-called United Tajik Opposition, where localism (the western v. eastern part of the country), economic conditions (more developed v. less developed parts of the state), clan politics (the Leninabad and Kulob clans versus clans from Gharm and to some extent Badakhshan) and ideology (postcommunism versus liberalism and Islamism) all played a role.[133] Even though this conflict was mostly intrastate, outside actors were also involved, including the Central Asia and South Caucasus entities (i.e. the government of Uzbekistan initially delivered weapons and later intervened directly) and out-of-region actors (Afghans joining both sides, the Russia government supported the postcommunist party with military equipment and then used its military forces in Tajikistan directly).[134]

The second example of ethnic conflict in the Central Asia and South Caucasus region is Nagorno-Karabakh separatism within the internationally-recognized borders of Azerbaijan. At the end of 1980s, the abovementioned Armenian-populated region of Azerbaijan sought to be annexed by Armenia but failed and spurred anti-Armenian activities in Baku. With the independence declaration of Armenian and Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh followed, and war with Azeri forces started at the end of 1991. At the beginning of 1993, without a formal declaration of war, troops from independent Armenia joined the Nagorno-Karabakh forces, and a stalemate ensued. Finally, a ceasefire was signed in the middle of 1994 with the de facto independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding areas occupied by

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Armenian forces. Even though the Nagorno-Karabakh war is sometimes strictly classified as an intrastate conflict (especially during the first stage 1991–1993),[135] it is also perceived as a mix of intrastate and interstate clashes with de facto independent Armenian involvement in the second phase (1993–1994).[136] Also, out-of-analyzed-region actors like Russia were involved in this conflict, delivering military and non-military supplies to an independent Armenia and in this way indirectly supporting Nagorno Karabakh separatism.[137] The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war not only demonstrated a changing regional balance between resource-rich Azerbaijan and much poorer Armenia, but also confirmed the role played by out-of-South-Caucasus regional powers as the new phase of this conflict involved (traditionally) Russia and (with generally more activity in recent years) Turkey.[138]

The third example of this kind of conflicts would be Georgia, as it represents the case of ethnic conflict and separatism intensified by civil war and out-of-region involvement. In the case of South Ossetia, this region declared independence at the end of 1990, leading to the intrastate war between South Ossetian troops and Georgian armed forces between 1991 and 1992. The conflict ended with the Sochi Agreement in 1992, resulting in the withdrawal of Georgian forces from South Ossetia.[139] In the middle of 1992, the Abkhazia region de facto declared independence and this resulted in two years of war (1992–1994) and ended in a Georgian defeat.[140] Both separatist conflicts in Georgia co-occurred with the domestic war over central government control between Zviad Gamsakhurdia and his opponents between 1991 and 1993.[141] Also the involvement of actors outside Central Asia and South Caucasus could be noticed in this conflict, as reports have shown both the role played by North Caucasus fighters (e.g. Chechens) and a Russian military presence.[142] The Russian invasion of Georgia in August 2008 (the so-called Five-Day Russian-Georgian War) transformed this domestic conflict (with external involvement) into an interstate war between the South Caucasus state and an out-of-region great power (with the domestic issue as only a pretext).[143]

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[135] Ibid., pp. 309–310.

[136] Ibid., p. 310; Halbach, Uwe: "A Case Sui Generis: Nagorno-Karabakh in Comparison with Other Ethnic Conflicts in Eastern Europe". In: Kambeck, Michael / Ghazaryan, Sargis (eds.): *Europe's Next Avoidable War: Nagorno-Karabakh.* Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York, NY 2013, pp. 52–54; Tank, G. Pinar: "The CFSP and the Nation-State". In: Eliassen, Kjell A. (ed.): *Foreign and Security Policy in the European Union.* SAGE Publications: London 1998, p. 17; Broers, Laurence: "From "Frozen Conflict" to Enduring Rivalry: Reassessing the Nagorny Karabakh Conflict". *Nationalities Papers* 43 (4), 2015, pp. 559–560.

[137] Mirzoyan, Alla: *Armenia, the Regional Powers, and the West: between History and Geopolitics.* Palgrave Macmillan: New York, NY 2010, pp. 32–34.

[138] Górecki, Wojciech: *The Gordian knot of the Caucasus. The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.* Centre for Eastern Studies: Warsaw 2020; Górecki, W.: "Nagorno-Karabakh: Armenia's surrender, Russia's success". *Centre for Eastern Studies*, Nov. 10, 2020, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2020-11–10/nagorno-karabakh-armenias-surrender-russias-success; Górecki, W. / Chudziak, Mateusz: "The (pan-)Turkic Caucasus. The Baku-Ankara Alliance and its Regional Importance". *Centre for Eastern Studies*, Fed. 1, 2021, retrieved 05.01.2020, from https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2021–02-01/pan-turkic-caucasus-baku-ankara-alliance-and-its-regional.

[139] Dixon, J. S. / Sarkees, M. R.: op. cit., pp. 306–307; George, Julie A.: *The Politics of Ethnic Separatism in Russia and Georgia.* Palgrave Macmillan: New York 2009, pp. 109–114.

[140] Dixon, J. S. / Sarkees, M. R.: op. cit., pp. 310–311; George, J. A.: op. cit., pp. 114–121.

In reference to the clan politics in the Central Asia and South Caucasus region, it should be stated that the prominence of kinship networks predate the Soviet era and were never eroded during the communist period. As a result, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the formal transformation quite often ended in the de facto hybrid (dual) solution of presidential political systems and a kind of tribalism based on clan structures. In most cases, interclan relations were structured around cooperation on sustaining stability in the state and limiting the scope of interclan rivalry for political means (in the form of clan pacts). Nevertheless, in the Tajikistan case, we can observe how interclan conflict was one of the most important reasons for the civil war.[144]

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[141] Dixon, J. S. / Sarkees, M, R,: op. cit., pp. 308–309.

[142] George, J. A.: op. cit., p. 120; Sakwa, Richard: “Great Powers and Small Wars in the Caucasus”. In: Sussex, Matthew (ed.): *Conflict in the Former USSR.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2012, p. 80.

[143] Cornell, S. E. / Starr, S. F. (eds.): *The Guns of August 2008: Russia’s War in Georgia.* M.E. Sharpe: Armonk, NY 2009; Sakwa, R: op. cit., pp. 79–90.

[144] Collins, K.: “Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia”. *Journal of Democracy* 13 (3), 2002, pp. 137–151; Collins, K.: “The Logic of Clan Politics: Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories”. *World Politics* 56 (2), 2004, pp. 224–261; Collins, K.: *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge and New York, NY 2006; Starr, S. F.: *Clans, Authoritarian Rulers, and Parliaments in Central Asia.* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program: Washington, DC 2006, pp. 6–14; Gullette, David: “The Problems of the ‘Clan’ Politics Model of Central Asian Statehood: A Call for Alternative Pathways for Research”. In: Kavalski, E. (ed.): *Stable Outside, Fragile Inside?: post-Soviet Statehood in Central Asia.* Ashgate Pub.: Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT 2010, pp. 53–69; Sanglibev, A. A.: “Ethnic Clan Politics in the Post-Soviet Space”. *Russian Social Science Review* 51 (1), 2010, pp. 56–71 (on clan politics in South Caucasus see: 61–65); Stefes, Christoph: “Governance, the State, and Systemic Corruption: Armenia and Georgia in Comparison”. *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 2 (2), 2008, pp. 76, 81. See empirical study suggesting that the so called “clans” (e.g. in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) are neither purely geographical (i.e. regional), nor purely kinshipn-based as thoese could also be based on the patron-client network. Tunçer-Kılavuz, İdil: “Political and Social Networks in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan: ‘Clan’, Region and Beyond”. *Central Asian Survey* 28 (3), 2009, pp. 323–334.

Conclusion

One of the cornerstones of most Western international relations theories is based on the concept of the unity and sovereignty of states. In the case of the Central Asia and South Caucasus region, we can easily discern how this idea is undermined in a threefold manner. Firstly, at the domestic level, we can observe how intra-elite disagreements on rent-seeking, radical Islam, ethnic issues, and interclan clashes threaten territorial integrity. Secondly, at the intraregional level, we find conflicts on the management of border, water and energy resources disputes. Finally, at the international level, out-of-region great powers compete for influence, undermine territorial integrity and try to control Central Asia and South Caucasus states economically. As a result, it should be not surprising that Emilian Kavalski has claimed that this region forces researchers to focus on non-Western international relations theories which are able to handle the international, intraregional and domestic actors shaping the fate of the Central Asia and South Caucasus region.[145]

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Great Powers
in Central Asia and the South Caucasus

Piotr Bajor

2. The Policy of the Russian Federation towards Central Asia

Abstract: This article is devoted to the policy of the Russian Federation towards the countries of Central Asia. The most important conditions and Russia's interests in the region are discussed, along with its importance for the foreign and security policy of the Russian state. The paper then turns to an examination of the most significant aspects of Russia's bilateral relations with the countries in the region, as well as the multilateral dimension of these relations within the framework of international structures. The last part of the work discusses current challenges in Russia's policy towards Central Asia countries and presents some potential avenues for its future development in a medium-term perspective.

Keywords: Russia, Central Asia, strategic planning, national interests, China

Central Asia is one of the priority directions for the foreign and security policy of the Russian Federation. Russian policy towards the countries of Central Asia has long been determined by many factors of a tactical and strategic nature. Therefore, the main research question in this article relates to the key factors determining the policy of the Russian Federation towards Central Asia.

The research hypotheses adopted in this paper, indicating that the Russian policy towards Central Asia has been shaped by Russia's key interests which are of a political, economic, and military nature, also support the above question. Within the political and economic area, the priority has been to retain the Russian influence and domination over this area, especially in the situation where China's position in this region of the world has been increasing. The next hypothesis that can be easily verified is an assumption indicating that one of the most significant premises of Russian policy is the growing number of security threats in this region. This aspect is particularly important in terms of ending the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, as well as effectively countering Islamic State in the Middle East, as a result of which new threats have appeared in Central Asia, impacting the complex regional security. Therefore, the next verifiable hypothesis in the article explains the matter of Russia using security threats in order to strengthen its influences in this region, not only at a bilateral level, but also by using multilateral forms of cooperation.

The above research assumptions determine the accepted theoretical perspective, namely that of realism. The case study method is employed as the main research strategy, together with the content analysis of formal state documents describing the implementation of foreign and security policy.

The structure of the article below logically stems from the proposed research question and research hypotheses. The first part explains the background to the Russian Federation's policy towards Central Asia, before presenting an analysis of the strategic assumptions and their implementation in bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation. The last part of the article describes the challenges that Russia needs to confront in terms of the implementation of the foreign and security policy in Central Asia. Particular parts present the research results related to the circumstances and tendencies which impact upon the discussed processes. Therefore, the main aim is to fill the existing research gap on the analysis of the most important factors influencing regional security, as well as determining the Russian foreign and security policy towards this region.

A Background to Russia's Policy towards Central Asia

The break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the emergence of several independent states in the region completely changed the geo-political configuration of Central Asia.[1] From the first shoots of independence in these countries, Russia was a very active player, trying to maintain its influence and geo-political interests in the region. Hence, Russia played an essential role in the internal processes which transpired in the individual countries and in the ongoing social-political transformation; it also tried to influence the foreign and security policies of these countries.[2]

The issue of security and the scale of threats in the region is one of the key factors conditioning Russia's active policy in the area of Central Asia. The greatest threats it faces, whether connected with terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, illegal immigration or drug smuggling, come from this region. In this aspect, we should also highlight the potential risk of conflict in a region whose destabilization would be considerably dangerous for Russian interests.[3]

When analyzing Russian policy towards Central Asia, it can be stated that in the late 1990s this policy decelerated significantly. This was connected with the internal crises in Russia at the time and its general weakness on the international arena but this issue changed when President Putin came to power in 2000.[4] The new leader considered the rebuilding of Russia's position on the international arena and restoring its superpower status to be a key direction in his policy. Putin also emphasized the need to rebuild and modernize the armed forces and a more efficient struggle to fight with key threats to the security of the state. Therefore, the above-mentioned factors conditioned President Putin's policy towards the region of Central Asia, which is traditionally a source of numerous risks for Russia.

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[1] As the term "Central Asia" can be understood in a number of ways, this article adopts the premise that it includes the following countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

[2] For more, see: Радниц, Скотт: "Стратегическая солидарность: Как Центральная Азия реагирует на уговоры Кремля." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://www.globalaffairs.ru/PONARS-Eurasia/Strategicheskaya-solidarnost-Kak-Tcentralnaya-Aziya-reagiruet-na-ugovory-Kremlya-18730.

[3] Муртазин, Марат: "Международные террористические организации и их деятельность на постсоветском пространстве." *Россия и новые государства Евразии*, 4, 2017, pp. 105–116; Муртазин, Марат: "Государства Центральной Азии и угрозы религиозного экстремизма." *Россия и новые государства Евразии*, 1, 2017, pp. 41–55.

Undoubtedly the Russian policy of the time was also a reaction to the USA intervention in Afghanistan, which directly influenced regional stability and security in Central Asia. Therefore, during the first years of Putin's presidency, Russia began to strengthen its position in the region, using political, economic and military means in bilateral relations with individual countries, as well as activating a platform for multilateral forms of cooperation. It is worth emphasizing that, despite a few initiatives, the countries of this region did not manage to create a structure for multilateral cooperation which could secure independence from Russia.[5]

Here we should mention Russian initiatives directed at the countries of the Central Asia region within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the creation of new mechanisms for multilateral cooperation such as: the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) or the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). In time, these initiatives grew in importance and until today they have been a crucial instrument in strengthening Russia's position in Central Asia. Both the policy towards Central Asia executed by Russia, and the strategic premises analyzed below, testify to this fact.

The Region of Central Asia in the Strategic Premises of the Russian Federation

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which led to the imposition of sanctions on Russia by the European Union and the United States, and a radical deterioration of relations with Western countries and NATO, triggered the beginning of work directed at updating strategic documents concerning foreign policy and state security in Russia. New versions of the three most important documents in this area were produced in response and these include the Military Doctrine of 26 December 2014, the Strategy for National Security of 31 December 2015, and the Concept of Foreign Policy of 30 November 2016. An analysis of these documents has been presented below through the lens of aspects concerning the conditions and execution of Russia's foreign policy towards Central Asia.

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[4] Radnitz, Scott: "Strategic Solidarity: How Central Asia Responds to the Kremlin's Exhortations." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/PONARS-Eurasia/Strategic-Solidarity-How-Central-Asia-Responds-to-the-Kremlins-Exhortations--18731.

[5] Бологов, Петр: "С оглядкой на Кремль. Готова ли Средняя Азия к самостоятельности." *Московский Центр Карнеги*, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://carnegie.ru/commentary/68707.

It should be emphasized that none of the above documents refers directly to relations with the individual countries of the region. Despite signing strategic partnership agreements with each of the Central Asian countries, Russia does not list or name any country from the region in its foreign policy concept. As a priority direction in Russia's policy, the region is presented through the lens of instability, complex geo-political conditions, potential for conflict and key threats to the security of the Russian state. Thus, Russia mainly highlights the indispensable actions needed to combat these threats through bilateral cooperation and within the framework of multilateral structures such as the CSTO or the SCO.

In the Military Doctrine of 2014, it was emphasized that world considerations for international relations are characterized by great tensions between countries and an increase in global competition. It was indicated that numerous disputes and regional conflicts were still unresolved and that they tended to be dealt with using force. It was also highlighted that such unfavorable situations were present in many of the regions bordering Russia.[6]

Therefore, this statement can be interpreted as a direct reference to the conditions and threats from the Central Asia region for Russia. Further fragments of the Doctrine can also be understood as relating to the situation of the countries in the region, arguing that internal tensions in many countries are the cause of instability and emerging threats to regional security.[7]

Moreover, the key threats of terrorism and extremism, which are among the most important problems for Central Asia countries and the Russian Federation, were indicated in this document. Russia emphasized the growing risk of terrorist attacks, including those with the use of radioactive and toxic substances. Fragments referring to the creation and training of illegal armed formations and their activities on the territory of the Russian Federation and its allies point to yet another significant threat connected with the situation in Central Asia.[8]

The region of Central Asia was similarly defined in the Strategy for National Security of 31 December 2015. The Strategy is the Russian Federation's basic document defining the state's national interests and the aims of home and foreign policy, directed at strengthening national security.

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[6] *Военная доктрина Российской Федерации (в редакции от 2015 г.).* Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/976907.

[7] Ibid.; "Doktryna wojenna Federacji Rosyjskiej." *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*, 35, 2015, retrieved 12.01.2018, from https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/03/35_KBN_DOKTRYNA_ROSJI.pdf, pp. 177–183.

[8] *Военная доктрина…*; *Doktryna wojenna…*, pp. 183–184.

The document points to a considerable growth in the Russian Federation's international position in the world. According to the assumptions of the document, this triggered a sharp reaction and response of the West which, as Russia claims, undertakes actions intended to weaken Russia's position, interfere with integration processes in the Eurasian sphere, and provoke tensions as well as to destabilize this region.[9]

Russia considered its priority to be further development of integration within the existing structures and other forms of cooperation in the Eurasian sphere. In this aspect, further development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the CIS countries was recognized as one of the Russian foreign policy priorities. It was also emphasized that Russia advocates further 'quality' development of the CSTO and transforming this structure into a universal international organization capable of efficiently combating strategic risks for the member countries. These issues were also raised in reference to the functioning of the SCO. The need for further action aimed at increasing mutual trust and partnership between the individual countries of Central Asia was emphasized in this respect. What is more, the indispensable further strengthening of the SCO's political and economic potential was indicated.[10]

In terms of economic integration in the Eurasian area, the Concept highlights the priority role of the EEU. Russia emphasized that the creation of the Union was a new stage in the economic integration in the post-Soviet sphere and, at the same time, it announced further actions intended to enhance the integration processes.[11]

By the same token, Russian priorities connected with Central Asia countries were presented in the Concept of Foreign Policy of 30 November 2016. In this document, the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the CIS member countries was considered a priority. It was declared that Russia would undertake actions aimed at increasing the potential of the CIS as an organization capable of effective actions in combating both existing and new threats. Again, Russia underlined a key role of the EEU in the process of the economic integration of post-Soviet countries.[12]

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[9] *Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 31.12.2015 г. № 683 О Стратегии национальной безопасности Российской Федерации.* Администрация Президента России, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/40391; Weitz, Richard: "Moscow's agenda in Central Asia and the Caucasus: it is official." *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, retrieved 12.01.2018, from https://cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13341-moscows-agenda-in-central-asia-and-the-caucasus-it-is-official.html.

[10] *Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 31.12.2015 г. № 683 О Стратегии….*

[11] Ibid.

[12] *Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 30.11.2016 г. № 640 Об утверждении Концепции внешней политики Российской Федерации.* Администрация Президента России, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41451/page/1.

It should be noted that, due to the termination of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, the document directly refers to the way Russia perceives the situation in Central Asia. In the Russian perception, new conditions pose a serious threat to the security of Russia and other countries in the region. Therefore, if was emphasized that Russia, in cooperation with the countries concerned and with the use of regional structures (CIS, CSTO, SCO), would undertake further actions to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan. Russia stressed the fact that a policy aimed at combating terrorist threats in Afghanistan and in the region, as well as curbing drug smuggling, needed to be an element of such actions. Additionally, the CSTO's special role in fighting these risks was emphasized and, consequently, its key role in guaranteeing security in the post-Soviet sphere was highlighted.[13]

As is apparent from the above analysis, Russia perceives the Central Asia region as one of the most important directions in its foreign and security policy. This stems mainly from the key threats to the state, and also from a desire to maintain its own interests and influence in the region. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the policy of Russia towards Central Asia is executed in a multifaceted way: on the level of bilateral relations as well as within multilateral forms of cooperation.

The Bilateral Dimension of Russia's Policy towards Central Asia

Russia's relations with individual countries in the region are varied. However, Russia tries to carry out an active policy with each of them. As already mentioned, Russia established a special character of bilateral relations on the level of a 'strategic partnership' with each Central Asia country. There exists a broad legal base for cooperation with all the countries, and an intensive political dialogue at the highest level of governance is maintained.[14]

The issues of economic cooperation and the problem of illegal economic migration are an important aspect of Russia's policy towards Central Asia. However, it should be underlined that it is extraordinarily difficult to precisely determine the exact number of illegal migrants from Central Asia in Russia. The data here is very divergent, but some of it gives an overall figure of over 4 million people.[15] In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the data points to a number between 400,000 and a million people. A similar divergence occurs in the case of Uzbekistan, where a figure ranging from 600,000 and 2 million people is mentioned. When it comes to Tajikistan, the estimated number ranges from between one and two million people.[16] Although the above-mentioned economic and political processes have undoubtedly led to a decrease in this number, it is still estimated to amount to several million people and constitutes an essential factor in Russia's policy towards Central Asia.

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[13] Ibid.

[14] *Россия и Центральная Азия.* Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://www.mid.ru/rossia-i-problemy-central-noj-azii

[15] Рязанцев, Сергей: "Трудовая миграция из Центральной Азии в Россию в контексте экономического кризиса." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://www.globalaffairs.ru/valday/Trudovaya-migratciya-iz-Tcentralnoi-Azii-v-Rossiyu-v-kontekste-ekonomicheskogo-krizisa-18333.

This is due to the fact that a majority of those people are employed illegally, often exploited by employers or have trouble adapting in Russia. This situation results in extremely serious consequences for Russia's security, which is confirmed by foiled plots and terrorist attacks carried out in the country. Those responsible for their preparation were citizens of Central Asian countries or people coming from that region yet holding Russian citizenship. Agitators from terrorist cells recruit new members in Russia as they become more radical due to social problems, lack of adaptation, disappointment and social exclusion in this country. Thus, apart from the activities of the secret service, the cooperation of Russia's migration bodies with Central Asian countries and Russia's activities to counter migrant social exclusion should also play an essential role in tackling this problem.[17]

One of the most important partners for Russia in Central Asia has invariably been Kazakhstan, which participates in all Russian re-integration projects in the Eurasian area. A key document forming the basis for mutual relations between the countries is the *Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance* and it was signed on 25 May 1992. The strategic partnership between both countries was also highlighted in numerous documents signed later, among which it is worth listing the *Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Cooperation in the 21st Century* of 11 November 2013. Yet again, this document highlights the strategic character of bilateral relations and the need for broadly understood international cooperation between the two countries.[18]

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[16] Малашенко, Алексей: "Интересы и шансы России в Центральной Азии." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://carnegieendowment.org/files/ProEtContra_58_21-34.pdf, pp. 24–25; Бологов, Петр: "Последний край державы. Почему Москве по-прежнему рады в Средней Азии." *Московский Центр Карнеги*, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://carnegie.ru/commentary/68153.

[17] Старостин, Алексей: "На службе у террористов: причины радикализации мигрантов из Средней Азии." *Российский совет по международным делам*, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/na-sluzhbe-u-terroristov-prichiny-radikalizatsii-migrantov-iz-sredney-azii/; Alekseenkova, Elena: "Integrating Migrants in the Interests of Security and Development." *Российский совет по международным делам*, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/integrating-migrants-in-the-interests-of-security-and-development/

[18] *Двусторонние отношения. Российско-казахстанские отношения.* Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации, retrieved 12.01.2018, from http://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/kz/?currentpage=main-country#relation-popup.

It should be stressed that the considerable Russian minority in Kazakhstan is an essential factor conditioning this cooperation. According to the statistical data, Russians constitute more than 20 % of the population. Importantly, Russian is an official language in Kazakhstan and is commonly used in public administration.[19]

The question of enhancing cooperation and joint actions to fight threats in the region were a topic of various discussion between authorities e.g. during meeting of Presidents Putin and Nazarbayev, which took place on 27 February 2017 in Almaty.[20] The meeting was an element in an intensive dialogue between the two countries. For example, the data of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows that in 2016, 15 meetings on the highest level took place, including 6 meetings of the Presidents, 5 – of the Chief executives, and 4 meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.[21]

One of the most important aspects of Russian policy towards Kazakhstan is military cooperation. It is based on the *Treaty on Cooperation in the Military-Technical Area,* which was signed by the Presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan on 24 December 2013. Currently, Russia leases three bases on the territory of Kazakhstan: Sary Shagan military training ground and a part of the following units' infrastructure: 4th State Central Range and 929th State Air Centre. Russia also uses the Baikonur complex, whose lease was prolonged until 2050. In accordance with the agreements signed in the years 2004–2005, Kazakhstan's Bayterek space rocket complex is created there with Russia's cooperation on the cosmodrome. Russia is also Kazakhstan's key partner in purchasing arms and servicing Russian equipment bought earlier.[22]

Another country in the region where Russia plays an important role is Kyrgyzstan. A few months after the Soviet Union broke up, on 10 June 1992, the countries signed the *Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.* Additionally, the *Declaration of Eternal Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership* was signed on 27 July 2000.[23]

Several important events took place in Russia's policy towards Kyrgyzstan in recent years. One of them was President Putin's visit to Bishkek on 28 February 2017, during which a joint statement of the Presidents was adopted and numerous documents concerning mutual cooperation were signed.[24] Another important event was President Almazbek Atambayev's visit to Russia during which both Presidents signed the *Declaration of Enhancing Cooperation and Strategic Partnership* on 20 June 2017. Moreover, several important documents, including the key *Agreement on the Development of Cooperation in the Military-Technical Area*, were signed during the meeting.[25]

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[19] Ibid.

[20] *Встреча с Президентом Казахстана Нурсултаном Назарбаевым.* Администрация Президента России, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53949.

[21] *Двусторонние отношения. Российско-казахстанские….*

[22] Ibid.

[23] *Двусторонние отношения. Российско-киргизские отношения.* Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/kg/?currentpage=main-country.

[24] *Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Киргизии Алмазбеком Атамбаевым.* Администрация Президента России, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53964.

For Russia, this sphere of cooperation is of strategic importance connected with the lease of military bases in this country. Crucial for this issue was President Putin's landmark visit to Bishkek on 19–20 August 2012. A number of important documents, including an agreement regulating the status and conditions of the functioning of the Russian military base in this country, were signed then (an air base in Kant, 954th Naval Force base in Karakul, a special unit analyzing seismic processes and a communication point for naval forces enabling contact with Russian warships on waters of the Pacific and Indian Oceans).[26]

Because of the scale of increased risks to security, Tajikistan takes a special place in Russia's policy. A key document shaping bilateral relations between these two countries is the *Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance* signed on 25 May 1993.[27] The civil war in Tajikistan in the 1990s was one of the largest problems for regional stability and security. Therefore, it should be stressed that Russia played a crucial role in this conflict termination and signing a special peace agreement on 27 June 1997 in Moscow.

Due to the porosity of Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan and the threats connected with it, Russian border guards have patrolled its individual sections for many years. Russia also has military bases in Tajikistan; the bases have been transformed from the units dating back to Soviet Union times. A special agreement on the Russian base status and conditions of its functioning was signed in Moscow on 16 April 1999. It is worth noting that on 5 October 2012 a new agreement,[28] prolonging the functioning of the Russian base in Tajikistan until 2042, was signed.[29]

An important place in Russia's policy towards Central Asia is held by Uzbekistan. Unlike the countries listed above, Uzbekistan has attempted to pursue a multidimensional policy which would make it more independent from Russia, which has been confirmed, for example, in Tajikistan's activities on the international arena and its approach to the political, economic and military re-integration projects carried out by Russia in the post-Soviet area.[30]

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[25] *Заявления для прессы по итогам российско-киргизских переговоров.* Администрация Президента России, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54828.

[26] Князева, Маргарита: "Объединенная российская военная база в Киргизии. Что? Где? Когда?" *Информационное агентство REGNUM*, retrieved 15.01.2018, from https://regnum.ru/news/2232631.html.

[27] *О Российско-таджикских отношениях*. Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации, retrieved 15.01.2018, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/tj/?currentpage=main-country#_ftn1.

[28] It took effect on Feb. 6, 2014.

[29] *О Российско-таджикских….*

Irrespectively of the above activities, Russia's relations with Uzbekistan are also referred to as strategic partnership. Key in shaping these relations was the *Agreement on the Foundations of Inter-state Relations, Friendship and Cooperation,* signed on 30 May 1992. Signing the *Treaty on Strategic Partnership* on 16 June 2004, was also an important element in the development of bilateral relations. The strategic character of the relations between the two countries was emphasized in those documents and a willingness to enhance these relations further was declared.[31]

It is worth adding that both countries cooperate in the military arena. These issues are regulated by a special agreement on enhancing military cooperation, signed in 1999. Moreover, Russia and Uzbekistan established a special committee for coordinating this cooperation in 2001. One of its fundamental elements is the joint control of the airspace of the two countries and further actions aimed at combating key threats in the region.[32]

A separate place in Russia's policy towards Central Asia is held by Turkmenistan as this state declared that it would adopt a policy of neutrality on the international arena. Therefore, Russia's relations with Turkmenistan are considerably conditioned by this issue, particularly Turkmenistan's attitude to participation in Russian projects of political, economic and military integration. Irrespective of this issue, political relations of these two countries are referred to as 'strategic partnership'.

The first document forming the foundations for shaping mutual relations was the *Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation,* signed on 31 July 1992. After its termination, on 23 April 2002, a new *Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation* was signed, where strategic relations between these countries and willingness to develop them further were confirmed.[33]

These declarations were also confirmed in an agreement on strategic partnership, signed on 2 October 2017 during President Putin's visit to Turkmenistan.[34]

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[30] Compare: Притчин, Станислав: "Узбекский транзит для Центральной Азии." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.globalaffairs.ru/number/Uzbekskii-tranzit-dlya-Tcentralnoi-Azii-18566. See also: Саттаров, Рафаэль: "АСЕАН по-узбекски. Новые амбиции Ташкента в Центральной Азии." *Московский Центр Карнеги*, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://carnegie.ru/commentary/75120.

[31] *Двусторонние отношения. Российско-узбекские отношения.* Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/uz/?currentpage=main-country#relation-popup.

[32] Ibid.

[33] *О российско-туркменских отношениях*. Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/tm/?currentpage=main-country#relation-popup.

[34] *Российско-туркменистанские переговоры.* Администрация Президента России, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55747;

A special character of the relations between the two countries was also stressed by presidents Putin and Gurbanguli Berdimukhamedov during their speeches at a special press conference. Nonetheless, special attention should be paid to the Turkmen President's statements: although Berdimukhamedov declared his willingness to enhance relations with Russia, he repeatedly referred to and stressed Turkmenistan's neutrality policy which is in line with crucial interests of the Russian state.[35]

The Multilateral Aspect of Russia's Policy towards Central Asia

Another aspect of Russia's policy towards Central Asia is its multilateral dimension. The overreaching objective of this policy is maintaining Russian interests and enhancing its position in the region through engaging its individual countries into political, economic and military re-integration projects carried out by the Russians in the Eurasian area. Therefore, a comparison of the membership of Central Asia countries in those projects is essential for an analysis of their relations with Russia and mutual relationships. The table below includes a list of member countries in the most important structures of multilateral cooperation within the Eurasian area.

Table 1.1: The most important structures of multilateral cooperation within the Eurasian area with the participation of Russia and Central Asia countries

Structure	Member states
The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Moldavia, Ukraine
The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Belarus
The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Belarus
The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)	China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan

Source: Author's own dataset.

Документы, подписанные в ходе официального визита Владимира Путина в Туркменистан. Администрация Президента России, retrieved 15.01.2018, from http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/5235.

[35] *Заявления для прессы по итогам российско-туркменистанских переговоров.* Администрация Президента России, retrieved 16.01.2018, from http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/55753.

As the above table suggests, the participation of individual countries in multilateral forms of cooperation is highly varied. The only organization whose members are all the countries of the region, is the rather ineffective CIS. The CSTO, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, is important for Russia as far as its security interests are concerned. However, only the first two countries take part in the Russia-dominated economic integration project which is the EEU. A considerable lack of Uzbekistan's participation in the work of the above-mentioned structures should be indicated in this context. This country is only a member of the SCO, which also includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.[36] Turkmenistan, on the other hand, due to the declared neutrality policy, does not take part in the listed projects and is only a member of the CIS.

Despite the CIS's lack of efficiency, the structure remains an important dimension for realizing Russia's interests towards Central Asian countries. Moreover, Russia points to the need for increasing its efficiency and importance in integration processes between countries. For example, Russian priorities within this scope were clearly presented during the 25th CIS Anniversary Summit which took place in Bishkek in 2016. In the statement then approved in accordance with the Russian position, member states underlined the CIS's role in maintaining constructive cooperation and enhancing mutual relations within the post-Soviet area. They also indicated the need to strengthen that cooperation and to carry out integration projects more effectively.[37]

The other two cooperation structures, the SCO and the EEU, are of a completely different nature. For Russia, they are key projects of a military and economic character, and the Russian state plays a prominent role in them and has means of direct influence on the member states. The membership of just Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the EEU, and these countries with Tajikistan in the SCO, is a considerable limitation for Russian interests in the region, yet Russia is undertaking various actions in order for other countries to join these structures.[38]

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[36] However, it should be emphasised that the SCO has a completely different nature and objectives from the above-mentioned structures, and in this case Russia's position and interests are conditioned by China's membership and by countries accepted in 2017, i.e. India and Pakistan. See: Иманалиев, Муратбек: "ШОС нуждается в новой концепции развития." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 16.01.2018, from http://www.globalaffairs.ru/global-processes/ShOS-nuzhdaetsya-v-novoi-kontceptcii-razvitiya-18781.

[37] *Решение от 16 сентября 2016 года город Бишкек о Заявлении глав государств – участников Содружества Независимых Государств в связи с 25-летием СНГ*. Исполнительный комитет Содружества Независимых Государств, retrieved 16.01.2018, from http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=5465.

[38] For more information on the efficiency of re-integration projects executed by Russia see: Bordachev, Timofey: "What Went Wrong with Eurasian Integration and How to Fix It." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 16.01.2018, from http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/book/What-Went-Wrong-with-Eurasian-Integration-and-How-to-Fix-It-19146.

When analyzing Russia's policy and interests through the lens of multilateral forms of cooperation, we should indicate another important aspect connected with Russia using these organizations to promote its own stand on key problems and threats to international security. The documents adopted during the important CIS summits in Bishkek (2016) and Sochi (2017) testify to that. The need to fight terrorism and most important threats, and Russia's role in these activities were emphasized at those meetings. The need to fight more effectively and to consolidate the activities of the entire international community in order to do so were indicated during the summits. It was also pointed out that a priority activity should presently be actions on ISIS which poses a threat to global security and peace in the world. In this aspect, attention was drawn to an increasing number of risks to stability and security in Central Asia, and the need for a strict counteraction against these negative trends was stressed.[39]

Taking into account the above-mentioned aspects, the course of SCTO summit which took place on 30 November 2017 in Minsk should also be mentioned. One of its main subjects was the war in Syria and its consequences for Central Asian security. The leaders gathered at the summit adopted a special statement which precisely mirrored Russia's position on this matter. The document emphasized support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and the need for a prompt resolution of the conflict by diplomatic means. Russia's fundamental contribution to fighting international terrorism was also highlighted in the statement. It was indicated that, due to Russia's engagement in Syria, conditions for ending the civil war and the potential for a peaceful resolution of the conflict were created.[40]

The above analysis shows unequivocally that Russia executes its policy in Central Asia in two dimensions, both on the level of bilateral relations with individual countries and within the framework of international organizations. Political, economic and military initiatives undertaken by Russia are aimed at strengthening its position in the region and enhancing integration processes in the Eurasian area and thus securing Russia's key interests in Central Asia.[41]

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39 *Решение от 16 сентября 2016 года город Бишкек о Заявлении глав государств – участников Содружества Независимых Государств о дальнейших совместных усилиях по противодействию международному терроризму.* Исполнительный комитет Содружества Независимых Государств, retrieved 16.01.2018, from http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=5480.

40 *Заявление глав государств – членов Организации Договора о коллективной безопасности о ситуации в Сирии и вокруг нее.* Организация Договора о коллективной безопасности, retrieved 16.01.2018, from http://odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=12032.

41 See: Омеличева, Мария: "Провалы в политике ОДКБ и ШОС." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 16.01.2018, from http://www.globalaffairs.ru/PONARS-Eurasia/Provaly-v-politike-ODKB-i-ShOS-19167

Challenges for Russia's policy in the Central Asia region

It should be stressed that what also influences Russia's policy in the region of Central Asia are the geopolitical circumstances connected with the interests and engagement of other powers in the region. This issue is, to a large extent, a challenge for Russia's key interests and Russia tries to counter it using various means.[42]

In the aspect of the geo-political situation in the region, a key factor is the growing presence and importance of China. The creation of the SCO and China's accession to it in 2001 was a turning point. From that moment on, we can talk about an increasingly active Chinese policy towards Central Asia. Initially, China concentrated on economic cooperation which, in time, turned into increasing political importance in individual countries.[43]

In the near future, an essential element of the cooperation will be the Belt and Road Initiative, within the framework of which the region will become a place for important infrastructural investment. Central Asia countries have generally responded positively to this proposal and are interested in participation in the project.[44] For example, the realization of the first investment, financed mainly by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, was established on China's initiative in 2015. The first project executed in Tajikistan was aimed at improving road infrastructure on the route connecting Tajikistan with Uzbekistan, while the second is the Nurek Hydropower Rehabilitation Project in Tajikistan.[45]

Because of its economic interests and planned investment, China is concerned with region stability and guarantees for Chinese interests. Therefore, China's military presence in the area of Central Asia, and especially in Tajikistan, has recently become more prominent. For example, the joint anti-terrorist exercises with soldiers from both countries which took place several times close to the border with Afghanistan, testify to this fact. It should be stressed that, although Russian authorities did not comment on these actions, the joint maneuvers were fiercely criticized by the Russian media.[46]

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[42] Ефременко, Дмитрий: "Рождение Большой Евразии." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 16.01.2018, from http://www.globalaffairs.ru/number/Rozhdenie-Bolshoi-Evrazii-18478.

[43] Воробьев, Александр: "Китай и Центральная Азия: растущая дружба под боком России." *Российский совет по международным делам*, retrieved 17.01.2018, from http://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/kitay-i-tsentralnaya-aziya-rastushchaya-druzhba-pod-bokom-rossii-/.

[44] Бабанов, Омурбек: "Центральноазиатские вызовы для России." *Российский совет по международным делам*, retrieved 17.01.2018, from http://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/tsentralnoaziatskie-vyzovy-dlya-rossii/.

[45] Мухин, Николай: "Постсоветская Евразия – взгляд с Востока." *Российский совет по международным делам*, retrieved 17.01.2018, from http://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/postsovetskaya-evraziya-vzglyad-s-vostoka-/ ; *Tajikistan: Nurek Hydropower Rehabilitation Project, Phase I.* Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, retrieved 17.01.2018, from https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/approved/2017/nurek-hydropower-rehabilitation-project.html; *Tajikistan: Dushanbe-Uzbekistan Border Road Improvement Project.* Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, retrieved 17.01.2018, from https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/approved/2016/tajikistan-border-road.html.

After the intervention in Afghanistan began, the United States also became an important player in the region. However, the USA's policy towards individual states in the region was conditioned by political issues and the fact that those countries were ruled by authoritarian regimes. Irrespective of these issues, due to the strategic interests connected with the logistics of their operations in Afghanistan, the USA decided to cooperate and lease an air base in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The wave of critical comments addressed to Uzbekistan after the Andijan massacre in 2005, resulted in the authorities in Tashkent stooping the lease of that base to the USA.[47]

The military presence of the USA in those countries was frowned upon by Russia who kept up pressure on their authorities to resign from such cooperation. Russia even managed to force through regulations on the SCTO stating that the question of foreign bases stationed on a member states' territory needed to be consulted with other partners within the organization. To a large extent, the Russian pressure was the reason why the authorities in Bishkek changed their stand and terminated the lease for the USA in 2014.[48]

When analyzing the policy of the USA, it should be underlined that after the termination of the ISAF mission, their political concern with the region decreased. While there appeared an idea for the political cooperation C5+1,[49] the completion of Barak Obama's term as president made it impossible for the cooperation to move beyond general political declarations.[50] The administration of President Donald Trump has not introduced any active policy towards Central Asia, despite declaration made by president about pragmatic politics and the necessity to fight terrorism and ISIS. These declarations were positively received by the leaders in the region. From their point of view, the fact that the USA ignore democratic and human rights issues is advantageous and in line with their political interests.[51]

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[46] Blank, Stephen: "New signs of Chinese military interest in Central Asia." *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, retrieved 17.01.2018, from https://cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13421-new-signs-of-chinese-military-interest-in-central-asia.html. To see more on the conditions for cooperation and Russia and China's relations on the area of Central Asia: Bordachev, Timofey: "Russia and China in Central Asia: The Great Win-Win Game." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 17.01.2018, from http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/valday/Russia-and-China-in-Central-Asia-The-Great-Win-Win-Game-18259.

[47] Standish, Reid: "Central Asia's Autocrats Welcome the Age of Trump." *Foreign Policy*, retrieved 17.01.2018, from http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/31/central-asias-autocrats-welcome-the-age-of-trump-russia-syria-isis/.

[48] Дубнов, Аркадий: "Пограничное беспокойство. Что показал тур Путина по Центральной Азии." *Московский Центр Карнеги*, retrieved 17.01.2018, from http://carnegie.ru/commentary/68144.

[49] Алексеенкова, Елена: "Сравнительный анализ деятельности созданных в Центральной Азии форматов «5+1» (с участием США, Южной Кореи, Японии и ЕС)." *Российский совет по международным делам*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/sravnitelnyy-analiz-deyatelnosti-sozdannykh-v-tsentralnoy-azii-formatov-5-1-s-uchastiem-ssha-yuzhnoy/.

It should be emphasized that the changing geo-political situation and China's growing engagement in the region undermine the interests of the Russian Federation and pose a challenge for the Russian policy.[52] On the other hand, the present situation gives the countries from the region the chance to balance the influence of Russia and China.[53] The authorities of these countries realize that too great a dependence on China is unfavorable from the point of their interests and, in Kazakhstan for example, there have already been the first incidents of public protest against China's excessive presence there.[54]

Therefore, Russia has been undertaking actions aimed at maintaining its influence in the region. They are mainly connected with stressing the growing terrorist and Islamic fundamentalist threats and thus the need to cooperate in order to guarantee security and regional stability. Russia underlines the fact that ISIS is now a key threat to all countries of the region and that they should take part in joint efforts to combat it. Moreover, Russia states that this cooperation should be under its leadership as it is the only country possessing adequate means and power to ensure more effective actions against those threats.[55]

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[50] For the first time, the 5+1 initiative was discussed at the UN General Assembly session on 27 September 20015 in New York. The US Secretary of State John Kerry met Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the countries of Central Asia. Cooperation and the US's engagement in the region were discussed during the meeting. These talks were continued in November 2015, during Kerry's visit to Central Asia states. See more.: Weitz, Richard: "Building on Kerry's Central Asian tour." *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13315-building-on-kerrys-central-asian-tour.html; Tolipov, Farkhod: "Pluses and minuses of the C5+1 format." *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13300-pluses-and-minuses-of-the-c5%201-format.html.

[51] Standish, Reid, op. cit.

[52] See more: *Перспективы сотрудничества России и Китая в Центральной Азии. Российский совет по международным делам*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://russiancouncil.ru/activity/workingpapers/perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-rossii-i-kitaya-v-tsentralnoy-az/.

[53] Сафранчук, Иван: "Всегда на распутье." *Россия в глобальной политике*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://www.globalaffairs.ru/number/Vsegda-na-raspute-18487.

[54] *Страх перед Китаем вывел людей в Казахстане на улицы. BBC*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2016/04/160429_kazakhstan_land_rent_protests; Сурганов, Валерий: "Дракон оскалился. Что раздражает крупный китайский бизнес в Казахстане." *Информационное агентство «Фергана.Ру»*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from https://www.fergananews.com/articles/9692.

An important event in this process was Russia's announcement of the victory over ISIS in Syria.[56] Russia underscored that this new situation resulted in particular consequences for the state of affairs in Central Asia. It also showed that several thousand Russian citizens and people from Central Asia had fought for ISIS. Shortly before the visit, Putin even presented the official data of the Russian special services, according to which 4,000 Russian and 5,000 citizens from Central Asia countries went to Syria.[57]

It is hard to verify this data unambiguously, yet it is almost certain that several thousand people left Russia and Central Asia for the Middle East. The decisions to leave were made for ideological, identity and economic reasons.[58] A considerable number of people who went to the East had earlier been deported from Russia, became radicalized and, not having any perspectives, decided to leave. Recruitment in Central Asian countries and promises about the potential to make even a few thousand dollars fighting for ISIS encouraged such decisions.[59]

Nonetheless, it should be stressed that a significant proportion of the people who left were killed during fighting, which can be considered favorable from the perspective of the interests of both Russia and the other Central Asia countries. On the other hand, people returning from Syria are even more radical, they are experienced in fighting, and have international contacts, all of which can pose a serious threat. Therefore, the issue of threats and the need to cooperate in combating them will certainly be a constant element of Russia's policy towards the countries of this region in the foreseeable future.

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[55] Shlapentokh, Dmitry: "The ISIS threat and Moscow's influence in Central Asia and the Middle East." *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13297-the-isis-threat-and-moscows-influence-in-central-asia-and-the-middle-east.html.

[56] To see more on the threats connected with ISIS in Central Asia: Дауров, Рамазан: "«Черные лебеди» на Шелковом пути." *Российский совет по международным делам*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/chernye-lebedi-na-shelkovom-puti/.

[57] Дубнов, Аркадий: op. cit.

[58] Smith, Charlie: "Islamic State in Central Asia: threat or opportunity." *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from https://cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13245-islamic-state-central-asia-threat-opportunity.html; Cornell, Svante: "Central Asia is not a Breeding Ground For Radicalization." *Silk Road Studies Program*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://silkroadstudies.org/publications/joint-center-publications/item/13262-central-asia-is-not-a-breeding-ground-for-radicalization.html.

[59] Полетаев, Дмитрий: "Миграционные факторы радикализации населения в Центральной Азии. Выводы для России." *Российский совет по международным делам*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/migratsionnye-faktory-radikalizatsii-naseleniya-v-tsentralnoy-azii-vyvody-dlya-rossii/#3.

In this way, using *hard power* instruments, Russia will attempt to balance China's influence and its own diminished importance with elements of *soft power*.[60] The latter are connected with the adverse consequences of the economic crisis and with a change of Russia's reception due to the annexation of Crimea and the engagement on the separatists' side in the military conflict in the eastern regions of Ukraine.[61]

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia's policy towards the countries of Central Asia has evolved significantly. It should be emphasized, however, that once the proposed research hypotheses have been verified, it seems that during that time, Central Asia has consistently remained the priority direction in the country's foreign and security policy. The policy of Russia's engagement in this area is connected with the country's key interests in political, economic and military areas. Therefore, it was of crucial importance for Russia to maintain its position in the region and its further strengthening through executing numerous projects in bilateral relations and within the framework of multilateral forms of cooperation.

Recently, the growing interests and importance of China have been a great challenge for Russia's policy in the region. As a result, Russia has tried to be more politically active and to balance the Chinese presence. Thus, in the foreseeable future, Russia will continue to indicate increasing threats and highlight the need for close cooperation in combating them. In this way, Russia will try to play a more important role in the internal policies of these countries and also within the framework of multilateral structures of cooperation and thus, maintain its position and secure its own interests in the area of Central Asia.

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[60] To see more on the Russian soft power towards Central Asia countries: Лебедева, Марина: "«Мягкая сила» в отношении Центральной Азии: участники и их действия." *Вестник МГИМО-Университета*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from http://www.vestnik.mgimo.ru/sites/default/files/pdf/lebedeva.pdf.

[61] Souleimanov, Emil: "Russia's Syria initiative and the exaggerated ISIS threat to Central Asia." *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, retrieved 18.01.2018, from https://cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13280-russias-syria-initiative-and-the-exaggerated-isis-threat-to-central-asia.html.

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Tomasz Pugacewicz

3. U.S. Decision-making on the Use of Drones before 9/11: A Case Study on UAVs Operating from Uzbekistan over Afghanistan

Abstract: The aim of this chapter is to explain the pre-9/11 U.S. decision-making process regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) departing from the territory of Uzbekistan for actions in the airspace of Afghanistan. Much work has been published on U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and counter-terrorism prior to Sep. 11, 2001 attack, but few have focused directly on the abovementioned decision-making process. In order to explain this phenomenon, two theories of foreign policy decision-making in the strict sense were used: the bureaucratic politics model and the advisory system framework. Those two explanatory theories were selected based on the decisional unit approach and the identified decision-makers involved in the analyzed process (due to its secrecy, as it was limited to the president and his circle of advisors). The paper is divided into four parts. In the introduction, theoretical concepts, literature review, and empirical context are discussed. In the first part, actors involved in the decision-making on the mentioned issue are identified (different officials from the Clinton and G. W. Bush administrations) as well as their preferences. In the next part, the decision-making process is reconstructed according to two foreign policy theories associated with identified decisional unit composition. In conclusion, the explanatory power of the applied approaches is assessed. The main method of collecting and analyzing data is qualitative text analysis of official and media reports. The two main sources are the 2004 final report of the 9/11 Commission and the numerous investigative journalism reports published since the end of 2001.

Keywords: United States, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, decision-making, foreign policy theories, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the pre-9/11 U.S. decision-making process regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) departing from the territory of Uzbekistan for actions in the airspace of Afghanistan. As the reached at that time decisions in this process are now publicly available, the research questions here are: (1) why did the U.S. decide to conduct reconnaissance flights by an unarmed UAV (Predator) from Uzbekistan into the airspace of Afghanistan in 2000; (2) why was the U.S. initially against equipping the Predator with Hellfire missiles in 2000 before reversing this decision in 2001; (3) why, after better weather conditions arrived, was there no continuation of reconnaissance flights by the unarmed

Predator in 2001; (4) why did the U.S. not come to the decision to attack al-Qaeda in Afghanistan using an armed Predator before the events of 9/11; (5) how were the requisite conditions for carrying out combat missions by armed Predators over Afghanistan determined.

To answer those questions, a number of theories of foreign policy decision-making were utilized.[1] As there are many such theoretical concepts, it was resolved that the appropriate theory to explain a particular decision would be chosen depending on the composition of the decisional unit. According to this approach, a theory explaining a particular decision-making process in foreign policy is selected in reference to the participants of this process (from the domestic political system), constituting what is called a "decisional unit."[2] This unit could be represented by a group of people meeting in person (e.g. a president and their advisors or the heads of federal departments and agencies meeting without the president and their representatives) or understood as the representatives of the institutions (governmental and non-governmental) of a domestic political system indirectly interacting with each other (e.g. representatives of U.S. Congress, public administration, and interest groups unified around one foreign policy aim, such as the development of military equipment).

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[1] In U.S. academia there is a tendency to term the theoretical concepts of foreign policy decision-making as "models", with even the first scholars on the subject, like e.g. James Roseanu, explicitly writing about "foreign policy theories" (see e.g. his paper title "Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy"). This "model"-oriented tradition can be traced back to Graham Allison's models introduced in his "Essence of Decision" (i.e. Rational Actor Model, Governmental Politics Model and Organizational Process Model) or could be a way of expressing a certain level of precaution as scholars are afraid that those theoretical concepts are not developed enough. Pugacewicz, Tomasz: *Teorie polityki zagranicznej: perspektywa amerykańskiej analizy polityki zagranicznej.* [*Theories of Foreign Policy. American FPA Perspective.*] Jagiellonian University Press: Krakow 2017, p. 21; Hellman, Gunther: "IR/Foreign Policy Theory and German Foreign Policy". *Journal of International Relations and Development* 12 (3), 2009, p. 251. Nevertheless, those mentioned theoretical concepts (termed "models") exhaust the definition of a "theory" (to be more precise: "explanatory theory") as introduced in Jørgensen, Knud E.: *International Relations Theory: A New Introduction.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2010, pp. 7–11; Rosenau, James N.: "Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy". In: Farrel, R. B. (ed.): *Approaches in Comparative and International Politics.* Northwestern University Press: Evanston 1966, pp. 27–92 [reprinted in: Rosenau, James N.: *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy.* 2nd ed. Frances Pinter: London 1980, pp. 115–169]; Allison, Graham T.: *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis.* Little, Brown: Boston 1971. Of course, foreign policy decision-making theories are a subcategory of a broader set of concepts called foreign policy theories, which could include integrative theories like e.g. poliheuristic theory and international relations theories referring to foreign policy (e.g. neoclassic realism, constructivism or (neo-)Marxist approaches). Cf. Stuart, Douglas T.: "Foreign-Policy Decision-Making". In: Snidal, Duncan / Reus-Smit, Christian (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations.* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2008, pp. 576–584; Pugacewicz, Tomasz: "Studia nad polityką zagraniczną z poziomu czynników krajowych. Historia rozwoju i współczesne wyzwania w nauce światowej i polskiej". ["Domestic Level of Analysis in the Foreign Policy Studies. History and Challenges in Global and Polish International Relations".] *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations* 1 (55), 2019, pp. 74–75.

[2] In FPA's literature this kind of approach is associated with the studies on the so called "ultimate decision unit" but also was developed separately by individual scholars

Two types of decisional units were identified in reference to decision-making on the employment of U.S. drones departing from Uzbekistan to pursue missions over Afghanistan. In the first case, this unit consisted of the president (or his direct advisors from the Executive Office of the President [EOP], including the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, NSA) and his advisors (EOP's staff and heads of federal departments and agencies). Members of the second type of decisional unit were only EOP's staff and heads of federal departments and agencies without the president (or his advisers from the EOP and operating in his name). As the U.S. drone deployment in Uzbekistan was secretive and publicly revealed just after the 9/11 attacks, only government members (in fact, the executive branch, with the U.S. Congress being idle) were involved in the decision-making process and non-governmental actors (e.g. think tanks, interest groups, media, public opinion) were excluded.

After identifying two different types of operating decisional units, two foreign policy decision-making theories – associated with these kinds of units – were utilized. In reference to the composition of the first decisional unit (the president and his advisors) the advisory system theory was employed.[3] Out of many concepts

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focused on synthesizing existing foreign policy theories. Hudson, Valerie M.: "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations". *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1 (1), 2005, pp. 20–21; Hermann, Margaret G.: "How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy: A Theoretical Framework". *International Studies Review* 3 (2), 2001, pp. 47–82; Pugacewicz, T.: *Teorie polityki…*, pp. 223–289.

[3] One of first such approaches was introduced in 1980 by A. L. George, who proposed the following types of advisor relations preferred by the leader: formal (the leader exercises his power towards the team of advisors), rivalry (the leader enables the team members to compete), and collegial (the leader strives to work out a joint position). George also highlighted that the preferences of the participants themselves may influence the relationship in the team. Group members can be: a) loyal to the team leader and support his ideas, b) representatives of an institution and advocate its interests, or c) autonomous towards the leader and other institutions. Chollet, Derek H. / Goldgeier, James M.: "The Scholarship of Decision-Making: Do We Know How We Decide?". In: Snyder, Richard C. et al.: *Foreign Policy Decision Making (Revisited).* Palgrave Macmillan: New York 2002, p. 163; Hudson, V. M.: *Foreign Policy Analysis. Classic and Contemporary Theory.* Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham et al. 2007, p. 66, 67; George, Alexander L.: *Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice.* Westview Press: Boulder 1980.

of this kind, David Mitchell's "advisory system decision-making framework" was chosen.[4] According to Mitchell, two types of interactions of president and his advisors can be identified: a "formal model" assuming that the dominating position of the president results in his will being imposed on his advisors (further in the text this concept will be termed the "dominating leader model") and a "collegial model" where the president is just one of many participants in the decision-making process.[5] In fact, as those two "models" can either be centralized or decentralized (depending on the presidential leadership style), Mitchell introduced four different decision-making concepts: a centralized and decentralized dominating leader model and a centralized and decentralized collegial model.

The second type of decisional unit (which assumes the bringing together of the equal heads of federal departments/agencies and the EOP's staff) is associated with the so-called bureaucratic politics model (BPM). The assumptions of this approach were reconstructed based on Christopher M. Jones' profound analysis of the history and essence of BPMs.[6] In this framework, the president or his direct advisors from the Executive Office of the President (e.g. the National Security Advisor or his deputy) are absent from the decisional unit or participate in it but without presenting their own preferences. According to this theory, the power to decide is shared between decisional unit members, so without the agreement of all members, a final resolution could be not reached.

As the decisional unit's composition in those two foreign policy theories are independent variable, the dependent variable is the shape of the decision reached by particular unit. The decision "shape" is based on the degree of the inclusion of the preferences of decision makers and four types can be identified:[7] (1) political stalemate, called also deadlock or gridlock (the preferences of all members of decisional unit are excluded), (2) dominant or prevalent solution (the preference of one member of the decisional unit prevails as he dominates or his ideas were firstly introduced and other members abstained from presenting their ideas), (3) subset solution (the preferences of not all members of the decisional unit are accepted e.g. based on majority voting) and, finally, (4) integrative solution (or consensus) is reached (as the partial preferences of all members of the decisional unit are included).

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[4] Mitchell, David: *Making Foreign Policy: Presidential Management of the Foreign Policy Decision Making Process*Ashgate Publishing: Aldershot, Hants, England and Burlington, VT 2005, pp. 4, 10–31 (first chapter published as: Mitchell, D.: "Centralizing Advisory Systems: Presidential Influence and the US Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process". *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1 (3), 2005, pp. 181–206).

[5] Mitchell thereby omits one of the models of the classic triad proposed by A. L. George. He does this because he claims that the competitive model distinguished by George is only one of the variations of the collegial model and should not be treated separately. Therefore, in his considerations, he only takes into account two models: formal and collegial model.

[6] Jones, Christopher M.: "Bureaucratic Politics and Organizational Process Models". In: Denemark, Robert A. (ed.): *The International Studies Encyclopedia. Vol. 1.* Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, West Sussex and Malden, MA 2010, pp. 151–168; Jones, Ch. M.: "Roles, politics, and the survival of the V-22 Osprey". *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 29 (1), 2001, p. 49.

[7] This typology is based on works of: Hermann, Charles F. / Stein, Janice Gross / Sundelius, Bengt / Walker, Stephen G.: "Resolve, Accept, or Avoid: Effects of Group Conflict on Foreign Policy Decisions". *International Studies Review* 3 (2), 2001, pp. 133–168.

Table 3.1: Four types of theories ("models") based on Mitchell's advisory system decision-making framework and types of decision associated with those theories

type of theory:	**dominating leader model**	**collegial model**
degree of centralization		
strong **(i.e. centralized system)**	*dominant solution*	*integrative solution*
weak **(i.e. decentralized system)**	*subset solution* or *deadlock*	

Source: Mitchell, David: Making Foreign Policy: Presidential Management of the Foreign Policy Decision Making Process. Ashgate Publishing: Aldershot, Hants, England and Burlington, VT 2005, pp. 4, 10–31.

Particular configurations of two mentioned foreign policy decision-making theories are associated with particular types of decision. As shown in Table 3.1, the centralized dominating leader theory of the advisory system results in a dominant solution, while the centralized collegial model of the advisory system results in an integrative solution. With the decentralized dominating leader model and decentralized collegial model, the result is a subset solution or stalemate. In the case of BPM (not mentioned in the table), only two types of decision are possible: an integrative solution or stalemate.

It should be stated that the foreign policy decision-making theories utilized refer to decision-making in the strict sense, i.e. they are focused on how particular actors with given preferences reach a particular kind of decision. Those theories are not aiming at explaining the decision-making in the larger sense, i.e. including the whole process (or cycle) starting with agenda-setting, formation of decision-makers preferences and ending with an assessment of their implementation. As a result, the applied theories exclude important components of many concepts of decision-making (e.g. the theory of the source of decision-makers preferences and theories of implementation and assessment of the implemented decisions). This approach is necessary to limit the scope of the research inquiry and is associated with two assumptions made by the paper. Firstly, it is assumed that decision-makers act with a given set of preferences as no theoretical concepts of preference origins are referenced. Secondly, the foreign policy theories employed ignore the question of the rationality of the decision reached, as components focused on decision assessment were excluded from those concepts.

The whole paper is a single case study on five decisions regarding one issue, i.e. pre-9/11 drone operations from Uzbekistan over Afghanistan. The paper is divided into four parts. In the introduction, there is a not only the above presentation of the theoretical concepts but also a literature review and the empirical context is discussed. In the first part, actors involved in the decision-making on the mentioned issue are identified, together with their preferences in the abovementioned process of decision-making (as two presidential administration are included, preferences of different officials from the Clinton and G. W. Bush administrations are reviewed). In the next part, the decision-making process is reconstructed according to two foreign policy theories associated with the composition of the identified decisional unit. In conclusion, the explanatory power of applied theories is assessed and indications for the further research of this case with different theoretical concepts and empirical inquiries are presented.

The main method of collecting and analysis data is qualitative text analysis of official and media reports. Two main sources of data could be named. The first important point of reference is the 2004 final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also called the 9/11 Commission report. Also associated with this commission is the transcript of one of its hearings from 2004, where issues associated with this paper were discussed more precisely than in the final report.[8] The second type of sources are many investigative journalism reports published since the end of 2001. In this regard, the emphasis is on Steve Coll's book entitled "Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001" (2005) and based on many interviews with decision makers directly involved in the issues analyzed here.

Even though almost 20 years have passed from the decision-making processes analyzed in this paper, studies on those issues are still fractured and limited. The first type of research in this regard is associated with works focused on the Clinton administration's strategy toward the terrorist threat. In such works, Afghanistan and U.S. drone capabilities are only presented as one of many sources of threats and tools to curb them.[9] The same issue was also carefully analyzed by investigative journalists and not only resulted in books based on direct interviews with decision-makers, but also on still not publicly availed documents. Two main examples in this regard are books written by Richard Miniter[10] and Steve Coll.[11] The latter author has written on both the Clinton administration and the first eight months of intelligence operations toward Afghanistan during the presidency of G. W. Bush. Additionally, post-9/11 reporting on the Bush administration's pre-9/11 policy toward terrorism was also instructive for understanding these processes.[12]

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[8] See also Richard A. Clarke own account correlated with his testimonies in 2004 and the 9/11 Commission final report: Clarke, Richard A.: *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror.* Free Press: New York 2004.

[9] Boys, James D.: *Clinton's War on Terror: Redefining US Security Strategy, 1993–2001.* Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder 2018, pp. 171–189, 209–211.

The second line of inquiry referring to the topic of this paper is a focus on U.S. policy toward Afghanistan (as a whole) before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In this case, American policy toward al Qaida cells in Afghanistan, including surveillance and possible attacks on it, is just one of many factors shaping U.S. policy toward this country.[13] Also, journalists reporting on U.S. policy toward Afghanistan during this period is useful here, with a strong position occupied by the books and articles of Ahmed Rashid.[14]

Finally, the specialized literature on drones and their usage sheds light on some of the more technical issues of the analyzed problem. One of the first pieces on the subject was published by Richard J. Newman in "Air Force Magazine,"[15] and pioneering academic research in this field was conducted by Ian G. R. Shaw and his concept of U.S. dominance in world by drone warfare called "Predator Empire."[16]

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[10] Miniter, Richard: *Losing Bin Laden: How Bill Clinton's Failures Unleashed Global Terror.* Regnery Pub.: Washington, DC 2003.

[11] Coll, Steve: *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001.* Penguin Books: London 2004.

[12] E.g. Murphy, Jarrett: "Infighting Delayed Osama Hunt". *CBS*, 25.06.2003, retrieved 15.03.2017, from: http://cbsn.ws/1r9bwcl; Bridis, Ted / Solomon, John: "Officials: U.S. Slow on Bin Laden Drones". *AP*, 23.06.2003, retrieved 15.03.2017, from: https://www.theintelligencer.com/news/article/Officials-U-S-Slow-on-Bin-Laden-Drones-10515450.php; Gellman, Barton: "A Strategy's Cautious Evolution". *The Washington Post* 20.01.2002, p. A1.

[13] Cristol, Jonathan: *The United States and the Taliban before and after 9/11.* Springer International Publishing: Cham 2019.

[14] Rashid, Ahmed: "The Rise of Bin Laden". *New York Review of Books* 27.05.2004, pp. 19–22; Rashid, A.: *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia.* Yale University Press: New Haven 2000.

[15] Newman, Richard J.: "The Little Predator That Could". *Air Force Magazine* 85 (3), 2002, pp. 48–53.

[16] Shaw, Ian G. R.: "The Rise of the Predator Empire: Tracing the History of U.S. Drones". *Understanding Empire blog*, [blog post not dated], retrieved 15.03.2017, from: https://understandingempire.wordpress.com/2-0-a-brief-history-of-u-s-drones/. The author of the above text, a researcher at the University of Glasgow, states that the post is complementary to his paper: "Predator Empire: the Geopolitics of U.S. Drone Warfare". *Geopolitics* 18 (3), 2013, pp. 536–559. In fact, however, the paper is much more general than the blog post. See also: Shaw, Ian G.R.: *Predator Empire: Drone Warfare and Full Spectrum Dominance.* University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis 2016.

Finally, journalists reporting on the evolution of the U.S. drone program were also insightful.[17]

The U.S. decision-making process analyzed in this paper – on flights by unmanned aircraft (MQ-1 Predator) concerned reconnaissance and (a first in world history by this kind of device) attacks on selected ground targets using AGM-114 Hellfire missiles – took place between the beginning of 2000 and mid-September 2001,[18] but the context of events leading to this should be presented briefly first. The activity of UAVs in the airspace of Afghanistan was a general result of the U.S. fight against terrorism. In the second half of the 1990s, the U.S. Intelligence Community and other actors of the U.S. political system considered preventing Osama bin Laden from terrorist activity to be an increasingly important goal of the U.S. foreign and security policy. It was due to the fact that his operations were becoming increasingly threatening to the safety of U.S. citizens. Each terrorist attack potentially related with Osama bin Laden increased the engagement of the U.S. in combating his activity. As a response to the attack of November 1995 on U.S. soldiers in Saudi Arabia, a special CIA unit was formed within the Counterterrorist Center which was focused solely on Osama bin Laden's activity.[19] However, the U.S. authorities only decided to bomb alleged al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan where Osama bin Laden had supposedly been hiding since 1996, after his attack on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998.[20] Simultaneously, in confidence Clinton decided to arrest bin Laden or, if impossible, to kill him, evoking the U.S. right to self-defense in case of persons planning to attack it.[21] The engagement in fighting bin Laden further increased after he contributed to the attack on a U.S. Navy vessel in Yemen in October 2000.

The importance of Uzbekistan for U.S. intelligence at that time increased together with the American engagement in combating bin Laden's activity. This was due to several factors. Firstly, Pakistan, a traditional U.S. ally in intelligence cooperation in Afghanistan, was not ready to fight bin Laden. Pakistani intelligence agents cooperated with the Taliban and al-Qaeda.[22] Secondly, after the Taliban took over the capital and most of the territory of Afghanistan, the only Afghan opposition forces (ready to cooperate with U.S.) remained in the northern part of the country. It was not easily accessible for the U.S. intelligence based in Pakistan, whereas the Central Asia countries to the north of Afghanistan constituted a natural access corridor. Thirdly, Uzbek authorities were interested in intelligence cooperation with the U.S., because Osama bin Laden had trained the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), an organization wanting to overthrow the post-communist authorities of Central Asian countries. In this context, beginning cooperation with the Uzbek authorities was easy for U.S. intelligence, especially after Uzbekistan experienced bombing attacks in 1999 which IMU claimed responsibility for.[23]

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[17] Miller, Judith / Schmitt, Eric: "Ugly Duckling Turns Out to Be Formidable in the Air". *New York Times* 23.11.2001, p. B1; Windrem, Robert: "How the Predator Went from Eye in the Sky to War on Terror's Weapon of Choice". *NBC News*, 5.06.2013, retrieved 15.03.2017, from: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/investigations/how-predator-went-eye-sky-war-terrors-weapon-choice-flna6c10215303.

[18] Officially, "Hellfire" is an abbreviation for "Helicopter Launched, Fire and Forget Missile". Miniter, R.: op. cit., p. 204; Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1.

[19] Rashid, A.: "The Rise…," pp. 19–22; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 353; Miniter, R.: op. cit., p. 165.

[20] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 449; Woodward, Bob: *Bush at War*. Simon & Schuster: New York 2002, p. 4.

[21] Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 446, 464–467; "Report: Clinton Targeted Bin Laden". *CBS*, 16.09.2001, retrieved 15.03.2017, from: http://cbsn.ws/1jUk0jQ.

[22] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 455, 500, 502.

The intelligence cooperation between U.S. and Uzbekistan established in the first half of 1999 was not limited to providing an airport for unmanned U.S. aircrafts activity in the airspace of Afghanistan described below. This is not directly relevant for the paper's research area, but it should be stated that, among other elements of the cooperation, there were the following: (1) exchange of intelligence data, (2) development of the intelligence capabilities of Uzbekistan through supply of modern equipment, (3) training of a group of Uzbeks whose task was to attack bin Laden in Afghanistan, (4) and stationing U.S. civil helicopters for contacting Taliban opponents in northern Afghanistan.[24]

Finally, it should be stated that the Predator drone, despite its name, was initially developed by the Defense Department as a tool for long-range reconnaissance, not for direct attacks. The first official contract for the development of the Predator was awarded in 1994 and the first U.S. armed forces units received them a year later. It is also when the Predator was first used for battlefield operations, i.e. for tracking events in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, back then it was not equipped with advanced observation devices, so its contribution to the actions of the U.S. armed forces was limited. It played a bigger role during NATO's intervention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999. At that moment, it was equipped with instruments allowing real-time transmission of data regarding the location of selected targets. In the second half of the 1990s, the U.S. Central Command started using the Predator to support its activities in southern Iraq. Work on equipping it with the capability to guided missiles shot also began in this period.[25]

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[23] Priest, Dana: *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military.* W. W. Norton: New York 2003, p. 101; Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 456–457, 500–501.

[24] Priest, D.: op. cit., pp. 101–102; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 502; Rashid, A.: "The Rise...," pp. 19–22; Woodward, B.: op. cit., p. 114.

[25] Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1; Newman, R. J.: op. cit., pp. 48–53; Miniter, R.: op. cit., p. 203; Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 575–576; Windrem, R.: op. cit.; Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit..

Participants of the Decisional Units and Their Preferences

Until the U.S. decision on employing armed unmanned aircraft in the airspace of Afghanistan in mid-September 2001, only a few actors of the U.S. political system (associated only with the executive branch of the government) were involved in decision-making. This was due to the fact that before UAVs were used on a large scale in November 2001, their presence outside the U.S. borders was secret and attracted very little attention in the U.S. political system, including the media.[26] If any studies on this subject were published before November 2001, they appeared in specialist journals and concerned development work on the device and not its specific operational use. This situation remained steady for a long period of time, since before the 9/11 attacks, this type of device had not officially been put into operation by U.S. armed forces.[27]

Six participants of the decision-making process regarding the use of the Predator departing from the territory of Uzbekistan for actions in the airspace of Afghanistan can be distinguished: the U.S. president, Director of Central Intelligence, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, and National Security Advisor to the U.S. President (in some cases also their deputies).

U.S. President

The decision-making process regarding the analyzed issue falls within the terms of office of two U.S. presidents.

The preferences of the first, William Clinton, were due to his general views on terrorism. By the end of the 1990s, he considered fighting terrorism important, but not the most important issue, and this concerned Osama bin Laden in particular. The following U.S. president decisions illustrate this fact: 1) appointing a Counter-Terrorism Coordinator at the U.S. Executive Office of the President; 2) attacking al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan with cruise missiles; 3) prosecution or, if impossible, killing Osama bin Laden (general decision without approval for its execution). Such actions are unsurprising, given that until the mid-1990s the number of terrorist attacks targeted at U.S. objects and associated with Osama bin Laden was increasing.[28]

Clinton's pressure at the turn of 1999 and 2000 made the representatives of diverse federal executive institutions look for new intelligence methods in Afghanistan. This pressure was due to the president's frustration with the fact that his order to arrest or kill Osama bin Laden had not been carried out, because the

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[26] Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.; Scarborough, Rowan: *Rumsfeld's War: the Untold Story of America's Anti-terrorist Commander*. Regnery Pub.: Washington, DC 2004; Newman, R. J.: op. cit., pp. 48–53.

[27] Newman, R. J.: op. cit., pp. 48–53. See e.g. "Predator Hellfire Missile Tests 'Totally Successful' ". *CheckPoint*, 12.05.2001, retrieved 15.03.2017, from: http://bit.ly/OKdTRx.

[28] Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 475–480.

U.S. military ruled out using ground forces, and air attacks were postponed, as there was not enough intelligence data on targets. The U.S. president believed that insufficient intelligence information on bin Laden's location should lead to finding new ways of obtaining information in Afghanistan.[29]

Therefore, Clinton's general view shaped his preferences regarding the problem of using the Predator. Firstly, he supported the use of the Predator for airborne reconnaissance in 2000.[30] Secondly, by the end of 2000, he seemed to not support an attack using an armed Predator on Osama bin Laden while in Afghanistan, believing that the new U.S. president should make this decision.[31]

The stance on using the Predator adopted by the next president, G. W. Bush, was also rooted in his views on fighting terrorism. Despite certain declarations made during his presidential campaign, fighting terrorism was not a priority until Sep. 11, 2001. He only occasionally indicated that terrorism was one of the factors making ballistic missile defense a key objective of U.S. policy.[32]

Thus, it is unsurprising that there is no information regarding the involvement of G. W. Bush in the decision-making on the use of the Predator departing from the territory of Uzbekistan for actions in the airspace of Afghanistan before Sep. 11, 2001.

After the attacks, the situation changed, since fighting Osama bin Laden's organization became a priority for G. W. Bush. Among other military means of attacking Afghanistan, he started to prefer the use of armed Predators.[33]

Director of Central Intelligence

The analysis of the U.S. Intelligence Community's preferences regarding U.S. foreign policy will be focused on the views of the director of the CIA since this position was the principal representative of the IC in the U.S. at that time (formally known as the Director of Central Intelligence, DCI). Between 2004 and 2006, this role was assumed by the Director of National Intelligence and separated from the position of the CIA's head.[34]

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[29] Ibid., pp. 572–573; "Transcript: Wednesday's 9/11 Commission Hearings". *Washington Post*, 24.03.2004, retrieved 15.03.2017, from: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A20349-2004Mar24.html; Miniter, R.: op. cit., pp. 200–203; Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious...," p. A1.

[30] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 578.

[31] Although W. Clinton declined airstrikes on Osama bin Laden, he considered a Special Forces attack. Ibid., p. 583.

[32] Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious...," p. A1.

[33] After Sep. 11, 2001, the program of flights of Predators over Afghanistan was launched so intensely that they were initially operated from command containers placed on the parking of the Central Intelligence Agency. Windrem, R.: op. cit.; Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1.

[34] Formally, the CIA director ceased to be the Director of Central Intelligence in mid-2004 and became responsible for only the Central Intelligence Agency. However, the new Director of National Intelligence was not appointed until 2005. A year later, he

For the purpose of this case study, an assumption was made that during the discussion on using the Predator departing from the territory of Uzbekistan for actions in the airspace of Afghanistan the Central Intelligence Agency spoke with one voice.

However, it does not change the fact that there were internal divisions regarding this problem inside this institution. On the one hand, CIA agents linked with human intelligence (HUMINT) were opposed to investments in signal intelligence (SIGINT). This group was represented, among others, by James L. Pavitt – Deputy Director for Operations between 1999 and 2004 – who headed the Directorate of Operations (from 2005, National Clandestine Service). He believed that such a step would limit the funds for human intelligence and lead to focusing on short-term solutions instead of building contacts with potential informants which would pay off in the long-term.[35]

On the other hand, CIA employees responsible for combating Osama bin Laden's activity supported the use of Predators. In their opinion, the intelligence should use all means allowing information on his operations to be obtained. Two persons represented this position. The first one was Joseph Cofer Black, head of the CIA's Counter-Terrorism Center between 1999 and 2001. The second one was Charles E. Allen, Assistant DCI for Collection, who was the first person to draw attention to the possibility of using the Predator (developed by the military) by the intelligence services.[36]

As indicated above, the final assumption was that there were no differences between the preferences of CIA representatives regarding the flights of Predators. This was not only due to the need to simplify some issues for the purposes of this study, but also the fact that George Tenet, the then DCI (1997–2004) took the side of the second of the aforementioned groups quite quickly.[37] It seems that one can assume that if the question described in this study had concerned publicly open matters, one of the CIA's opponents of using Predators by the U.S. intelligence could have attempted to build a coalition with other actors in the U.S. political system through press leaks.

Before presenting CIA preferences, the fact that long before the airborne reconnaissance with the Predator in Afghanistan started, the U.S. intelligence was interested in using UAVs should be pointed out. However, those attempts did not meet the expectations, although even an aircraft with a missile installed had

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led the appointment of the new CIA director, the first he could influence and the first who had not been the head of the remaining intelligence institutions.

[35] Coll, S.: op. cit., 576–577, 598, 630; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…".

[36] Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 573, 576–577, 630; *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States.* National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States: New York 2004, p. 190; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…".

[37] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 583; Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.; Shaw, I. G. R.: *The Rise…*.

been designed. Such devices developed by the U.S. armed forces did not arouse the interest of the CIA, as they were too fast to be able to track a target for a long time.[38] The Predator, however, was able to stay over a chosen target for a long period, which made it useful for long-term airborne reconnaissance. Its advanced photo and video recording and real-time transmitting devices allowed it to take better pictures than satellites and U-2 aircraft.[39]

As in the case of the representative of the Department of Defense, seven preferences of the CIA regarding the use of Predators departing from the territory of Uzbekistan can be distinguished.

Three of them were related to the situation from 2000. Firstly, the CIA was interested in using an unarmed UAV for reconnaissance over Afghanistan for the reasons described above. Secondly, the Central Intelligence Agency was not interested in covering the costs of using these aircraft during such a reconnaissance mission.[40] Thirdly, the U.S. intelligence representatives were interested in the development of an armed version of the Predator. It was due to the fact that during the reconnaissance flights at the end of 2000, the Predator was able to locate Osama bin Laden with a high degree of probability.[41] Given the reconnaissance capabilities of the aircraft, arming it with missiles meant reducing the time gap between discovering the target and attacking from several hours to less than 10 minutes. It increased the probability that the target would be in the same position when the missiles reached it.[42]

Another four (new) preferences concerned issues related with the Predator in 2001. Firstly, the CIA opposed to the recommencement of its reconnaissance flights. It was officially justified by the risk of detection of the aircraft by the Taliban. Contrary to the military's claims, the Predator turned out to be visible to some extent by the air defense radiolocation stations of the Taliban. The detection of the Predator would have many negative consequences. Shooting it down would be a great PR success for al-Qaeda or the Taliban and could lead to the cancellation of the program of flights over Afghanistan. Even if it were not shot down, its repeated detection could increase Osama bin Laden's vigilance, which would make future attacks more difficult.[43]

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[38] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 574; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…".

[39] Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 572–573; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…". What is interesting, when CIA was against relaunching reconnaissance flights of unarmed Predator over Afghanistan in 2001, it explained that satellite and reconnaissance planes pictures sufficiently replaced UAV flights. This contradiction could not be clarified. Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 598.

[40] CIA justified its position stating that the Department of Defense should finance such a mission, as it would speed up the development works. Ibid., pp. 580–581.

[41] Ibid., pp. 579–580; Windrem, R.: op. cit.; Miniter, R.: op. cit., p. 204; Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.; *The 9/11 Commission…*, p. 190.

[42] Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1; Newman, R. J.: op. cit., pp. 48–53; Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 577, 581, 596.

Secondly, faced with the failure of previous attacks by U.S. armed forces on al-Qaeda targets using bombers and cruise missiles, the Central Intelligence Agency supported the use of an armed Predator for the attack.[44] It is related also with the net preference, in accordance with which the CIA declared that the tests of the armed Predator confirmed its combat readiness for this type of task. Successful attack of this aircraft on a model of an Afghan agricultural holding where Osama bin Laden's presence had been detected was considered a particular proof of this. Therefore, further postponement of armed Predator flights and subsequent tests was not deemed necessary.[45]

Fourthly, CIA believed that the costs of armed Predator actions and direct order to attack were the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Defense. The fact that the Predator was officially the property of the U.S. Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency could not interfere with the command and control structure of the armed forces was invoked. The U.S. intelligence paid particular attention to the costs of the ongoing functioning of the Predator and its repairs, as by the end of 2000, the Department of Defense tried to pass the costs of repair and purchase of new Predators to replace the damaged ones to the Central Intelligence Agency.[46]

Department of Defense: Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense and Representatives of U.S. Air Force

Different representatives of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) expressed their preferences regarding the use of the Predator. The U.S. Air Force representatives, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of Defense were among them. Unlike the Central Intelligence Agency, their preferences were consistent from the beginning and were correlated with the long period of Predator use (described in the paper's introduction). Seven preferences of the Defense Department regarding the use of the Predator in the airspace of Afghanistan can be distinguished.

The first three originated in 2000. Firstly, in 2000, the representatives of this institution supported sending an unarmed Predator over Afghanistan in order to gather intelligence. Some sources suggest that the whole idea originated in the DoD.[47] Secondly, the representatives of the Defense Department believed that it could not finance this project, because the aircraft was to be used to fulfil the objectives of the Central Intelligence Agency. Thirdly, the DoD supported the project of armed Predator development. In the middle of 2000, a multi-annual armed Predator development program was launched. However, it was primarily due to the previous experiences of the U.S. Air Force with this type of device.[48] Thus, the preference appeared earlier than the issue of using the Predator to attack targets in Afghanistan.

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[43] *The 9/11 Commission...*, pp. 190, 211; Windrem, R.: op. cit.; Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious...," p. A1; Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.; Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 579–580, 597–598.

[44] *The 9/11 Commission...*, p. 211; Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 596–597.

[45] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 597.

[46] Ibid., pp. 580, 630–631; *The 9/11 Commission...*, pp. 211–212; Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.; Miniter, R.: op. cit., p. 205; Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1; Windrem, R.: op. cit.; *Transcript: Wednesday's ...*, op. cit.

[47] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 573; *The 9/11 Commission...*, p. 189.

In 2001, another three preferences of the Department of Defense appeared. Firstly, unlike the year before, the Department opposed recommencing flights by unarmed Predator from Uzbekistan into the airspace of Afghanistan. Similarly to the Central Intelligence Agency, the DoD highlighted the risk of the detection of the device and its possible destruction by the Taliban or al-Qaeda members.[49] Secondly, the Defense Department opposed sending an armed Predator over Afghanistan for at least two reasons. Firstly, the Department claimed that the development works on the armed Predator were not advanced enough to allow using it in a combat mission.[50] Secondly, the U.S. Department of Defense pointed out that the U.S. armed forces had more proven solutions such as bombers and cruise missiles if only the intelligence was able to provide reliable information about the target.[51]

Thirdly, the DoD believed that a potential decision on sending an armed or unarmed Predator from Uzbekistan into the airspace of Afghanistan would not only mean the participation of the Central Intelligence Agency in the current use costs, but also in the costs of repairs and purchase of new Predators in case of the destruction of any of the existing ones. This stance was due to the experiences from flights over Afghanistan in 2000, when one of the Predators was heavily damaged and the CIA refused to participate in repair costs.[52] Fourthly, the Defense Department believed that direct decision on such an attack did not fall within its competences, as the target was not the personnel or installations of foreign armed forces, but members of a transnational terrorist organization.[53]

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[48] The decision of the Department of Defense is mostly due to General John P. Jumper. He was the commander of the U.S. Air Force in Europe during the actions in the Balkans and had the opportunity to learn about the potential of an unarmed Predator. He subsequently became the head of the Air Force Air Combat Command providing units for such commands engaged in war. The U.S. Air Force decided to develop the armed Predator in July 2000 and the work started a month later. Miniter, R.: op. cit., pp. 204–206; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 597; Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious...," p. A1; *Transcript: Wednesday's ...*, op. cit.; *Predator Hellfire Missile...*, op. cit.; *The 9/11 Commission...*, pp. 210–211,212.

[49] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 597; Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious...," p. A1.

[50] The internal assessment of the Department of Defense indicated high unreliability of the Predator. E.g. between 1995 and 2001, as much as 17 out of 50 such devices were destroyed as a result of tests conducted and another 5 were shot down in armed hostilities. Miniter, R.: op. cit., pp. 204–206; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 597; Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious...", p. A1; Newman, R. J.: op. cit.., pp. 48–53; *The 9/11 Commission...*, p. 211. See in particular the disclosed internal documents of the Department of Defense. "Media Dazzled by Pentagon Propaganda While Pentagon's Chief Tester Declares that Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle 'Not Operationally Effective or Suitable' ". *Project On Government Oversight*, 30.10.2001, retrieved 15.03.2017, from: https://web.archive.org/web/20020602100936/http://www.pogo.org/mici/predator103001.htm.

[51] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 631; Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit..

Department of State: Secretary of State and Other Representatives

The U.S. Department of State (DoS) presented its opinion on only one among the numerous issues regarding the use of the Predator from the territory of Uzbekistan for actions in the airspace of Afghanistan.

It happened for the first time when the Secretary of State was still Madeleine Albright. When the Department of Defense decided to begin development work on the armed version of the Predator in the middle of 2000, the State Department objected to it, explaining that a legal analysis confirmed that arming an UAVs infringed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty between the U.S. and Soviet Union (Russia) signed in 1987.[54]

When Colin Powell became the new Secretary of State, this preference of the DoS changed. In February 2001, it announced that arming an unmanned aircraft with missiles did not infringe the aforementioned treaty.[55]

The Department of State did not express its views on the remaining issues regarding the use of the Predator. This was mostly due to a lack of clear preferences concerning the U.S. policy in Afghanistan resulting from several factors. For example, the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Southern Asia remained vacant until mid-2001.[56] Besides, the situation in similar federal institutions was not different. For example, the revision of foreign policy towards Afghanistan announced by the Bush-era U.S. National Security Council (NSC) was not carried out before the 9/11 attack.[57]

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[52] *The 9/11 Commission*…, p. 211; Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 580, 597, 631; Miniter, R.: op. cit., pp. 204–206; Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious…," p. A1.

[53] Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1.

[54] Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 577, 581, 596; Gellman, B.: "Broad Effort Launched after '98 Attacks." *The Washington Post* 19.12.2001, p. A1; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…"; *Predator Hellfire Missile*…, op. cit.

[55] Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…"; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 596.

[56] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 598.

[57] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 597.

Counter-Terrorism Coordinator

One of the most important participants in the decision-making process concerning the use of the Predator was Richard Clarke. In 1992, during the presidency of G. H. W. Bush, he was appointed head of the interagency Counter-terrorism and Security Group, which brought together the deputy secretaries of various departments (e.g. DoD and DoS).[58] On 22 May 1998, Clinton appointed him as Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and a member of the so-called Principals Committee of the U.S. National Security Council. However, in fact he had limited personnel at his disposal and almost no control over the budget of the institutions whose works he coordinated during that period.[59] The position of Clarke and his subordinate team was additionally weakened in 2001 after the inauguration of the new administration, when he was deprived of membership in the U.S. NSC and the Deputy National Security Advisor became his supervisor.[60]

Just like in case of the CIA and the Department of Defense, several of Clarke's preferences regarding the use of the Predator departing from the territory of Uzbekistan for actions in the airspace of Afghanistan can be distinguished.

The first three concerned issues related with the year 2000. Clarke was one of the first supporters of launching reconnaissance flights by unarmed Predators from Uzbekistan. Within his review of the U.S. intelligence activity in Afghanistan, the initial cooperation of CIA and the Department of Defense on Predator design began.[61] As indicated below, he also sought the U.S. president's support for the idea of sending an unarmed Predator over Afghanistan when it turned out that there was a stalemate in the discussion between the aforementioned agencies. Secondly, there is no information on Clarke's preferences regarding the financing of actions of unarmed Predators over Afghanistan. Thirdly, since Clarke found out about the development program of an armed version of the Predator in October 2000, he was a strong supporter of sending it over Afghanistan to carry out an attack. It shows that he valued the intelligence data provided by the unarmed Predator highly and believed that adding the function of shooting missiles would contribute to killing Osama bin Laden.[62]

Another three preferences expressed by Clarke concerned the events of 2001. Firstly, he supported continuing airborne reconnaissance over Afghanistan using an unarmed Predator, for example starting in March 2001. He stated that even if the Taliban shot the aircraft down, it would not be a loss for the U.S., because the pilot would be safe in the control center. Clark intensified his efforts in mid-2001, when the U.S. intelligence started receiving information that al-Qaeda was planning attacks on U.S. soil, its armed forces, or allies.[63] Secondly, he believed that the successful armed Predator tests conducted in the beginning and in the middle of 2001 allowed its use in combat and there was no need to suspend its flights over Afghanistan.[64] Thirdly, there is no information on his preferences regarding the federal administration department or agency to be financially and legally responsible for a direct attack using an armed Predator.

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[58] Gellman, B.: “A Strategy's Cautious…,” p. A1.

[59] Miniter, R.: op. cit., p. 166.

[60] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 595.

[61] Ibid., pp. 572–573. 576–577; *The 9/11 Commission…*, pp. 189–190; Shaw, I. G. R.: “The Rise…”; Miniter, R.: op. cit., p. 203.

[62] Miniter, R.: op. cit., pp. 205–206; *Transcript: Wednesday's …*, op. cit.; Gellman, B.: “A Strategy's Cautious…,” p. A1.

Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

The National Security Advisors in that period were also involved in shaping the policy concerning the use of Predators departing from Uzbekistan and flying over Afghanistan.

The first was Samuel Richard "Sandy" Berger, who was in office during the second term of the Clinton presidency. A number of his preferences can be distinguished. Firstly, he supported sending an unarmed Predator for reconnaissance over Afghanistan.[65] Secondly, there is no information on his preferred costs distribution. Thirdly, it seems he did not support the initiation of armed Predator flights over Afghanistan at the end of 2000, deciding that the new U.S. president should resolve the question.[66]

In 2001, Condoleezza Rice replaced Berger. Due to the fact that a part of the decision-making process regarding the discussed problems took place at the level of the so-called National Security Council Deputies Committee, Stephen John Hadley, Deputy National Security Advisor since 2001, was also involved in the process. It should be noted that the views of the two aforementioned persons were assumed to be consistent not only due to the need of maintaining one level of the analysis, but also to general similarity of their preferences.[67]

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[63] At the end of December 2000, Clarke prepared propositions for further measures against Osama bin Laden, which included confidential help for Uzbekistan and the Afghan Northern Alliance and relaunching unarmed Predator flights over Afghanistan in March 2001. Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.; *The 9/11 Commission…*, pp. 197, 210–211, 508 [footnote 155]; Windrem, R.: op. cit.; Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious…," p. A1; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 594, 597.

[64] *The 9/11 Commission…*, p. 211; Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious…," p. A1. More information about the tests: Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1; Miniter, R.: op. cit., p. 204; Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 596; Newman, R. J.: op. cit., pp. 48–53; Windrem, R.: op. cit.; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…".

[65] Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 573.

[66] Ibid., p. 585.

[67] Mann, James: *Rise of the Vulcans: the History of Bush's War Cabinet.* Viking: New York 2004, pp. 252, 273, 331.

A number of their preferences as of 2001 can be indicated. Firstly, they supported the development of the armed version of the Predator.[68] Secondly, they did not support the recommencement of unarmed Predator flights.[69] Thirdly, they supported sending armed Predators over Afghanistan in 2001,[70] which means they considered further tests unnecessary. Fourthly, their preferences regarding the financing of Predator combat missions over Afghanistan could not be determined.

Summary of Involved Decision Makers and Their Preferences

Table 3.2. summarizes the preferences of particular participants of U.S. the decision-making process regarding the use of the Predator departing from the territory of Uzbekistan for airborne reconnaissance in the airspace of Afghanistan.

Three issues stand out in relation to the decisions from 2000. Firstly, all participants agreed or gave tacit consent to the launch of unarmed Predator flights from Uzbekistan into the airspace of Afghanistan. Secondly, there was a dispute between the CIA and the Department of Defense regarding the costs of financing of these flights, repairs, and purchase of new machines in order to replace those lost during missions. Finally, there was dispute between CIA, DoD, Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and DoS (and probably also the U.S. president and NSA) on whether an armed version of the Predator should be developed.

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[68] Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…"; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 613.

[69] *The 9/11 Commission…*, p. 211.

[70] Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.

Table 3.2: Summary of preferences of the participants of the U.S. decision-making process regarding using unmanned aircraft departing from Uzbekistan for actions over Afghanistan

	U.S. president	**Central Intelligence Agency: Director of Central Intelligence**	**Department of Defense: Secretary of Defense and other representatives**	**Department of State: Secretary of State and other representative**	**Counter-Terrorism Coordinator**	**National Security Advisor**
year 2000						
an unarmed Predator should be sent over Afghanistan	[+]	+	+	?	+	+
CIA covers the costs of unarmed Predator's actions over Afghanistan	?	–	+	?	?	?
DoD covers the costs of unarmed Predator's actions over Afghanistan	?	+	–	?	?	?
an armed version of the Predator should be developed	[–]	+	+	–	+	[–]
year 2001						
an armed version of the Predator should be developed	?	+	+	+	+	+
an unarmed Predator should be sent over Afghanistan	?	–	–	?	+	–

	U.S. president	Central Intelligence Agency: Director of Central Intelligence	Department of Defense: Secretary of Defense and other representatives	Department of State: Secretary of State and other representative	Counter-Terrorism Coordinator	National Security Advisor
an armed Predator should be sent over Afghanistan	?	+	–	?	+	+
after the tests of 2001, armed Predator can be sent over Afghanistan	?	+	–	?	+	+
armed Predator needs more tests before flying over Afghanistan	?	–	+	?	–	–
CIA is responsible for the costs and decisions of Predator's attacks on Afghanistan	?	–	+	?	?	?
DoD is responsible for the costs and decisions of Predator's attacks on Afghanistan	?	+	–	?	?	?

A plus ("+") means support of a given preference, a minus ("–") means objection to it, and a question mark ("?") means there is no information on the preferences. Square brackets ("[…]") mean a probable preference.

Source: own work.

As for the decisions from 2001, four issues stand out. Firstly, all participants agreed or gave tacit consent to the development of an armed Predator. Secondly, there was a dispute between the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and the remaining participants regarding the recommencement of flights over Afghanistan. Thirdly, there was a dispute between the Department of Defense and the remaining participants regarding the combat readiness of the armed Predator. Fourthly, there was a conflict between the CIA and the Department of Defense regarding the responsibility for the costs and decisions of Predator attacks.

Decision-making Process Analysis Based on Identified Decisional Units and Theories

Overall, between 2000 and 2001, the U.S. decision-making process concerning five issues related with the flights of Predators departing from Uzbekistan and operating in the airspace of Afghanistan will be analyzed. Those are: (1) reconnaissance flights in 2000, (2) starting development work on equipping the Predator with Hellfire missiles (2000–2001), (3) continuing reconnaissance flights in 2001, (4) attacks on al-Qaeda using the armed Predator (2001), (5) conditions (responsibility for the costs and decisions) of carrying out combat missions by the armed Predator (2001). In each case, the analysis follows five steps (also illustrated in subchapter tables): (1) the decisional unit composition is reconstructed based on data from the first, empirical part of the paper; (2) one of foreign policy decision-making theories (described in the introduction) is associated with the particular type of decisional unit; (3) types of decisions corelated with identified theory are named according to the assumptions from the introductory part; (4) content of particular types of decisions is presented based on processed issue and decisional unit members' preferences (described in the paper's first part); (5) the actually made decision is discussed in the context of the utilized theory and, if needed, additional assumptions are highlighted and tracked in the empirical realm.

Reconnaissance Flights by Unarmed Predators from Uzbekistan into the Airspace of Afghanistan in 2000

As initially assumed in the paper's introduction, a given decisional unit contains the participants that expressed their preferences regarding a given problem. The composition of a decisional unit concerning the problem of whether an unarmed Predator should start flying over Afghanistan indicates that it represents the type of unit associated with the advisory system theory. It is due to the fact that the unit not only consisted of representatives of federal administration institutions (e.g. DoD, DoS, and CIA), but also the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and National Security Advisor, and at some moment even the president himself. Mitchell, the author of the typology of the advisory system theories presented in the paper's introduction, identifies Clinton's decision-making style with the low centralization collegial model.[71]

Such a model assumes that either the decision of the participant who had access to the president and convinced him is pushed through, or there is a deadlock, as no one apart from the president can impose a solution on other participants. Thus, there were two possible variants in this case. The first was pushing through a preference of one of the participants: the CIA (flights financed by the Department of Defense), the Department of Defense (flights financed by the CIA), or Clarke and Berger (flights carried out regardless of financing). The second variant is a lack of presidential support for any of the parties, as none of the preferences would be pushed through and there would have been a stalemate. In this case, it would not be a result of disputes on whether an UAV should be sent at all (as it was presented in the paper's first part, there were no disputes at this level), but of disputes regarding the source of financing of the mission. Neither the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator nor the National Security Advisor could finance it, so it all came down to rivalry between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

Table 3.3: Analysis of the U.S. decision-making process regarding the problem of starting unarmed Predator flights from Uzbekistan to the airspace of Afghanistan in 2000 based on the proposed theory

decisional unit composition	**federal administration units (Department of Defense and CIA)**		**presidential aides (Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and National Security Advisor)**	**[U.S. president]**
associated with decisional unit decision-making theory	advisory system theory: low centralization collegial model			
decision types related with the identified theory	preferences of one of the participants			stalemate
contents of hypothetical decision made based on the proposed theory	flights financed by CIA (Department of Defense)	flights financed by the Department of Defense (CIA)	flights carried out regardless of financing (CTC and NSA)	no flights
decisions actually made			2.	1.

Source: own work.

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[71] Mitchell, D.: *Making Foreign…*, p. 43.

In reality, there was no stalemate and a decision was taken, albeit not immediately. At the beginning of 2000, Clarke tried to find an agreement between the representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense within the interagency Counter-terrorism and Security Group that he was the head of. However, this did not work out because neither of these federal administration units wanted to participate in the costs. Thus, initially a stalemate situation occurred (marked with "1" in Table 3.3).[72]

Clarke, concerned about the possible failure of his endeavors to begin reconnaissance flights and having experienced the impossibility of a compromise between the two federal administration units, asked Berger, the National Security Advisor, for help. Berger supported the concept of sending a Predator over Afghanistan by issuing an appropriate decision (marked with a "2" in Table 3.3).[73] It is therefore not easy to determine whether approving a new program of reconnaissance flights over the territory ruled by the Taliban, hostile towards the U.S., fell within the competences of the NSA or had to be consulted with the president. Unfortunately, the president's written instructions from the end of the 1990s are still unavailable. Ultimately, the power given to Berger by the U.S. president must have been behind his decision.[74]

Finally, in June 2000, the interagency Counter-terrorism and Security Group backed the use of the Predator.[75] The reconnaissance flights started in early September and lasted until the end of October 2000.[76]

Berger and Clarke's preferences regarding the need to begin the program of flights from Uzbekistan into the airspace of Afghanistan were clear, but there is no information about their financing preferences. Given that they were not ready to support any of the parties earlier, it can be assumed that they preferred a compromise or wanted the CIA and the Department of Defense to settle the issue between themselves. These two institutions, according to the bureaucratic politics model, could have remained deadlocked, which was no longer possible after Berger's decision, or reach a compromise, so they chose the latter. Regardless of whether it was due to carrying out Berger and Clarke's preferences or made according to the BPM, the decision was the same: the parties divided the costs of financing the unarmed Predator between themselves equally.[77]

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[72] Of course, the Counter-terrorism and Security Group included also representatives of other bodies, not only these two. Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 576.

[73] Ibid., p. 577; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…".

[74] One of the authors directly indicates that the U.S. president approved launching Predator reconnaissance flights, but it is not known whether he refers to an initial decision or an elaborate project of the interagency Counter-terrorism and Security Group. Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 578.

[75] *The 9/11 Commission…*, p. 189.

[76] Two Predators carried out the flights. Miniter, R.: op. cit., pp. 203, 205; Scarborough, R.: op. cit., p. 25 [footnote 2]; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…"; Windrem, *How the Predator…*; Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 577–578. The data on whether the Predator's reconnaissance flights at the end of 2000 were only supposed to gather intelligence or included the possibility of attack using cruise missiles are contradictory. *The 9/11 Commission…*, pp. 189–190; *Transcript: Wednesday's …*, op. cit.

In fact, the mentioned U.S. decision-making process could be explained according with the low centralization collegial model. At first, there was a stalemate caused by the fact that the participants (CIA, Department of Defense, Clarke), were not supervised by the president, and did not feel forced to make a decision while having opposing preferences. Then, one of the participants – unsatisfied with the situation – decided to include the president in the process and contacted Berger. As a consequence, the decision reflected the preference of Clarke, who was in favor of starting the reconnaissance flights. The question of cost distribution was either imposed by Berger on behalf of the president, or settled in accordance with the bureaucratic politics model assuming that the rivalry of two federal administration units leads to a stalemate (impossible after the president's decision) or a compromise.

Starting Development Work on Equipping Predators with Hellfire Missiles (2000–2001)

The decisional unit for starting development work on equipping Predators with missiles consisted of three federal administration institutions (the CIA, Department of Defense, Department of State) and Clarke, the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator. Thus, the advisory system theory in its low centralization collegial variant applies again. As previously, the decisions made could also have taken the form of pushing the preference of one of the parties through or a stalemate if the president had not been engaged.

This theory in the case of identified preferences could result in three decisions: stalemate, starting development work (the preference of the Department of Defense, CIA, and Clarke), and at least temporarily blocking development work (preferred by the Department of State). In fact, the stalemate also meant blocking development work, thereby realizing the Department of State's preference.

In September 2000, this was certainly the case as neither Berger or the president committed themselves to one of the preferences, so stalemate was the only solution according to identified theory. This gridlock took place just after the Defense Department decided to develop an armed Predator in July 2000, with conceptual work starting in August, and when information regarding Osama bin Laden's location from an unarmed Predator flying over Afghanistan being obtained.

It may seem surprising that Clarke did not attempt to change the situation or seek the support of the National Security Advisor for the armed Predator development program. However, the presidential elections lost by the vice-president in office that took place soon after that and the end of Clinton's second term have to be taken into account. Thus, it is understandable that the president in office was not ready to take a decision on launching a program for the development of a new type of secret weapon. This kind of preference illustrates the president's attitude towards the attempts to kill Osama bin Laden in that period. By the end of 2000 he left the decision regarding another cruise missile attack to his successor.

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[77] *The 9/11 Commission...*, p. 189, 506 [footnote 113].

Table 3.4: Analysis of the U.S. decision-making process regarding the problem of starting development works on the armed Predator based on the proposed theory

<table>
<tr><th>decisional unit composition</th><th>federal administration units (Department of Defense, Department of State, and CIA)</th><th colspan="2">presidential aides (Counter-Terrorism Coordinator)</th></tr>
<tr><td>associated with decisional unit decision-making theory</td><td colspan="3">advisory system theory:
low centralization collegial model</td></tr>
<tr><td>decision types related with the identified theory</td><td colspan="2">preferences of one of the participants</td><td>stalemate</td></tr>
<tr><td>contents of hypothetical decision made based on the identified theory</td><td>starting the development works (Department of Defense, CIA, and Counter-Terrorism Coordinator)</td><td>blocking the development works (Department of State)</td><td>no development works</td></tr>
<tr><td>decisions actually made in 2000</td><td></td><td></td><td>1.</td></tr>
<tr><td>decisions actually made after the Department of State changed its preference in 2001</td><td colspan="2">2.</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Source: own work.

The decision-making regarding this issue altered drastically in 2001, when the Secretary of State changed and the State Department shifted its preference soon afterwards, starting to support the development of an armed Predator, as it was found not to infringe the INF Treaty. The remaining participants were already in favor of this option, so now the decision was unanimous. Therefore, it is not surprising that the trials of a Predator armed with Hellfire missiles started on the test range less than a month from the official communication regarding the new stance of the U.S. Department of State.[78]

Continuation of Flights by Unarmed Predators Departing from Uzbekistan in Order to Carry out Tasks over Afghanistan (2001)

In September 2000, unarmed Predator reconnaissance flights over Afghanistan were suspended for a month due to weather conditions.[79] At the beginning of 2001, the interagency Counter-terrorism and Security Group considered resuming them. The decisional unit for this issue included a representative of the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense, and Clarke, the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.

The presence of Clarke should indicate that the advisory system theory applies, but it will be assumed that Clarke's formal membership of the U.S. Executive Office of the President in 2001 does not automatically imply this model. This is due to the fact that in the beginning of 2001, Clarke's position weakened, as he was deprived of the membership in the National Security Council and of direct contact not only with the president, but also with the National Security Advisor. Thus, despite his official status as Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, his situation resembled that of a regular employee of the NSC, as he was subordinate to Hadley, the Deputy NSA. Of course, it was not only a degradation of his position, but also of the problem of fighting terrorism in the U.S. foreign and security policy.

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[78] Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1; Miniter, R.: op. cit., p. 204; Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 596; Newman, R. J.: op. cit., pp. 48–53; Windrem, R.: op. cit..

[79] Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.

Table 3.5: Analysis of the U.S. decision-making process when the participants have the same preferences regarding the problem of relaunching unarmed Predator flights from Uzbekistan to the airspace of Afghanistan in 2001 based on the proposed theory

decisional unit composition	**federal administration units (Department of Defense and CIA)**	
associated with decisional unit decision-making theory	bureaucratic politics model	
decision types related with the identified theory	integrative solution	stalemate
contents of hypothetical decision made based on the identified theory	flights should not be resumed	de facto blocking the flights
decisions actually made	1.	

Source: own work.

Therefore, it was assumed that Clarke could not be considered an important element of a decisional unit in the case of restoring unarmed Predator flights in 2001. Instead, two federal administration institutions dominated and thus constituted the unit: the CIA and the Department of Defense. They had the same preference: unarmed Predators flights should not be resumed. In this situation, resuming the flights was out of the question (see Table 3.5).

The actual events confirm the above assumptions.[80] Despite the discussions that took place in the first half of 2001 in the Counter-terrorism and Security Group and later the National Security Council Deputies Committee, the decision to resume the flights was not made.

Even if Clarke is assumed a full member of the Executive Office of the President and the problem is analyzed using the advisory system theory, the result remains the same. According to Mitchell, G. W. Bush's presidential model is the low centralization dominating leader model.[81] In this theory, either the decision-making result is a deadlock (flights stopped in 2000, so it would mean the maintenance of this state) or the performance of the preferences of one of the participants after that participant convinces the president (see Table 3.6). The latter case provided Clarke with a chance to implement his preferences, but it was impossible due to his lack of contact with the president.

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[80] *The 9/11 Commission…*, pp. 202–203, 211; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 598; Gellman, B.: "A Strategy's Cautious…," p. A1; Murphy, J.: op. cit.; Bridis, T. / Solomon, J.: op. cit.

[81] Mitchell, D.: *Making Foreign…*, p. 43.

Table 3.6: Analysis of the U.S. decision-making process regarding the problem of relaunching unarmed Predator flights from Uzbekistan to the airspace of Afghanistan in 2001 based on the proposed theory

<table>
<tr><th>decisional unit composition</th><th colspan="2">federal administration units (Department of Defense and CIA)</th><th colspan="2">(formal) presidential aides (Counter-Terrorism Coordinator)</th></tr>
<tr><td>associated with decisional unit decision-making theory</td><td colspan="4">advisory system theory:
low centralization leader dominating model</td></tr>
<tr><td>decision types related with the identified theory</td><td colspan="3">preferences of one of the participants</td><td>Stalemate</td></tr>
<tr><td>contents of hypothetical decision made based on the identified theory</td><td>objection to the relaunch of flights (CIA and Department of Defense)</td><td colspan="2">relaunch of flights (R. Clarke)</td><td>(de facto blocking the flights)</td></tr>
<tr><td>decisions actually made</td><td></td><td colspan="2"></td><td>1.</td></tr>
</table>

Source: own work.

It was only after fighting terrorism and intervention in Afghanistan became a priority for the National Security Advisor and the U.S. president himself due to the events of Sep. 11, 2001, that the decisional unit changed. In practice, it meant that the president supported the preferences of those who expected the resumption of unarmed Predator flights over Afghanistan. Finally, the president signed a decision authorizing the use of the Predator less than a week after the aforementioned attacks.[82]

Attacks on al-Qaeda in Afghanistan Using Armed Predators Departing from Uzbekistan (2001)

The decisional unit for the use of armed Predators flying over Afghanistan in 2001 included federal administration units – the CIA and the Department of Defense – and presidential aides: Clarke, the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, and National Security Advisor with her Deputy (Rice and Hadley).

Such a decision-making structure means that the analysis should be based on the advisory system theory, in the low centralization dominance variant in the case of this U.S. president. As mentioned above, it means that the effect of the decision is to push through a preference of one of the participants or deadlock, i.e. a lack of a decision.

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[82] Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1; Shaw, I. G. R.: “The Rise…”.

Using the aforementioned theory to analyze the participants' preferences regarding this issue means that the decision could have been the following: firstly, a deadlock could have occurred, secondly, the use of an armed Predator could have been rejected (Department of Defense), thirdly, the use of an armed Predator could have been accepted (remaining participants). Due to the fact that such flights were not carried out, the deadlock was equal with implementing the preference of the Defense Department.

In reality, a stalemate occurred. Despite the efforts of Clarke, the National Security Advisor, and her Deputy, the Department of Defense did not change its preference and no compromise was reached. The issue was not only discussed in the Counter-terrorism and Security Group and the National Security Council Deputies Committee, but also in the NSC Principals Committee.[83] It demonstrates that none of the participants interested in sending an armed Predator was ready to try to convince the U.S. president or that such attempts were met with the president's lack of readiness to engage. The last option would indicate either the president's lack of interest, as suggested by the analysis of his preferences, or his unwillingness to make decisions against the preferences of the Department of Defense, which opposed to such flights.

Table 3.7: Analysis of the U.S. decision-making process regarding the problem of starting the flights of a Predator armed with missiles from Uzbekistan to the airspace of Afghanistan in 2001 based on the proposed theory

<table>
<tr><th>decisional unit composition</th><th colspan="2">federal administration units (Department of Defense and CIA)</th><th colspan="2">presidential aides (Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, National Security Advisor, Deputy National Security Advisor)</th></tr>
<tr><td>associated with decisional unit decision-making theory</td><td colspan="4">advisory system theory:
low centralization dominating leader model</td></tr>
<tr><td>decision types related with the identified theory</td><td colspan="3">preferences of one of the participants</td><td>stalemate</td></tr>
<tr><td>contents of hypothetical decision made based on the identified theory</td><td>objection to the commencement of flights (DoD)</td><td colspan="2">support of the commencement of flights (R. Clarke, C. Rice, and S. Hadley)</td><td>no commencement of flights (Department of Defense)</td></tr>
<tr><td>decisions actually made</td><td></td><td colspan="2">2. (after Sep. 11, 2001)</td><td>1. (before Sep. 11, 2001)</td></tr>
</table>

Source: own work.

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[83] *The 9/11 Commission…*, pp. 210–211; Coll, S.: op. cit., p. 631; Windrem, R.: op. cit.

The situation changed after Sep. 11, 2001, when the president engaged in the fight against terrorism and considered sending an armed Predator over Afghanistan as a tool for fulfilling this goal. In accordance with the assumptions of the adopted theory, the president supported one of the decisional unit members. As a result, as early as Sep. 17, the president signed the decision on using the Predator, including its armed version, for actions in the airspace of Afghanistan.[84]

Conditions of Carrying out Combat Missions by Armed Predators over Afghanistan (2001)

The decisional unit establishing the conditions of carrying out combat missions by armed Predators flying from Uzbekistan into the airspace of Afghanistan only had two members: the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense. It means that the bureaucratic politics model should be used. As mentioned above, it assumes that the result is either a stalemate or a consensus (i.e. integrative solution).

In the context of the problem discussed here, the decisions could take two forms: a stalemate (no distribution of costs and responsibilities what equaled with no flights) or, in the latter case, the parties would agree on a distribution of costs for financing the project and responsibilities of decisions related with it. The second option would require either distinguishing two categories of targets under the responsibility of each of the institutions separately or double authorization: by the CIA and then by the Department of Defense (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Analysis of the U.S. decision-making process regarding the conditions of carrying out armed Predator flights from Uzbekistan to the airspace of Afghanistan in 2001 based on the proposed theory

decisional unit composition	**federal administration units (Department of Defense and CIA)**	
associated with decisional unit decision-making theory	bureaucratic politics model	
decision types related with the identified theory	consensus	stalemate
contents of hypothetical decision made based on the identified theory	equal distribution of costs and responsibilities regarding the armed Predator warfare use	no distribution of costs and responsibilities
decisions actually made	2. (after Sep. 11, 2001)	1. (before Sep. 11, 2001)

Source: own work.

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[84] Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…".

In reality, the parties did not establish the conditions for armed Predator use in the airspace of Afghanistan.[85] This seems to be due to the fact that none of them felt pressured to conclude an agreement, given that also the discussions regarding the use of armed Predator per se ended in deadlock.

This situation changed after Sep. 11, when the U.S. president decided to use armed Predators over Afghanistan, although he did not specify the conditions. However, the bureaucratic politics model can still explain the decision taken on this issue. A stalemate was no longer possible due to G.W. Bush's decision, so the only possible final decision was consensus. The CIA and the Department of Defense shared the costs of using the armed Predator as well as the targets. The Department of Defense issued the decisions on attacking Taliban units and the CIA on attacking al-Qaeda members.[86]

Conclusions

As a general conclusion, it should be stated that the identified foreign policy decision-making theories have enough explanatory power to explain the U.S. choices analyzed. Nevertheless, it should be pointed that, in some cases, this was achieved due to additional assumptions on decision-makers participation in the decisional unit or their preferences. Further studies – especially after the gradual opening up of archives – need to confirm the relevance of those assumptions.

As this case study shows, not all issues that are the subject of interagency or the president's advisers disputes are made public by their participants, e.g. with the help of media leaks. For various reasons – here, the classified nature of the issues – participants avoid getting information about "intraexecutive" conflicts beyond the narrow circle of decision-makers. Therefore, while many inter-agency and "interadvisers" disputes are public, it should be remembered that this is not always the case. Many such conflicts may never see the light of day, which means that they remain outside the scope of academic research.

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[85] Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1; *The 9/11 Commission…*, p. 210. The report of the commission examining the events of Sep. 11, 2001 states that on Aug. 1, 2001, the National Security Council Deputies Committee decided that the CIA would be responsible for decisions on direct attacks by Predators. However, the information obtained by S. Coll within the interviews with the then policymakers, indicate that a month later within a discussion during the so-called Principals Committee of the National Security Council, the head of CIA, G. Tenet, objected to making the attacks on al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan the responsibility of the CIA. Even if one assumes that the aforementioned report is reliable, it is worth noting that it states that the manner of financing armed Predator actions over Afghanistan was not established in August. *The 9/11 Commission…*, pp. 211–212; Coll, S.: op. cit., pp. 580–581.

[86] Due to the complexity of the command structure in the Department of Defense, in mid-October 2001, the CIA was granted a right to attack also targets in Afghanistan other than terrorist organizations. Miller, J. / Schmitt, E.: op. cit., p. B1; Windrem, R.: op. cit.; Shaw, I. G. R.: "The Rise…".

At different times, the actual decision-making process may reflect alternative variants of the same theory as to the final shape of the decision made. For example, despite the fact that the theory shows that the decision will be in the form of gridlock or the preferences of the selected participant, in fact, both solutions are possible. Of course, they do not occur simultaneously but one after another. For example, at the beginning of the decision-making process with regard to one and the same issue, the effect of decision-making is initially a stalemate, and then – due to e.g. change of preferences of decisional unit members – the preferences only of a group of the participants dominate.

As an effect of decision-making, gridlock often results in the realization of the preferences of one of the participants in the decisional unit. As a result, in the case of a stalemate, not all parties are equally blocked from realizing their preferences. For some participants, this is the solution they expected because it blocks the change they opposed. In the context of a stalemate as a type of a decision, it should be said that decisions made in U.S. foreign policy often take this shape. In the analyzed case, about half of the initial or final decisions took the form of a clinch.

It should also be highlighted that a gridlock as a result of decision-making leads to low effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy, which seems to be particularly important given the frequent occurrence of this type of decision. This thesis is perfectly illustrated by the almost a year-long stalemate in the decision-making process on the use of an armed Predator over Afghanistan. Of course, there is no certainty that the use of this aircraft would have prevented the Sep. 11, 2001 attacks or that it would have ensured the killing of Osama bin Laden. Nevertheless, the United States did not even try to make this kind of attack and intensely pursued him after the 9/11 attacks for the next ten years. Meanwhile, in 2000 and 2001, the strike did not materialize, not because there was a dispute as to the need for such a step, but because particular departments and agencies were unable to agree on the financial and legal terms of this undertaking. At the same time, the categorical statement that a stalemate always means low efficiency of the U.S. political system must be preceded by studies on the effectiveness of different types of decisions, which goes beyond the scope of this paper.

This case study shows that the U.S. president was only involved in shaping U.S. policy towards Central Asia when it concerned military or intelligence issues. One might wonder how often this is also in the case with other directions of U.S. foreign policy. This example also shows that the problems that the U.S. president considered important enough to be involved in their resolution and at the same time did not attract the attention of participants outside the executive branch were of the classified type.

As this case has shown, BPM is not only suitable for analyzing the decision-making process when there are disputes between the participants in the decisional unit but also when there is an agreement between them. Of course, making a decision in such a situation is not complicated – the decision reflects the consensus preferences of the participants – but the mere fact that such a situation took place, will make the researcher realize that conflicting preferences do not occur everywhere. Without bearing this in mind, there is a risk that the researcher will not be able to grasp the true reality because they will look for a stronger position of one of the decision-makers in a situation where the implementation of someone's preferences may be the aftermath of the fact that other members of the decisional unit agreed with him.

Finally, formal membership to the staff of the U.S. Executive Office of the President is not a sufficient basis to interpret the decision-making process involving such a participant in line with the advisory system theory. It depends on the practical position of this employee in contact with the president. An indicator of their status may be the question of whether such a person is formally a member of the U.S. National Security Council and whether they have direct access, if not to the president, then to their NSA. If this is not the case, the participation of the EOP personnel in the decisional unit does not determine that a given decision-making process should be analyzed with the help of the advisory system theory.

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Przemysław Osiewicz

4. The Importance of Central Asia in Iranian Foreign Policy: Between Idealism and Reality

Abstract: This chapter is dedicated to Iranian foreign policy towards Central Asia in the post-Cold War period. Undoubtedly, the region has played an important role in Iranian strategies since the dissolution of the Soviet Union yet in the past it was always of secondary importance compared with the Middle East in general or the Persian Gulf area in particular. The Caspian dimension was unappreciated for a long time. The chapter is a case study whose main aim is a detailed analysis of Iranian foreign policy in order to find out whether one can observe continuity or change in the framework of the Iranian attitude toward Central Asia. The main hypothesis is that the Iranian foreign policy toward Central Asia has been formulated ad hoc by successive presidents and has not constituted a coherent strategy since 1991. The analysis is based on official documents, issued by various state institutions in Iran, speeches of influential politicians as well as academic articles, monographs, and reports.

Keywords: Iran, Central Asia, foreign policy

Introduction

The contemporary foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is multidimensional. Undoubtedly, its main aim is to ensure the survival of its theocratic regime as well as sustainable growth. As far as the geographical dimension is concerned, one can distinguish a few regions which are crucial from the Iranian point of view. Iran intends to become the dominant power in the Persian Gulf while remaining one of the key players in the Middle East as a whole. But what about Central Asia, namely the former Soviet republics such as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan?

Although Iran is only bordered by Turkmenistan and connected with Kazakhstan through the Caspian Sea, the three remaining Central Asian states are perceived as parts of Iran's immediate neighborhood. For instance, Iran and Tajikistan are connected by culture and language. The question is, however, whether the region is genuinely important from the Iranian point of view. The main hypothesis is that the Iranian foreign policy toward Central Asia has been formulated *ad hoc* by successive presidents and has not constituted a coherent strategy since 1991. In order to verify this hypothesis, the following research questions are posed: Do Iranian presidents as heads of the state administration pay attention to Central Asia and its political as well as economic significance? Are their visions examples of continuity or change within Iranian foreign policy? Are their political actions with regard to Central Asia in line with their official declarations?

In order to answer these questions, an analysis and comparison of Iranian foreign policy toward Central Asia since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 is proposed. The case study hinges on text analysis as the main research method. This method allows for a detailed analysis of the policies introduced by Iranian presidents in the post-Cold War period. The chapter is divided into six parts, including an introduction and conclusion. It begins with a theoretical analysis of various foreign policy approaches which can be observed in the case of Iranian foreign policy toward Central Asia after 1991. The following parts are related to Iran's attitude between 1991 and 2005, President Ahmadinejad's strategy, and the current policy promoted by President Hassan Rouhani. Such a structure allows the research questions to be answered and the hypothesis verified.

The main assumption is that presidential visions do matter in the foreign policy making processes in the Islamic Republic of Iran. There are serious doubts as to whether presidents have anything to say in the theocratic constitutional system without the prior approval of the supreme leader. However, in the opinion of Ali Akbar Rezaei, although "Iran's constitution vests ultimate authority in the supreme leader, the presidency has developed into a powerful office. … Constitutional amendments in 1989 abolished the prime minister's post, creating a presidential system."[1]

The current state of research on this matter is far from satisfactory. Although there are many monographs and academic articles dedicated to Iranian foreign policy, most of them mainly focus on its Middle Eastern dimension, international sanctions, and U.S.-Iran relations. In case of sources related to Iran and Central Asia, most of them are devoted to either historical aspects or paint a very general picture of Iran's policy toward the region. For this reason, a researcher is forced to analyze various sources in order to find any relevant information and data. The article is intended to bridge this gap and provide readers with a new perspective on Iranian foreign policy toward Central Asia.

Iranian Foreign Policy: Theoretical Background

In his research on Iranian foreign policy, Ali Akbar Rezaei underlines the difference between constructivism and rationalism in IR. He points out that constructivists believe in international politics which "is in the process of being made all the time. They believe in 'understanding' states' actions (not behaviour) because they are intentional."[2] Maaike Warnaar adds: "Constructivist tradition is not so much interested in what individual policy makers believe as in how they act within a shared discursive space."[3] On this basis one can, for instance, analyze contemporary Iranian foreign policy focusing on President Ahmadinejad and President Rouhani's actions in order to find out whether they were in line with the dominant political discourse.

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[1] Bakhash, Shaul: "The Six Presidents." In: Wright, Robin (ed.): *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy.* United States Institute for Peace Press: Washington D.C. 2010, p. 15.

[2] Rezaei, Ali Akbar: "Foreign Policy Theories: Implications for Foreign Policy Analysis of Iran." In: Ehteshami Anoushiravan / Zweiri Mahjoob (eds.): *Iran's Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad.* Ithaca Press: Reading 2011, p. 18.

In the case of Iran, Anoushiravan Ehteshami highlights the fact that "since 1979 Iran has added a religious dimension to its drive for power projection. Over time this old sociocultural root has formed a new layer on top of the deeply felt territorial nationalism of the state."[4] Dehghani Firooz-Abadi adds that "one of the goals of the foreign policy of the country is the establishment and creation of a just and desirable international system. The most important mechanisms and instruments for the establishment of such a just system is deconstruction of the present system, unity of the Islamic world, coalition and unity of anti-hegemonic players at an international level."[5]

In the case of rationalists, Rezaei emphasizes the fact that they "assume the interest and power of states to be 'exogenously given' variables. That is why they claim to 'explain' states' behavior and are known as rationalists. They include ideational variables in their theories though juxtaposing them to material variables and assuming causal relations between them, i.e. a state's identity causes its national interests."[6]

An interesting concept related to the contemporary foreign policy of Iran has been proposed by Mohammad Reza Dehshiri. In his opinion "in a detailed classification of the periods and evolutions of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we can scrutinize them from the point of view of the distinction between idealism and realism."[7] Dehshiri underlined the fact that "the coordination and complementarity of these two approaches in the context of time stems from stability and continuity in the engagement of ideals and principles of the Islamic Revolution, while endeavouring to have diplomatic flexibility taking into consideration environmental demands and progressive regional and international circumstances."[8] On the basis of Dehshiri's conception, one can distinguish periods of realism and idealism in the framework of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. These periods are dependent on the president at the time and their visions of the regional and global order, as well as dominance of ideas stemming from the ideals of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 (idealism) or pragmatism in actions taken (realism). These periods can be presented as follows:

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[3] Warnaar, Maaike: *Iranian Foreign Policy During Ahmadinejad: Ideology and Actions*, Palgrave Macmillan: New York 2013, p. 24.

[4] Ehteshami, Anoushiravan: "The Foreign Policy of Iran." In: Hinnebusch, Rayomond / Ehteshami, Anoushiravan (eds.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*. Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder 2014, p. 268.

[5] Firooz-Abadi, Dehghani: "Iran and the Ideal International System.". In: Ehteshami, Anoushiravan / Molavi, Reza (eds.): *Iran and the International System*. Routledge: New York 2012, p. 56.

[6] Ibid., p. 19.

[7] Deshiri, Mohammed Reza: *Reference Marks for a Study of the Foreign Policy of President Ahmadinejad: The Structural Tendencies and Elements of the Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Elmi Farhangi Publications: Tehran 2010, p. 4.

[8] Ibid., p. 4.

- idealism – Banisadr, Rajai, Khamenei (1979–1984);
- realism – Khamenei (1984–1986);
- idealism – Khamenei (1986–1987);
- realism – Khamenei (1987–1988);
- idealism – Khamenei (1988–1989);
- realism – Rafsanjani (1989–1996);
- idealism – Rafsanjani (1996–1997);
- realism – Khatami (1997–2000);
- idealism Khatami (2000–2001);
- realism Khatami (2001–2005);
- idealism – Ahmadinejad (2005–2013);
- realism – Rouhani (2013–).[9]

Dehshiri refers to realism, while Amin Saikal calls it 'Islamic pragmatism'. In his opinion "a final variable that has ensured Iranian resilience is the fact that despite Tehran's strong public Islamic ideological stance, its foreign policy is driven largely by nuanced Islamic pragmatic rather than idealistic considerations. It has often relied on ideology as a source of justifying rather than guiding policy."[10] In this context, Ali Akbar Alikhani underlines the importance of widespread sanctions as well as the creation of a negative and false image of Iran by the Western mass media. Such pressure left Iran "with little chance to precisely theorize and materialize the fundaments and ethical-human principles of Islam within the components of its domestic and foreign policies."[11]

There is one more factor which has to be taken into consideration while analyzing the contemporary Iranian foreign policy and it is connected with its multiple power centers, especially the supreme leader and the president. According to Mahmood Monshipouri, "Iran's foreign policy usually reflects the fact that it is ruled by multiple power centers. In general, there has nevertheless always been a broad consensus among the country's leaders to export the Islamic Republic's soft power of Islamism and anti-colonialism throughout the Middle East."[12] Although the final word always belongs to the supreme leader in the case of decisions related to foreign policy, presidents are responsible for their implementation and they usually justify Iran's actions or clarify official positions. For this reason, one can analyze the contemporary foreign policy of Iran towards Central Asia by comparing the policies, declarations, and actions of presidents. It seems that all of the above approaches could be applied in case of the Iranian foreign policy toward Central Asia. Such an eclectic approach enables scholars to analyze various aspects of foreign policy making.

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[9] Ibid., pp. 3–65. Modified and updated by the author.

[10] Saikal, Amin: "Iran and the Changing Regional Strategic Environment." In: Akbarzadeh, Shahram / Conduit, Dara (eds.): *Iran in the World: President Rouhani's Foreign Policy*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2016, p. 24.

[11] Alikhani, Ali Akbar: "Iran's Religious Fundaments and Principles." In: Ehteshami, Anoushiravan / Molavi Reza (eds.): op. cit., p. 23.

An Overview of Iran's Attitude Towards Central Asia in the Post-Cold War Period (1991–2005)

Central Asia has traditionally been dominated by the Russians.[13] However, "the collapse of the Soviet Union sent a wave of optimism around the world that even succeeded in penetrating the incendiary Middle East."[14] At the very beginning of the 1990s, many analysts and scholars believed that Iran could become a kind of regional gendarme, because this "country had the longest coast line and constituted a strategic bridge between the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, the Caucasus, Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and it should have a special role to play in the security arrangement."[15] In this context Abbas Maleki quite rightly points out that "the collapse of the Soviet Union gave rise to a new awareness in Iran of the possibilities presented by the combination of the country's strength relative to other regional states and its geographical location at the heart of the Eurasian continent."[16] Kaveh L. Afrasiabi also claims that "in the region's post-Cold War and post-Soviet Union context, Iran ideally holds out the expectations for the emergence of a new regional order assigned to peace and prosperity and international legal rules."[17] Yet not all analysts were so optimistic. For instance, in the opinion of Shireen Hunter, "with the Soviet Union's disintegration, however, Iran's importance as a buffer state faded. Its delicate strategic position between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea and its vast, albeit unrealized, potential became more of a liability than an asset. Both principal international actors and regional powers came to see Iran as a potential barrier to the achievement of their own ambitions or as a rival for influence in the post-Soviet space."[18]

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[12] Monshipouri, Mahmood: "Iran's Foreign Policy and Islamic Ideology." In: Juneau, Thomas / Razavi, Sam (eds.): *Iranian Foreign Policy since 2001: Alone in the World.* Routledge: Abingdon 2013, p. 67.

[13] More see: Petersen, Alexandros: *The World Island: Eurasian Geopolitics and the Fate of the West.* Praeger: Santa Barbara, 2011.

[14] Naji, Kasra: *Ahmadinejad: The Secret History of Iran's Radical Leader.* University of California Press: Berkeley 2008, p. 142.

[15] Marshall, Christin: *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: From Khomeini to Khatami.* Routledge: London 2003, p. 152.

[16] Maleki, Abbas: "Regionalism in Iran's Foreign Policy." In: Maleki, Abbas / Afrasiabi, Kaveh L.: *Reading in Iran Foreign Policy After September 11.* Booksurge: Lexington 2011, pp. 78–79.

[17] Afrasiabi, Kaveh L.: "International Law and Iran's Caspian Sea Policy." In: Maleki, Abbas / Afrasiabi, Kaveh L. (eds.): op. cit., p. 197.

The first step undertaken by the ayatollahs was the opening of Iranian embassies in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan in 1991. Yet further political and ideological expansion in the region was much more complex and difficult than expected, even in Tajikistan which Iran shares both history and language.[19]

As far as the initial strategy of Iran towards Central Asia is concerned, Bartosz Bojarczyk claims that one can distinguish between three stages. At first, the Iranians attempted to export 'revolutionary ideas' and promote the post-Soviet Islamization of the region in this way. Later, similarly to Turkey, Iran tried to emphasize the role of its historical and civilizational connections with Central Asians. When these two approaches proved to be unsuccessful, Iranian authorities decided to focus on economic cooperation.[20]

The creation of five new states in Central Asia opened up new opportunities for the Iranian authorities yet the Russians did not intend to withdraw from the region. Moreover, new opportunities attracted other external players such as Turkey, the United States, and the People's Republic of China. For this reason, Tehran was forced to take all these circumstances into consideration while preparing a new strategy towards the region. From a political perspective, Iran could cooperate closely with Russia and China in order to limit American influence in the region.[21] The second option was economic integration which could have tied Iran to the new states even more than diplomacy. Kaveh Afrasiabi is right in saying: "It seems as though the Iranian idea of building confidence through economic links had not overcome distrust by the mid-1990s and that distrust prevailed. Furthermore, the economic exchanges remained on a relatively low scale. These two reasons contributed to the fact that Iran turned at least some of its attention to the new markets in the Caucasus and Central Asia."[22] Iran had to modify its strategy in order to convince its partners in the region. In addition, Tehran still had to compete with other international actors such as China, Russia, and Turkey.

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[18] Hunter, Shireen: "Iran's Pragmatic Regional Policy." *Journal of International Affairs*, 56 (2), 2003, p. 136.

[19] More see: Jonson, Lena: *Tajikistan in the New Central Asia: Geopolitics, Great Power Rivalry and Radical Islam.* I.B. Tauris: New York 2006.

[20] Bojarczyk, Bartosz: "Działania Islamskiej Republiki Iranu w regionie." In: Bojarczyk, Bartosz / Ziętek, Agata (eds.): *Region Azji Centralnej jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych.* Wydawnictwo UMCS: Lublin 2008, pp. 154–155.

[21] Ahrari, Ehsan: "Iran, China, and Russia: The Emerging anti-US Nexus?" *Security Dialogue*, 32(4), 2001, pp. 453–466.

[22] Afrasiabi, Kaveh L.: op. cit., p. 176.

The Iranian authorities invited all five former Soviet republics to join the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 1992. On the basis of their accession, the founding members, namely Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan intended to establish a stable and secure sphere of influence in the region. Although this plan was never fully realized, it mobilized Iran to invest more in domestic road and railway infrastructure in the 1990s. Thanks to these new projects, Iranian authorities aimed at increasing of transit revenues. Besides, the construction of new routes connecting Iranian harbors with Central Asia created new opportunities of both political and geopolitical significance. Nevertheless, at the very beginning of the twenty-first century, China and Russia managed to seriously limit both Turkish and Iranian influence in the region with the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). All five Central Asian states joined SCO but Iran only has observer status and its position in Central Asia was weakened as far as prospects for economic integration are concerned. Thus, Tehran still seeks SCO membership and, according to Shahram Akbarzadeh, Iran perceives the organization "as a geopolitical counterweight to the USA."[23]

It should be emphasized that Iran shared some priorities in Central Asia with the Russian Federation in the post-Cold War period. Mark N. Katz mentioned four areas of their common interest, namely:

- a common desire to limit American influence;
- a common desire to limit Turkish influence in the region;
- a common desire to prevent secession in the region;
- a common fear of Sunni Islamic fundamentalism.[24]

Disputes related to the legal status of the Caspian Sea became key issues in Iran's relations with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in post-Soviet era. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, both Iran and the Russian Federation referred to two bilateral treaties, namely of 1921 and 1940. In the past, the Soviet Union and Iran had classified the Caspian Sea as a lake and divided it into two zones, with natural resources to be commonly shared. The situation became more complex with the emergence of new states such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan. Their authorities stated that these treaties had been signed by Russia/the Soviet Union and Iran and therefore they did not concern them. In the opinion of Rasoul Mousavi, in the 1921 and 1940 treaties "there is no mention of the Caspian Sea's surface, seabed and resources. Hence, the littoral states define the division or demarcation based on their own national interests."[25] In addition, actors interested in the region include not only the littoral states, but also states seeking access to its resources such as, for example, the United States, the People's Republic of China, Turkey, India, Pakistan or EU member states.[26] Undoubtedly, such a situation must have resulted in legal disputes and incidents.

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[23] Akbarzadeh, Shahram: "Iran and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Ideology and Realpolitik in Iranian Foreign Policy." *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 69 (1), 2015, p. 88.

[24] Katz, Mark N.: "Prospective impacts of Russia and Iran." In: Auty, Richard M. / de Soysa, Indra (eds.): *Energy, Wealth and Governance in the Caucasus and Central Asia.* Routledge: Abingdon 2006, pp. 219–222.

A solution was finally devised in 2018. Already in December 2017, representatives of Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan reached a consensus and decided to meet in order to sign the final agreement during the Aktau Summit. Eight months later, on 12 August 2018, the "Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea" was signed. The conference was of particular importance to Iran as the event took place a few days after the US administration had re-imposed economic sanctions.[27]

Another factor was connected with potential incomes from transit routes. In 1996, President Hashemi Rafsanjani counted on Gulf investment and suggested that Iran could become a transit route for Saudi goods to Central Asia.[28] Yet the Iranian strategy in Central Asia was hostage to U.S.-Iran relations. As Hunter points out, "the United States in particular was bent on preventing Iran from establishing any significant presence in Central Asia and the Caucasus. At a later stage it became part of the broader U.S. strategy of containing and isolating Iran in the context of the Clinton administration's policy of Dual Containment."[29] One of the key elements of the U.S. strategy towards the region was connected with the establishment of American military bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in the period after 9/11. Naturally, the proximity of U.S. military troops was perceived as a threat in Iran and further complicated regional matters. For this reason, Iranian authorities welcomed the closure of the last U.S. military base in Manas in Kyrgyzstan in 2014 with a sigh of relief.[30] Karshi-Khanabad Air Base in Uzbekistan was used by the U.S. Air Force and Marine Corps between 2001 and 2005.[31]

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[25] Mousavi, Rasoul: "The Future of the Caspian Sea After Tehran Summit." *The Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, 21 (1–2), 2008, p. 32.

[26] Chapman, Bert: *Geopolitics: A Guide to the Issues*, Praeger: Santa Barbara 2011, p. 58.

[27] Greenwood, Phoebe (2018): *Landmark Caspian Sea deal signed by five coastal nations.* The Guardian, retrieved on 12.08.2018, from www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/12/landmark-caspian-sea-deal-signed-among-five-coastal-nations. Full text of the Convention see: *Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea of 12 August 2018.* Presidential Executive Office, retrieved on 23.02.2020, from http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5328.

[28] Ibid., p. 144.

[29] Hunter, Shireen: "Iran's Pragmatic…." op. cit., p. 134.

[30] Pillalamarri, Akhilesh: *The United States Just Closed Its Last Base in Central Asia.* The Diplomat, retrieved on 31.10.2017, from https://thediplomat.com/2014/06/the-united-states-just-closed-its-last-base-in-central-asia/.

[31] More see: Clarke, Michael: "Glocality, Silk Roads and New and Little Great Games in Xinjiang and Central Asia." In: Mackerras, Colin / Clarke Michael (eds.): *China,*

Some analysts are very pessimistic and critical as far as Iran's achievements in Central Asia in the 1990s are concerned. According to Robert D. Kaplan, "Iran's geography, as noted, gives it frontage on Central Asia to the same extent that it has on Mesopotamia and the Middle East. But the disintegration of the Soviet Union has brought limited gains to Iran, when one takes into account the whole history of Greater Iran in the region."[32] Did any positive change take place during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency?

The Iranian Foreign Policy Towards Central Asia Under the Presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

President Ahmadinejad and his administration were often unable to sacrifice ideational rhetoric for gains within the official foreign policy. In 2008, during the first term of Ahmadinejad's presidency, Mohammad Reza Dehshiri and Mohammad Reza Majidi wrote as follows: "Islam forms the dominant ideological discourse of Iranian foreign policy. Regional and international equations, as well as identity factors also have great impacts on Iran's foreign policy. Meanwhile, identity – as viewed in constructivism – takes precedence over national interest and is socially constructed. … This identity is the outcome of the integration of ancient Persian civilization with Shiite Islam, making it both historical and religious."[33]

According to Maryam Panah, "the persistence of what may be called a revolutionary foreign policy by the Iranian regime has resulted in continued international tension, in particular with respective administrations in Washington which have perpetuated the image of the Islamic Republic as a revolutionary ('rogue') state in the international system."[34] The result of such strategy was obvious. The international community, encouraged by the United States, began imposing political as well as economic sanctions on Iran. Their supporters claimed that Iran led by ideational leaders could pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

To their satisfaction, the Iranian position on the nuclear program was not flexible and, without any significant progress during the 5+1 talks, Iranian foreign policy remained seriously limited. As a result, international sanctions became the

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Xinjiang and Central Asia: History, Transition and Crossborder Interaction Into the 21st Century. Routledge: New York 2009, pp. 183–185.

[32] Kaplan, Robert D.: *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate.* Random House: New York 2012, p.276.

[33] Dehshiri, Mohammad Reza / Majidi, Mohammad Reza: "Iran's Foreign Policy in Post-Revolution Era: A Holistic Approach." *The Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, 21 (1–2), 2008, pp. 102–103.

[34] Panah, Maryam: *The Islamic Republic and the World: Global Dimensions of the Iranian Revolution.* Pluto Press: London 2007, p. 158.

main obstacle for the further development of Iran-Central Asian states relations, especially as far as trade and investments were concerned.

Still, some analysts claim that an unambiguous evaluation of Ahmadinejad's foreign policy is simply impossible. Eric Wentz underlined the fact that President Ahmadinejad alienated Iranian pragmatists according to many analysts, who tended to criticize him for his harsh and offensive rhetoric. At the same time, however, many conservative clerics and politicians "saw him as surrendering Iran's rightful strategic interests."[35] Ali Rahnema also noticed that "at times, he used Khatami's inclusivist discourse, reaching out to the international community, and at other times, he relied on an exclusivist discourse."[36]

The facts show that Ahmadinejad's approach towards Central Asia was pragmatic rather than ideological. In 2010, Shireen T. Hunter presented the list of factors which affected the then Iran's policy towards Central Asia. She mentioned the following aspects:

- the primacy of security;
- the economic dimension;
- the Russian policy towards the region;
- the lack of "ideological connection with central Asia's Islamist movements";
- limited symbolic and ideological significance of Central Asia from the Iranian point of view;
- the lack of significance of the region for the Iranian regime's legitimacy;
- the domination of local movements supported by Arabs, Afghans, and Pakistanis.[37]

As far as the economic dimension is concerned, Iran continued to import gas from Turkmenistan, although it has its own huge deposits. According to Abbas Maleki, this was mainly "because Iran can add value to gas and export it as electricity or other forms of energy to other countries besides using it to satisfy domestic demand in northeastern provinces."[38] Some of this gas was then exported to Turkey. In 2012 Iran exported around 670 million cubic feet to Turkey and imported around 770 million cubic feet per day from Turkmenistan.[39]

Nevertheless, the total trade turnover with Central Asian states remained relatively low. According to the EU's list of the major trade partners of Iran in the period between 2008 and 2012, Kazakhstan ranked 19th, Turkmenistan was 24th, Tajikistan 31st, and Uzbekistan was 40th.[40] Kyrgyzstan was not even ranked among the top 50 trade partners. In the case of foreign investments, Iran was the main investor in Tajikistan in 2010 under the presidency of Ahmadinejad and the second biggest after China in 2011. Iranian FDI in this Central Asian state amounted 65.5 million USD in 2010.[41]

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[35] Wentz, Eric: *Iranian Foreign Policy: Religious Fanaticism or Realpolitik?* Tate Publishing: Mustang 2015, p. 31.

[36] Rahnema, Ali: *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics: From Majlesi to Ahmadinejad.* Cambridge University Press: New York 2011, p. 36.

[37] Hunter, Shireen T.: *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order.* Praeger: Santa Barbara 2010, pp. 174–175.

[38] Maleki, Abbas: op. cit., p. 98.

[39] Cordesman, Anthony H. / Gold, Bryan / Couglin-Schulte, Chloe: *Iran – Sanctions, Energy, Arms Control, and Regime Change.* Center for Strategic and International Studies: Washington D.C. 2014, p. 54.

However, despite the cultural links between Iran and Tajikistan, their political relations under the presidency of Ahmadinejad were very complex. Some analysts like Morteza Mahmoudi specified the main tasks which could have been undertaken by Iran to improve the situation. He suggested developing cultural convergence, preventing the formation of challenges, correction of misunderstandings about Iranian culture, quest for confidence building, and emphasis on the bilateral cooperation.[42] This problematic nature of Iran-Tajikistan relations was the best illustration of the weakness of Iran's political position in the region under the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

President Rouhani and Iran's Attitude Towards Central Asia: Continuity or Change?

Soon after Hassan Rouhani's electoral victory, a newly appointed minister of foreign affairs, Javad Zarif, declared as follows:

"Rouhani's foreign policy platform was based on a principled, sober, and wise critique of the conduct of foreign relations during the preceding eight years under the previous administration. Rouhani promised to remedy the unacceptable state of affairs through a major overhaul of the country's foreign policy. … This vision aims to move Iran away from confrontation and toward dialogue, constructive interaction, and understanding, all with an eye to safeguarding national security, elevating the stature of Iran, and achieving long-term comprehensive development."[43]

These were political declarations but what about the actions of the new president and his administration? The main change under the presidency of Rouhani was connected with a softening of the rhetoric. Since 2013, Iranian foreign policy has become less ideational and more pragmatic, with talks related to the Iranian nuclear program becoming key to all other issues. President Rouhani and his aides, especially Minister of Foreign Affairs Javad Zarif, well understood that the lack of progress would bring the negotiations to a halt and if the Iranian authorities had not ensured the success of nuclear negotiations in 2015, they would not have been able to modify the Iranian foreign policy and stimulate cooperation between Iran and its partners including Central Asian countries. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) became the first step towards the lifting of economic sanctions which opened new opportunities for both sides. This realistic approach enabled Iran to end its economic isolation in the immediate neighborhood. Obviously, such a change would not have been possible without the political support of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei yet, like in all other cases, the Iranian president became personally responsible for the decision and its consequences. In this way, Rouhani was meant to guarantee the ultimate success of the new strategy and still act in accordance with Khamenei's guidelines.

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[40] *Iran-EU Bilateral Trade and Trade with the World.* DG Trade Statistics, retrieved on 23.05.2013, from http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113392.pdf

[41] Włodkowska-Bagan, Agata: *Rywalizacja mocarstw na obszarze poradzieckim.* Difin: Warszawa 2013, p. 270.

[42] Mahmoudi, Morteza: "Central Asia & the Growth of Iran-Tajikistan Bilateral Cooperation." *The Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, 19 (3), 2007, p. 43.

[43] Zarif, Javad: "What Iran Really Wants: Iranian Foreign Policy in the Rouhani Era." *Foreign Affairs*, 93 (3), 2014, p. 7.

Soon after Rouhani's victory, Stephen Blank noticed that his "government has formulated a new regionalism concept whereby Iran will try to augment its influence in neighboring regions like the Caucasus and Central Asia. The new regionalism policy aimed to overcome that setback to both sides' potential for trade, investment, and mutual influence."[44]

The main factors behind Iran's foreign policy towards Central Asia under the presidency of Hassan Rouhani are:

- the lifting of economic sanctions imposed on Iran;
- further institutionalization of cooperation with Central Asian countries;
- potential for regional hydrocarbon cooperation, especially in case of pipelines and new export routes for landlocked countries of Central Asia;
- cooperation and common interests with Russia in the Caspian Sea region;
- huge potential, strategic importance, and value of Iran for China especially in the framework of the Belt and Road initiative;
- closer cooperation on security issues;
- cultural diplomacy.

On 24 December 2016, after his diplomatic trip across the region, namely to Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan, President Rouhani declared that "establishing close ties with neighbors, especially Central Asia and the Caucasus, is among the Islamic Republic's basic foreign policy principles."[45] He also stated: "Close relations may lead to more detailed consultations and planning, which will in turn result in more resistance against scourges such as insecurity, instability and terrorism that has engulfed the region. Iran plans to revive the ties in the post-sanctions era."[46] As far as specific initiatives and concepts are concerned, the Iranian president negotiated the framework for lifting visa issuance, as well as such issues as culture, academic cooperation, security, active participation in the Eurasian Economic Union, the removal of trade tariffs, agriculture, engineering, and energy projects especially new power plants and dams.

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[44] Blank, Stephen: *Is Iran Making a Comeback in Central Asia? Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, retrieved on 14.10.2017, from https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13055-is-iran-making-a-comeback-in-central-asia?.html.

[45] *Iran prioritizes close ties with Central Asian, Caucasian neighbors.* Mehr News Agency, retrieved 15.10.2017, from http://en.mehrnews.com/news/122233/Iran-prioritizes-close-ties-with-Central-Asian-Caucasian-neighbors.

Nonetheless, despite some progress in case of political relations with post-Soviet republics in Central Asia, Rouhani's Iran also faces some regional problems, for instance, in relations with Tajikistan. In 2016 the bilateral relations with this country were the lowest in the post-Soviet era. One of the reasons for this was connected with Iran's support for the Tajik opposition leader Muhiddin Kabiri in 2015, which was interpreted by the government in Dushanbe as a proof of direct interference in internal affairs of Tajikistan. Taking into consideration the cultural and linguistic connections between these two states, as well as their relatively high level of economic cooperation in the past, such a situation has to be classified as a failure of the current Iranian administration. Although it was not the president but the supreme leader who invited Kabiri to Tehran, it does not change the fact that Rouhani's administration has to deal with consequences of the diplomatic incident.

Interestingly, the change in the framework of Iran-Central Asia political relations is not reflected in economic indicators. For instance, trade turnover between Iran and Kazakhstan was declining between 2014–2016. A relatively good result, amounting to 986 million USD in 2014, decreased to 635 million USD in 2015 and 596 million USD in 2016."[47] What is more, Kazakh-Iranian trade turnover was based mainly on Kazakh exports to Iran. Accordingly, trade turnover between Turkmenistan and Iran was very low compared with Turkmenistan's turnover with other states in the neighborhood, especially Turkey or Georgia.[48] The same phenomenon can be observed in the case of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

Nevertheless, geopolitical determinants should create new opportunities for both sides. For instance, Robert D. Kaplan underlines the fact that "part of Iran's appeal to India is as a viable transit state for Central Asian gas."[49] In the post-JCPOA period, both Iran and its Central Asian partners can only benefit from this and the potential for bilateral cooperation and trade development is huge. The only question is if both sides will be eager to take advantage of geopolitics.

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[46] Ibid.

[47] *Iran, Kazakhstan trade stable*, Iran Daily, retrieved 31.10.2017, from: http://www.iran-daily.com/News/201547.html.

[48] *Turkmenistan*, retrieved 31.10.2017, from https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/tkm/.

[49] Kaplan, Robert D.: *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power.* Random House: New York 2011, p. 14.

Edward Wastnidge quite rightly points out that at the moment Iran "places a great deal of importance on Central Asia, which is further enhanced by its perception of a deep and longstanding historical and cultural relationship with the region. Added to this is the geographic proximity and opportunities afforded by acting as a gateway state, both to and from Central Asia, along with increased Chinese investment as part of its New Silk Road–inspired One Belt, One Road initiative."[50] Taking a closer look at the map, with the planned economic corridors connecting China with Europe, we can see that the Chinese will not be able to succeed without the support of Iran and Central Asian states. The 'northern corridor' is meant to connect China with Germany through the Central Asian states, Russia and Poland, while the 'southern corridor' will cross Central Asia, Iran, Turkey, and the Balkans.[51] On this basis one can notice that China has a vested interest in the promotion of peace and cooperation in the region. The more predictable that Iran and other partners in Central Asia are, the better for the initiative. Any tensions or conflicts in the area may seriously undermine China's position. For this reason, China will probably become the biggest promoter of peace and economic cooperation in Central Asia.

Conclusion

In practice, Iran's political influence in the region has been very limited since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The hypothesis was tested positively in terms of the objectives of the Iranian foreign policy toward Central Asia are formulated ad hoc and do not constitute any coherent strategy. Although the Iranian authorities attempted to change this in the 1990s, they were not successful and the political and economic sanctions imposed by the international community only worsened the situation. Besides, priority was given to the Persian Gulf region instead of the Caspian Sea and Central Asia and Iranian presidents did not prioritize Central Asia in their strategies, although there has been a noticeable change since the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

President Ahmadinejad's administration paid more attention to the region than his predecessors, but he was still more focused on the political developments in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, and rivalry with Saudi Arabia than a constructive policy towards Turkmenistan and other partners. Ideational factors prevailed over pragmatism, although Ahmadinejad's administration proved a few times that it was ready to sacrifice ideology for short-term economic gains. The Tajik-Iranian relations can serve as the best example of such a political strategy.

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[50] Wastnidge, Edward: "Central Asia in the Iranian geopolitical imagination." *Cambridge Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 1 (1), 2017, p. 12.

[51] More see: Cai, Peter: *Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative*. Lowy Institute Sydney, March 2017, retrieved 1.11.2017, from https://www.lowyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/documents/Understanding%20China%E2%80%99s%20Belt%20and%20Road%20Initiative_WEB_1.pdf.

The new approach, as represented by President Rouhani, may open a new chapter in Iran-Central Asia relations. Nevertheless, at least as far as economic relations are concerned, the current change within the Iranian foreign policy towards Central Asia is not reflected in economic indicators, especially increases in trade turnover. On the contrary, one can observe a significant decrease and other regional actors like Turkey or China play a much more important role and even much smaller states like Azerbaijan and Georgia have better economic indicators.

According to Thomas Juneau, "with an increasingly limited margin of maneuver, Iran is likely to be pushed toward greater reliance on spoiling. This, in turn, is likely to intensify the consequences of its policy choices, given that spoiling strategies annoy Iran's neighbors and worsen its isolation."[52] This is one of the main reasons why Rouhani's administration modified Iranian policy towards Central Asian region and both sides can benefit from the change. Yet, at least for the time being, mutual mistrust seems to be the main obstacle and Iran still has to take Russian and Chinese influences in the region into consideration. Without any significant increase in trade turnover with Central Asian states, all of the political initiatives of Iran may be doomed to failure.

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[52] Juneau, Thomas: *Squandered Opportunity: Neoclassical Realism and Iranian Foreign Policy.* Stanford University Press: Stanford 2015, p. 226.

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Magdalena Kania

5. EU Development Assistance to Central Asia: an Interest-driven and Value-driven Hybrid

Abstract: The article presents EU development assistance to Central Asia since 2002, when the first significant documents were adopted. A special focus is given to the year of 2007, when both the Strategy for a New Partnership and the Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia have been adopted, changing a former EU strategy that was interest-driven. In political terms, Central Asian countries have relatively recently attracted more interest from the EU and still remain second-rate beneficiaries of assistance when compared with other recipients of assistance. The academic literature remains scarce on the subject of the EU's patterns of development assistance towards Central Asia. The article provides a timeline of the key steps undertaken by the EU regarding development strategies towards Central Asia. The main questions posed here concern the motives behind the EU's engagement in Central Asia in the context of development assistance. Therefore, the article presents to what extent the EU's development assistance is driven by a value-based approach and to what extent it remains an instrument of the realization of self-interests.

Keywords: EU development assistance, EU-Central Asia relations, normative power, Strategy for a New Partnership to Central Asia

Introduction: Development Assistance of the EU

In recent years, the phenomenon of development assistance has turned into a paradox. This paradox derives from the fact, that despite lack of tangible effects and substantial achievements,[1] the international community expresses constant enthusiasm towards setting increasingly ambitious goals in development assistance. That was the case with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which expired in 2015. Although the UN has labeled MDGs as "the most successful anti-poverty movement in history,"[2] in political and social practice MDGs have been concluded rather as an “unfinished agenda,”[3] or even as a failure in other interpretations.[4] The paradox lies in the fact, that with disregard to the deficiency of MDGs a new set of goals, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has been welcomed by the international community that proclaimed an “exciting time in international development.”[5] This paradox and lack of self-reflection call into question the politically-driven motives behind development assistance policy.

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[1] See more on critics on top-down approaches to development aid as the main pattern of development aid's deliverance in Easterly, William: *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. Penguin Books: New York 2007 [first published 2006].

[2] United Nations: *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015,* retrieved 1.10.2017, from http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/UNDP_MDG_Report_2015.pdf.

The EU policy towards the developing world has been one of the first clearly defined international domains ever since the launch of the European project in the 1950s, with the signing of the Treaty of Rome. Despite that, as noted by Martin Holland and Mathew Doidge, there is a significant imbalance in academic literature, with a relatively limited number of studies devoted to the EU development assistance in comparison with the growing literature on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).[6] However, the distinction between development assistance policy and CFSP as two different forms of external relations, where only CFSP (including Common Security and Defence Policy, CSDP) forms the foreign policy of the EU is an oversimplification. In contrast, to understand the “EU’s peculiar foreign policy structure”[7] in full, one needs to adopt a *sensu largo* approach to foreign policy based upon its multifaceted, multi-method and multi-level character, which in addition to CFSP/CSDP includes trade, development and external environmental policies.[8] Until the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty, development assistance has been a field of a competition and rivalry between former colonial powers, from the early period of France’s dominance in the common development discourse to the shifts in the Communities’ development patterns after the UK joined the EC.[9] The political battle for dominance over the models, discourses and the strategic visions of development policy reached a critical point during the negotiations of the Lomé Convention in 1975,[10] when France and Britain scaled up activities to enhance their negotiation positions to defend their own interests in their former colonies.[11] Currently, due to the ongoing processes of the institutionalization of the development assistance emerging from the Maastricht Treaty and its globalization, development assistance places itself at the top of the EU's external agenda. Today, with the budgets of its Member States (MSs), the EU remains the world's largest donor of official development assistance (ODA). It must be acknowledged, however, that "oft-repeated claim" of the EU as the largest global donor is not an exact depiction of the reality since in political practice most member states have launched their own programs in development assistance, which are perceived as independent from the EU, even though the sum of the EU and member states' budgets are presented as overall Community assistance.[12] The growing presence of the EU and member states in development assistance leads to the situation, where "the EU can rightly claim to be an international leader with significant influence shaping global agendas."[13] It was only in the 1990s that the EU joined global efforts to tackle the international challenges deriving from the state of underdevelopment. In fact, its promising potential was grounded in an institutional dimension, since the EU had at its disposal a wide spectrum of instruments and mechanisms linking development and security.[14]

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[3] Kumar, Sanjiv / Kumar, Neeta / Vivekadhish Saxena: “Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Addressing Unfinished Agenda and Strengthening Sustainable Development and Partnership”. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine* 41 (1), 2016 pp. 1–4.

[4] Cf. Czaja, Stanisław: “Czynniki niedostatecznej realizacji milenijnych celów rozwoju. Analiza globalna”. *Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu* 452, 2016, pp. 115–125.

[5] Mimica, Neven: *New Challenges, Exciting Times,* retrieved 1.10.2017, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/mimica/blog/new-challenges-excitingtimes_en?lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad_flagship3_pulse_read%3BrlcAtyHzTxyONrMDtVJv4A%3D%3D.

[6] Holland, Martin / Doidge, Matthew: *Development Policy of the European Union.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2012, p. 1.

[7] Keukeleire, Stephan / Delreux, Tom: *The Foreign Policy of the European Union.* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2014 [2nd edition], p. 1.

[8] Ibid., p. 11–19.

[9] Cf. Dimier, Véronique: *The Invention of a European Development Aid Bureaucracy. Recycling Empire.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2014.

The EU position towards Central Asian countries was a relatively reluctant one throughout the 1990s. In the early era of post-Soviet independence, Central Asia barely gained any interest from the European Union. The "cautious approach" to Central Asia resulted in the limited presence of Western delegations in the region. Only Germany was represented in all five states, and the first EU delegation to Central Asia was opened in 1994 in Almaty in Kazakhstan.[15] In parallel, flows of development assistance to Central Asia began in 1991 when TACIS (Technical

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[10] The Lomé Convention is an agreement between the European Communities and the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific), which sets principles and objectives of the Communities towards the ACP countries with a focus on development assistance. It replaced the first association between the EC and the ACP countries, drawn up in Cameroon Yaoundé Convention I, II (1963–1975).

[11] Cf. Tod, Philip: *Britain and the Lomé Convention.* In: Cosgrove-Sacks, Carol (ed.): *The European Union and Developing Countries. The Challenges of Globalization.* Macmillan Press: Basingstoke 1998, pp. 61–73.

[12] Bodenstein, Thilo / Faust, Jörg / Furness, Mark: "European Union Development Policy: Collective Action in Times of Global Transformation and Domestic Crisis". *Development Policy Review* 35(4), 2017, p. 443.

[13] Holland, Martin / Doidge, Matthew: op. cit., p. 1.

[14] Merket, Hans: "The EU and the Security-Development Nexus: Bridging the Legal Divide". *European Foreign Affairs Review* 18, 2013, p. 84.

[15] Melvin, Neil: *Introduction.* In: Melvin, Neil (ed.): *Engaging Central Asia. The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Central Asia.* Center for European Policy Studies: Brussels 2008.

Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States)[16] was launched as an EU effort to support transformation and development in the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States. However, under the terms of TACIS, the flow of assistance was asymmetrical. In practice, Central Asian countries could hardly compete with Russia in terms of benefits. Until 2002, €366.3 million was allocated to all five Central Asian countries as a part of the TACIS program (the overall EU assistance totaled €944.4 million at that time),[17] while Russia has received almost €2 billion until 2000.[18]

In recent years, the EU has shown a growing interest in closer cooperation with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. A new approach to common relations combines political and economic factors, regarding the specific geopolitical location of Central Asia. That approach has been implemented for the EU development assistance to Central Asia. Derived from the normative stance that highly developed societies have an imperative to assist those which are underdeveloped and developing, the EU adopts a broad interpretation of development assistance, from the promotion of economic development and sustainable energy to providing support for good governance and stability in the region. However, Central Asia plays rather a second-rate role in the EU's directions of development assistance. All five countries are to be found between 85th (Tajikistan) and 127th (Turkmenistan) place in the top-beneficiaries rank.[19] The EU, together with its member states, only remained top donor of ODA in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, while in other countries the EU has to compete with the Russian Federation (Kyrgyzstan), Japan (Uzbekistan) and the United States. Table 5.1 presents the dispersion of ODA to Central Asian countries between 2007–2018, comparing the EU donors (EU institutions and the EU largest country-donors).

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[16] More on TACIS In: Grigoriadis, Theocharis: "Aid Effectiveness and Donor Preferences: European Aid Systems in the Former Soviet Union, 1992–2007." *Journal of International Development* 25 (1), 2013, pp. 45–66; Raszkowski, Andrzej: "Program TACIS w państwach postsowieckich." *Ekonomia = Economics*, 16 (4), 2011, pp. 436–445.

[17] European Commission, *Strategy Paper 2002–2006 & Indicative Programme 2002–2004 for Central Asia*, October 2002.

[18] Development Researchers' Network – Linden Consulting Partnership: *An Evaluation of the TACIS Country Programme in Russia. Final Synthesis Report.* Report provided for the European Commission.

[19] Data reflects the top beneficiaries of EU development assistance in 2015 and comprises summarized budgets on ODA of the European institutions and budgets of member states.

Table 5.1: The EU and non-EU donors to Central Asia between 2007–2018 (in million EUR)

	Kazakhstan	**Kyrgyzstan**	**Tajikistan**	**Turkmenistan**	**Uzbekistan**
European Commission	124.03	320.99	243.62	43.72	166.71
Germany	184.02	320.54	269.83	13.94	249.58
United Kingdom	36.55	71.83	100.68	3.72	17.42
France	37.16	8.85	30.64	2.57	32.41
Italy	0.81	0.34	1.07	0.11	0.72
Sweden	2.04	29.74	30.99	0.12	2.12

Source: European Commission: EU Aid Explorer. OECD Data Sources, Beneficiary: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, retrieved 1.10.2017, from https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/DevelopmentAtlas.do.

The article presents the EU development assistance to Central Asia in the period from 2002 onwards, regarding the first significant documents on the common relations adopted. A special focus is given to the year 2007, when both the Strategy for a New Partnership and Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia were concluded, changing the EU's former interest-driven strategy. As Central Asian countries have only recently attracted more interest from the EU, the literature on the subject remains scarce. The bulk of the literature on development assistance policy in the EU context tends to ignore a relation-oriented approach, focusing more on the development assistance as a policy, rather than as a tool in mutual relations between the EU and particular recipients. As a consequence, the literature on the EU development assistance is biased towards an investigation of particular dimensions: institutional, outlining actors, institutions, and mechanisms of the EU assistance;[20] political, analyzing processes of decision-making in the EU development policy;[21] correlational, analyzing linkages between development assistance and trade,[22] security,[23] or migration.[24] In terms of the evolution of concepts behind the EU development assistance, the literature covers a broad spectrum of studies from the historical interest-related assistance of the Communities[25] to the investigation of particular values behind the EU assistance, as the promotion of gender equality or civil society.[26] However, there is a tangible asymmetry between institution-oriented and relation-oriented analysis of the EU development assistance policy. The latter gives priority to studies on relations between the EU and ACP countries (Africa-Caribbean-Pacific).[27] This angle, however, seems to be justified since assistance towards the ACP countries remains a core direction of EU assistance flows, having regarded a key development assistance agreement of the EU – Cotonou Agreement with the ACP countries signed in 2000. Only recently have the bilateral relations between the EU and Central Asia been brought up on the academic agenda, asking the question of the effectiveness of mutual cooperation including comparisons with other international actors.[28]

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[20] Cf. Gänzle, Stefan / Grimm, Sven / Makhan, Davina (eds.): *The European Union and Global Development: An 'Enlightened Superpower' in the Making?*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2012 (part I); Holland, Martin / Doidge, Matthew: *Development Policy of the European Union*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2012.

[21] Cf. Carbone, Maurizio: *The European Union and International Development: The Politics of Foreign Aid*. Routledge: London and New York 2007.

The main question posed in the article concerns the motives behind the EU's engagement in Central Asia. The article tries to explore to what extent the EU's development assistance is driven by the value-based approach and to what extent it remains an instrument of the realization of self-interests. Due to the fact that EU development assistance policy is highly institutionalized, and the external relations of the EU are regulated in specific documents, the article adopts the analysis of relevant documents, strategies, papers and statistical data were implemented as a main method. To this end, qualitative context analysis has been implemented, while as a research technique with a high degree of importance in social science allows to concern more on meanings, contexts, and intentions, regarding that “content analysis is an *empirically grounded method*, exploratory in processes, and predictive or inferential in intent.”[29] To answer the question, the article adopts a structure that would allow those elements to be extracted which are related to self-interest and those which are embedded in the value-driven approach. In the first part, the article deals with the general theoretical observations on the notions of interest and values in international relations as deriving from IR theories. It allows the conceptualization of more general patterns of interest-driven and normative-driven international actors’ behavior. Built upon the theoretical observation, the hypothesis stated at the beginning assumes that since the EU acts as a non-state actor in international relations with an ambition to play a role of a normative power worldwide, it would be more prone to implementing a value-driven approach to its development assistance policy towards the developing world, including Central Asia. The following section provides an overview of the context in which the analysis is made, introducing the increasing relevance of Central Asia as a region, before, based on a detailed content analysis of documents, it shows how both values and interests were embedded in the official documents and strategies of the development assistance of the EU to Central Asia regarding different periods.

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[22] Cf. Faber, Gerrit / Orbie, Jan (eds.): *The European Union Trade Politics and Development. Everything But Arms Unravelled.* Routledge: London and New York 2007.

[23] Cf. Keukeleire, Stephan / Raube, Kolja: "The Security-Development Nexus and Securitization in the EU's Policies Towards Developing Countries". *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 26 (3), 2013, pp. 556–572; Youngs, Richard: "Fusing Security and Development: Just Another Euro-platitude?". *Journal of European Integration* 30 (3), 2008, pp. 419–437.

[24] Cf. Lavenex, Sandra / Kunz Rahel: "The Migration-Development Nexus in EU External Relations". *Journal of European Integration* 30 (3), 2008, pp. 439–457.

[25] Cf. Dimier, Veronique: op. cit.

[26] Cf. Lister Marjorie / Carbone Maurizio (eds.): *New Pathways in International Development Gender and Civil Society in EU Policy.* Ashgate: Aldershot and Burlington 2006.

[27] Cf. Flint, Adrian: *Trade, Poverty and the Environment The EU, Cotonou and the African-Caribbean-Pacific Bloc.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2008.

[28] Cf. Kulipanova, Elena: *Regional Cooperation, External Actors and Power Relations in Central Asia. The Cases of the Asian Development Bank and the EU.* Nomos: Baden-Baden 2013; Voloshin, Georgiy: *The European Union's Normative Power in Central Asia. Promoting Values and Defending Interests.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2014; Laruelle, Marlene / Peyrouse, Sebastien: *Regional Organizations in Central Asia: Patterns of Interaction, Dilemmas of Efficiency.* University of Central Asia, Institute of Public Policy and Administration, Working Paper no 10, 2012.

Interest-based vs Value-based Approach to Development Assistance

Realist Approach and the Concept of Interest

As the motive behind actors’ behavior in international relations, the concept of interest is laden with the expectation of potential benefits and has been placed at the heart of debates over international politics. Within these debates, the notion of interest *per se* is predominantly merged with that of the state, so that it functions as a *national interest*. However, the conceptualization of the term within various IR theories and paradigms requires one to adopt a certain dichotomy due to the vagueness of the meaning behind the term. Joseph Frankel, in his monograph on the notion of national interests, distinguishes two analytical approaches to national interest – an objective and a subjective approach. The former emphasizes “objectively definable yardsticks and criteria”, while the latter points out to the “changing pluralistic set of subjective preferences.”[30] The objective criteria, as (geography, culture, history, resource, demographic factors) form goals in foreign policy but, as noted by Scott Burchill, they are not created but rather discovered by policymakers. Subsequently, subjective interests rely on changing the preferences of specific actors in the process of policy-making.[31] The dichotomy proposed by Frankel, despite being favorable in terms of policy-making analysis, lacks the requisite theoretical angle which explains the role of an interest in actors' behavior. In academic disputes, national interest plays a significant role in the "intellectual orientation" of various IR theories, from being a foundation of a theoretical approach, as in the case of realism, to a tool to rationalize political decisions.[32]

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[29] Krippendorff, Klaus: *Content Analysis. An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Sage Publication: Thousand Oakes, London, New Delhi 2004 [2nd edition], p. xvii.

[30] Frankel, Jopseph: *National Interest*. Key Concept in Political Science Series, Palgrave Macmillan: London 1970, pp. 16–17.

During the Cold War, the concept of (national) interest has been indicated by the dominant realist paradigm as an uncontested variable defining international activity.[33] As "the main signpost" for realism, interest interpreted in terms of power has been perceived as an objective category,[34] universally valid, and "unaffected by the circumstances of time and place."[35] The concept of interest has evolved in parallel with the evolution of the realist approach. For neo-realists, such as Kenneth Waltz, the concept of interest differed from the way it was captured by classical realism. As a product of the structure of IR, it has remained "an automatic signal commanding state leaders when and where to move."[36] In fact, such strong commitments to the role of power and interest have led to the oversimplification of the realist tradition. If the reduction of realism to the caricature of pure immoralists (as pointed out by Anthony F. Land[37]) was correct, then there would be no place in the twenty-first century for such anachronistic visions. However, any claims that the late Cold War shift in paradigms provided a basis for the concept of interest to be abandoned, or at least reduced in meaning, appear to be simply wrong. In contrast, realism remains a part of "our political reality and is integral to our discourse on public affairs,"[38] so that the recognition of self-interest is a first step towards defining strategic foreign policy.

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[31] Burchill, Scott: *The National Interest in International Relations Theory.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2005, p. 3.

[32] Ibid., p. 4.

[33] Cf. Morgenthau, Hans: *In Defense of the National Interest. A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy.* Knopf: New York 1951; Marshall, C. B.: "National Interest and National Responsibility". *Annals of the American Society of Political and Social Science* 282, 1952, pp. 1–8.

[34] However, it must be acknowledged that within the realist thought, there was a group of analysts denying the existence of objective reality, who defined interests in a more subjective way. See more: Burchill, Scott: op. cit., p. 40.

[35] Morgenthau, Hans: *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York 1950.

[36] Jackson, Robert / Sorensen, Georg: *Introduction to International Relations. Theories and Approaches,* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2007 [first published 1999], p. 78.

[37] "Realist are either amoral analysts of the international system who focus only on power on immoral Machiavellians who see nothing wrong with using violence and deception to advance the national interests": Lang, Anthony: *Morgenthau, Agency, and Aristotle.* In: Williams, Michael (ed.): *Realism Reconsidered. The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations.* Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, p.18

On a theoretical basis, the perception of interest as opposed to morality is "the fundamental error", as noted by Hans Morgenthau, since in international politics:

> "[t]he choice is not between moral principles and the national interests devoid of moral dignity, but between one set of moral principles divorced from political reality and another set of moral principles derived from political reality."[39]

For realists, the notion of an interest is traditionally manifested in the field of economics and security as two sides of a coin of power. It is a realism-grounded assumption, that the first principle of foreign policy is "the self-preservation or the well-being of the nation."[40] In this context, security is "one primary national interest in relations with other nations"[41] or in other words, it gains "the primacy in all political life … in human motivation."[42] However, it would not be enough to assume that security and power are the only essentials of realism. Instead, realism stresses that other "more noble" ends would be unattainable if security and power were not provided first.[43] The main assumption here is that the world is in a constant state of anarchy and, therefore, states seek to maximize their security. For that reason, states adopt foreign policy instrument which are aimed at strengthening their domestic security. In this logic, power is not a supreme value of states but an instrument deriving from "security dilemma" correlated with the international anarchy.[44] The security dimension is supplemented by economic factors affecting the state's position in international relations. In that context, security policies have been fully designed to preserve or increase the level of power, since the "standing in the international community has traditionally been based on military and economic power."[45] The ongoing processes of economic globalization which foster processes of decentralization seem not to change the position of realists. Contrary, realists are biased towards emphasizing the role of the economics as a power of states, and therefore a crucial element of (national) interest.[46]

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[38] Kratochwil, Friedrich: "On the Notion of 'Interest' in International Relations". *International Organizations* 36 (1), 1982, p. 2.

[39] Morgenthau, Hans: *In Defense…*, p. 33.

[40] Zimmer, Louis: *The Vietnam War Debate. Hans J. Morgenthau and the Attempt to Halt the Drift into Disaster.* Lexington Books: New York 2011, p. xxiv.

[41] Morgenthau, Hans: *A New Foreign Policy for the United States.* Frederik A. Praeger Publishers: New York, Washington, London 1969, p. 241.

[42] Gilpin, Robert: *The Richness of Tradition of Political Realism.* In: Keohane, Robert (ed.): *Neorealism and Its Critics.* Columbia University Press, New York 1986, p. 305.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Waltz, Kenneth: *Man, the State, and the War.* Columbia University Press, New York 2001 [first published 1959], p. 37.

[45] Lebow, Richard: Fear, "Interest and Honour: Outlines of a Theory of International Relations". *International Affairs* 82 (3), 2006, p. 435.

The evident shortcomings of Cold War realism, specifically its state-centric approach, have been widely criticized in the literature.[47] The limitations of this chapter do not allow us to develop more arguments to this end, yet it must be acknowledged that the realist tradition in the post-Cold War period is far from fading. In fact, the studies on security "must therefore engage with realism not because it is true, but it is influential."[48] Taking this assumption, the question arises as to how a realist and neorealist concept of interest may be implemented in the theory of development assistance. Looking at the practice of development assistance, a self-interest-driven development assistance is not a new phenomenon. Historically, as the processes of decolonization began in African countries, the former colonies "combined their new-found altruism with a hefty dollop of self-interests,"[49] with the clear goal of maintaining their strategic geopolitical influence. However, the straightforward implementation of realist logic to development assistance poses certain serious shortcomings. First, there is the issue of actorness. The realist approach to international relations claims that sovereign states are the main actors, while non-state actors tend to be marginalized. This state-centric approach does not fit the reality of global development assistance since states are no longer the only key players in that domain. State-centric ODA still predominates with many non-European donors, such as Japan, USA, or Canada. International organizations, including the EU, United Nations and other regional organizations, have raised their engagement in development assistance since the early 1990s. In fact, even though the EU does not act in development assistance as a group of states, but rather as a single actor, the political ambitions of the EU fostered through the growing role in shaping international ODA allow us to assume that the EU may implement the logic of an interest-driven foreign policy, despite being a non-state actor. The question is how, in practice, development assistance may serve as an instrument of the realization of self-interest. First, due to the establishment of interconnections between donors and recipients, development assistance strengthens the position of donors in recipient countries. The asymmetrical relations between donors and recipients allows the former to take up the role of actors that are more developed, wealthier and mightier in political terms. Second, development assistance enhances the dependence of recipients on donor countries in economic terms, as flows of money are rarely unconditioned. Third, donors are free to condition aid as they set objectives and goals to follow. Fourth, donors are free to define the areas in which they are willing to help regarding their own interests. For that reason, they are more prone to invest in security programs, economic development, or in business and investments improvements, while they may expect certain returns. For realists, if development assistance is an interest-driven instrument, it first and foremost takes into account the geopolitical relevance of potential beneficiaries in terms of security and economic benefits.

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[46] See more: Burchill, S.: op. cit., pp. 52–61.

[47] See: Donnelly, Jack: *Realism and International Relations.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2004.

[48] Booth, Ken: *Theory of World Security.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2007, pp. 32–33.

[49] Moyo, Dambisa: *Dead Aid. Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York 2009, p. 31.

The interest-driven approach to development assistance at the international level was intensely questioned in the 1990s, when global donors began to abandon the idea of tied aid. In particular, the concept of donor benefits from development assistance was long debated within the framework of development policy.[50] The concept of tied aid refers to a situation when a donor only offers aid under the condition that the aid will be used to procure goods and services from the provider. Current trends in development assistance run counter to such commitments, which may be contradictory to the normative dimension of development assistance. Discursively, development assistance is all about humanitarian aspects instead of reciprocal economic rights or privileges. If development assistance is meant to bring economic returns, then donors would be encouraged to invest in those countries where they could take advantage of economic benefits with minimal concerns over the social and political situation of a recipient country. For that reason, emerging markets may be viewed as desirable targets, with the assumption that these formerly established economic ties will result in dynamic economic relations. Following the logic of realism, this would not be about abandoning more noble values, but rather an economic-value clash where the potential benefits of the former would marginalize the latter.

Security-Development Nexus

Having recognized the links between geopolitical relevance and security issues, the EU has been constantly implementing a coherent narrative merging security with development. In the academic literature, the aforementioned phenomenon has been labeled as the *security-development nexus.* It is an ongoing debate, however, to what extent the security-development nexus is a newly emerged practice. For some researchers, the links between security and development have remained an integral part of foreign policy practices throughout history, even though historically these two concepts were debated separately.[51] For others, this nexus was a product of liberal thought.[52] In 1994, the UN Report on Human Development introduced the need to seek a new paradigm in security, one that would meet the challenges faced by developing countries. It paved the way past the traditional state-centric meaning of security which was military in nature, while security became an integral part of human development.[53] Such a clear manifestation of this merger is discernible in the humanitarian interventions which were led in the 1990s. Third parties were involved in security interventions in civil conflicts and other domestic crises, while simultaneously the specific socio-political solutions (democracy, human rights, good governance) were part of such interventions. Coercive interventions, followed by the flows of development assistance, bound together the concepts of security and development. As stated by Bjørn Hettne, the "justification of external interventions can be seen as an extension of international development assistance into a more coercive form."[54] The impetus towards bringing security and development as two policies with one common objective was then accelerated in the aftermath of 9/11 and due to the decreasing significance of the liberal project related to the Washington consensus.[55]

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[50] Cf. European Commission: *Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament. Untying: Enhancing the effectiveness of aid*, Brussels, 18.11.2002, COM (2002) 639 final.

[51] See more: Hettne, Bjorn: "Development and Security: Origins and Future". *Security Dialogue* 41 (1), 2010, pp. 31–52.

The EU followed global trends in recognizing the correlation between security and development, explicitly expressing its relevance in several documents and strategies on development assistance. Due to the conceptual strength of the nexus, the EU even ignored the fact that, as noted by Hans Merket, it collided with the EU's delimitation of competences due to the legal complexity of its implementation.[56] In the European Security Strategy of 2003, security was defined as "a precondition of development", while "conflict not only destroys infrastructure (….) it also encourages criminality, deters investment and makes normal economic activity impossible."[57] As a result, developing countries are caught in an insecurity-poverty trap. The following Strategy of 2015 was more explicit in merging security and development than any strategic document before. It sets "a joined-up union" as a goal in external relations. As it stated:

> We must become more joined up across our external policies, between Member States and EU institutions, and between the internal and external dimensions of our policies.

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[52] Jahn, Beate: "Barbarian Thoughts: Imperialism and the Philosophy of John Stuart Mill". *Review of International Studies* 31 (3), 2005, pp. 599–618.

[53] UNDP: *Human Development Report 1994*, retrieved 1.10.2017, from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf.

[54] Hettne, Bjorn: op. cit., p. 44.

[55] Kilby, Patrick: "The Changing Development Landscape in the First Decade of the 21st Century and Its Implications for Development Studies". *Third World Quarterly* 33 (6), 2012, p. 1002.

[56] Merket, Hans: op. cit., pp. 83–102.

[57] European Council: *European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World*, retrieved 1.10.2017, from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf, 2003, p. 2.

> This is particularly relevant to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, migration, and security, notably counter-terrorism.[58]

The strategic relevance of security and development has also been expressed in strategic documents on development assistance. Therefore, in the European Consensus on Development, the EU has stressed that insecurity should be perceived as a challenge to achieving the MDGs and that "[s]ecurity and development are important and complementary aspects of EU relations with third countries."[59] The nexus has been strongly rooted in EU discourse and has repeatedly cropped up on the agenda of EU documents and strategies.[60]

Normative Theory and Value-driven Politics

The specific nature and common practice of development assistance do not permit the reduction of the policy to solely the political and economic realization of self-interests. Taking into account a theoretical perspective derived from development theories, the notion of development has been interpreted as a teleological and approachable goal. However, the very meaning of development has altered significantly. Development reduced to the factors of economic growth has been rejected as overly narrow, starting from the early phase of the modernization theory, the dominant paradigm in development thinking in the 1950s. Apart from the economic dimension development was perceived in social terms as a step-by-step process of modernization which targeted countries and societies. Consequently, the concept of development combined aspects of economic growth and political transformation. These overlapping aspects were grounded on the assumption that "the phenomenon of industrialism could not have come about without a supportive social structure and psychological types of men."[61] The notion of modern-to-be as applied to non-modern developing countries requires modern solutions to the political structure of the country and the well-being of its citizens. Modern states place human beings at their centers, in the meaning that people are regarded as "the source of inspiration and guidance" for the governments.[62] In that context, the concept of democracy related to the equality of people, accompanied by raising public engagement to improve social qualities in sectors such as healthcare or education, has become an inherent part of development. In that sense, development was not a neutral concept but a value-laden one, reflecting particular normative and desirable ends to be achieved.

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[58] European External Action Service: *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, 2006, retrieved 1.10.2017, from http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf.

[59] European Commission: *The European Consensus on Development*, 2006, retrieved 1.10.2017, from https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/publication-the-european-consensus-on-development-200606_en.pdf, p. 23.

[60] Cf.: Keukeleire, Stephan / Raube, Kolja: op. cit.

[61] Varma, Baidya: *The Sociology an Politics of Development. A Theoretical Study.* Routledge: London 2011, p. 121.

[62] Gilman, Nils: *Mandarins of the Future. Modernization Theory in Cold War America.* Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore and London 2004, p. 1–2

A concentration on values in international relations, highlighting the paramount importance of the moral dimension in relations with other political actors, remains the central part of normative theory in IR. It must be acknowledged that some academics are reluctant to recognize normative theory as a distinct paradigm, whilst others show the importance of reflections on normative IR theory as providing an ethical dimension to IR studies.[63] For the former, normative theory is perceived as synonymous with classic theory, with the exception that, as stressed by Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen "it reaches farther into political theory and moral philosophy" of IR. Normative theory tends to be interpreted in opposition to empirical theory, as the distinction derives from the conceptual framework in which they are embedded. The assumption is that the former is based on the ideal world of values and the latter is a theory deriving from facts. Normative theory rejects that distinction as misleading.[64] According to normative theorists, the normative questions regarding international relations require making "judgments about what *ought* to be done", and while these judgments are based upon ideational objects, the answers cannot be interpreted from "pointing to the way things are in the world."[65] In such a broad interpretation, one may conclude that all IR theories are normative, since one could always find a perception of moral responsibility behind an actor's motivation, even if that responsibility is limited to the clarification of national interest to citizens.[66] Since this logic leads to a ridiculous conclusion, a more precise clarification of normative theory is needed. Molly Cochran limits the subject of normative IR theory to the investigation of criteria and standards in ethical judgment and the aim of seeking principles which are shared by the international community. As actors operate in international relations in a relational way, there are always "reason for obligation owed in international practice" going far beyond one's self-interest.[67] In this context, self-interest is in contradiction to moral obligation, since the latter is exercised not with the purpose to achieve particular benefits but to fulfill the expectation imposed by the international community through specific ethical principles. In parallel with theoretical debates, the relevance of normative theory in IR has been fostered by the activity of the United Nations. It is assumed that by setting principles and legal providing documents, the UN focuses the attention of states on normative issues, such as democracy or human rights, as the basis of international relations.[68]

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[63] Cf. Cochran, Molly: *Normative Theory in International Relations. A Pragmatic Approach.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2004.

[64] See more: Jackson, Robert /Sorensen, Georg: op. cit., pp. 297–299.

[65] Frost, Mervyn: *Ethics in International Relations. A Constitutive Theory.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2001, p. 2.

[66] Cochran, Molly: op. cit., p. 1.

[67] Ibid., p. 2.

The EU as a Normative Power

In the case of the European Union, with its politically and discursively expressed commitment to values which manifests itself within the framework of development assistance in a tangible way, it remains inextricably linked to the EU soft-power international identity (called by some authors a civilian power).[69] In political practice, this soft-power identity depicts the EU as an international actor able to influence other actors by means other than military. In terms of political means, there is a special place for home-generated norms. In light of the relatively low efficiency of military instruments and mechanisms, the EU extends its international performance as an international promoter of norms. In that context, the words of Jose Manuel Barroso should be interpreted that "in terms of normative power … we [the EU] are one of the most important, if not the most important normative power in the world."[70] Normative power is the ability to influence other states through home-made values and norms. For Edward Carr, it would start with the power over opinion, as distinct from military and economic powers; for Duchene it has been represented in the political atmosphere of founding fathers, whose ideals have flown over Western Europe; for Johan Galtung "ideological power" considered as "the power of ideas" has been as crucial as other dimension, while "ideas penetrate and shape the will of the power-recipient."[71]

Human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are the core concepts of the EU value-based international identity. However, the concept of democracy is the most ambiguous in political terms, since there is no official definition of democracy provided by the EU which would be a guiding principle in the promotion of democracy. Instead, typically human rights, fundamental freedoms, rule of law, accountable government and processes of democratization are mentioned as essentials in the promotion of democracy.[72] The EU Treaties have laid down the guiding principles and politically motived priorities in the EU external relations. As stated in article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union, the EU "is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights." Such recognition serves as a certain value-laden superstructure of particular political activities undertaken by the EU. It is explicitly understood that the EU should be obliged to promote human rights globally (TEU, article 5 and 21). A strong commitment to the values of democracy, human rights explicitly reflects a clear desire to assist those states and societies who are on their way to domestic political and economic transformation which has the ultimate goal of them functioning as open and robust societies. Consequently, the EU's efforts towards strengthening the rule of law and raising the significance of the human rights agenda in developing countries serves as a strategy with the aim of helping to "uphold ideational factors."[73] Therefore, as expected, the spill-over effect would be a consequence of development assistance programs. A number of bilateral programs have been established, including sectoral dialogues and development assistance, through which the EU means to push recipients towards adopting particular values and standards. This is perhaps the best reflection of the EU's image as both civilian and normative power "intent to spreading norms and principles abroad."[74]

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[68] Ibid., pp. 4–6.

[69] Cf. Bull, Hedley: "Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms". *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21 (2), 1982, pp. 149–164; Manners, Ian: "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms". *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40 (2), 2002, pp. 235–258; Duchene, Francois: *The European Communities and Uncertainties of Interdependence.* In: Kohnstamm, Max / Hager, Wolfgang (eds.): *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign-Policy Problems before the European Community.* Palgrave: Basingstoke, London 1983; Smith, Karen: "The End of Civilian Power EU: A Welcome Demise or Cause of Concern". *The International Spectator* 35 (2), 2000, pp. 11–28.

[70] Barroso, Jose Manuel: *John Peterson interviews the European Commission Presiden*t, 17 July 2007, retrieved 1.10.2017, from http://www.eu-consent.net/library/BARROSO-transcript.pdf, p. 4.

[71] Carr, Edward (1962); Duchene, Francois (1973); Galtung, Johan (1973). All cited by Manners, Ian: op. cit., p. 239.

EU Development Assistance to Asia: Overlapping Values and Interests

The Newly Re-emerged Relevance of Central Asia

The relevance of Central Asia as a region is strongly related to its geographical location and the socio-economic situation of particular countries. From the geopolitical perspective, Central Asian countries are of great strategic importance due to their specific location at the crossroads of China, Russia, Iran and Afghanistan. From the economic perspective, they are important players as producers of energy and in the context of their mineral resources. Concerning the latter, international attention has typically been oriented towards their fossil reserves, which are significant in the Caspian Sea and on the territory of Kazakhstan and

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[72] Omelicheva, Maryia: *Competing Perspectives on Democracy and Democratization: Assessing Alternative Models of Democracy Promoted in Central Asian States.* In: Wetzel, Anne / Orbie, Jan / Bossuyt, Fabienne (eds.): *Comparative Perspectives on the Substance of EU Democracy Promotion.* Routledge, London and New York 2017, p. 62.

[73] Casarini, Nicola: *Remaking Global Order. The Evolution of Europe-China Relations and its Implications for East Asia and the United States.* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2009, p. 41.

[74] Ibid., p. 57.

Turkmenistan.[75] Central Asia varies in terms of the socio-economic situation. The DAC list of ODA recipients classifies Central Asian countries as between the categories of lower-middle-income countries and territories (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan) and upper-middle-income countries and territories (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan). The only exception is Tajikistan, which is classified as a low-income country.[76] Following that, the Human Development Index (HDI) of 2016 classifies two countries – Kazakhstan (56th) and Uzbekistan (105th) as countries with a high human level of development, while three others – Turkmenistan (111th), Kyrgyzstan (120th) and Tajikistan (129th) are classified as countries with a medium level of human development.[77]

The shift in the EU's interest in Central Asia began in the early twenty-first century and was driven by two factors. First, security concerns arose over Central Asian countries in the aftermath of the Global War on Terror which was launched in 2001. Due to its geographical location, Central Asia became strategically involved in counter-terrorist operations. US airbases were established in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, whilst the Germans were present in Uzbekistan and France in Tajikistan.[78] Moreover, the enlargement of the EU in 2004 shortened the distance between Central Asia and the EU, leading to concerns regarding EU internal security. Central Asia became a challenge to EU security due to the weakness and instability of the Central Asian states, the rising threat of Islamic extremism, and drug trafficking through the corridors of Central Asia.[79] Second, the greater interest of the EU in Central Asia was motivated by political and economic reasons, concerning energy supply routes. In light of the gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine in 2006, the EU attempted to diversify its energy supplies and expressed its willingness to speed up the Nabucco gas pipeline project to get access to gas from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.[80] The commercial and strategic priorities in Central Asia, ignored throughout the 1990s, were finally recognized by policy-makers in Brussels.[81] Most recently, Central Asia has acquired a new strategic relevance due to China's project of the New Silk Road, placing Central Asian countries as a bridge between China and Europe, which revived the potential of the region and re-emerged reminiscences of great powers' game in Central Asia.[82]

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[75] European Commission, *Strategy Paper…*.

[76] OECD: *DAC List of ODA Recipients*, 2014, retrieved 1.10.2017, from http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC%20List%20of%20ODA%20Recipients%202014%20final.pdf.

[77] UNDP: *Human Development Report 2016. Human Development for Everyone*, retrieved 1.10.2017, from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016_human_development_report.pdf.

[78] Melvin, Neil: op. cit., p. 3.

[79] Cf. Kimmage, Daniel: *Security Challenges in Central Asia: Implications for the EU's Enlargement Strategy.* In: Melvin, Neil (ed.): *Engaging Central Asia. The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Central Asia.* Center for European Policy Studies, Brussels 2008, pp. 9–19.

[80] Hoffmann, Katharina: "The EU in Central Asia: Successful Good Governance Promotion?". *Third World Quarterly* 31 (1), 2010, p. 95.

The EU development assistance to Central Asia has evolved in parallel to the processes of the strengthening of political cooperation between the EU and Central Asian countries. The TACIS program has been active since the 1990s, but gained special attention only after 2001 with the adoption of the Strategy Paper for Central Asia 2002–2006. A milestone has been marked in 2007, when the European Council adopted the Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia with the purpose of highlighting priorities for a new period of multilateral cooperation. Following that, the former program of development assistance (the TACIS, aimed at supporting the transition of Central Asia after they gained independence) was replaced with the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The overall strategy towards development assistance in Central Asia was outlined in the Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the Period 2007–2013. In 2012, the Strategy for a New Partnership was reviewed by the European Council. Most recently, the EU committed itself to increase its funding to around €1 billion of financial support to programs in Central Asia in the period of 2014–2020.[83]

New Impulse in the EU-Central Asia Relations (2002–2006)

In 2002, the EU adopted a Strategy Paper for Central Asia 2002–2006 and launched a TACIS Indicative Program for the period of 2002–2004, that was addressed to five Central Asian countries.[84] The budget of the following program was estimated at €150 million euro, with an annual allocation of €50 million. As a strategic document, it indicated some of the specific issues Central Asia faces in terms of development and security challenges. The Strategy reveals Central Asian countries as ones which are lacking progress in democratic transition, without good records of implementation of human rights commitments, threatened by the ongoing processes of Islamic radicalization and the proliferation of weapon of mass destruction, and which struggle against poor economic records, business and investment climates and economic poverty of society. Not surprisingly, the assistance agenda was dominated by security and economic issues and the value-based approach, despite some references, played rather a marginal role. The European assistance strategy was designed "to promote the stability and security of the countries of Central Asia and to assist in their pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction."[85] The promotion of a democratic transition and human rights, despite being stressed as an overarching objective, played a secondary role in light of security concerns. Such a strong commitment to security and economic issues with a minor attention to both human rights and good governance should be interpreted through the context in which strategy has been concluded. In the post 9/11 international environment, the EU manifested its full commitment to the anti-terrorism coalition. In political terms, it presents the EU as a full-fledged actor taking responsibility for tackling global challenges. The EU interests in Central Asia are clearly expressed in the Strategy of 2002. A strong interest in promoting peaceful political and economic development of Central Asia frames the EU engagement in Central Asia. As stated, the main strategic goals to achieve in the region are the "stability and security of the countries of Central Asia" and "sustainable economic development and poverty reduction."[86] Security, however, has a domestic dimension for the EU. Due to the enlargement of the EU, EU security has been challenged by the threat of terrorism possibly spreading from Central Asia. Moreover, Central Asian countries serve as a transit route of drugs to Western Europe from Afghanistan. Accordingly, economic interests are expressed clearly in the agenda and, having set economic development as a priority, the EU admits that it "already has sizeable economic interest in Central Asia" and as a major consumer of energy, the EU "will take an interest in the development of Caspian energy resources and safe transit routes."[87] As predicted, the latter will guarantee a diversification of supply for the EU. The EU support for the implementation of market-oriented reforms in Central Asian countries is built upon the assumption that, in the long term perspective, reforms will open new markets for the European investors. As a part of a greater effort, the EU has set itself the goal of integrating Central Asia into "the world economy and with Europe". The expectation towards opening new markets in terms of import-export balance is not surprising since the balance in trade flowing between the EU and Central Asian countries has always been low.[88] In terms of normative dimensions, values such as human rights, good governance, and democratization were presented in the Strategy of 2002. However, they remained isolated from the tracks of promotion of security and economic development. The EU has supported human rights through the different channels of cooperation, including cooperation with other international organizations. However, it must be acknowledged that, despite the declaratory recognition of relatively poor records of human rights in Central Asia, no tangible political pressure has been imposed from the side of the EU towards Central Asia in that period.

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[81] Cooley, Alexander: "Principles in the Pipeline: Managing Transatlantic Values and Interests in Central Asia". *International Affairs* 83 (6), 2008, pp. 1173–1188.

[82] Cf. Zhi, Wang: "China's New Silk Road Strategy and Foreign Policy Toward Central Asia". *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 38, 2016, pp. 69–77; Bessler, Patrick: *China's "New Silk Road" Focus on Central Asia.* EU-Asia Economic Governance Forum, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung 2015; Zimmerman, Thomas: *The New Silk Roads: China, the U.S., and the Future of Central Asia.* Center on International Cooperation, New York University 2015.

[83] European External Action Service: *European Union- Central Asia Ministerial Meeting*, 21.12.2015, retrieved 1.10.2017, from http://eueuropaeeas.fpfis.slb.ec.europa.eu:8084/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/8281/european-union-central-asia-ministerial-meeting_en.

[84] European Commission, *Strategy Paper….*

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[85] Ibid., p. 17.

[86] Ibid., p. 3.

[87] Ibid., p. 18.

[88] Cf. European Commission: *European Union, Trade in goods with Central Asia 5*, 2017, retrieved 1.10.2017, from http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/november/tradoc_151896.pdf.

New Vision and a New Strategy: 2007–2013

Adopted under the German Presidency, the Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia of 2007[89] and Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007–2013[90] were expected to bring about a change in relations between the EU and Central Asia. As an opening, a new chapter, the idea behind it was to reduce the interest-driven dimension of relations, and to give the priority to the promotion of values in political and in social spheres. Security and economics still remain priorities, albeit no longer unconditioned. As declared, the clarification of the EU commitments and interest requires human rights, good governance, and democracy to be taken into account. Moreover, the new approach to development assistance in Central Asia rejects a one-size-fits-all approach, having recognized the differences between particular countries in regions and their diverse needs. Instead of one strategy for all countries, bilateral partnerships began to be favored. The budget allocated for development assistance increased significantly in comparison to previous years. The Regional Strategy for 2007–13 allocated an overall budget of €673.8 million: €352.8 million for 2007–2010 under the DCI with 215.8 million for bilateral operations, and €137 million for regional programs. In 2009 the EU reevaluated the budget for Central Asia, and the new Multi-annual indicative program (2011–2013) has provided €321 million (annual increase of 20 % per year).[91] The newly established instrument – DCI – merged both geographical and issue-oriented instruments and defined sectoral objectives of development assistance to Central Asia. The instrument has been established with the aims of helping to (1) promote regional cooperation and good neighborly relations (app. 30–35 % of total assistance), (2) reduce the poverty (40–45 %) and (3) support good governance and economic reforms (20–25 %). The combination of economic issues with a value-based approach was the EU's idea of how to include good governance with talks with authoritarian partners.[92] Newly established cooperation areas combined both interest-driven fields such as economic and security-related issues (economic development, trade and investment, energy, combating common security challenges) and value-driven clusters (human rights, rule of law, good governance, education and intercultural dialogue), with the aim to equalize their importance.[93] For that reason, new Initiatives were launched (European Education Initiative and the EU Rule of Law Initiative) and supplemented by the establishment of result-oriented Human Rights Dialogue with all five Central Asian countries. However, even though greater importance was given to the normative dimension, the concepts of security, prosperity and economic development as priorities were never abandoned. On the contrary, the idea of the EU was to merge elements of security and economic dimensions with values, recognizing them as having an impact on EU interests. Therefore, development assistance should be an instrument strengthening both security and processes of democratization, respect for human rights, poverty reduction. The whole project was based on the following assumption:

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[89] Council of the European Union: *The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership,* Brussels, 31 May 2007, 10113/07.

[90] European Commission: *Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007–2013*, 2007, retrieved 1.10.2017, from https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/rsp-central-asia-2007-2013_en.pdf.

[91] European Commission: *European Union – Central Asia Development Cooperation*, retrieved 1.10.2017, from https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/publication-european-union-central-asia-development-cooperation-2011_en.pdf, pp. 5–6.

> strengthening the commitment of Central Asian States to international law, the rule of law, human rights and democratic values, as well as to a market economy will promote security and stability in Central Asia, thus making the countries of the region reliable partners for the EU with shared common interests and goals.[94]

The value-based approach to development assistance as a superstructure for economic measures serves as an extension of the EU commitment to the UN Millennium Development Goals which have dominated the narrative of development aid throughout the twenty-first century. The priority of development assistance in Central Asia was to fight against domestic poverty in the region and to improve living standards as assumed in MDGs and to ensure security and stability in the region. As relatively general in notion, with a low degree of controversy, the priorities in economic and social dimensions have been followed. A more significant shift in attitude was experienced in the political dimension, specifically in the context of good governance. Before 2007, the EU expressed rather a technocratic perspective on good governance, however, in the following agenda after 2007, the perspective became broader and now includes human rights, administrative reforms, rule of law and civil society.[95] However, the politically naïve desire to combine interests and values ignores the fact that the interest and value-driven approaches are contradictory in many situations and any attempt to link economics, human rights, security, and energy is never easily attainable, if ever. On several occasions the EU has been confronted by the limitations of such a combined approach. In Turkmenistan, the EU had to mitigate its pressure on human rights issues, since the policymakers in Brussels wanted to diversify their gas supplies to gain more independence from the Russian route.[96] Practice has shown that in the case of budget support programs in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the European Commission was not rigorous enough in management in terms of anti-corruption measures.[97] The overall EU assistance to Central Asia thus seems to have had a limited impact on the ground in terms of diffusing values, even though the financial aspects are significant in terms of their anticipated efficiency. In 2011, the European Parliament concluded that initial estimations over funds allocation were not sufficient and the current funds would not be able to have an impact on priority areas in Central Asia.[98] Similarly, reserved enthusiasm over the effects of current assistance has been expressed by the European Court of Auditors in 2013. Limited resources, a combination of contradictory interests and values, objectives which are too broad in scope and several areas of activities are the most crucial factors leading to lowering the impact of assistance. Moreover, the Report of the European Court of Auditors suggests that the implementation of Strategy has suffered from delays due to bureaucratic procedures and legal requirements.[99] A more individual approach is needed. Regarding the overall socio-economic situation of the region, assistance is needed mainly in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, while relations with rapidly developing Kazakhstan should rather evolve to more equal political and economic partnership. On the other hand, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are only "marginally receptive" to the assistance initiatives provided by the EU, and unwilling to process domestic reforms.[100]

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[92] Boonstra, Jos / Halle, Jacqueline: *EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?* EUCAM Working Paper no 8, 2010, pp. 8–9.

[93] Hoffmann, Katharina: op. cit., pp. 95–96.

[94] European Commission: *European Union…,* 2011, p. 5.

[95] Hoffmann, Katharina: op. cit., p. 101.

Deepening Partnership: 2014–2020

In its Conclusion of 2012, the Council of the European Union[101] reviewed the previous EU policies towards Central Asia and presented a proposal for new efforts. The former fields of interests are maintained as still valid and relevant – from economic measures to security challenges and support for democratization and respect for human rights. However, new plans were drawn up based on the lessons learned from the implementation of previous strategies. The EU recognized the fallibilities of its activities in some key initiatives, including the rule of law and advocated for a greater engagement. Traditional challenges were highlighted: (1) protection of human rights, good governance and civil society development (bilateral human rights dialogue, encouraging democratic reforms); (2) consolidation of energy cooperation, aiming to promoting diversification of energy supplies; (3) security matters from the regional perspective, border and migration issues. As a result, the EU allocated € 1,068 billion for the programming period 2014–2020, which doubled the previous programming period of 2007–2013 (an increase of 56 %). €360 million is planned to be distributed to regional programs – Tajikistan is expected to receive approximately €250 million, Kyrgyzstan €184 million, Uzbekistan €168 million and Turkmenistan €36.5 million. In the case of Kazakhstan, the EU bilateral development "is phasing out" while Kazakhstan is no longer classified as a low-income country.[102] Moreover, as of 2014, Kazakhstan no longer benefits from favorable access to the EU market. Good governance and human rights protection have been indicated as factors of growing significance. The notion of good governance, as in the previous strategy, has been interpreted variously and has not been limited to technocratic, administrative reforms but included value-based political issues.[103]

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[96] Peyrouse, Sebastien / Boonstra, Jos / Laruelle, Marlene: *Security and Development Approaches to Central Asia. The EU Compared to China and Russia*, EUCAM Working Paper No 11, 2012, p. 15.

[97] European Court of Auditors: *EU Development Assistance to Central Asia*, Special Report no 13/2013.

[98] European Parliament: *Resolution of 15 December 2011 on the State of Implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia*, P7_TA(2011)0588, 2011.

[99] European Court of Auditors: *EU Development Assistance to Central Asia*, Special Report no 13/2013, p. 28.

[100] Boonstra, Jos / Halle, Jacqueline: op. cit., p. 16.

[101] Council of the European Union: *Council Conclusions on Central Asia,* Luxembourg, 25 June 2012.

Conclusion

Thanks to the relevance of the development assistance policy in the EU's external agenda, the EU has shown an ability to adjust its policies to changing patterns in the global system of development assistance. In recent years, this has led to a broadening of the scope of cooperation between the EU and the developing world in terms of fields of engagement, a decentralization of the actors involved, and the extension of the allocation of funds. In the declaratory sphere, a development assistance policy is interpreted as a set of normative stances, perceived through the lens of a moral imperative to help. For the EU, acting as a non-state actor in international relations and a growing engagement in normative debates gives the EU a powerful voice among other actors. However, purely normative rhetoric would be insufficient to build an international position. The potential to become a powerful actor derives from the economic position of the EU and its member states. It is a well-known issue in the literature to characterize the EU as a civilian and normative power and, accordingly, the EU seems to adopt this perception. In terms of the rhetoric of normative power, it may be assumed that the EU might be prone to take advantage of the instruments and mechanisms in its external relations to enhance its normative position. At first glance, a development assistance policy appears to be a natural domain due to its asymmetrical relations between those who have and those who have not. On the other hand, development assistance can serve as another foreign policy instrument in the realization of interests. The reduction of development assistance to merely one-dimension, no matter whether interest or values-based, leads to the oversimplification of the complexity of international relations. The evolution of the EU development assistance to Central Asian countries has shown that, despite changing international circumstances over the decades, some primarily formulated issues are unchangeable. It relates first and foremost to security and economics as interests which dominate the agenda, and to the political ambition of becoming a norm-provider. Even though a normative superstructure is an overarching principle, the geopolitical relevance of Central Asia in terms of security and economic benefits cannot be dismissed. Development assistance is thus embedded in the contradictory logic of the interest and values-based approaches. That contradiction is particularly discernible on the ground, resulting in the low efficiency of the assistance. The low impact of the EU in terms of the diffusion of norms, however, does not seem to have discouraged the EU from continuing with value promotion as it boosts its engagement in Central Asia. From the perspective of its interests, the EU has clearly stated since 2001 that security and economic interests remain the key challenges to be met in Central Asia. In terms of normative elements, human rights, good governance, and democratization are perceived as the dominant issues. The emphasis may be placed on the interest-driven approach, while in other declarations values may be brought to the fore, but none of the elements is expected to lose importance. It seems that development assistance to Central Asia is less about Central Asia as a region and more about the EU and its self-perception as an actor capable of providing internal security and economic well-being and, last but not least, as a global actor with a strong normative voice.

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[102] European External Action Service: *New Impulse for the Relations between Europe and Central Asia.* A Key Note Address by Gerhard Sabathil, 28 August 2014, Almaty-Kazakhstan.

[103] Council of the European Union: *Relations with Central Asia – Council Conclusions on the EU Strategy for Central Asia*, Brussels, 22 June 2015, 10191/15.

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European Commission: *European Union, Trade in goods with Central Asia 5*, 2017, retrieved 1.10.2017, from http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/november/tradoc_151896.pdf.

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Agnieszka Batko

6. Striving for the Recognition: Japanese Foreign Policy Towards Central Asia

Abstract: The re-emergence of Central Asia within the international system has posed a considerable challenge to Japanese policy-makers who did not have any strategy in place towards this region. Nevertheless, Japan established its presence quickly through a distinctive model of official development assistance. It was followed by a coherent political strategy that is fully reflected in the "Central Asia Plus Japan" Dialogue. The purpose of this essay is to analyze Japan's foreign policy towards central Asia since 1991, and in particular from 2011 onwards. The chapter will discuss the Japanese activities as primarily focused on providing developmental assistance to Central Asia states, although a certain degree of the realization of national interests will also be examined. The chapter will also briefly refer to the possible competition between Japan and China, even though this is not considered to be the main objective of the analysis. At the level of theory, the assumptions of realist as well as liberal paradigms concerning foreign aid will be applied since their combination exemplifies Japan's motivations for its engagement in Central Asia. The arguments will also be supported through the adoption of discourse analysis towards the speeches of Japanese governmental representatives, and primarily official data, though not exclusively, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Keywords: official development assistance, Central Asia Plus Japan, foreign aid, Japan Central Asia Friendship Association

Introduction

After the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991, the international system changed dramatically. Those transformations, among other shifts, allowed for several states to become independent. This was also the case in Central Asia (CA), where five countries, namely Kazakhstan, The Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were formed from the territories that belonged to the Soviet Union.[1]

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[1] Several scholars include Afghanistan within Central Asia when defining the region. However, this essay is not concerned with Japanese activities in Afghanistan, which are specifically linked to contributing to peace-building operations. What is more, although the incentives of the Japanese policy-makers may be similar with regards to the aims of foreign policy, that is contributing to peace and stability, the government's policy, outlined both in the rhetoric of the politicians as well as official documents and programs on foreign aid, does not include Afghanistan as a part of Central Asia.

The re-emergence of Central Asia as a separate region naturally triggered the interests of not only neighboring states such as the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia, which tried to sustain its ties in the post-Soviet era, but also from established global powers such as the United States (U.S.) and Japan. Due to the fact that the region has high reserves of fossil fuels, natural gas and mineral resources such as uranium and gold, several analysts have referred to the powers' quest for CA's resources as the new "Great Game."[2]

The article will seek to answer the questions on what are the central objectives of Japanese foreign policy towards Central Asia and how these goals are achieved. Based on those research questions, the essay establishes two hypotheses. First, it will be argued that Japan's activities in the region are not aimed at directly challenging China or Russia but rather at keeping the region open. Thus, Japan's goal is to prevent CA from being monopolized, by the PRC in particular. Second, it will be demonstrated that Japan, while indicating the interests in the region's resources, offers a distinctive model of aid and development policy that can prove to be successful for Central Asian states. Ultimately, it will be argued that various actors in the region, namely Japan and China, perceive it differently, which results in undertaking different policies towards CA. Whereas the PRC is mainly concerned with resources, Japanese policy-makers have to date identified the region as a part of a broader strategy.

With regards to methodology, the essay will examine the realist and liberal paradigms in international relations with respect to the arguments concerning foreign aid which constitutes the primary tool of the Japanese government for building its relationship with Central Asia. Those contradictory approaches not only seem to illustrate the struggles of Japanese policy-makers, but may also provide an insight into the different understandings of the role of the foreign aid between China and Japan. Additionally, it needs to be noted that the article looks at the issue from the donor perspective rather than the recipient, namely the CA states. It should also be acknowledged that the theoretical basis concerning foreign aid is different depending on whether a state grants or accepts it. However, those matters are beyond the scope of this study. In terms of specific methods, the main ones include text, document and statistical analysis. As for the first two, they will be applied with respect to examining documents, statements and reports concerning Japan's official development assistance (ODA) policy issued by the state's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Ministry of Economy and Trade (METI). The latter concerns statistical data taken from, among others, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The article will analyze Japan's foreign policy towards Central Asia from 1991, focusing not only on the historical development of ties between Japan and CA, but primarily on the characterization of the aid model adopted by Japan. Furthermore, the emphasis will also be placed on the years from 2011 onward. The basis for this time framework is concerned with the triple disaster in 2011 in Japan, namely the earthquake, tsunami and accident that occurred at the Fukushima nuclear facility. Since several cabinets in Tokyo have expressed their interest in CA's resources, this chapter will aim to establish whether such a dramatic shift led to increased efforts towards importing them from Central Asia.

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[2] Hughes, Christopher W.: "Japan's response to China's rise: regional engagement, global containment, dangers of collision". *International Affairs* 85:4, 2009, p. 849.

With reference to scientific works concerning the issue, two bodies of literature should be mentioned, the first one encompassing publications on the specific Japanese approach towards Central Asia, and to state's ODA policy more general, and the latter regarding a wider context of international competition in the region, in particular the Sino-Japanese one. The book authored by Timur Dadabaev offers one of the most comprehensive accounts of Japanese policy towards the region, including theoretical insights into the dilemmas of Japanese policy-makers in terms of shaping their agenda. Although he frames it as being "trapped between idealism and pragmatism,"[3] the arguments reflect the struggle between realist and liberal paradigms, as demonstrated in this essay. Furthermore, Mirzokhid Rakhimov's article provides a useful summary of the dynamics of bilateral relations between Japan and respective CA countries.[4] As for the aspect of international competition, the articles by Christopher Hughes (2011) as well as Jacob Townsend and Amy King provide valuable insights which serve to demonstrate Japan's new initiatives in the region as a response to China's presence.[5] In this context, the article seeks to explain that the activities of both Japan and China in Central Asia should not be perceived in terms of mutual competition. It is not to say that policy of China, e.g. One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative does not influence the activities of Japan and that Japan's policy has no impact on the decision-making process in Beijing. Rather, the essay will seek to demonstrate that Japanese politicians are aware of their disadvantages, especially in terms of providing financial resources to CA countries. Therefore, the ODA model they adopted for the region should not perceived as being designed primarily to counter China's influence.

Lastly, regarding the article's structure, it has been divided into three parts. The first one is concerned with the theoretical framework of developmental theory that aims to present the existing clashes among the Japanese policy-makers between treating ODA as a tool for securing national interests for the future and promoting prosperity and peace in CA. The second segment will elaborate on how the Japanese policy towards the region has evolved since 1991. The third part will in turn focus on the aid and development model provided by Japan that can be perceived as the main strength for the country in CA. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the arguments while providing an answer to the research questions and addressing the listed hypotheses.

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[3] Dadabaev, Timur: *Japan in Central Asia. Strategies, Initiatives, and Neighboring Powers*. Palgrave Macmillan: London 2016, p. 5.

[4] Rakhimov, Mirzokhid: "Central Asia and Japan: Bilateral and multilateral relations". *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 5 (1), 2014, pp. 77–87.

[5] Townsend, Jacob / King, Amy: "Sino-Japanese Competition for Central Asian Energy: China's Game to Win". *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5 (4), 2007, pp. 23–45.

Theoretical Framework

This study incorporates the assumptions of realist and liberal paradigms with regards to the arguments concerning foreign aid, currently measured by the Official Development Assistance (ODA). Primarily, those two stances emphasize different understandings of donor state motivations for providing resources and assistance to underdeveloped ones. As foreign aid gradually increased after World War II (WWII), and in the 1960s in particular, the representatives of theoretical approaches within international relations have been contributing to the debate on the rightfulness, conduct and the outcomes of donating and receiving foreign aid.

Realists, as well as neo-realists, agree on the basic principles governing the international system that also have a direct influence on foreign aid. By referring to it as being driven by self-interest and power-centrism, proponents of this school of thought determine the functions of foreign aid. What is more, they also stress the rationality of actors, predominantly states, within the international system, which they define in terms of them acting merely in their own interests on the basis of the calculation of advantage. Hans Morgenthau established the basic arguments for policy of foreign aid as being "… no different from diplomatic or military policy or propaganda," stressing that "they are all weapons in the political armoury of the nation."[6] He distinguishes six types of foreign aid, namely: (1) humanitarian, (2) military, (3) economic development, (4) subsistence, (5) prestige, and (6) bribery, which have the common feature of providing a donor state with an opportunity to exert and broaden political influence and national interests. Furthermore, Morgenthau demonstrates a particular degree of skepticism with regards to foreign aid for economic development as he underlines its hazardous nature that can ultimately lead to counterproductive results for the donor states (Morgenthau, p. 309). However, it is worth noting that realist arguments concerning foreign aid, although similar, vary in terms of their details. For instance, classical realists focus primarily on the strategic and military significance of the recipient states, whereas neo-realists also recognize the importance of the economic potential of aid beneficiaries.[7]

The liberal paradigm challenges the arguments provided by the realists in virtually every aspect concerning foreign aid. Whereas they do not deny that the donor's self-interest constitutes a factor in the flow of aid towards the recipients, it is neither a primary nor the only reason explaining why developed states decide to transfer financial resources to the less developed ones. David Halloran Lumsdane argues that "the essential causes lay in the humanitarian and egalitarian principles of the donor countries and in their implicit belief that only on the basis of the just international order in which all states had a chance to do well was peace and prosperity possible."[8] This concept also underlines the responsibility of the developed states to provide assistance to those which are underdeveloped, something which is validated on the basis of the interdependence and stability of the international system as a whole. Lastly, the motivations stressed by liberals also enforce a different notion of rationality compared to that argued by realists. For the advocates of liberalism, rationality no longer equals the calculation of advantage, but instead incorporates a certain moral choice which is exemplified, among other policies, through foreign aid.[9]

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[6] Morgenthau, Hans: "A Political Theory of Foreign Aid". *The American Political Science Review* 56 (2), 1962, p. 309.

[7] Schraeder, Peter J. / Hook, Steven W. / Taylor, Bruce: "Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle: A Comparison of American, Japanese, French, and Swedish Aid Flows". *World Politics* 50 (2), 1998, p. 298.

Summing up the realist and liberal stances on foreign aid, those two paradigms fundamentally differ: whereas the first draws a more pessimistic vision of the world, and consequently incentives of the foreign aid donors, the latter indicates the important role of foreign aid in creating relations formed on the basis of goodwill and friendship between the donors and recipients, ultimately contributing to peace and prosperity.[10]

The foreign policy of Japan towards the CA region seems to illustrate the struggles between different motivations and perceptions behind providing foreign aid outlined in those two different theoretical approaches. Dadabaev (2016, p. 5) describes this dilemma as being ambushed between pragmatism and idealism. According to this argument, Japanese policy-makers face domestic difficulties as donations in Central Asia do not benefit the country as much as anticipated, at least on the surface. On the other hand, they choose not to focus on their profits and emphasize the development of the region instead. Drawing from the liberal assumptions concerning foreign aid, Japan aims to sustain its positive image in the world by fulfilling the role of a donor and stressing the rhetoric of the responsibilities that the developed states have in creating regional as well as global stability. At the same time, providing ODA to CA countries serves the national interest, namely to prevent China establishing a monopoly in the region. This article argues for Japan being seen as a rational actor in this regard. More specifically, this rationality is illustrated in the policy aimed at keeping Central Asia open to multilateral initiatives rather than allowing PRC to dominate it. Japan cannot, nor does it wish, to challenge China in terms of resources donated in the region, especially with the pledge that was made by policy-makers in Beijing regarding the New Silk Road program and accompanying infrastructure investments amounting to 240 billion dollars.[11] Hence, the intention is not to engage in straightforward competition but rather to ensure the stability and impartiality of political leaders in Central Asia.

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[8] Lumsdaine, David Halloran: *Moral Vision in International Politics. The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949–1989.* Princeton University Press: Princeton 1993, p. 30.

[9] Ibid., p. 63.

[10] Pankaj, Ashok Kumar: "Revisiting Foreign Aid Theories". *International Studies* 42(2), 2005, p. 105, retrieved 10.10.2017, from DOI 10.1177/002088170404200201.

Japan in Central Asia – Difficult Beginnings and the Struggle for Recognition

The collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the emergence of Central Asia states demonstrated that this dramatic shift came as a surprise to policy-makers in Tokyo as the government had no policy in place towards the region. Geographical distance, logistical problems and essentially a lack of knowledge concerning different dynamics of the newly formed states contributed to the initial lack of political agenda (Dadabaev, pp. 14–16). Furthermore, as Laurelle Marlen and Sebastien Peyrouse point out, prior to increasing its involvement in the region, Japan might have misread it. Initially, it perceived Kyrgyzstan as having the most economic and political potential, and was thus where Japanese aid could be the most efficient. However, the focus was gradually shifted to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, despite those issues, Japan put pressure on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), through its membership of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), to grant CA states the status of developing countries, which in turned enabled them to be included in the Development Assistance Program.[12] Immediately after the collapse of the USSR, Japan became involved in providing ODA to Central Asia states. In contrast to other countries, the development aid model was primarily concentrated on the economic infrastructure, including railways, roads and telecommunication projects, that constitute distinctive features of the Japanese approach. The motivation for providing aid loans and grants for those projects was twofold. First, according to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) it is the way through which Japan could contribute to global peace and stability. Secondly, as the country imports vast amount of natural resources, it needs well-established trade relations with the developing countries.[13] This strategy, despite being first introduced in the 1970s, seems also to apply to the CA in the early 1990s. However, it should be noted that this initial period of Japan's involvement in the region was not marked by its explicit interest in the natural resources to be found in Central Asia. Instead, it was rather focused on building networks with the elites and implementing its diplomatic strategy through ODA and humanitarian assistance.[14]

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[11] Ramani, Samuel: "Japan's Strategy for Central Asia". *The Diplomat* 30.07.2015, retrieved 10.10.2017 from https://thediplomat.com/2015/07/japans-strategy-for-central-asia/.

[12] Laurelle, Marlene / Peyrouse, Sebastien: *Globalizing Central Asia. Geopolitics and Challenges of Economic Development.* Routledge: New York, NY 2013, p. 104.

[13] Söderberg, Marie (eds.): *The Business of Japanese Foreign Aid. Five case studies from Asia.* Routledge: New York 1996, p. 1; 25.

Japan's interest in the region shifted in 1997 with the announcement of "Silk Road Diplomacy" or "Eurasian Diplomacy" made by Hashimoto Ryūtaro, who at that time was the Prime Minister of Japan. In his address to the Japan Association of Corporate Executives he proposed a broader perspective for Japan's foreign policy. Drawing from the consequences of the end of the Cold War on the international system, Prime Minister Hashimoto called for the need to achieve political and economic stability in Central Asia states. With regards to the perception of Japan's relations with the region, he also stated that the foreign policy "will be crafted as an organic component of the broad scheme of relations with Eurasia."[15] Simultaneously, the speech emphasized three directions for Japan's foreign policy towards the region, namely (1) political dialogue that would strengthen mutual trust and understanding, (2) economic and natural resources development cooperation that would stimulate prosperity, and (3) joint efforts concerning nuclear non-proliferation that would contribute to building peace and stability.[16] The announcement was followed by the publication of the Silk Road Action Plan in 1998 which led to Japan's position as the biggest provider of ODA to the region (Hughes, p. 849). Nevertheless, due to the political changes in the Japanese government and MOFA, the implementation of the plan was rather slow and the exchanges of representatives remained sporadic and only occurred on the ministerial level (the Prime Minister of Japan did not visit the region until 2004).

The next major step made by the Japanese policy-makers towards the region was the initiative called "Central Asia Plus Japan" Dialogue (CAJ) launched in 2004 between Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on the occasion of the Japanese Foreign Minister visit to Astana.[17] As demonstrated in the figure below, an action plan for the CAJ was adopted in 2006, specifying five pillars of cooperation and areas of enhanced efforts within them.

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[14] Walton, David: "Japan and Central Asia". In: Kavalski Emilian (ed.): *The New Central Asia. The Regional Impact of International Actors.* World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd: Singapore 2010, p. 267.

[15] Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet: *Address by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto to the Japan Association of Corporate Executives*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://japan.kantei.go.jp/0731douyukai.html.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Chien-peng, Chung: "China and Japan in Central Asia". *China: An International Journal* 13 (2), 2015, p. 126.

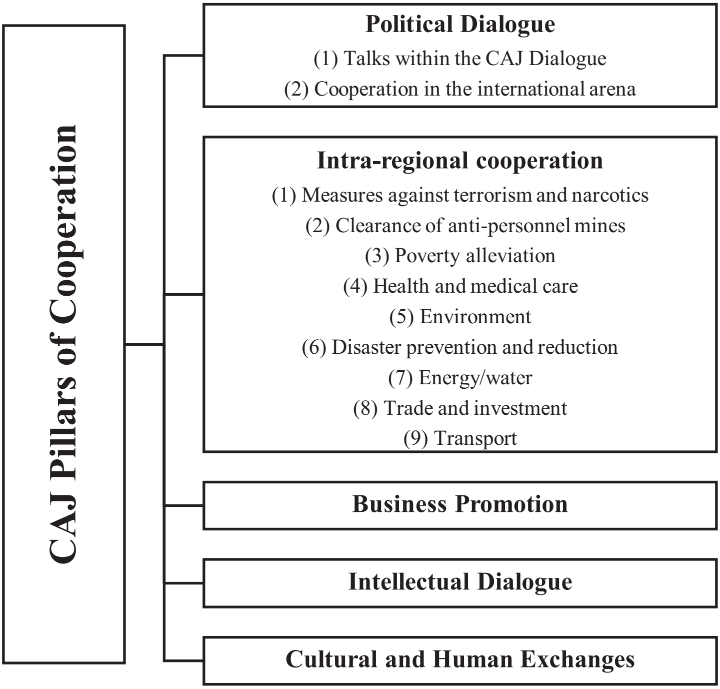
CAJ Pillars of Cooperation
Political Dialogue
(1) Talks within the CAJ Dialogue
(2) Cooperation in the international arena
Intra-regional cooperation
(1) Measures against terrorism and narcotics
(2) Clearance of anti-personnel mines
(3) Poverty alleviation
(4) Health and medical care
(5) Environment
(6) Disaster prevention and reduction
(7) Energy/water
(8) Trade and investment
(9) Transport
Business Promotion
Intellectual Dialogue
Cultural and Human Exchanges

Figure 6.1: Pillars of cooperation in "The Central Asia Plus Japan" Dialogue

Source: Own work based on: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: "Central Asia Plus Japan" Dialogue. Action Plan, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/dialogue/action0606.html.

From the perspective of strengthening Japan's presence in the region and its ties with CA states, several initiatives within the pillars of cooperation are worth mentioning. By establishing the CAJ Dialogue, Japan received the support of the region concerning its ambition of gaining permanent member status on the Security Council of the United Nations. Furthermore, Japan reaffirmed upholding of its development policies in the region, which will be examined in detail in the following section of this article. Apart from the action plan, Asō Tarō, the Japanese Foreign Minister at that time, outlined Japan's further interests and strategy by framing the CA region as "a corridor of peace and stability".[18] In the essay published in *Asia Europe Journal*, he elaborated on the idea of Central Asian stability being a key condition for the preservation of global peace. Asō specifically mentioned the region's natural resources, not only in terms of expressing Japan's interests in them, but also as a significant factor in the stability of global markets. Lastly, he also emphasized that Japan's role in CA, through the assistance in a wide range of development projects, should remain stimulatory in its character.[19] In parallel, Japan also sought to develop bilateral relations with Central Asia states. For instance, it deepened cooperation with Kazakhstan concerning the peaceful exploitation of nuclear energy, while in the case of Uzbekistan, the projects were focusing on education (e.g. increasing the number of Uzbek students in Japan) and improving the country's human rights record (Dadavaev, pp. 23–24). Additionally, some efforts were also made at a broader regional level through the Japanese foundations and non-profit organizations such as The Nippon Foundation which donates to the Japan, Turkey, and Central Asia Friendship Association. The main goal was to provide scholarships for students from CA to study in Turkey for one year with the opportunity of learning Japanese as well (Walton, p. 274). Complemented by study visits and trips to Japan, The Nippon Foundation provided 52 million yen in grants in 2016, when the scheme ended.[20] The Japan Central Asia Friendship Association (JACAFA), however, continues to support human resource development in the region, continuing the Japan Visit Program, and focusing mainly on the education issues.[21]

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[18] Aso, Taro: "Central Asia as a corridor of peace and stability". *Asia Europe Journal* 4(4), 2006, retrieved 10.10.2017, from DOI 10.1007/s10308-006-0089-8.

The significance of the Central Asia region to Japan increased yet again when the state was hit by a series of events including an earthquake followed by a tsunami and in particular the accident that occurred at the Fukushima-1 nuclear plant. The latter redefined the energy market in Japan and reduced citizen support for nuclear energy, ultimately leading to the shutdown of nuclear energy facilities across the country. Most notably, the triple catastrophe resulted in the increase in energy imports to the country from 80 % in 2010 to subsequently 89 % in 2011 and 94 % in subsequent years.[22] According to the report published by the International Energy Agency, the shutdown created a 30 % gap in electricity supply which was subsequently closed through the import of liquefied natural gas, fossil fuels, oil, and coal.[23] The increase in energy supplies from abroad caused Japanese policymakers to look in the direction of natural resources central Asian states. What is more, in order to diversify the import of energy supplies, and especially decrease the country's dependency on China, Japan decided to invest 700 million dollars in the development of rare materials and natural gas in CA.[24] On the Japanese part, the governmental unit responsible for the energy policy and arranging the contracts with foreign parties was the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI).

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[19] Ibid.

[20] The Nippon Foundation Library: *Japan Turkey Central Asia Friendship Association*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from https://nippon.zaidan.info/dantai/336697/dantai_info.htm.

[21] Japan Central Asia Friendship Association, retrieved 30.08.2020, from http://jcafriend.net/.

[22] World Bank: *World Bank Indicators*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.IMP.CONS.ZS/countries.

[23] International Energy Agency: *Energy Policies of IEA Countries. Japan 2016 Review*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/EnergyPoliciesofIEACountriesJapan2016.pdf.

The interest in CA's energy resources continued through further investments and joint projects by the government of Abe Shinzō, whose Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) returned to power at the end of 2012 and was immediately faced with the long-term consequences of the nuclear accident in Fukushima. A METI minister visited Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 2014 while his successor went to Turkmenistan in the following year. In Uzbekistan, Japan sought to further deepen cooperation on the transfer of technologies in power plants and in the electricity sector. The economic mission to Kazakhstan was focused on the nuclear power field. A memorandum was signed emphasizing further collaboration, e.g. in terms of the construction of a nuclear power plant. Lastly, during the visit to Turkmenistan, talks were held concerning several projects on chemical plants related to petroleum gas, as well as strengthening transport infrastructure related to the production of natural gas.[25]

A significant push towards strengthening cooperation with Central Asia occurred in 2015 when Prime Minister Abe visited all five states in the region. Speaking in Kazakhstan, he outlined his vision of Japan's politics towards the region which resembles the approach taken by the previous governments. More specifically, he emphasized the continuity of the "Central Asia Plus Japan" Dialogue and the plan to invest three trillion yen (24 billion dollars) in the region, through projects and business opportunities based on the cooperation of public and private sectors.[26] Apart from framing region as a whole, that visit allowed Japan to simultaneously focus on bilateral relations. The most notable achievements include the signing of agreements worth 2.2 trillion yen (18 billion dollars) in Turkmenistan and announcing 8.5 billion dollars in contracts for joint projects (e.g. a contract for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Mitsubishi Corporation that will build a fertilizer plant worth 1 billion dollars).[27]

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[24] Sadykova, Raikhan: "Japan's Policy towards Countries of Central Asia". *International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering* 7 (8), 2013, p. 2247.

[25] Ministry of Economy, Trade and Investment, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://www.meti.go.jp/english/index.html.

[26] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: *Speech by Prime Minister Abe on Japan's Foreign Policy Toward Central Asia*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/ca_c/kz/page1e_000055.html.

[27] Farchy, Jack / Harding, Robin: "Abe woos Central Asia to counter China's growing influence". *Financial Times* 26.10.2015, retrieved 10.10.2017, from https://www.ft.com/content/b5d597d4-7b3c-11e5-a1fe-567b37f80b64?mhq5j=e6.

Increasing interests since 2011 and Prime Minister Abe visit in 2015 demonstrated several characteristics of Japan's involvement in the region. First, that it aims to continue the strategy of perceiving the region as a bridge between East and West and one whose stability is essential to global markets. Through this framing, Japan aims to play a role of providing financial resources and to continue to contribute to human development in order to keep it stable. What is more, it also confirms Japan's broader strategy of sustaining its positive image and global position. Finally, regarding energy-related issues, the latest data of energy imports to Japan[28] confirms that none of the Central Asian states is a partner in terms of oil and gas, mainly due to the lack of infrastructure and the high costs of transportation.[29] Nevertheless, Tokyo's specific interest in investments in this sector, in particular in Turkmenistan's natural gas, indicates that Japan may be shielding its energy security and opportunities for upcoming decades. A similar situation concerns uranium since, despite having the world's third largest uranium reserves, imports from Kazakhstan accounted for only one percent of total uranium imports to Japan in 2009.[30] Due to the Fukushima disaster in 2011, resulting in restrictions put upon nuclear power plants in Japan, as well as a reduction in public trust towards nuclear energy, imports from Central Asia have not been extended.

A number of analysts compare Japan and China in terms of their respective policies towards Central Asia. In most cases, they often frame Japan's disadvantage not only in geographical terms, but primarily in the financial terms mentioned earlier. Ultimately, China's pledge to Central Asia with its New Silk Road policy cannot be challenged by Japan. PRC's further advantages include its deeper engagement on the institutional level, through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) or Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Whereas the meetings of Central Asia Plus Japan Dialogue occur on the foreign minister level, the SCO's summits bring together heads of governments (Townsend / King, p. 41). The analyses also underline that the process of receiving financial resources from China is much more straightforward that it is in the case of Japan since PRC puts forward one Chinese bidder whereas Japanese companies are concerned with a number of different bids (Jack / Robin 2015). Those arguments seem to be missing a key point that Japanese policy-makers are well-aware of their disadvantaged position. As a result, they do not try to engage in a classic two-state competition, but rather aim to prevent China establishing a monopoly. Additionally, as they offer a specific type of aid and invest in different projects throughout the region, Japan strives for recognition and appreciation for its assistance. Lastly, the analyses that acknowledge China's superiority in Central Asia do not elaborate on the position of the Central Asian countries themselves and their perception of Japanese aid as opposed to that offered by China. During Prime Minister Abe's visit in 2015, all the leaders across CA expressed their gratitude for Japan's involvement but also the expectation of its continuity and even increase. This in turn may constitute a signal indicating that those states are seeking to diversify their industrial base and potentially reduce their dependency on China and Russia.[31] For those reasons, Japan's presence in the region remains momentous.

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[28] Japan imports crude oil mainly from Saudi Arabia (35,8 %), the United Arab Emirates (26 %), Kuwait (9 %) and Qatar (6,2 %). The primary imports of natural gas come from Australia (22,9 %), Malaysia (18,7 %), Qatar (15,8 %) and Russia (8,5 %). See: International Energy Agency, op. cit., pp. 59, 77.

[29] L. Mangi examines, that there are three routes connecting Japan and Central Asia, namely the Trans-Siberian Railway, China Land Bridge and Iran-Turkmenistan's Chabahar port that not only decline in competitiveness but are also expensive in terms of transit costs. See: Mangi, Lutfullah: *The Political and Economic Strategy of Japan towards Central Asia.* Social Research Center, Kyrgyzstan 2011, p. 6.

[30] Kassenova, Togzhan / Toki, Masako: "Japan and Kazakhstan: Nuclear Energy Cooperation". *Nuclear Threat Initiative* 13.03.2009, retrieved 1.08.2018, from http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/japan-kazakhstan-energy-cooperation/.

Where its Strengths Lie – the ODA Model

The ODA was first defined in 1969 by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, although resource flows have been measured since 1961. The definition adopted by the OECD concerns the flows to the DAC List of ODA recipients that are given by governmental agencies on a concessional basis and which primarily aim to promote the economic development of the recipient countries and territories.[32] Furthermore, the OECD excluded several transactions that might otherwise have been included within the definition of ODA, namely: military and peacekeeping resources, nuclear energy that is not provided for civilian purposes, and occasional cultural exchanges.[33]

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[31] Pollman, Mina: "What Did Abe Accomplish in Central Asia?". *The Diplomat* 28.10.2015, retrieved 10.10.2017, from https://thediplomat.com/2015/10/what-did-abe-accomplish-in-central-asia/.

[32] OECD: *Official development assistance – definition and coverage*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm.

[33] Ibid.

Table 6.1: Total ODA net to Central Asia countries by major powers (in million US dollars)

	Kazakhstan	**Kyrgyzstan**	**Tajikistan**	**Turkmenistan**	**Uzbekistan**
EU (2017)	12.1	31.9	22.9	3.8	19.8
Japan (2017)	-39*	28,4	24,1	0	245
Russia (2012)	1.1	37.9	15.2	1.3	0.9
U.S. (2017)	19.9	52.4	35.3	2.9	8

Source: Compiled from the data published by OECD and AID Data. See: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development: Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Developing Countries 2018. Disbursements, Commitments, Country Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris 2018, retrieved 1.08.2018, from DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/fin_flows_dev-2018-en-fr; OECD: Stat., retrieved 1.08.2018, from https://stats.oecd.org/.

**Note: The negative figure illustrates outstanding loans after repayment by a recipient.*

The data provided in Table 6.1 clearly demonstrates that Japan, although not the largest net ODA donor to the region, is maintaining its steady presence. The reason for China's omission from the above table is that the country does not publish its data on bilateral ODA commitments, and there is a general lack of consensus regarding how we should classify many of the Chinese financial instruments that lack OECD-DAC counterparts.[34] Nevertheless, the cumulative data of the Chinese ODA provided by the AidData, a research lab at the Global Research Institute at William & Mary, shows that between 2000 – 2014, China contributed ODA to Central Asian states to the tune of: (1) 207 million USD to Kazakhstan, (2) 491.8 million USD to Uzbekistan, (3) 621.9 million USD to Turkmenistan, (4) 843.5 million USD to Tajikistan, and (5) 1.54 billion USD to Kyrgyzstan.[35]

In terms of Japan's presence in the region, the country is involved in a variety of projects concerning power, economic and transport infrastructure, as well as education. The ODA model adopted by Japan is distinctive in this regard from other donors. The most complex overview of Japanese aid in Central Asia is provided in the *White Paper on Development Cooperation*, published yearly by MOFA.[36] The reports provide an extensive summary of Japan's ODA, including both contributions to international organizations as well as aid donated on a bilateral basis. The latter is diversified to include grants (transferred through grant aid or technical cooperation) and governmental loans (ODA loan or private sector investment finance).[37]

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[34] Carter, Becky: *A literature review on China's aid.* GSDRC Applied Knowledge & Services, retrieved 30.08.2020 from https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/177_China_aid.pdf.

[35] AidData: *China*, retrieved 1.08.2018, from https://www.aiddata.org/china.

[36] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: *White Paper on Development Cooperation 2016. Japan's International Cooperation*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000282089.pdf.

The policy concerning Japan's ODA outlined in the *White Papers* is analyzed from the perspective of both regions and issues that are common across the recipient states. In this policy, Central Asia have been placed in one group with the countries of the Caucasus, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In terms of Japanese priorities, the most recent version of the document for 2018 lists the (1) development of the economic and social infrastructure (including medical care, education and tourism), (2) support for democracy and the development of market economy, and (3) border control management and anti-drug measures.[38] The reports also list specific projects conducted on a bilateral basis for each region that fully demonstrate the characteristics of Japan's ODA model. In Central Asia, t bilateral assistance initiatives have been run in Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the largest project is aimed at the improvement of equipment at Manas International Airport. In Tajikistan, the project consuming the most resources concerns the improvement of equipment for road maintenance in the Sughd region and the eastern part of Khatlon region, while in Uzbekistan, Japan assists with the improvement of the equipment at the medical Center in Navoi. For all four states, the support is also provided for the protection of borders and countering drugs and crime in Central Asia (MOFA 2016 p. 218). In addition, the reports also highlight the cooperation with Central Asia states in the business field. Japan Centers for Human Development were opened in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The main goal of this initiative is to provide courses on business management and Japanese language learning opportunities, as well as organizing the training of business personnel. The Centers are open to both governmental bodies and the broader public. Despite the fact that their development was officially concluded in 2016, they are still operating on a regular basis.[39]

The governmental agency responsible for managing the ODA resources and implementing the projects across all the regions, including the Japan Centers for Human Development, is the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In Central Asia, the agency maintains offices in Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, although it has conducted projects in each of the five states. As it essentially carries out Japanese government policies, the JICA's activities resemble what has been already examined in terms of the types of supported projects. More specifically, in each of the countries in Central Asia, due to its richness in terms of natural resources, there is considerable support for building the power transportation infrastructure and human development that would help to create successful businesses. Additionally, JICA provides assistance to the Khatlon province in Tajikistan that is located on the border with Afghanistan in order to secure stability for the entire region.[40]

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: *White Paper on Development Cooperation 2018. Japan's International Cooperation*, retrieved 30.08.2020, from https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page24e_000261.html.

[39] Central Asia Education Platform Projects Database: *Central Asia Countries – Japan Center for Human Development Projects*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://dbase.caep-project.org/project/central-asia-countries-japan-center-for-human-development-projects-2/.

Conclusion

Despite the initial absence of a coherent policy towards Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Japan managed to establish continued contacts and exchanges based on the model of relations between developed and developing states. Throughout this essay it has been argued that the activities demonstrated by subsequent Japanese government in CA have simultaneously reflected on both realist and liberal arguments concerning foreign aid. The first is exemplified through Japan's explicit interest in CA's natural resources which has been linked to nation's security, especially in recent years. The latter is mirrored in the country's projects conducted through the ODA that also aim to empower local communities and improve the overall quality of life.

The attempts made by Japan on the regional level, notably the "Central Asia Plus Japan" Dialogue, along with maintaining the donations, have made Tokyo one of the important actors in the region. The cooperation is also appreciated by the leaders of Central Asia states that in recent years have expressed their hope for increased joint initiatives. Ultimately, Japan seems to have managed to achieve its goal of presenting itself as a provider of an attractive business and development model through engagement in several educational activities, especially the Japan Center for Human Development.

Lastly, this analysis also touched upon the alleged competition between China and Japan in the region. In this regard, it has been argued that Japan, being a rational actor, is aware of its disadvantaged position in comparison with China and hence it does not aim to participate in the new "Great Game", but it is rather preoccupied with ensuring Central Asia's openness to multilateral initiatives, as opposed to China establishing a monopoly.

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[40] Japan International Cooperation Agency: *JICA 2016 Annual Report*, pp. 39–40, retrieved 10.10.2017, from https://www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/reports/annual/2016/c8h0vm0000aj21oz-att/2016_all.pdf.

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Japan International Cooperation Agency: *JICA 2016 Annual Report*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from https://www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/reports/annual/2016/c8h0vm0000aj21oz-att/2016_all.pdf.

Kassenova, Togzhan / Toki, Masako: "Japan and Kazakhstan: Nuclear Energy Cooperation". *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, 13.03.2009, retrieved 1.08.2018, from http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/japan-kazakhstan-energy-cooperation/.

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OECD: *Official development assistance – definition and coverage*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm.

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World Bank: *World Bank Indicators*, retrieved 10.10.2017, from http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.IMP.CONS.ZS/countries.

Regional Issues and Regionalism

Randall Newnham

7. Russian Economic Linkage and the Eurasian Union in Central Asia

Abstract: As President Putin has revived Russia's geopolitical ambitions, his efforts have focused largely on the so-called 'near abroad,' the former members of the Soviet Union. While the dramatic military confrontations with Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine since 2014 have captured headlines, this paper argues that the Kremlin's most important weapons in the region have been economic. For example, such weapons helped create the Eurasian Economic Union with four of Russia's former Soviet neighbors. This study will examine the economic carrots and sticks that the Putin regime has used to induce these states to join the Union, focusing on the Central Asian members of the Union, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In doing so, it will demonstrate the large role of economic leverage, both in the form of sanctions and incentives, in influencing even important 'high politics' questions in International Relations. Notably, the paper will show that Russia has been adept at using different economic levers on each partner. Thus, any study that focuses on only one lever – such as oil and gas pricing – will be very incomplete.

Keywords: Russia, Eurasian Union, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, economic sanctions, foreign aid

Introduction and Theory

In 2002–03, the George W. Bush administration faced the unenviable task of persuading the world to support the looming U.S. war against Saddam Hussein of Iraq. While some countries seemed to believe America's allegations that Saddam had been involved in the 9/11 attacks and held large stockpiles of WMDs, many others doubted these assertions and saw the war as unjustified. What was America to do? As I showed in an article in *International Studies Perspectives,*[1] the Bush administration launched an all-out effort around the world to use U.S. economic leverage to persuade countries to join the pro-war 'Coalition of the Willing.' These efforts were not unnoticed; in fact, some skeptical commentators soon labelled the group the "Coalition of the Bribed, Bullied, and Blind."[2] However, most observers focused only on one aspect or another of this 'bullying.' It was noted, for example, that some coalition members were dependent on U.S. economic aid. But why, then, might nations such as Singapore, a rich trading state, want to join? As I showed in the 2008 piece, the U.S. in fact targeted dozens of states with very different packages of economic inducements. These ranged from promises to accelerate free trade agreements (Singapore, Australia) to offers of jobs and contracts in the rebuilding of Iraq after the war (Philippines, Poland), promises of valuable U.S. military bases (Romania), promises to give favorable immigration treatment to migrants coming to the U.S. (El Salvador and other Central American countries), and many more.

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[1] Newnham, Randall: "Coalition of the bribed and bullied? U.S. economic linkage and the Iraq War coalition". *International Studies Perspectives* 9 (2), 2008, pp. 183–200.

[2] Gilfeather, Paul: "Coalition of the bribed, bullied, and blind". *Daily Mirror*, 22.3.2003, retrieved 12.6.2017, from http://www.mirror.co.uk.

I believe that this point can be made about any large economic power. To state the research question of this chapter simply: can it be shown that Russia, like other great powers, will use economic leverage in any form it can, both positive and negative, to achieve its international goals? Will it, like the U.S. in the Iraq War case, modulate its tactics depending on the needs of the country targeted? This study will hypothesize that such varied types of leverage were indeed used on Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. And it will attempt to prove a second hypothesis, that this leverage played an important role in Russia's success in bringing these states into the Eurasian Union.

This paper will be based on the large existing literature on the role of economic linkage, both positive and negative, in International Relations. There have been many studies focusing on cases of economic sanctions and incentives; Kirshner provides a good summary.[3] Many of these, like this chapter, have used a case study approach, such as that advocated by George and Bennett and Mahoney.[4] These two case studies will show how different Russian economic inducements impacted Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, helping to induce them to join the Eurasian Union.

However, I believe there are important gaps in the existing literature. First, most such studies focus on very 'hard' cases for economic linkage. For example, many works focus on inducing Iran or North Korea to give up their nuclear programs through economic sanctions, or on the even more difficult efforts to bring about the outright overthrow of Castro's regime in Cuba or Saddam Hussein's in Iraq.[5] Thus it should not be surprising that many studies of economic linkage simply conclude that "sanctions don't work."[6] This is clearly oversimplified; for example, the classic volume edited by Hufbauer et al.,[7] considered one of the best overall studies, does conclude that economic leverage works about one-third of the time. However, even here the study focuses mainly on a few well-known 'hard' cases. It is my contention that the universe of cases is far larger than these. For example, the cases considered in this study are relatively 'easier,' in two ways. First, both Central Asian states studied already had many positive ties to Russia, and thus were more willing to agree with the Kremlin than, for example, Iran was willing to agree with the Trump administration. Second, the issue in question – joining in an economic agreement – was, while important, far less fraught than giving up nuclear arms (today's North Korea). I believe there are many such cases in International Relations, and they are understudied compared to the classic 'hard' cases.

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[3] Kirshner, Jonathan: "Review essay: Economic sanctions, the state of the art". *Security Studies* 11 (4), 2002, pp. 160–179.

[4] George, Alexander / Bennett, Andrew: *Case studies and theory development in the Social Sciences.* MIT Press: Cambridge, MA 2005; Mahoney, James: "Process tracing and historical explanation". *Security Studies* 24 (2), 2015, pp. 200–218.

[5] Kaplowitz, Donna: *Anatomy of a failed embargo: U.S. sanctions against Cuba.* Lynne Rienner: Boulder, CO 1998; Gordan, Jay: *Invisible war: the U.S. and the Iraq sanctions.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge 2010; Haggard, Steve / Noland, Marcus: "Sanctioning North Korea: the political economy of denuclearization and proliferation". *Asian Survey* 50 (3), 2010, pp. 539–568; Takeyh, Ray / Maloney, Suzanne: "The self-limiting success of Iran sanctions". *International Affairs* 87 (6), 2011, pp. 1297–1312.

[6] Kirshner, Jonathan: op. cit., pp. 160–179.

A second key gap in the existing literature is that many analysts – depending on their research focus – have looked at only one economic 'weapon' at a time, such as trade sanctions, financial sanctions, foreign aid, or military aid.[8] Thus, I believe, they have often failed to see the true importance of economic linkage as a whole. This has been the case, I believe, with some studies of Russia's campaign to regain influence in what Russians rather dismissively call the 'near abroad,' the former components of the Soviet Union. The most visible weapon which the Kremlin has used in this effort is its control over oil and gas resources in the region. As many analysts have noted, by raising and lowering prices – and even sometimes cutting off supplies altogether – Russia has gained both a powerful 'stick' and a 'carrot', which it can use to punish its foes and reward its allies.[9] Yet how might this explain Russia's influence over states such as Kazakhstan, which are themselves major oil and gas exporters? Or Kyrgyzstan and other relatively undeveloped states in

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[7] Hufbauer, Gary et al.: *Economic sanctions reconsidered.* Columbia University Press: New York 2008.

[8] For example: Alesina, Alberto / Dollar, David: "Who gives foreign aid to whom and why?". *Journal of Economic Growth* 5 (1), 2000, pp. 33–63; Lektzian, David / Souva, Mark: "An institutional theory of sanctions onset and success". *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51 (6), 2007, pp. 848–871; Rosenberg, Elizabeth et al.: *The new tools of economic warfare: effects and effectiveness of contemporary U.S. financial sanctions.* Center for New American Security: Washington, DC 2016; Ovrelicheva, Mariya / Carter, Britnee / Campbell, Luke: "Military aid and human rights: assessing the impact of U.S. security assistance". *Political Science Quarterly* 132 (1), 2017, pp. 119–144.

[9] Stuhlberg, Adam: *Well-oiled diplomacy: strategic manipulation and Russia's energy statecraft in Eurasia.* SUNY Press: Albany, NY 2007; Goldman, Marshall: *Petrostate: Putin, power, and the new Russia.* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2008; Perovic, Jeronim / Orttung, Robert / Wenger, Andreas: *Russian energy power and foreign relations: implications for conflict and cooperation.* Routledge: New York 2009; Newnham, Randall: "Oil, carrots, and sticks: Russia's energy resources as a foreign policy tool". *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2 (2), 2011, pp. 134–143; Sotiriou, Stylianos: *Russian energy strategy in the European Union, the former Soviet region, and China.* Lexington Books: New York 2016.

Central Asia? In fact, as we shall see, the situation is a good deal more complex. Russia, like the U.S. in 2002–03, has carefully sized up the states it is targeting, and has applied a nuanced mix of carrots and sticks, including Russian investments, military aid, economic aid, trade access to the Russian market for different groups of products and the right to send migrants to Russia. While the Kremlin has not always succeeded in its efforts, with countries such as Ukraine and Georgia remaining unfriendly, it has managed to cobble together a group of former Soviet nations in the Eurasian Economic Union, a 'neo-Soviet' grouping which, Moscow believes, helps to give it credibility as a major world leader. As we shall see, like the American 'Coalition of the Willing,' this group, too, could well be called a "Coalition of the Bribed, Bullied and Blind."

The remainder of this paper will proceed as follows. First, we will consider the roots of Russia's economic dominance over the other members of the Eurasian Union. Then we will look in more detail at two case studies, those of the current Central Asian members of the Union, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In each case we will analyze the country's economic ties to Moscow and how the Kremlin has used those ties to help link the state to the Union. As we shall see, the mix of incentives and economic threats used has been quite different in each of these cases – but has nonetheless been effective. With the wealthier state of Kazakhstan, Russia used its control over export routes for Kazakh oil and gas, the mainstay of the country's economy, and the lure of access to Russia's own market for other Kazakh products. With the poorer state of Kyrgyzstan, the two key factors seemed to be access to Russia's labor market for Kyrgyz workers and outright payments to the Kyrgyz government. In neither case did the price or quantity of Russian oil and gas shipments – the most-studied of Moscow's economic instruments – play a key role.

Mr. Putin and the Four Dwarves

In order for a country to successfully use economic linkage in international affairs, it must have some sort of economic advantage over the state(s) it is targeting. This is clearly the case for Russia in its relations with the Eurasian Union. The economic imbalance between these countries is striking and multi-faceted.

First, raw economic size greatly favors the Russians. According to the World Bank (2019 figures), GDP figures for the Eurasian Union countries broke down as follows:

Table 7.1: GDP of Eurasian Economic Community members (in billion dollars)

Russia	1,699.877
Kazakhstan	180.162
Belarus	63.080
Armenia	13.673
Kyrgyzstan	8.455
Total	1,965.247

Source: World Bank, retrieved 26.8.20, from https://data.worldbank.org.

Russia's dominant role is obvious. It accounted for almost 90 percent of the bloc's GDP (86.5 %), with Kazakhstan and Belarus lagging far behind and the others mere rounding errors. In contrast, many authors have commented on the issue of perceived German domination in the European Union – yet with Germany making up only 21 % of the EU's economic output in 2015 it is clear that group has a much smaller problem than Russia's bloc.[10]

This GDP differential not only gives the Kremlin vastly more resources to use for foreign aid, military aid, or loans than its partners – it also makes it much easier for Russia to use trade as an inducement or threat. Much literature on trade sanctions falsely assumes that a sanction always hurts the sender as much as the target state. For example, Baldwin cites Weintraub as noting that sanctions "may be more costly to the sending nation than the target," and quotes Milton Friedman as asserting that sanctions "are likely to do us as much harm as they do their intended target."[11] It is often asserted, for example, that if the U.S. imposes a trade sanction on Cuba, we are hurting the U.S. as much as we hurt Cuba. This is clearly absurd when the sanctioning country is much bigger than the target. For example, if Russia cuts off trade worth $100 million to Kyrgyzstan, this would cost that tiny country about 1.2 % of its entire GDP (based on the table above), while costing Russia a negligible .005 %, since its economy is well over 200 times larger.

The smaller members of the Eurasian Union are hampered not just by the small size of their economies, but by their poverty. While Kazakhstan is roughly equal to Russia in measures such as per capita GNP, unemployment and poverty rate,

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[10] Central Intelligence Agency: *CIA World Factbook,* retrieved 12.6.2017, from http://www.cia.gov.

[11] Weintraub, Sidney (ed.): *Economic coercion and U.S. foreign policy: implications of case studies from the Johnson administration.* Westview Press: Boulder, CO 1982, p. 11; Friedman, Milton, *Bright Promises, Dismal Performance.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, NY 1983, p. 372. Quoted in: Baldwin, David: *Economic Statecraft.* Princeton University Press: Princeton 1985, p. 120.

Belarus is notably weaker, and the smallest members of the club – Armenia and Kyrgyzstan – stand at Third World levels. While Russia and Kazakhstan boast middle-class GNPs ($29,200 and $27,400 per capita, by purchasing power parity in 2019), Belarus stands at only $19,900, Armenia at $14,200, and Kyrgyzstan at $5,500.[12] The latter two countries must also deal with catastrophic unemployment and poverty levels. Armenia has about 19.8 % unemployment (first quarter 2020) and 50.4 % of the population living on less than $5.50 per day, an amount considered 'poor' by the World Bank. Kyrgyzstan has a full 61.3 % of its population living below that poverty threshold. By comparison, only 2.3 % of Russia's people are that poor.[13] Thus, especially with Belarus and the two smallest members, Russia would seem to face easy targets when using economic carrots or sticks. Even the smallest threat or inducement would loom large to a country in such dire economic straits.

Geography further strengthens Russia's hand in dealing with its neighbors. It is centrally located, with the other former Soviet states arrayed around it, close to Russia yet far from each other. What economic sense is there in trade, for example, between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan? Seemingly very little. Still, each has vital trade with Russia. Russia's size and central location also place it astride vital trade routes for its neighbors. Central Asian states need to cross Russia to reach vital European markets for their products. Belarus and Armenia have the opposite problem – Russia separates them from Central Asia, a key source of energy and raw materials. This geographic position has, for example, enabled Russia to buy oil and gas from Central Asia at bargain basement prices and then resell it at a premium to states such as Belarus and Ukraine.

Overall, Russia's position in trade with its Eurasian Union partners is strongly to its advantage. Since Russia is so much larger, a certain trade volume looms much larger for its smaller partners. Thus, they tend to have Russia among their top trade partners. This can be seen below in Table 7.2.

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[12] World Bank, retrieved 1.9.2020, from https://data.worldbank.org.

[13] Ibid. Poverty figures as of 2018 for all three countries.

Table 7.2: Top three trade partners among Eurasian Economic Union states in 2018

Country	**Export percentage**	**Import percentage**
Armenia	Russia 27.0 % Switzerland 14.2 % Bulgaria 9.0 %	Russia 26.0 % China 13.6 % Iran 5.6 %
Belarus	Russia 38.2 % Ukraine 12.0 % United Kingdom 9.1 %	Russia 58.4 % China 7.8 % Germany 4.7 %
Kazakhstan	Italy 19.2 % China 10.3 % Netherlands 10.1 %	Russia 39.3 % China 16.0 % Germany 4.9 %
Kyrgyzstan	United Kingdom 36.5 %[a] Russia 19.4 % Kazakhstan 14.7 %	China 36.7 % Russia 28.6 % Kazakhstan 11.4 %
Russia	China 12.4 % Netherlands 9.6 % Germany 7.6 %	China 21.7 % Germany 10.6 % Belarus 5.4 %

Note: Kyrgyzstan has very limited exports (only $1.77 billion in 2017, compared to $4.33 billion in imports). Much of this export comes from a single gold mining operation, whose exports to the world market go through the UK.

*Source***:** *World Bank: World Integrated Trade Solution, retrieved 1.9.2020, from https://wits.worldbank.org.*

Meanwhile, trade with the Union states is much less vital to Russia. Its top export partner among the Union states is Belarus (5.1 % in 2018), its fourth largest partner.[14] But this is over ten times less in percentage terms than Belarus' reliance on Russia for imports. Kazakhstan took 2.9 % of Russia's exports in 2018 (Russia's ninth largest partner), but again this amounts to over ten times more dependence for the Kazakhs. Meanwhile, the other two small members of the Eurasian Union represent mere rounding errors in Russia's trade statistics. In 2018 Kyrgyzstan took only 0.36 % of Russia's exports, and Armenia 0.30 %.

Finally, the specific history of these nations gives Russia yet another advantage. All of them were knit together under Russian dominance not only in the Soviet period, but in the Czarist empire which preceded it. This has established a myriad of economic and other ties which help the Kremlin to influence these states today. For example, in terms of transport and pipeline links it is literally true that 'all roads lead to Moscow.' One symbolic factor illustrates this: beginning in the 1840s the Russian Empire used a different railroad gauge than its European neighbors. Even today Russia and the ‘near abroad’ share that gauge, meaning that trains can easily travel within that area, while those from ‘outside’ need to change their wheels to enter. More importantly, transport and pipeline links were consciously designed to knit the Empire – and later the USSR – together, radiating like the spokes on a wheel from the Russian heartland. Direct links between the various smaller units of the empire were not favored. History linked the Empire’s people, as well. Many in the Eurasian Union states speak Russian, and each of the states harbors a Russian minority – which might want to follow the Kremlin’s lead politically. Also, as we shall see, many in the West forget that large migrant flows into Russia have also taken place under both Czars and Commissars. Many of today’s leaders in business and government in the ‘near abroad’ were educated in Russia, or worked there before the collapse of the USSR.[15] And all of these states have historically sent many workers into Russia, and even today they depend on access to the Russian labor market – as Moscow is well aware.

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[14] All figures in this paragraph from World Bank: op. cit.

In short, for many reasons Russia enjoys a position of “asymmetrical interdependence” in its favor in relations with the states of the ‘near abroad.’ This enables it to employ a variety of economic carrots and sticks to influence its neighbors, as we shall see in examining this paper’s two case studies, Moscow’s relations with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In each case, I argue, economic linkage helped pave the way for those countries’ accession to the Eurasian Union.

Kazakhstan

As noted above, Central Asian states like Kazakhstan suffer from a geographic disadvantage vis-à-vis Russia. Russia lies astride their main trade routes, since traditionally pipelines, roads, and railroads in the region all were centered in Russia. Thus Russia has often been able to act as a de-facto monopsony purchaser of Central Asian goods since the breakup of the USSR. Its power is further strengthened when it can resell Central Asian products as a monopoly seller to other former Soviet states such as Belarus or Armenia. For Kazakhstan, this reliance on Russian transport routes has been especially problematic in the area of oil and gas, since those products account for almost three-quarters of Kazakhstan’s exports.[16]

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[15] This is true even in states which have not yet joined the Eurasian Union, like Georgia. The leader of the Georgian Dream movement which now governs that country, billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, lived and worked in Moscow for his entire career – 30 years--until returning to Georgia to run for office in 2012. He long went by the name ‘Boris,’ and many of his assets are still in Russia. See Newnham, Randall: “Georgia on my mind? Russian sanctions and the end of the Rose Revolution”. *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 6 (2), 2015, pp. 161–170.

[16] 70.03 % in 2018, according to the World Bank: *World Integrated Trade Solution*, retrieved 1.9.2020, from https://wits.worldbank.org.

The dual advantage for Russia as both purchaser and seller was dramatically displayed in January 2006, when it was pressuring the anti-Russian regime of Viktor Yushchenko in Ukraine by threatening to cut off natural gas supplies. In the end, the Kremlin was able to force the Ukrainians to pay much more for their gas purchases, yet at the same time openly discriminate against Central Asian producers. The final deal called for Russia to ship 17 billion cubic meters (BCM) of its own gas to Kiev, at the cost of $230 per thousand cubic meters (TCM), roughly the same price Moscow received from its wealthy West European gas customers.[17] This price was almost five times higher than the roughly $50 per TCM Moscow had charged Kiev only two years earlier. Russia also agreed to allow Central Asian producers Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to ship a total of 56 BCM of gas to Ukraine – yet they were to be paid only $65 per TCM, barely a quarter of the price Moscow received. Russia had cleverly placed itself in a win-win-win situation. It profited handsomely from the huge increase in the price it charged Ukraine. It was able to punish the recalcitrant Yushchenko regime. And it also showed Central Asia how dependent it was on Russian transit routes.

In addition to Moscow's ability to control Kazakh oil and gas exports to former Soviet states like Ukraine and Belarus, it also controls Kazakh shipments to the much more lucrative West European market. Aside from China, which the Kazakhs can now access directly thanks to new pipelines, most of the country's other major trading partners are in Europe, and all of them are mainly interested in Kazakh hydrocarbons. For example, oil and gas made up 98.3 % of Italy's 2018 imports from Kazakhstan; the same is true of the Netherlands (97.8 %), France (96.4 %), and Switzerland (94.7 %).[18] Moscow's transit role to these states is so important that some authors, such as Dr. Dmitry Shlapentokh of Notre Dame University, consider the gas and oil transshipment issue to be the main reason that Kazakhstan agreed to join the Eurasian Union. As he puts it, "the very fact that Kazakhstan decided to join the Moscow-sponsored project of forming a Eurasian Union was mostly due to Kazakhstan's desire to use old Soviet pipelines in order to transport Kazakh hydrocarbons to the West."[19]

Russia also uses its strategic position astride Kazakhstan's pipelines to induce the country to sell oil and gas to Russia itself at low prices. In the past it has often imported these products, refined them, and sold the refined goods (petrochemicals and gasoline) back to Kazakhstan at higher prices. Kazakhstan hoped to sweeten these trade deals under the Eurasian Union, in part by threatening that if prices did not improve it would turn more to China. Indeed, despite the Union, the Kazakhs have begun to sell more oil and gas to China and to import refined products from that country instead of Russia.[20] In 2015 Kazakhstan actually halted the import of gasoline from Russia.[21] Russian media predicted that the country would soon run out of gas – an ironic situation for such an oil-rich country – and indeed, the Kazakhs were soon forced to import Russian gasoline again. As of 2017 about 40 % of the country's supply came from Russia.[22]

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[17] Figures in this paragraph from Parfitt, Tom: "Russia and Ukraine hail gas deal". *The Guardian*, 4.1.2006, retrieved 27.6.2017, from https://www.theguardian.com.

[18] World Bank: *World Integrated Trade Solution*, retrieved 1.9.2020, from https://wits.worldbank.org.

[19] Shlapentokh, Dmitry: "Kazakhstan drifts to China amid tension with Russia." *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analytical Articles,* 8.1.2014, retrieved 3.7.2017, from http://www.cacianalyst.org.

Russia's vital role in the transshipment of Kazakh gas and oil is matched by its role as a vital purchaser of other Kazakh goods. As noted above, the country's other partners are only interested in Kazakh raw materials, especially oil and gas. Russia, able to supply most of the raw materials it needs, instead purchases an array of other Kazakh products, including many agricultural and industrial products. It is thus a vital support for many sectors of the Kazakh economy. Therefore Kazakhstan also joined the Eurasian Union with the goal of improved trade access to the Russian market. Customs posts between the two states were taken down in 2011, under the Eurasian Customs Union, predecessor to the Eurasian Union. Yet tariff-free access to the Russian market has come at a price: Kazakhstan has been forced to raise its own tariffs on non-Russian goods to match Russia's higher tariffs. This is a drag on Kazakh trade with other partners, most notably China, which helps to cancel out the benefits from increased ties with Russia. Additionally, as Tarr shows in his detailed analysis, many non-tariff barriers still obstruct Kazakh access to Russia's markets, such as cumbersome enforcement of food safety rules.[23] Kazakhstan has been frustrated that it still has a sharply negative trade balance with Russia. Nazerbayev complained in October 2013, for example, that Russia still would not import meat products or electricity from Kazakhstan.[24]

The 2014–15 Russian economic crisis, sparked by its sanctions war with the West over Ukraine, greatly worsened matters. The Ruble lost about half its value, leading to a flood of suddenly cheap Russian goods across the open Kazakh border. Kazakh production of everything from food to cars plummeted, and stores frantically posted signs begging customers to "buy Kazakh products."[25] Even Nazerbayev had to speak up, urging his countrymen to support products made in Kazakhstan in a February, 2015 speech.[26] Kazakhstan was forced to allow its currency, the Tenge, to float in August 2015, resulting in a major depreciation to match the Ruble. In addition to the currency issues, Russia's 2014–15 recession impacted trade volumes overall. Bilateral trade with Moscow seemed to fall, rather than rise, as the Eurasian Union was implemented, disappointing the Kazakhs. Overall, bilateral trade fell 26 % from 2014 to 2015, with an even larger 32 % fall in Kazakh exports.[27] 2016 saw a further fall, with a decline of 23.5 % in Kazakh shipments to its Eurasian Union partners overall.[28] Much of this was due to declining prices for Kazakh oil and gas, which cannot be blamed on the Union, but it still runs counter to Russia's promises when the Kazakhs joined the group.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Rysmuhamedova, Dana: "Kazakhstan suspends Russian fuel imports to avert surplus". *Agence France Press (AFP),* 5.3.2015, retrieved 7.7.2017, from http://russia-insider.com.

[22] Kumenov, Almaz, "Fuel Crisis Grips Kazakhstan." *Eurasianet,*12.10.2017, retrieved 2.9.2020 from https://eurasianet.org.

[23] Tarr, David: "The Eurasian Economic Union of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and the Kyrgyz Republic: Can it succeed where its predecessor failed?". *Eastern European Economics* 54 (1), 2016, pp. 1–22.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Abdurasulov, Abdujalil: "Kazakhs find uneven playing field in Russia's trading bloc". *BBC News,* 26.4.2015, retrieved 3.7.2017, from http://www.bbc.com.

A particularly annoying trade issue for the Kazakhs is the Kremlin's politically-motivated enforcement of food safety standards. Moscow has become notorious for using this tactic against recalcitrant former Soviet republics, for example by barring mineral water and wine from Georgia as 'unsafe.'[29] Many other cases could be cited. And Russia has even used this tactic on generally friendly states such as Kazakhstan whenever minor tensions appear in relations. For example, in 2015 a virtual 'trade war' took place between the two states with tit-for-tat food safety allegations affecting a number of products. On March 3, 2015, Kazakhstan turned away five tons of Russian meat, alleging "low quality."[30] Many products were soon affected by sanctions, including poultry, milk, mayonnaise, chocolate, butter, cheese, yogurt, beef sausages, and canned meat.[31] Again, the benefits Russia promised from entering the Eurasian Union did not seem to be as substantial as hoped.

In addition to trade links, direct payments play a role in Russian-Kazakh relations, albeit a secondary one. Just as Russia pays states like Kyrgyzstan and Belarus for the use of some military facilities, it also rewards Kazakhstan for the use of some installations dating from the Soviet era. These include military test ranges and also the USSR's main space launching facility, the Baikonur Cosmodrome. This remains a key symbol of Russia's important role in the world, as could be seen from the fact that the United States was dependent on Baikonur to launch all American astronauts to the International Space Station from 2011 to 2020.[32] Russia pays the Kazakhs about $115 million per year to lease the base, under an agreement originally reached in 1994, and extended in 2004 to last until 2050.[33]

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[26] Rysmuhamedova, Dana: op. cit.

[27] Schenkkan, Nate: "Kazakhstan with Russia: Smiling through gritted teeth". *Russian Analytical Digest* 188, 2.8.2016, p. 3.

[28] Central Intelligence Agency: op. cit.

[29] Newnham, Randall: "Georgia…".

[30] Tarr, David: op. cit., p. 11.

[31] Abdurasulov, Abdujalil: op. cit.

[32] 2011 marked the last flight of the U.S. Space Shuttle, and a replacement – the Crew Dragon spacecraft – did not enter service until nine years later.

[33] RIA Novosti: "Kazakhstan finally ratifies Baikonur rental deal with Russia". *RIA Novosti*, 12.4.2010, retrieved 11.7.2017, from http://www.spacedaily.com.

Nonetheless, despite elements of dependence in Kazakh-Russian ties, the country remains the most independent member of the Eurasian Union. There are several reasons for this: it has a relatively larger economy than the other members; its per capita wealth is on a par with Russia's; and it is self-sufficient in oil and gas supplies, despite Russia's key role astride its export routes for these commodities. In contrast to Kyrgyzstan, as shown below, Kazakhstan does not have a great need for Russian financial support. In fact it has been a net contributor to the Union's Eurasian Development Bank and Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development, which Moscow has used to pay off the poorer members of the group.[34] President Nazerbayev and his successor Kassym-Jomart Tokayev have thus been able to have some influence on Eurasian Union decisions, in contrast to the other members of the Union – Belarus, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan – which are all more dependent on Moscow.

In sum, however, the Kazakhs share a key experience with the other members of the Union: they were induced to join it through a package of Russian economic incentives and threats. For the Kazakhs, the key incentives seemed to be access to Russian pipelines for oil and gas shipments to the West and access to the Russian market itself for other Kazakh products.

Kyrgyzstan

Like most of the other former Soviet states, Kyrgyzstan was not eager to join the Eurasian Union. In October 2014 its president, Almazbek Atambayev, stated that in joining "we are choosing the lesser of two evils. We have no other option."[35] Six months after its August 2015 accession to the Union, the Kyrgyz Premier summed up the results with this tepid statement: "the effects…have turned out to be blurry."[36]

The country had many grounds for its hesitation in joining the Union. First, it hoped for more economic and political independence from Russia, a country which long ruled it as a colony, in both Czarist and Soviet times.[37] Second, it is known as the most democratic state in Central Asia – although it still has very weak credentials in this area--and was wary of yoking itself to a bloc whose members were all more authoritarian.[38] And finally, like the Kazakhs, it also wanted to remain open to China, which had become a major economic partner. In fact, a major part of the Kyrgyz economy today is in its role as a transshipment center for Chinese goods entering Central Asia. Its huge Dordoi market, near Bishkek, "employs, directly and indirectly, more than 150,000 people," according to the World Bank.[39] As noted in Table 7.2 above, China is actually the number one exporter to Kyrgyzstan, accounting for 36.7 % of the country's imports in 2018, as compared to only 28.6 % for Russia and 11.4 % for Kazakhstan.[40] If the new Union harms this trade with China, Kyrgyzstan will suffer greatly. This already appears to be happening; when the country first joined the Eurasian Union, in 2015, China accounted for fully 56.4 % of Kyrgyz imports.[41]

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[34] The Development Bank, set up in 2006 with $7 billion in initial capital, received 2/3 of its funding from Russia and 1/3 from Kazakhstan, with virtually no contributions from other members. The Stabilization Fund, set up in 2008 as the global recession began, was capitalized at $8.5 billion, with Moscow providing $7 billion and the Kazakhs $1 billion. Newnham, Randall: "Russia and Belarus: Economic linkage in a patron-client relationship". *Journal of Belarusian Studies* 9 (1), 2020, pp. 3–26.

[35] Putz, Catherine: "A 'blurry' union: Kyrgyzstan and the Eurasian Economic Union". *The Diplomat*, 18.2.2016, retrieved 3.2.2017, from http://thediplomat.com.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Many Kyrgyz have kept alive the memory of past Russian oppression. For example, the country recently marked the centenary of a major revolt against Czarist rule in 1916, which caused many thousands to flee over the forbidding Tien Shan mountains into China.

Nonetheless, the tiny, impoverished state proved to be a relatively easy target for the Kremlin in its efforts to expand the Eurasian Union. As noted in the second section of this paper, its economy is dwarfed by that of Kazakhstan, not to mention that of Russia. Kyrgyzstan's miniscule GDP, only about $8.46 billion, is over 200 times smaller than that of Russia. Its per capita GNP is vastly smaller, about $5,500 compared to Russia's $29,200. Thus, even the slightest Russian economic incentives or sanctions can impact the country dramatically. As we shall see, Russia has not hesitated to use a variety of instruments to influence Kyrgyzstan, including trade sanctions and direct payments. But most importantly, the Kremlin has been able to exploit the tiny country's great dependence on sending migrant workers to Russia.

The level of Kyrgyzstan's reliance on Russia's labor market is hard to overstate. The estimated number of Kyrgyz workers in Russia ranges up to 1.5 million.[42] If this is accurate, it is almost 25 percent of the country's entire population

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[38] Freedom House gave the country a score of 38/100 in its 2019 report, but Russia received only 20 and Kazakhstan 23. Kyrgyzstan held relatively open elections in 2010 and 2015. Its parliament currently has six competitive parties. Its government has two centers of power, with an elected President and a Prime Minister whose support is based on shifting coalitions in parliament. Freedom House considers it the only country in Central Asia worthy of even a 'partly free' ranking. Freedom House: *Global Freedom Status*, retrieved 2.9.2020 from https://freedomhouse.org.

[39] Paczai, Tamas: "Kyrgyzstan's colossal Dordoi bazaar: a time of opportunity and change". *Eurasianet*, 21.10.2015, retrieved 3.3.2017, from www.eurasianet.org.

[40] World Bank: *World Integrated Trade Solution*, retrieved 1.9.20, from https://wits.worldbank.org.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Accurate estimates are very difficult to obtain, since many of these workers are not legal. The official number of legal workers was 573,000 in early 2016, but others estimate up to a million additional illegal workers. Abdrisaev, Ermek: "Condition of Kyrgyz migrants in Russia and Kazakhstan after accession to the EEU". *Kabar News Agency*, 31.5.2016, retrieved 3.3.2017, from http://kabar.kg; IRIN News: *Hope and fear: Kyrgyz migrants in Russia*, 24.4.2015, retrieved 3.3.2017, from www.irinnews.org.

(6.5 million). Such huge numbers of migrants produce huge flows of remittances back to Kyrgyzstan. It is estimated that remittances reached $2.4 billion in 2019, or 29.2 % of the country's entire GNP, one of the highest levels in the world.[43] (By comparison Mexico, widely regarded in the U.S. as highly dependent on earnings from its workers in our country, received only 3 % of its GNP from this source in 2019.)[44] Clearly, such high dependence gives Russia a powerful source of leverage over this tiny Central Asian country.

Russia also cleverly exploited its ability to 'move the goalposts' on migration – to make its partners give concessions in return for simply retaining what had long been the status quo. For many years after the breakup of the USSR, migrant workers from the former Soviet states had easily been able to enter Russia with only a domestic identity document, not an international passport. There were few other rules in place. Under Putin, however, the rules for migrants have been progressively tightened. By 2017, one article noted that:

> New arrivals have 30 days to register their residence, obtain a certification of their skills for their desired industry, translate their passport into Russian, find medical insurance, pass a medical examination, and pass an exam on Russia's language, history, and laws….Violators are added to a blacklist set up in 2013 and are subject to deportation.[45]

To make matters worse, in 2014 Russia was about to impose yet another requirement – that all migrants have a proper international passport, complete with modern biometric features. When this rule took effect at the start of 2015, it could have devastated the prospects of Kyrgyz migrants. First, the passports were expensive, costing the equivalent of over two months' salary for a minimum wage worker. And second, the Kyrgyz government was not ready to issue biometric passports, claiming they would need several years to prepare.[46]

Clearly, then, the Kyrgyz leadership had a great incentive to enter the Eurasian Union to help its migrant workers, which were the backbone of the Kyrgyz economy. By joining the Union, it was exempted from the passport requirement – its citizens can now continue to enter Russia and Kazakhstan (another important destination for migrants) with only a domestic document. Its workers no longer need to buy a Russian work permit (which could cost hundreds of dollars a year).[47] They can work in Russia for an unlimited period, while previously they were limited to two years, then required to leave the country to reapply. They are allowed to stay in Russia for 30 days before registering their residence (previously the limit had been seven days), which allows new workers to find better jobs and housing before having to register. And the requirement for exams on Russian language, history and laws is gone.

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[43] Only three states had a higher proportion of remittances in their economies. These were Tonga (37.6 %), Haiti (37.1 %) and South Sudan (34.4 %). Source: World Bank annual remittances data (as of April 2020), retrieved 2.9.2020, from www.worldbank.org.

[44] Ibid.

[45] IRIN News: op. cit.

[46] Daly, John: "Kyrgyz migrants under pressure in Russia," *Silk Road Reporters,* 17.11.2014, retrieved 20.2.2017, from www.silkroadreporters.com.

[47] All other provisions in this paragraph from Abdrisaev, Ermek: op. cit.

The results of this more lenient treatment were clear. Despite a major downturn in the Russian economy in 2014–16, which resulted in many migrants from other countries being forced to leave the country as jobs dried up, the number of Kyrgyz migrants in Russia actually increased 5.4 % in 2015, which one analysis called "a likely result of the easing of employment restrictions due to its EEU membership."[48] With the Ruble falling in value, the amount of remittances flowing to Kyrgyzstan did fall somewhat in real terms, but by much less than the declines seen for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, nearby states which also depend heavily on payments from workers in Russia.[49] This result has not only confirmed to Kyrgyzstan that it has no alternative to staying in the Union; it is also propelling the Tajiks to consider joining.[50]

In the area of trade, as well, Russia has cleverly 'moved the goalposts.' For example, Russia has threatened to charge 'export duties' on its shipments of oil to Kyrgyzstan. This is a bizarrely rare procedure in international trade, where duties are generally charged on imports, not exports. An 'export duty' on oil is simply a way for Russia to punitively raise prices.[51] In June 2016 Prime Minister Medvedev visited Bishkek and signed an agreement 'generously' agreeing to continue duty-free export of oil to Kyrgyzstan.[52] Bishkek remains dependent on Russia and Kazakhstan (also in the EEU) for its oil and gasoline, so is vulnerable to threats of supply cutoffs or price increases.

In addition to the force of its 'arguments' on trade and migration, Russia helped to seal the deal with Kyrgyzstan with direct payments. In May 2014 it agreed to provide Bishkek with $1.2 billion in return for the country's agreement to join the Eurasian Union.[53] $200 million of this was to be an outright grant, and $1 billion a long-term loan. Given the county's small size, this was a vast payment, equal to about 20 percent of Kyrgyzstan's entire annual GNP at the time. This large payment is also testimony to Moscow's great desire to strengthen the Union at all costs, especially since it was announced despite the fact that the West was at the same time imposing sanctions on Russia for its role in the Ukraine crisis, which put great stress on Russia's economy.

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[48] Putz, Catherine: "Tajikstan: the Eurasian Economic Union's next member?". *The Diplomat,* 19.7.2016, retrieved 3.2.2017, from http://thediplomat.com.

[49] The number of Uzbek workers fell by 22.2 %, with remittances falling 51 %. Tajik workers were down 15.6 %, and their payments by 47 %. Source: Central Bank of Russia figures, reported in Institute for War and Peace Reporting: *Russian crisis continues to bite for labour migrants*, 10.3.2016, retrieved 10.2.2017, from https://iwpr.net.

[50] Putz, Catherine: "Tajikstan: …".

[51] In recent years Russia has sought to impose similar 'export duties' on oil and gas shipments to countries like Ukraine, which it has targeted for political reasons.

[52] Babayeva, Fatma: "Kyrgyzstan, Russia, ink deal on duty free oil supplies". *Azernews*, 6.6.2016, retrieved 10.2.2017, from www.azernews.az.

[53] Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: *Russia to allocate $1.2 billion to help Kyrgyzstan join customs union*, 30.5.2014, retrieved 10.7.2017, from http://www.rferl.org.

Beyond this bilateral aid, Kyrgyzstan has benefitted handsomely from the Russian-funded Eurasian Development Bank and Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development. For example, in December 2013 it was awarded $80 million for road projects and agricultural equipment.[54] In July 2014 it received $155 million for power plants, and $25 million to upgrade its customs facilities to meet Eurasian Union standards for agricultural exports. And in September 2016 it was granted $110 million for a hydroelectric plant. All of these development projects loom large in such a small, poor country. And they are far larger than what the U.S. or other lenders would be willing to offer.

Overall, then, Moscow clearly exploited several economic levers to press Kyrgyzstan to join the Eurasian Union. Particularly important was the role of migrant workers, a key prop of the Kyrgyz economy. By adroitly moving the goalposts Moscow was able to make a decision to maintain the *status quo ante* – free access for Kyrgyz workers – appear to be a huge economic reward. A second key factor seems to have been outright cash payments of some $1.2 billion to Kyrgyzstan to bring about a final decision to join. This amount, almost a quarter of the country's annual GNP, could not be ignored by the Kyrgyz leadership.

Conclusion

This paper has implications in two areas. First, it helps to confirm the theoretical points mentioned at the start of the study. Economic linkage can play a key role in important foreign policy issues, and in using this linkage, major states will assemble varied packages of sanctions and incentives, which cannot be understood if analysts focus only on one policy instrument. And second, this chapter offers insights into the specific cases explored here, in the Central Asian region.

Like the United States in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, mentioned at the start of this study, Russia has sought allies by employing a wide variety of economic – and non-economic – instruments. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth mentioning that a number of non-economic threats and inducements have been offered to persuade states to join the Eurasian Union. Armenia, for example, is widely reported to have joined partly for military reasons, because of its fears of war with Azerbaijan.[55] It reached the conclusion that only Russia could be counted on as a military ally to keep Armenia safe, and the price for this was giving up hopes of links to the European Union, and turning instead to the Moscow-sponsored Eurasian group. Kazakhstan, too, faced real security concerns in deciding to join the Eurasian Union. It was concerned about its large Russian minority, concentrated in the north of the country, which could potentially be moved to revolt by Russian agitation if the Kazakhs tried to escape Moscow's orbit. In what was seen as a major threat to the Kazakhs, Russian President Putin casually claimed in 2014 that the country had never had statehood until the post-Soviet era, and linked its independence only to President Nazerbayev, implying that after he passed from the scene the country's sovereignty would be in doubt. Since this statement was made as Moscow was dismembering Ukraine in the same manner, it had to be taken seriously.

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[54] Details of EDB financing in this paragraph from Eurasian Development Bank: *Kyrgyzstan – member profile*, retrieved 2.9.2020 from https://eabr.org.

[55] Grigoryan, Armen: "Armenia chooses Customs Union over EU Association Agreement". *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analytical Articles*, 18.9.2013, retrieved 23.5.2016, from http://www.cacianalyst.org.

However, as noted in this paper, for both Central Asian members of the Eurasian Union economic packages played a major role in pushing them to join the Union. As shown above, for Kazakhstan key factors included the lure of access to Russian markets and the key role of Russian pipelines in transporting oil and gas, the country's main exports, to its most important customers. For the poorer Kyrgyz state, in contrast, the most important factor was the fate of migrant workers, with outright cash payments also playing a key role. In each case, several other smaller economic inducements were also involved.

This analysis could easily be extended to the other members and potential members of the Eurasian Union. Armenia, for example, while concerned about military issues, also has many economic reasons to join the group. Its trade is heavily oriented toward Moscow, Russia has many strategic investments in the country (controlling, for example, its electricity suppliers and pipeline grid), and the Russians have also provided cut-rate oil and gas supplies.[56] Belarus faces a similar calculus. In its case a key role is played by access to the Russian market for the country's uncompetitive Soviet-style industrial products. Russia has also made large loans to Belarus, and like Armenia, has given it major discounts on oil and gas.[57] Finally, as noted above, Russia has continued to use economic packages to target potential new members for the Union. Tajikistan is reported the closest to joining,[58] motivated largely by the need to improve access for its migrant workers in Russia. Ukraine has been a more important long-term target, courted with loans, trade access and cheap gas during periods when it was friendly to the Kremlin (under Kuchma before 2004 and Yanukovych in 2010–14), but thus far without success.

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Popescu, Nicu: *Eurasian Union: the real, the imaginary and the likely.* (Chaillot Papers 132). European Union Institute for Security Studies: *Paris* 2014; Newnham, Randall: "Russia…".

[58] Putz, Catherine: "Tajikstan: …".

Finally, this paper also provides some insights into current conditions in Central Asia. The key conclusion is that Moscow is highly motivated to keep those states close to Russia, and is willing to invest considerable economic and political resources to ensure that result. It will exploit any perceived economic need in the states it is targeting. Thus, any country which wants to challenge Moscow's role in the area – such as the United States or China – will not be able to succeed merely with statements and requests. It must back its intent with major amounts of economic leverage – such as cash, trade and migration access and natural resources. Only a power which can match the size of Moscow's economic packages can hope to have success in the region. Given the West's geographical distance and historical lack of interest, the only other player positioned to challenge the Kremlin in Central Asia would seem to be China.

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Marcin Grabowski, Jakub Stefanowski

8. Belt and Road Initiative: A Tool for Reshaping the Structure of the Central Asian System?

Abstract: The aim of this chapter is to analyze if the Belt and Road Initiative, as a core element of Chinese foreign policy strategy, is reshaping the structure of the regional system in Central Asia. The paper is an example of theory-led research and adopts a neorealist paradigm. It focuses on the system level and the possible change in the distribution of capabilities of the two dominant players in Central Asia, namely the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, as well as on the Chinese capacity to drive this change through the Belt and Road Initiative.

Keywords: Central Asia, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), neorealism, structural realism, regional system

Central Asia has been an important area in global politics since ancient times, constituting the core of the so-called Silk Road, followed by the geopolitical rivalry of global powers since the nineteenth century (British-Russia rivalry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and American-Soviet rivalry during the Cold War). Somehow forgotten and left alone in the 1990s to develop authoritarian regimes, with the Russian position still dominant (reinforced by the so-called 'geopolitics of pipelines'), Central Asia has experienced growing Chinese influence in the twenty-first century.

As the Central Asian regional system was still predominantly shaped and institutionalized by Russia (CIS, CSTO, SCO – and to a certain extent, EEU), Chinese authorities had to influence its structure if they wanted to increase their position in the Central Asia or Eurasian sphere. Therefore, we can observe a gradual increase of the Chinese role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as well as new initiatives, including two which were extremely important, namely the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (inaugurated in Dec. 2015/Jan. 2016)[1] and the Belt and Road Initiative (initially known as the Silk Road Economic Belt, then One Belt One Road, as also evolving into a set of possible land- and sea-based communication routes).

The latter project, hereafter referred to as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will be analyzed in this paper as the crucial element in reshaping the Central Asian regional system to reinforce the Chinese position. Therefore, the main goal of this paper is to conduct an analysis of the Chinese BRI project as a core element of its foreign policy strategy of reshaping the structure of the system, initially in Central Asia and ultimately in Eurasia. To attain this goal, we intend to focus on the research problem of shaping the structure of the system as well as the available tools and capabilities of such activities. Even though there is a broad literature analyzing the Belt and Road Initiative itself,[2] we can still identify a research gap, as the role of the initiative in changing the system structure has largely remained unanalyzed.

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[1] In December 2015 – Articles of the Agreement entered into force, but the bank commenced its activity in January 2016.

Two research questions drive the research and the paper itself:

> RQ1: Can the Belt and Road Initiative reshape the system structure in Central Asia?
> RQ2: Is China capable of driving this system structure change?
> Based on the aforementioned research questions, two hypotheses were created:
> H1: The Belt and Road Initiative is a crucial element in reshaping the system structure in Central Asia.
> H2: People's Republic of China has the requisite capabilities and resources to gradually change the shape of the regional system.

The analysis will be based on neorealist theory and will refer to the system level, with a focus on Belt and Road Initiative as a factor at the level of system structure. The paper is based on legal-institutional, factor and document analysis.

Theoretical setting[3]

Neorealism was selected as the theory driving the research and the paper itself. Neorealism, also known as structural realism, has mostly been developed by

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[2] Wang, Linggui / Zhao, Jianglin (eds.): *The Belt and Road initiative in the global context.* Social Sciences Academic Press, Beijing 2017; Mayer, Maxiilian (ed.): *Rethinking the Silk Road China's Belt and Road Initiative and Emerging Eurasian Relations.* Palgrave Macmillan: Singapore 2017; Deepak, B.R. (ed.): *China's Global Rebalancing and the New Silk Road.* Springer, New Delhi 2018; Cheng, Dawei: *Trade governance of the Belt and Road Initiative: economic logic, value choices, and institutional arrangement.* Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon, New York 2018; Zhang, Wenxian: *China's belt and road initiative: the changing the rules of globalization.* Springer, New York 2018; Bal, K. Sharma / Nivedita Das Kundu (eds.): *China's one belt one road: initiative, challenges, and prospects,* Vij Books India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi 2016; Cheng, Yu / Song, Lilei / Huang, Lihe (eds.): *The Belt & Road Initiative in the global arena: Chinese and European perspectives,* Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore 2017.

[3] This theoretical setting was adopted from: Grabowski, Marcin / Stefanowski, Jakub: "Regional Integration in Central Asia in the Shadow of Sino-Russian Rivalry". In: Mania, Andrzej / Grabowski, Marcin / Pugacewicz, Tomasz (eds.): *Global Politics in the 21st Century: Between Regional Cooperation and Conflict.* Peter Lang Verlag: Berlin 2019, pp. 69–108.

Kenneth Waltz and is fully described in his prominent book *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Even though states, as units of the system, remain crucial, their interactions and position in the system are dependent on the system structure itself.[4]

As there are various publications focusing on the role of structural realism in International Relations (IR) theory,[5] only certain features were selected as analytical tools for the paper presented. These features focus on the international structure as defined by Kenneth Waltz:

1) Structures defined according to the principle ordering the system (including transformation of the system from anarchic to hierarchic one);
2) Structures defined by different functions of distinguished units (again hierarchic system changing with differently defined and allotted functions v. anarchic system with similar units);
3) Structures defined by the distribution of capabilities across units, making the system an anarchic or hierarchical one.[6]

This paper refers to the BRI as an element forming the structure of the regional system, hence, to certain extent, a framework for unit relations with proper feedback.

There are naturally more dilemmas that the regional system in Central Asia faces –especially those connected with the anarchy versus hierarchy distinction, the polarity of structure (the number of poles in the system), level of integration and interdependence (including sensitivity and vulnerability in the system).[7] Finally, there is a problem of the likelihood of integration and its effectiveness as reflected in neorealist theories. Regional institutions, including alliances, are fully justified under realist or neorealist theories, as they reduce the security dilemma. Dominant powers mean that the alliance/institution and weaker states can benefit from a 'security umbrella'. In the economic sphere, integration positively influences economic potential, hence increases the role of the country (unit) in the system. Regional institutions normally reflect power distributions in the system, and powers create them in order to increase their position within it.[8] The power distribution in the system (as mentioned in Table 8.1) is highly unequal, favoring Russia and China, hence it is fair to state that organizations in Central Asia mostly reflect Sino-Russian power competition, or a will to maintain their dominant status in the region (in case of Russia). Russia makes greater use of hard power, whereas China prefers the soft variety and, if pushed to use hard, it is rather in its economic form which would better be termed a smart power approach.

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[4] Kenneth Waltz refers to different system approaches: that of Richard Rosecrance – in this case he suggests it is more a reductionist than a systemic approach, but useful as a source of categories and vocabulary; of Stanley Hoffmann – criticizing the lack of usefulness of such a theory, where everything is bundled into one category of structure, but showing the merits of Hoffmann's theory: pattern of relations, structure, elements influencing the behavior of rulers and state's operations. Finally, Morton Kaplan, the most popular system theorist, is criticized for lacking a clear distinction between the interaction of units from their arrangement (structure), as relations of states are placed on the systemic level. See Waltz, Kenneth: *Theory of International Politics.* Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Reading-Menlo Park-London-Amsterdam-Don Mills-Sydney 1979, pp. 41–59.

[5] Keohane, Robert (ed.): *Neorealism and Its Critics.* Columbia University Press, New York 1986. See especially essays: Keohane, Robert: *Realism, Neorealism and the Study of World Politics,* pp. 1–26, Ruggie, John Gerard: *Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis,* pp. 131–157, Keohane, Robert: *Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond,* pp. 158–203, Ashley, Richard: *The Poverty of Neorealism,* pp. 255–300; Waltz, Kenneth: *Reflections on* Theory of International Politics: *A Response to My Critics,* pp. 322–346. See also: Guzzini, Stefano: *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold.* Routledge: London-New York 1998, pp. 125–141; Griffiths, Martin: *Rethinking International Relations Theory.* Hundmills-New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011, pp. 123–130.

[6] Waltz, Kenneth: *Theory…*, pp. 100–101.

As for the level of analysis approach, it was introduced by Kenneth Waltz in 1959 in *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*,[9] developed as a theoretical model by David Singer in 1961,[10] and widely applied since then.

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[7] Those issues were discussed by Waltz: Kenneth, *Theory…*, pp. 104–147.

[8] See Grieco, Joseph: "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism". *International Organization* 42 (3) 1988, pp. 485–507; Walt, Stephen: *The Origins of Alliances*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca-London 1987, pp. 1–49. See also Oye, Kenneth (ed.): *Cooperation under Anarchy*. Princeton University Press: Princeton 1986, especially essays: Oye, Kenneth: "Explaining Cooperation under Anarchy: Hypotheses and Strategies". pp. 1–24; Jervis, Robert: "From Balance to Concert: A Study of International Security Cooperation". pp. 58–79.

[9] Waltz, Kenneth: *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. Columbia University Press: New York-London 1959, see especially pp. 16–41, 80–123, 159–186.

[10] Singer, David: "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations". *World Politics* 14 (1), 1961, pp. 77–92.

Table 8.1: Simplified structure of power in Central Asia 1995, 2005, 2015, and 2019

	1995					**2005**					**2015**					2019				
	T	**P**	**GDP (PPP)**	**A.F.**	**D.B.**	**T**	**P**	**GDP (PPP)**	**A.F.**	**D.B.**	**T**	**P**	**GDP (PPP)**	**A.F.**	**D.B.**	T	P	GDP (PPP)	A.F.	D.B.
Russia	**17098**	**148.4**	**833**	**1800**	***12472***	**17098**	**143,5**	**1697**	**1452**	***27337***	**17098**	**144**	**3615**	**1490**	**66419**	**17098**	**144**	**4192**	**1454**	**65102**
China	**9563**	**1205**	**2252**	**4130**	***12606***	**9563**	**1304**	**6639**	**3755**	***45919***	**9563**	**1371**	**19814**	**2843**	***214093***	**9563**	**1398**	**21414**	**2695**	***261082***
Kazakhstan	2725	15.82	95.5	75	178	2725	15.15	216	101	592	2725	18	439	71	2046	2725	18.5	478	71	1766
Kyrgyzstan	200	4.56	5.64	7	51.6	200	5.16	10.9	18	75.7	200	6	20.5	20	231	200	6.4	33	21	124
Tajikistan	143	5.76	5.34	18	5.8	143	6.85	10.4	13	N/A	141	8.6	24	16	95.8	143	9.3	30	17	N/A
Uzbekistan	447	22.79	37.3	42	112.7	447	26.17	71.5	91	N/A	447	31	190	68	N/A	447	33.6	227	68	N/A

Symbols: T – territory (in thousand sq. km); P – population (in million people); A.F. – armed forces (in thousand people – armed forces personnel); GDP (PPP) – Gross Domestic Product, Purchasing Power Parity (in billions of US$ at current prices and exchange rates); D.B. – defense budget (in millions of US$ at current prices and exchange rates). Figures in italics are SIPRI estimates. Underlined figures indicate highly uncertain data.

Source: Authors own work, based on: World Bank Data; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, retrieved 18.08.2020, from https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex; The International Institute for Strategic Studies: The Military Balance 2020, Routledge: London 2020; Grabowski, Marcin / Stefanowski, Jakub: "Regional Integration in Central Asia in the Shadow of Sino-Russian Rivalry". In: Mania, Andrzej / Grabowski, Marcin / Pugacewicz, Tomasz (eds.): Global Politics in the 21st Century: Between Regional Cooperation and Conflict. Peter Lang Verlag: Berlin 2019, p. 100.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

The foreign policy of the Peoples' Republic of China began to change under the new leadership of President Xi Jinping. In late 2013, based on the developing integration within the Eurasian Economic Community and a deadlock in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in particular within the economic sphere, the Chinese state proposed to establish the Silk Road Economic Belt.[11]

The announcement of the project was part of Xi Jinping's lecture at the Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan, in which he proposed cooperation to establish trade and economic linkages to promote regional integration. Then, several months later, the project was enlarged with the Maritime Silk Road, which was proposed on Xi's trip to Indonesia. Altogether it creates the project which is commonly known as the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative.[12]

As the project itself is only a part of a bigger operation, it should not be analyzed solely and strictly in the context of relations in Central Asia. Its ultimate goal is to connect and integrate all of the countries in Europe and Asia, through the linkage of Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe. The undertaking includes a vast variety of infrastructure projects and a few new international institutions.[13] The assumptions of the project are something different than merely constituting another international organization. It rather resembles the manifestation of China's goals in the international area than a one single project. Its basis is a set of economic ideas which do not instantly present a clear blueprint for a new international structure on their own.[14] Lastly, in the context of the rivalry stated earlier, the OBOR should be rather viewed as a project aimed at contesting the power of the United States of America and the assumption of the unquestioned regional hegemony/leader/power by China.[15]

Due to the fact that the whole project has a Westward orientation, its goal might also be viewed as a means to aid the less developed regions in China. The project provides an ideological base for an outlet of China's huge foreign exchange reserves and a stimulus for economic growth.[16]

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[11] Kaczmarski, Marcin: *Russia-China Relations in the Post-Crisis International Order*. Routledge: New York 2015, p. 98.

[12] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China: *President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech and Proposes to Build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian Countries*, retrieved 10.04.2018, from http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpfwzysiesgjtfhshzzfh_665686/t1076334.shtml.; Xi, Jinping: *Speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Indonesian Parliament,* retrieved 10.04.2018, from http://www.asean-china-center.org/english/2013-10/03/c_133062675.htm.

[13] Mayer, Maximillian: "China's Rise as Eurasian Power: The Revival of the Silk Road and Its Consequences". In: Mayer, Maximillian (ed.): *Rethinking the Silk Road China's Belt and Road Initiative and Emerging Eurasian Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan: Singapore, 2017, pp. 2–3.

[14] Kaczmarski, Marcin: *Russia-China Relations…*, p. 98.

[15] Wilson, Jeanne L.: "The Eurasian Economic Union and China's silk Road: implications for the Russian-Chinese relationship". *European Politics and Society* 17 (1), 2016, pp. 116–119.

The institutionalization of OBOR is very weak since it mainly rests upon the political commitments of the interested parties. The new international organizations which are part of OBOR are: the Silk Road Fund, set up in 2014 with capital amounting to 40 billion USD (65 % China's currency reserves, 15 % to one of China's SOE and the rest from state banks)[17] and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which also was established in 2014 and currently brings together 103 states (Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are members of the Bank)[18]

The most important document of the OBOR, which regulates its functioning, is the Vision and Actions of Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The document does not, however, consist of any strict plan for the development of the project but it outlines the principles and elements (corridors) of the initiative. It emphasizes that the OBOR should be concentrated on the construction of transportation and telecommunication infrastructure. What is more, five essential forms of connections are highlighted: infrastructure construction, unimpeded trade, financial integration, policy coordination and people-to-people ties.[19]

Although OBOR does not currently have its own fully independent organization to gather together interested parties, usually using already existing ones for that purpose, in May 2017 the first 'Belt and Road Summit' was held in Beijing. To date, more than 100 states and international organizations have confirmed their support and engagement with the project and China has signed 40 memoranda of understanding concerning cooperation within the OBOR framework.[20] The latest data (March 2020) indicates that the list of participating countries has increased to 138 and counted 29 international organizations separately.[21]

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[16] Ibid.

[17] At the 2017 Belt and Road Summit, Xi Jinping announced that China would contribute an additional 100 billion RMB to the budget of the Fund. Xi, Jinping: *President Xi's speech at opening of Belt and Road forum*, 14.05.2017, retrieved 03.05.2018, from https://china.usc.edu/president-xis-speech-opening-belt-and-road-forum-may-14-2017.

[18] Kaczmarski, Marcin: "Two Ways of Influence-building: The Eurasian Economic Union and the One Belt, One Road Initiative". *Europe-Asia Studies* 69 (7), 2017, p. 1031. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank: *Who we are*, retrieved 10.04.2018, from https://www.aiib.org/en/about-aiib/index.html.

[19] The National Development and Reform Commission of People's Republic of China: *Vision and Actions of Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road*, retrieved 10.04.2018, from http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html.

[20] Kaczmarski, Marcin: "Two Ways...", p. 1031.

[21] Green Belt and Road Initiative Center: *Belt and Road Initiative Quick Info*, retrieved 19.08.2020, from https://green-bri.org/belt-and-road-initiative-quick-info.

System Level Analysis of the Role of the BRI

This part of the paper is dedicated to the system level, focusing on the structure of power within the researched region. Furthermore, as neorealism was chosen as the main explanatory tool, the study focuses on the factors shaping the system which are associated with that paradigm, thus BRI will be analyzed in the context of hard power (military and economic sphere), strategic resources and lastly the structure of international organizations as the manifestation of power in the regional system.

When it comes to the military aspect of BRI, there is none to be seen. In the legal texts associated with this initiative, as well as in the political discourse this project is purely economic in its nature. It is stated that BRI "is in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It upholds the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence."[22]

The regional system in Central Asia resembles, as already mentioned, a Sino-Russian duopoly (hence of the unequal distribution of power). Whereas China is undoubtedly the dominant economic player, Russia, due to the existing infrastructure and the setting of international organizations, is more active in the military area. Some researchers indicate that one may detect a division of labor between the great powers in Central Asia.[23] That situation will not change because of the development of the Belt and Road Initiative and, although BRI increases the level of capital and investment in the region and thus Chinese interests, the Initiative is not forged to frame any particular security agenda. Ultimately, if the structure of the system is analyzed, the BRI is not a mechanism intended to change this system.

Considering the issue of the control of the strategic resources (energy resources) it is once again fair to state that the BRI may only change structure of power in the region to some extent. The lion's share of the infrastructure which shapes the international flow of strategic resources, namely gas and oil, was operational before the creation of the BRI. The central project in this regard – the Central Asia-China gas pipeline – became operational in 2012.[24] Currently, within the framework of the BRI in Central Asia, the Russia-China East gas pipeline and the last section of the Central Asia-China gas pipeline have been built.[25] BRI in this aspect is something of a late-comer and should not be associated as the leading mechanism for changing the structure of power in Central Asia.

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[22] The National Development and Reform Commission of People's Republic of China: *Vision and Actions of Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road*, retrieved 10.04.2018, from http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html

[23] Tolipov, Farkhod: "One Belt, One Road In Central Asia: Progress, Challenges, and Implications". In Arduino, Alessandro / Xue, Gong (eds.): *Securing the Belt and Road Initative: Risk Assessment, Private Security and Special Insurances Along the New Wave of Chinese Outbound Investments.* Palgrave Macmillan: Singapore, Shanghai, 2018, pp. 181–196; Grabowski, Marcin / Stefanowski, Jakub: op. cit.; de Haas, Marcel: "War Games of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization: Drills on the Move!". *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 29 (3), 2016, pp. 378–406.

[24] The Kazakhstan-China crude oil pipeline became functional in 2006; The Kazakhstan-China and Turkmenistan-China sections of the gas pipeline were put into service

As the Belt and Road Initiative is mainly an economic project, there is a need to research a number of additional factors. These include the level of capital which the great powers have to spare on the development of the region (reserves), the trade position of China and Russia to each other and the issue of foreign direct investments (FDI).

The analysis of the data collected in Figure 8.1 indicates that, in comparison to Russia, China has a lot to offer to Central Asian states. The reserves of Chinese capital allow PRC to shape the regional system. China has the potential to bend the regional setting to favor to its interests more. Thus, the research question (RQ2) based on the economic data might be answered positively because China will not met a real competitor in the region if it decides that it wants to create a favorable infrastructural system in Central Asia.

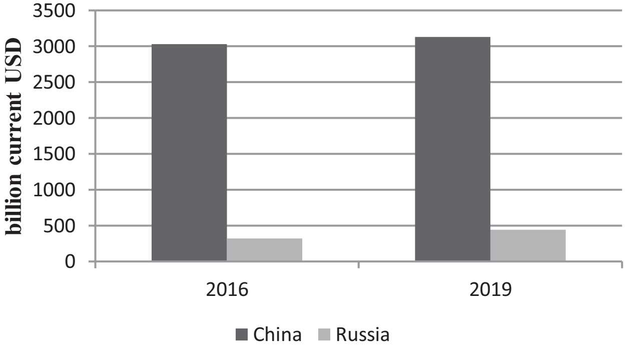

Figure 8.1: Chinese and Russian total reserves minus gold in 2016 and 2019 (current US$)
Source: Authors' own work based on the Word Bank data.

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in 2009 and Uzbekistan-China section was operational from 2012; Liu, Dawei / Yamaguchi, Kensuke / Yoshikawa, Hisashi: "Understanding the motivations behind the Myanmar-China energy pipeline: Multiple streams and energy policy in China". *Energy Policy* 107, 2017, pp. 403–412.

[25] Radio Free Europe: *Tajik Claim Of Pipeline Progress Is Welcome News In Turkmenistan*, retrieved 18.08.200, from https://www.rferl.org/a/tajik-claim-of-pipeline-progress-is-welcome-news-in-turkmenistan/30410670.html; Hellenic Shipping News Worldwide: *China starts building southern part of China-Russia East gas pipeline*, retrieved 18.08.2020, from https://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/china-starts-building-southern-part-of-china-russia-east-gas-pipeline/.

When it comes to the matter of trade, China has outstripped Russia and become the largest trader with Central Asia (counted as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) in the period following the financial economic crisis in 2008 (Figure 8.2). Until 2013 (the year of the establishment of the BRI) the structure of the trade position of China was on the rise. The ratio of the value of Chinese trade (import+export) to Russia was steadily improving but the situation changed after 2013 and the ratio of the structure of the trade position became rather stable (highlighted period).

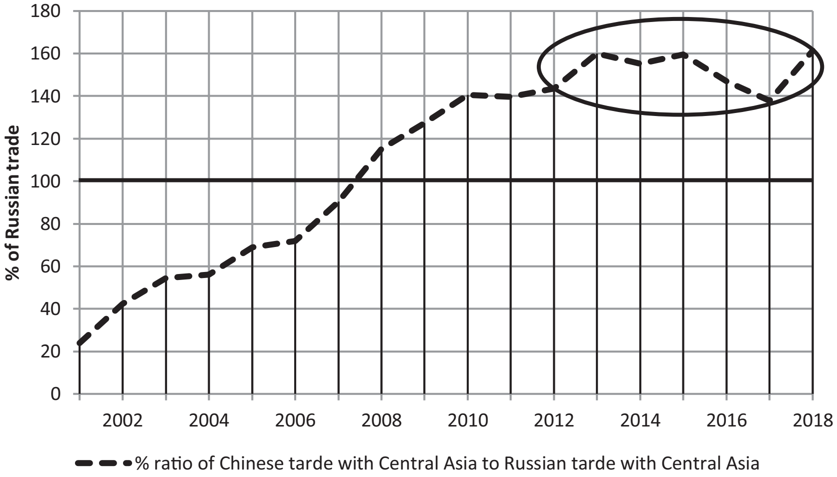

Figure 8.2: % ratio of Chinese trade with Central Asia to Russian trade between 2001–2018

Source: Authors' own work based on the data of the World Integrated Trade Solution.

The matter of trade indicates that the BRI is rather a status quo mechanism for China in case of the trade position structure in the region than a mechanism for change. The BRI might be depicted as a milestone demonstrating the economic dominance of China in Central Asia but not an initiative which has drastically changed the economic performance of the structure of economic power in the region.

Although, the data of the bilateral FDI between China and Central Asian countries is hard to collect, based on the UNCTAD outstock FDI's data from 2012 it can be said that the level of the investments proposed by China, which were presented as BRI investments, is a game changer in the region. The value of the agreements signed in 2013 with the Central Asian states as part of the BRI was estimated at around 48 billion USD.[26] The amount is nearly seven times higher than the outstock of Chinese investments detected by UNCTAD in 2012 (Table 2). The impact of Chinese investments should be also analyzed in comparison to Russian FDI's, which even before BRI were more than half that of their Chinese counterparts, thus making China the dominant power in terms of infrastructure development in the region.

Table 8.2: Russian and Chinese outstock FDI In Central Asia in 2012

	Russian Federation, outstock FDI 2012, millions USD	**China, outstock FDI 2012, millions USD**
Kazachstan	2 453	6 251
Kyrgyzstan	202	662
Tajikistan	679	476
Uzbekistan	277	146
Total	3611	7536

Source: Authors' own work based on the UNCTAD Bilateral FDI statistics database.

Lastly, apart from the economic indicators, there is the issue of the regional integration setting as a manifestation of power in the region. There is a question whether the BRI has changed the agenda of the already existing organizations in favor of Chinese interests. The matter of regional setting in the context of international organizations in Central Asia was studied in one of the authors' previously papers.[27] The gist is that the Belt and Road Initiative has been a subject of rivalry between Russia and China and that it ultimately changed the regional setting in favor of Chinese interests. The BRI was signed into the agenda of the China-dominated Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Perhaps, it is more important that the BRI – although it was not initially well received by Russia, which treated this initiative as directed against the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union project – it was still included into the undertaking as part of a mutual agreement which was signed in 2015 and led to the further development of the regional setting in Central Asia.[28]

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[26] Tolipov, Farkhod, op. cit., p. 187.

[27] Grabowski, Marcin / Stefanowski, Jakub: op. cit., pp. 69–108.

[28] Ibid.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to assess the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative in the context of the changing power dynamics in Central Asia. The BRI was analyzed as a tool influencing the system structure in central Asia and reinforcing the Chinese position in the system itself.

Overall, the system level analysis points to a mixed answer to the question of whether the BRI is a game changer in Central Asia. Although it economically strengthens China's position and role in the system, it does not change the division of labor and functions in the system of the studied region. Summing up, it is fair to state that the system is changing, thus making the BRI a game changer, but it does not affect every important factor and all dimensions of the structure of power in Central Asia.

As for the hypothesis H1: the Belt and Road Initiative is a crucial element in re-shaping the system structure in Central Asia, the analysis shows the important role of BRI initiative in the consolidation of Chinese efforts and policies in the region, but at the same time the value added as a system changer at this moment is still limited, projects within the BRI scarce, investments quite limited etc. Therefore, we can only expect future changes in this matter, bearing in mind the overall Chinese engagement in Central Asia, its potential and the expected consolidation of those efforts within the BRI.

As for hypothesis H2: People's Republic of China has both the capabilities and resources to gradually change the shape of the regional system, we were able to confirm this to a higher degree given the Chinese capabilities and relative transformation of power in Central Asia, with a weakening Russian position and strengthening Chinese one, mostly by referring to economic spheres (military and socio-cultural spheres are still dominated by Russian influence).

In terms of neorealist analysis, we can briefly and tentatively assess that the structures defined according to the principle ordering the system have not yet been substantially altered, even though this new initiative has implemented a set of novelties in the structure (including a very limited level of institutionalization, as well as limiting the level of anarchy and challenging the hierarchical structure by shifting power and initiative towards the People's Republic of China). It has also influenced structures defined according to the different functions of the distinguished units, reinforcing the role of the PRC as the main provider of ideas and holder of economic tools (supporting infrastructure development as well as demonopolizing the Russian position in terms of the control of resources), again reinforcing the Chinese position in the system. Finally, as for the distribution of capabilities across units, we can observe a similar process at play, namely BRI being a tool for reinforcing and institutionalizing the Chinese position, as its capabilities are much more powerful.

Summing up, despite the fact the first hypothesis has been confirmed to a very limited degree, the second hypothesis has been borne out to a higher degree and the Belt and Road Initiative, being part of a broader Chinese Central Asian strategy, may be an important tool supporting systemic change in the region. It is especially discernible in the neorealist analysis provided above, as this new tool reinforces the Chinese role in all three structural dimensions of the system.

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Alessia Chiriatti

9. Georgia, South Caucasus Equilibrium and the Turkish Role. How do Non-state Actors Act and React?

Abstract: In light of the war between Georgia and Russia in South Ossetia in August 2008, this paper explores whether non-state actors act and react in regional networks in order to bypass and influence the central foreign policy organs of government and provide an alternative to state structures, authorities and institutions of governance, especially in conflict resolution. Methodologically, references to the ideas of the classical theory of regional integration and the literature about "shadow regionalism" and "diffuse regionhood" will be made to describe the presence of alternative actors in the international relations background. Questioning the exclusive competency of the state in "going regional", the study will investigate how non-state actors might challenge the role of central governance in regional institutionalization and how they affect state-led policymaking. Through an explorative focus on the Southern Caucasus, the paper will try to answer the following research questions: how do transnational actors act regionally? How do these regional non-state actors influence the State level? Moreover, the Turkish role will be considered in order to evaluate the regional equilibrium in terms of the chance for this country to become a leading state in the region itself.

Keywords: non-state actors, South Caucasus, Georgia, South Ossetian war, regionalism, security, Turkey

Introduction

A new interpretation of the role of non-state and transnational actors in the literature of International Relations and Security Studies has emerged during recent decades in order to study how and why they are able to challenge the central foreign policy organs of government and provide an alternative to a state's structures, authorities and institutions of governance.[1] In this sense, the concepts of the state, regional integration and regionalism are at the center of a veritable explosion of research and policy discussion. For instance, Peter Katzenstein rejects the "purportedly stubborn persistence of the nation-state or the inevitable march of globalization," arguing that we are approaching a "world of regions."[2] Similarly, Amitav Acharya examines the "emerging regional architecture of world politics," whereas

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[1] Söderbaum, Fredrik: "Rethinking Region and Regionalism". *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 14 (2), 2013, p. 10.

[2] Katzenstein, Peter J.: *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium.* Cornell University Press: Ithaca, New York 2005, p. 35.

Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver speak about a "global order of strong regions."[3] "Regions are now everywhere across the globe and are increasingly fundamental to the functioning of all aspects of world affairs from trade to conflict management, and can even be said to now constitute world order,"[4] Rick Fawn writes.

'Shadow regionalism'[5] – or what Bach refers to as 'trans-state regionalisation'[6] – has gradually focused attention on non-state-centric instances of regionalism in order to explain the existence of parallel structures of pursuing power and managing different patterns and processes of regional interactions. It can be opposed to the classical theories of regional integration and cooperation, such as functionalism and neofunctionalism, which maintain liberal-pluralist assumptions, such as the need for cordial relations between states and non-state actors to promote good relationship.

While not denying the pre-eminent role of the state in governance, we could affirm that there is an underestimation of transnational governance.[7] One of the most fascinating developments in the post-Cold War period, in fact, is the frenzy of (regional) institution-building that began in the late 1980s.[8] From the other side, the policy debate is interested in idealism concerning the benefits of regional organizations and what they can achieve. The preference for regional organizations continued in the literature of the last period to be dominant in the field. The study of regionalism has focused on determining what types of regions are the most functional, instrumental and efficient to rule or govern.[9]

The case-study proposed in this paper, referring to Georgia and South Caucasus, interested by a post-Soviet frozen conflict, reveals interesting variations in the architecture of transnational governance. Moreover, it also focuses on the Turkish role and its influence on the South Caucasus region: Turkey has manifested a genuine interest in the region just after the end of the Soviet Union and the emergence of three independent states, particularly for energy and economic issues.

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[3] Buzan, Barry / Waever, Ole: *Regions and power: The Structure of International Security.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2003, p. 4.

[4] Fawn, Rick: "Regions and Their Study: Where from, What for and Where to?". *Review of International Studies* 35, 2009, p. 7.

[5] Shadow regionalism indicates that regime actors use their power positions within the State apparatus in order to set up a complex mode of regionalization, characterized by informality and personal self-interest.

[6] Bach, Daniel C.: *Regionalisation in Africa: Integration and Disintegration.* James Curry: London: James, 1999.

[7] Breslin, Shaun / Nesedurai, Helen E. S.: "Who governs and how? Non-state actors and transnational governance in Southeast Asia". *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 48 (2), 2018, pp. 187–202.

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[9] Soderbaum, Fredrik: "Formal and Informal Regionalism". *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalism.* Routledge: London, 2012.

The Eurasian region is a significant example in order to understand and explain how state and non-state actors are interrelated within their Regional Security Complex (RSC), as claimed by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever. In this paper, Buzan and Waever's approach to RSC constitutes one of the most important research pillars. Specifically related to security interdependence, it will be used in this paper in order to evaluate a particular case, with the reference to the Caucasian sub-region and the isolation of South-Ossetia and Abkhazia. The case study, conducted thorough a qualitative method, has been chosen in order to stress the importance of non-state actors and their role in the region and in order to fill the gap on the topic, considering the existing IR literature. The paper will firstly analyze the Georgian case study, with a particular stress on the South Ossetian war and non-state actors involved in the Caucasian sub-region. Specifically, the paper will focus on the criminal routes in the Caucasus, mainly during the period between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Rose Revolution (2003), thus trying to comprehend if this sub-region could be intended as a hub for terrorism. It reviews the regional security environment in the Caucasus and provides an overview of the most important non-state actors, such as terrorist groups, insurgency movements, operating across the region.

Secondly, the paper will evaluate the Turkish role, considering it in terms of geographical proximity (i.e. the common borders between Georgia and Turkey) and the proactive foreign policy promoted by the "zero-problems with neighbors" approach by the former Turkish chief foreign policy advisor (from 2002) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (2009–2014), Ahmet Davutoglu.

Following this scheme, this paper will try to evaluate the following: firstly, how do transnational actors cluster regionally? And, secondly, are there regional coalitions beyond and behind the state level?

Choosing the case of these types of non-actors in South Caucasus, and focusing on the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the idea of this paper is to understand if the Caucasus is the ideal sub-region where the model of Regional Security Complexes by Barry Buzan and Waever could be applied.

The Georgian case and the Regional Security Complex

Georgia could be considered a part of a sub-regional case of study, instrumental to investigate the security dimension in Caucasus. Methodologically, it is important to consider the concept of Regional Security Complexes which covers how security is clustered in geographically shaped regions.

Considering security, Georgian case is mostly symbolic: after the 2003 Rose Revolution and the 2008 South Ossetia war, the borders between legal and illegal formations, together with corruption and criminal organizations' infiltration, have become blurred. Moreover, the presence of ethnic minorities is another important challenge to the Georgian integrity and to the regional stability. Following the ceasefire, criminal organizations have feasted on resources derived from a fragmented country, one which could be considered a non-mature (or young) democracy.[10]

Moving to the regional level, it is important to consider the Regional Security Complex Theory, "security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters: security complexes."[11] In their early formulation, Barry Buzan and Ole Waever considered the middle level of world politics in which collective political units, that could be represented by state and non-state actors, construct relationships of amity or enmity with each other.[12] The two authors analyze the security constellation according to four interrelated levels of analysis: the states of the region, particularly their domestically-generated vulnerabilities; state-to-state relations; the region's interaction with neighboring regions; and finally, the role of global powers in the region. In this perspective, a regional security complex was first defined as a "group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another."[13] The state-centric dimension was later "downgraded", therefore re-defining a regional security complex as "a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both, are so interlinked that their security problems cannot be reasonably analyzed or resolved apart from one another."[14]

As with most regional spaces, the definition of the Caucasus sub-region is subject to alternative and contested interpretations. Having emerged from the USSR's implosion in the 1990s', this event can be seen as not only bringing bipolarism to an end, but also leading to the birth of new states in Central Asia and Caucasus. The latter region has an important geopolitical position at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, the North and the South, and the Black and the Caspian seas, representing a key square in the "Eurasian chessboard."[15] The Caucasus sub-region has been selected as a case study in order to identify different instances of regional interactions, led by non-state actors on a transnational basis, with the purpose of analyzing whether this poses a challenge to the tentative regionalization(s) in progress which the states are trying to pursue, in spite of the fact that many of them still struggle with weak institutional capacity, corruption, fragile rule-of-law, ungoverned territories, territorial and inter-ethnical disputes and conflicts. Moreover, the region is particularly characterized by frozen conflicts that have led to a weakened position of the central authorities, also inciting other states that back the separatists to interfere in their affairs, either directly or not.

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[10] On November 14, 2019, the Georgian Parliament, with 101 votes in favor and three against, voted down a bill that would have replaced the country's mixed electoral system with a fully proportional one. This reform was hailed by international and domestic observers as a way to consolidate Georgia's struggling democracy.

[11] Buzan, Barry / Waever, Ole: *Regions and power…*, p. 4.

[12] Buzan, Barry / Waever, Ole: "Macrosecuritisation and Security Constellation: reconsidering scale in securitization theory". *Review of International Studies* 35 (2), 2009, pp. 253.

[13] Buzan, Barry / Waever, Ole: *Regions and power…*, p. 8.

[14] Buzan, Barry / Waever, Ole / De Wilde, Jaap: *Security: a New Framework for Analysis.* Lynne Rienner Publichers: Boulder 1998, p. 201.

[15] Brzezinski, Zbigniew: *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Strategic Imperatives.* Basic Books: Philadelphia 1998, p. 56.

Borders in this case have an ambivalent meaning: they represent defense from vulnerability and from the independent instances, but at the same time, as the Georgian case demonstrates, they carry the same threats that could menace the integrity of the state itself.[16] Contamination between outside and inside,[17] from the other point of view, is fundamental to understanding how non-state actors, like the above-mentioned ones, are able to strengthen or to weak the state entity. The penetration of these non-state actors represents a challenge to central sovereignty:[18] whatever is the aim of their action, even directed to change or to the maintenance of the status quo, or if it has territorial aspiration, or it carries out the use of violence, the state has to consider it. In the specific case of Georgia, the non-state actors that are active in its territory do not contribute to regional equilibrium but constitute a huge challenge to an already unstable unity. Geographic position is emblematic at this stage: it facilitates the traffic of drugs, arms and humans.[19] This inclination to instability may become a factor which can spread to neighboring countries.

Almost three decades after the collapse of the Soviet system, independence and separatist movements in Georgia still threaten and weaken the stability of the entire area.[20] Wars have broken out inside Georgian borders in recent decades,[21] constituting an obstacle to the peaceful development and security of the region.[22] It has also made it clear that the latter aspect is characterized by endogenous and large domestic instability, amplified by the consequences of some of the racial policies which were already present in the Czarist era. The separatism in Abkhazia and South Ossetia has amplified and fostered smuggling: the proliferation of criminal organizations seems to support this claim, with these groups often establishing their headquarters in secessionist regions. The intra-ethnic divisions in the country, with a violent vortex that destabilizes the already difficult Georgian democratic process, also encourages such groups. With porous state borders often controlled and crossed by warlords, interstate cooperation is threatened as a result, together with the prospects for peace in the whole area. The Caucasus is in a strategic position: Europe, Russia and the United States have played out a game for control of this corridor, together with new regional actors, such as Turkey, and no-state actors. For this reason, it is important to analyze the interventions of these smuggling groups.

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[16] Sorensen, George: *Changes in Statehood. The transformation of International Relations.* Palgrave: New York 2001, p. 12.

[17] Solioz, Christophe / Stubbs, Paul: “Emergent regional co-operation in South East Europe: towards ‘open regionalism’?”. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9 (1), 2009, p. 3.

[18] Van Langenhove, Luk: *Theorizing Regionhood.* UNU/CRIS e-Working Paper: Bruges 2003, p.19.

[19] A bridge between Black Sea and Caucasus, Georgian borders are extended for 1,461 km. The Caucasian puzzle, composed by Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, has a faithful allied in Turkey. Georgia is moreover could be considered as a puzzle of different ethnic groups: the most important one is kartvelian, composed by the minor groups of Georgian, Mingreli, Svani and Laz, everyone with a own language and religion.

[20] The conflicts broken after the collapse of Soviet Union have swamped the Central Asian and the Caucasus in the period immediately after December 1991: lot of these revolts has thrown the new states in an impasse condition, that continues still now. It could be intended as frozen conflicts: it lacks a resolution or a peace treaty to resolve the crisis situation.

[21] In recent decades, the most important wars which have broken out in the South Caucasus are: the conflict for the independence of Abkhazia in 1992–93 and the five day war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 over the control of South Ossetia.

On the eve of the tumultuous process of state formation which began in the 1990s, the principal squares of the most important cities were marked by civil demonstrations, ethnic tensions and territorial disputes. After the civil conflict in 1992 and 1993, the secessionist regions, i.e. Abkhazia and South Ossetia, both located along the border with Russia, remained outside the central government jurisdiction. This solution left the country in the hands of criminal organizations.[23] The 2003 Rose Revolution, the South Ossetia War in 2008, together with the demand for independence from Abkhazia, represent influential threats to regional and domestic security. Moreover, the continuous tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, together with the growing Russia influence, have detracted Georgian attention from its own internal problems. The energy issue, around which interests from Russian, Turkish, EU, Caucasian state and Black Sea Organization for Economic Cooperation revolve, complicates the situation further. The process of institutionalization is to the fore, democratization is not mature, while the representation of ethnic minorities is not guaranteed. Moreover, although there are a lot of areas in Georgia where government control seems to be effective, others, like Pankisi Gorge situated in the north-east of the country, is considered a harbor for terrorists and criminals. In the case of South Ossetia and Georgia, criminal organizations sometimes replace state actors: like in other early-warning conflict situations, the criminal sphere often fills the empty space between legal and official relations. Criminal groups are flexible and mutable and are able to quickly establish illegal relations on the international level. The South Ossetian and Abkhazian cases confirm this general trend, and it can easily be discerned how Georgian, Abkhazian and Ossetian criminal groups cooperate with institutions in the secessionist territories. The high level of corruption and organized crime in Georgia is a factor directly linked with its history and its Soviet past:[24] after centuries of foreign domination, the country is alienated from the central state, leaving more room for ethnic identities, clan-based systems, and different communities. The absence of legitimate power in the post-Soviet period has stimulated corruption and a large proportion of Georgian ethnic groups have been recruited by the criminal professional elite. The European Council's decision of 2004 to include the South Caucasus countries in the European Neighborhood Policy, following a Commission recommendation, was particularly driven by the anti-corruption revolution of November 2003 in Georgia. However, although each of the countries in the South Caucasus has adopted an official anti-corruption program and joined the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption, progress is slow, while results are uncertain and difficult to measure: in Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perception Index, Georgia ranked 44th out of 198 (near to highly corrupted).

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[22] Georgia is not the only case in South Caucasus that suffers from the presence of the so-called frozen conflicts: Armenian ethnic separatism, especially between 1988 and 1994, has fueled a separatist movement striving for independence for Nagorno-Karabakh, an area claimed by Azerbaijan as a part of its state.

[23] Kukhianidze, Alexandre / Kupatadze, Alexandre /Gotsiridze, Roman: *Smuggling through Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region of Georgia.* American University's Transnational crime and Corruption Center: Tbilisi 2004, pp. 5–6.

In the 1990's, the problem of smuggling arose in a dramatic way: South Ossetia and Abkhazia remained outside the borders of the Georgian central government, and well beyond its control. The war between Abkhazia and Georgia became inevitable in 1992: when the first hostilities exploded, Abkhazian people were supported by the Russian military and other army formations from the north. The war ended in Georgian defeat and a consequent coup d'état in Tbilisi. After the ceasefire in 1993 and a period of stalemate, the war reignited in 2008 over the control and independence of South Ossetia, a five-day conflict between Georgia and Russia. These frozen conflicts are a fertile breeding ground for criminal and smuggling groups, ones which are increasingly interested in public resources and power: limiting the democratization process and militarizing the country are ways to achieve these aims. It is important to underline the nexus between the criminal organizations present in this landscape and the minority ethnic groups: smuggling groups take advantage of the general instability and insecurity inside Georgian borders amongst ethnic groups to foster their trafficking. Moreover, especially after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, there was a new focus on the threat of the proliferation of Islamic extremism in the South Caucasus. Despite Russian claims that al Qaeda operatives had taken refuge in the notoriously lawless Pankisi Gorge, an area of northern Georgia along the border with Russia long viewed as beyond Georgian control, an operation in late 2002 by Georgian forces found little more than small-scale smuggling activities.

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[24] Shelley, Louise: "Georgian organized crime". In: Shelley, Louise / Scott, Erik / Latta, Anthony (eds.): *Organized Crime and Corruption in Georgia.* Routledge: London and New York 2007, pp. 50–69.

In substance, when analyzing the Caucasian sub-region, we are confronted by two types of non-state actors that challenge Georgian state stability: criminal groups and ethnic minorities.

Ethnic Minorities

Georgia is a conglomeration of people and ethnic groups. The most important and dominant is the Kartvelian, composed of the Georgian, Mingrelian, Svan and Adjar subgroups, each with its own religion and language. This type of ethnic strife might negatively affect the Turkish-Georgian relationship, as the ties between Turkey and Abkhazia have caused some concerns for Tbilisi. For example, in 2001, the Turkish company Kara-Elmas signed an agreement with the Abkhazian government to exploit a coal mine in the breakaway republic. Adjaria also looks to Ankara in its demands for greater autonomy, including the Adjars living on the Turkish side as well. It depends in particular on the Muslim faith of the Adjars: other Georgians view them with suspicion, and also their loyalty is questioned as they are allegedly overly pro-Turkish.[25] A further cause of tension centers on the issue of the repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks, a mixed group including people of Turkish descent as well as Turkicized and Islamicizied Georgians. During the 1940's, they were deported to Central Asia, mostly to Uzbekistan, on the pretext that the military security of the Turkish-Soviet border needed to be strengthened. Many Georgians claim that the Meskhetian Turks have lost their links to Georgia and hence have no rights that would justify the large-scale upheaval that their resettlement would cause. Another "mosaic tile" is represented by the Turkic minority of Azerbaijanis living in the south-east areas of Georgia. This minority still complains about the lack of political representation and being subjected to various discriminatory practices.[26] Although an ethnic dimension is present in the relationship between Ankara and Tbilisi, the former Georgian governments have considered its bilateral relations with Turkey too important to be spoiled by those issues. On the other side, the Turkish government is perfectly aware of both the increasing importance of Georgia as an energy transit country and the impossibility of bypassing Russian influence. While the potential for Georgian-Turkish disputes over ethnic minorities certainly exists, the two countries have been scrupulously respectful of one another's territorial integrity.

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[25] It is important to recall that Adjaria was part of the Ottoman Empire until 1878, when it was incorporated into the Russian Empire. It then received the status of an autonomous republic in 1923.

[26] Furthermore, there is a Georgia-related subgroup which is located on the Laz, on the eastern Black Sea coast, and several hundred thousand Islamicized Georgians in the north-eastern inland of Turkey. However, they have shown no interest in being reunited with Georgia, which has not controlled the region since the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, Georgian nationalists may seek to revive the idea of a "Greater Georgia" in the future, by making irredentist claims on Turkish soil. Fuller, Liz: *Georgia's Azerbaijani minority airs grievances*, RFE/RL Caucasus Report 5(12), 2002; Fuller Graham / Lesser, Ian: *Turkey's New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China.* Westview Press: Boulder 1993, p. 25; Hoiris, Ole / Yurukel, Sefa Martin: *Contrasts and Solutions in the Caucasus.* University Press: Aarhus 1998, p. 444.

Smuggling at the Borders

Since the sudden independence of the three South Caucasus countries following the Soviet Union's collapse, criminality has affected Georgia and the other de-facto states in the sub-region with a moderate rank. Specifically, organized crime, the threat of terrorism, the cancer of corruption, human and drug trafficking have posed substantial threats to the security and stability of the countries of the South Caucasus.[27] By 2003, the problem was so intense that it caused a deep political crisis, paralyzing the whole country and threatening national security. Since its election in early 2004, the government of President Mikheil Saakashvili has emphasized its efforts to combat organized crime, even if with largely unspectacular results thus far. The most enduring issue in Georgia is smuggling: its growth has had catastrophic effects since 1998, and in just a few years, it became one of the major sources of instability for the country.[28] It has stimulated corruption, the creation of powerful criminal clans, as well as fostering their infiltration of political and representative groups in the central, local and regional authorities. According to the OSAC, the United States Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security, crime in Georgia continues to be a concern despite the establishment of a professional law enforcement presence and active enforcement. According to official statistics, there was a small decrease in criminal cases in 2017, compared to 2016. However, financial crimes increased in 2017, according to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. According to official statistics, there was a 14.6 % overall increase in crime in 2019 compared to 2018 based on January through September 2019 as reported by the Georgian Internal Affairs Ministry (MoIA).

In Abkhazia, criminal groups were more active particularly in Gali, Kodori Gorge and in the Zugdidi and Samegrelo districts, while in South Ossetia Tskhinvali and Gori are considered hotspots. The collaboration is generally based on ethnic origins and political orientations, sometimes interweaving links with other criminal groups and governmental structures in other parts of Georgia and Abkhazia. This factor is important to consider, not only in terms of how much these non-state actors threaten territorial integrity, but also to understand which type of impact they have on the population, as on the political, economic and military situation.

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[27] Cornell, Svante / Jonsson, Michael: *Conflict, Crime and the State in Postcommunist Eurasia.* University of Pennsylvania: Philadelphia 2014.

[28] Matsaberidze, David: *Conflict in Tskhinvali Region: Interaction of Georgian-South Ossetian Nationalism.* Central European University Nationalism Studies Program: Budapest 2008, pp. 29–31.

One of the most important illicit activity is related to the traffic of weapons, including armed robberies and assaults involving firearms, particularly since the collapse of Soviet Union and after the retirement of nuclear weapons: after 1990, 197 sites have been discovered on Georgian territory which are rich in radioactive materials and abandoned by Russia.[29] With the end of the war in 1993, although there was a sort of interruption in the arms trafficking, the demand from criminal groups outside and inside the region continued to stimulate supply. Symbolic in this regard are the arrests in the summer of 2002 of Artur Liudkov, a Russian citizen, and of Simon Mchedlidze, Major of Georgian State Security Ministry, was officially charged under the paragraph related to illegal arms dealing. The Tbilisi district court sentenced them to 3 months of preliminary detention on June 20.

In 2017, an emphasis on enforcement by Georgian authorities resulted in significant seizures of illegally possessed weapons, including handguns, rifles, hand grenades, and rocket propelled grenade launchers. The numbers of weapons seized reflects the overall number of weapons in circulation and the fact that Georgia is a post-conflict nation with large amounts of weapons remaining in the country after the fall of the Soviet Union and two internal conflicts (Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

Another form of criminality between Abkhazia and South Ossetia is linked to illegal drug trafficking. Georgia is in fact a transit point and an end-use destination for various illicit drugs: throughout the Southern Caucasus route, opiates produced in the Golden Crescent are trafficked from Iran to Ukraine or Moldova via Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. In 2007, the government adopted a national Anti-Drug Strategy, increased penalties for drug offenses, and adopted anti-drug legislation. The government is continuing its efforts to increase border security with the support of the U.S. government, the EU, and international donors. Since 2014, Georgia has placed special emphasis on countering narcotic trafficking through Georgia and created a special police division to combat international narcotic trafficking.[30]

In the years following Georgian independence from the Soviet Union, there also arose secessionist movements in Abkhazia (in 1992–3). As a result, the country's borders became uncontrolled, while separatists in both regions have won wars, even remaining de jure parts of Georgia. Contraband trade through Abkhazia and South Ossetia became an especially crucial problem in Georgia because it is closely connected to the broader problems of separatism, unresolved armed conflicts, violence in these regions, and border security. In the year before the Rose Revolution

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[29] Kolbin, Giorgi: "Environmental Aspects of Former Soviet Military Sites in Georgia". In: *Workshop on Reuse and Cleaning of Former Military Sites*, NATO: Bishkek 2002, pp. 27–29.

[30] United States Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security: *Georgia 2018 Crime & Safety Report*, retrieved 7.05.2018, from https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=23531.

(2003), the largest part of smuggled goods was directed to Russia and Turkey, from Abkhazia by the Black Sea. Illegal goods smuggled into Georgia through conflict zones undermine the market for legal goods. The most important criminal group is Gagra,[31] (made up mainly of local Armenians), which controls the export of wood and drugs, and the Gudauta group, of Abkhazian origin, which is strictly involved in the business of narcotics. Another group has Chechen origins and controls the East Abkhazian zone as far as the Sukhumi railway.[32] From the other side, armed groups on the Georgian side can be divided into two types: the guerrillas, and in particular the Forest Brothers, which dominate the Enguri river, and the White Legion, which has also supplied urban guerrillas, and the so-called *zviadist*. The criminal traffic in the Tskhinvali region and the Gori district are connected to smuggling activities: the situation is particularly difficult in this part of the Caucasus, exacerbated by poverty and political instability.

Georgian criminal groups also collaborate with South Ossetian ones: one of the most important is headed by Nikoloz Khmiadashvili, whose alias is Robota,[33] who controls arms and drug trafficking. Bribery is common, and the monthly amounts used to corrupt government organizations are estimated at between 20,000 and 30,000 dollars. This phenomenon continues even when the leaders are constrained in prison.[34]

Although the illegal traffic towards Abkhazia has caused very violent episodes, their negative impact on the Georgian economy is almost insignificant compared to the volume of illicit business developed through Azerbaijan (Red Bridge, across the Khrami River), the harbor of Poti (Black Sea), the autonomous Republic of Ajaria (from Turkey to Black Sea), Kazbegi (from Russia) and Akhaltisikhe (from Turkey). According to an analysis conducted jointly by the American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia and the Minister of Security, the volume of smuggling activities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia corresponds to the 15–20 % of the total in Georgia, while the percentage for Abkhazia alone is around 3–5 %.[35]

However, crime in Georgia (and in the South Caucasus) is still a problem if we think about the new Agreement on Operational and Strategic Cooperation to expand cooperation to combat serious and organized cross-border criminal activities, signed in 2017 between Georgia’s Minister of Internal Affairs, Giorgi Mghebrishvili, and Europol’s Director, Rob Wainwright.

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[31] Cornell, Svante / Jonsson Michael: op. cit.

[32] Mindorashvili, Maia: *Gangster Wars in Abkhazia*, Central Asia – Caucasus Analyst, retrieved 20.06.2014, from http://www.cacianalyst.org/.

[33] Kukhianidze, Alexandre / Kupatadze, Alexandre / Gotsiridze, Roman: op. cit., p. 28.

[34] Robota has moreover important familiar ties with some members of government.

[35] Hiscock, Duncan: “The Commercialization of Post-Soviet private Security”. In: Bryden, Alan / Caparini, Marina (eds.): *Private Actors and Security Governance.* LIT&DCAF: Geneva 2006, pp. 129–149.

The Regional Dimension of the Clusterisation of Non-state Actors

Considering this complex situation, it is necessary to remember the most important challenge represented by non-state actors in Caucasus: playing a leading role in the field of illegal, smuggling and trafficking of weapons, drugs and humans across increasingly porous borders, they are able to act globally, regionally, nationally and locally, sustaining the "economy of terrorism". Even if they are separate phenomena, terrorism, insurgency movements and transnational organized crime sometimes coexist, and the Caucasus, considered as a part of a wider regional security complex, can be observed as a clarifying example. Particularly in the South Caucasus, in fact, some areas remain "gray," like the triangle between Georgia, Russia and Azerbaijan.[36] There are several potential points of friction in the Caucasus: firstly, a large number of refugees, displaced and dispersed people across the region, foreign migrants and growing diasporas. Moreover, the Caucasian position, as part of the "Eurasian Conflict Rim",[37] constitutes a turbulent framework. Lastly, the presence of a pool of non-state actors, violent both internally and externally, has furthermore fragmented Caucasian territorial integrity. The persistence of illegal smuggling and trafficking not only undermines the political, economic and border integrity of the newly independent states in the Caucasus, but furthermore is an example of how non-state actors cluster together, constituting not a solely domestic problem, but an international issue.

The sub-region, because of its instability, has also become a "free zone" for clandestine "out-of-area" terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda, PKK (the Kurdistan Workers Party), and Mujahedeen-e-Khalk (MEK); even the Tigri Tamil from Sri Lanka have operated in the region, mostly for the purposes of fundraising and money laundering.[38] The inter-state borders between different countries in the region are crossed by trafficking activity in a complex environment, even if, according to the US Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Georgian police have placed special emphasis on their counter-narcotics work, with a special division to combat international narcotic trafficking:

> the border regime between some states is characterized by streamlined visa-issuing procedures and simplified crossing for citizens of certain countries. For example, Azeri citizens do not require visas to go to Russia, and Russian citizens do not need visas to go to Azerbaijan. The population of Nakhchevan, a region on the Azeri border

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[36] The Georgia-Russia-Azerbaijan tri-border is a region characterized by homogenous population, harsh physical environment and depressed economic situation. Together these elements have awakened the ethnic and religious identity of the people in the region.

[37] It encompasses Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

[38] Arasli, Jahangir: "The Rising Wind: Is the Caucasus Emerging as a Hub for Terrorism, Smuggling and Trafficking?". *The Quarterly Journal* 6 (1), 2007, pp. 5–26.

> with Iran, enjoys certain visa privileges for travel to Iran. Ethnic kinship remains a relevant factor; many ethnic groups, clans, and families straddle the borders of neighboring countries.[39]

In this sense, we have to consider the border security between Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey that suffered from the severe upheavals in the early 1990s and was twice partially destroyed; the frozen conflicts in Dagestan and Chechnya; the route between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan used as a transit trafficking directed to Serbia; the drug routes running from Iran (by land and sea), Kazakhstan (by air and sea), and Turkmenistan (by sea), and through Azerbaijan; and, last but not the least, the human routes in Armenia and Azerbaijan, fed by a cheap labor force, sexual exploitation or even the removal of bodily organs.

The clusterisation among transnational actors, thinking about a wider region that include a part of Middle East, is moreover demonstrated by the influxes of citizens and residents from countries of post-Soviet Central Asia travelling to Syria and Iraq as foreign fighters. Although numbers vary from source to source, roughly 8,500 individuals from these countries have traveled to join a host of Salafi-jihadi factions – mostly Islamic State in Iraq and al Sham (ISIS).[40]

The Turkish Role

Negative escalation in an early warning conflict situation such as Georgia's, however, could be arrested if the role of Turkey becomes more decisive. With its involvement as a medium and regional player, one which is solid from a military point of view and with huge historical interests in the entire region, matters could take a different turn. The intervention of non-state actors in the structural system might constitute a threat to both regional integration and bilateral cooperation, but they have not spoiled the development of a positive course between Ankara and Tbilisi. From one side, in fact, Ankara might choose to help the secessionist instances of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; from the other, its economic and cultural investments in Georgia underline how Turkey also looks to the Caucasus in order to develop its own role as a Russian counterpart in the region. During recent decades, Ankara has in fact promoted a foreign policy which has been more constructive and oriented to the resolution of conflict, one based on the principle of total performance and of "zero-problems with neighbors", as advocated by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoglu. This country, in particular, has invested in the involvement of civil society and of the non-state actors inside the negotiation process with neighboring countries. Thanks to its geographic nature and to its position of "a bridge" between Europe and Asia, it represents an important energy corridor between the Caspian Sea and Europe and a potential "pivotal state". Turkey might intervene to help Georgian minorities to de-isolate themselves from their solitude and to gain a privileged role in the process of pacification and democratization of this complex landscape. to people-to-people relations and to Turkish public diplomacy and soft power in the Caucasian sub-region.

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[39] Ibid., p. 10.

[40] Barrett, Richard: "Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees". The Soufan Center, October 2017, retrieved 4.03. 2018, from http://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Beyond-the-Caliphate-Foreign-Fighters-and-the-Threat-of-Returnees-TSC-Report-October-2017-v3.pdf.

However, we need to consider that the situation in South Caucasus is hostage to interactions amongst other actors (not only Turkey, but mainly the US, Russia and the EU). Moreover, from the standpoint of its new posture, Moscow has renewed bilateral relations with key regional powers like Iran and Turkey.

Conclusion

This preliminary research proposal has been motivated by the interest in exploring a supposed "transnational turn" in regional studies and to what extent state and non-state actors converge or diverge in their patterns or regional interactions. In the background there is a question about the maintenance of the state as "regionalism's gatekeeper". The emerging literature about shadow regionalism and trans-state regionalism, along with the tentative introduction of the concept of "diffuse regionhood", has been employed to outline two main sets of research questions. The paper tries to trace the instance of regional interactions, led by non-state actors on a transnational basis, in other words this study has sampled examples of trans-state regionalism in the Caucasian sub-region. Although the respective non-state actors actually aim at challenging the state's structures, rerouting the central foreign policy organs of government or merely exploiting region building. In conclusion, while the tendency of non-state actors to cluster on a regional basis cannot be excluded tout court, it can be affirmed that a multi-dyadic approach to the Caucasus sub-region seems to be more suitable to describe both inter-state relations and trans-state interactions, and their respective preference for bilateral linkages.

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Justyna Misiągiewicz

10. Caspian Sea Littoral States in the Energy Security Policy of the People's Republic of China

Abstract: Nowadays, energy security is a growing concern in state foreign policy and interdependency in the energy field is a very important dimension in contemporary relations between states and transnational corporations. The Caspian region is not only a largely undiscovered reservoir of oil and gas, but also a strategic "chessboard" with many internal and external players, where a new great game began the Cold War. Because of its geopolitical position in the center of Eurasia, it is becoming significant in global international relations, both politically and economically. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the newly-independent Caspian states became open to foreign investments. The growing energy needs have given China a strong interest in developing ties with energy – producing states in the Caspian region to build the requisite pipeline infrastructure. Newly independent states in Central Asia and the Caucasus hoped their oil and gas resources would help them secure economic growth and political independence.

Keywords: Caspian region, China energy policy, energy security, pipelines.

Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War led to a significant change in the configuration of Eurasian geopolitics. Such a reality created the Caspian region as an area of influence for neighboring states and distant players alike. Some analysts thus describe the rivalry in the region as a great game among the main actors: the United States, EU, China and Russia. The article discusses the issue of the Caspian basin in the context of its energy potential. Its aim is to analyze the role of the main energy producers in the Caspian region, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, in Chinese energy security policy.

In this paper, it is important to clarify a number of hypotheses. First of all, the energy field is not only vital to economic development but also to the future geopolitical order of the region. Second of all, China, as a rapidly expanding economy, and the largest energy consumer in the world, has given the Caspian region increasing geoeconomical importance. China's interests in the Caspian region are part of its overall Silk Road strategy to diversify energy dependence on the unstable Gulf region and build overland routes to hedge against maritime supply disruptions in the Gulf. To prove the above-mentioned hypothesis, we will analyze the Chinese energy security strategy and the energy potential data of the Caspian states. The aim of this article is also answer the following question: is the energy field the most important dimension of Chinese relations with the Caspian region states?

In this research, it is useful to take into consideration the Copenhagen school of international relations (its name is connected with a Danish research institute: *Copenhagen Peace Research Institute* – COPRI). As a result, we should consider security issues as spilling over into other sectors which are fundamentally different from military ones.[1] Security is an idea which needs a political, economic or societal and cultural dialog between and within states, civilizations and other actors on the international scene. Security, being a dynamic process, has become a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. Its multidimensionality means that it considers many areas of social life in terms of access to energy and its consumption as well.[2] Since energy security has become one of the key dimensions of security per se, its unique nature is an increasingly important branch of research.[3]

This paper considers the geopolitical position and energy potential of the Caspian states, the energy security strategy of the PRC and the pipeline infrastructure which connects China with the Caspian states. In the following analyses, we use the case study method and have concentrated on two of the Caspian littoral states: Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. These are the most important economic partners for China in the region. Although, Azerbaijan is one of the main energy producers in the region, there is still no pipeline crossing the Caspian basin to transport its hydrocarbons to China. We have also not mentioned the China – Russia relationship or China – Iran energy relations since, while both states are huge energy producers, their main resources are not located in the Caspian basin.

Geopolitics and Energy Security in the Caspian Region[4]

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War led to a significant change in the configuration of Eurasian geopolitics. Such a reality created a "power vacuum" in the Caspian region as an area of influence by neighboring states and distant players. Thus some analysts describe the geopolitical rivalry in the region as a "neo-Cold War" or "Great Game" among the main actors: the United States, EU, China and Russia.

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[1] Buzan, Barry / Wæver, Ole / Wilde, Jaap de: *Security: a new framework for analysis.* Lynne Rienner Pub.: Boulder, CO 1998, p. 195.

[2] Pietraś, Marek: "Autonomiczność bezpieczeństwa energetycznego w stosunkach międzynarodowych". In: Pietraś, Marek / Misiągiewicz, Justyna (eds.): *Bezpieczeństwo energetyczne we współczesnych stosunkach międzynarodowych. Wyzwania, zagrożenia, perspektywy. Energy security in the contemporary international relations. Challenges, threats, perspectives.* UMCS: Lublin 2017, pp. 23–40.

[3] Ibid., pp. 23–40.

[4] See: Misiągiewicz, Justyna: "Geopolitics and energy security in the Caspian region". *TEKA Komisji Politologii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych* 7, 2012, pp. 61–79.

One can safely assume that because of its geopolitical position in the center of Eurasia, the Caspian region is becoming both politically and economically significant in global international relations. According to Halford Mackinder, it is a part of the Eurasian Heartland – "the geographical pivot of history."[5] The territorial control of this area formed the basis for the domination of the Eurasian landmass, and even the whole globe. Mackinder summed up his ideas with the following words: "who rules East Europe commands the Heartland: Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island (Europe, Arab Peninsula, Africa, South and East Asia), who rules the World-Island commands the World."[6]

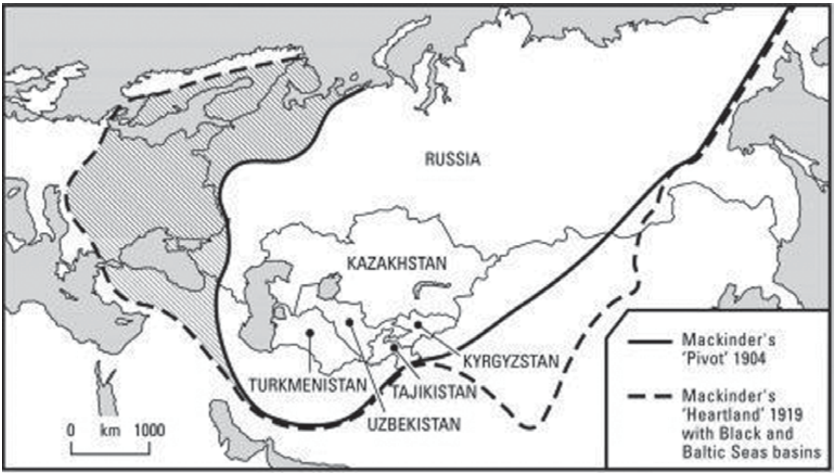
RUSSIA
KAZAKHSTAN
TURKMENISTAN
UZBEKISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
KYRGYZSTAN
0 km 1000
Mackinder's 'Pivot' 1904
Mackinder's 'Heartland' 1919 with Black and Baltic Seas basins

Figure 10.1: The Heartland concept according to H. Mackinder

Source: Megoran, Nick / Sharapova, Sevara: "Mackinder's 'Heartland': A Help or Hindrance in Understanding Central Asia's International Relations?". Central Asia and the Caucasus 4 (34), 2005, p. 9.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Caspian region became an area of rivalry and competition between external powers, interested in developing energy resources in the newly independent post-Soviet states. Taking into consideration the fact that there is a deficit in the global energy market, we can anticipate that the foreign investments and transnational companies will be more active in the Caspian region. The Caspian's future production will undoubtedly contribute to the diversification of oil and gas supplies and to the global energy security.

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[5] Dalby, Simon: "American Security Discourse: the Persistence of Geopolitics". *Political Geography Quarterly* 9 (2), 1990, pp. 171–188.

[6] Iseri, Emre: "The US Grand Strategy and the Eurasian Heartland in the Twenty-First Century". *Geopolitics* 14, 2009, p. 33.

Nowadays, five states share the Caspian Basin: Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan. Their common aim is to explore and develop the region's hydrocarbon resources.[7] The perspectives for the exploitation of oil and gas have raised the stakes of external actors.[8] The post-Soviet Caspian states, assisted by foreign actors, have tried to limit their dependence on Russian dominated infrastructure at the heart of Caspian geopolitics.[9] The new geopolitical situation in the Caspian region can be characterized as:

a) increasing involvement by external actors (both state and non-state);
b) energy security as a key issue determining the future strategic setting of the Caspian region;
c) increased competition between external actors.

Historically, hydrocarbon activities in the Caspian region were concentrated on the Absheron Peninsula of Azerbaijan, around the town of Baku. The Baku region accounted for half of the world's oil production in 1900[10] and oil companies have been interested in Baku since the nineteenth century. The Noble brothers, the Rothschilds and the Royal Dutch Shell helped Russia to develop its Caspian energy resources.[11] Oil had also a strategic value in both world wars, with the German army seeking unsuccessfully to capture the Baku region. Indeed, this was perhaps the main reason for its defeats in both 1918 and 1945.[12] Since the 1950s, after Russia discovered large oil reserves in its Siberian and Ural regions, investment and production in the Caspian region decreased.[13]

According to the British Petroleum Statistical Review of World Energy, Caspian oil potential (without Russian and Iranian resources) represents about three percent of global oil production, and Caspian gas potential is also over three percent in relation to the world.[14]

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[7] Bahgat, Gawdat: "Energy Security: The Caspian Sea". *Minerals & Energy* 20 (2), 2005, p. 3.

[8] Chufrin, Gennady: *The security of the Caspian Sea Region*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 2001, p. 11.

[9] McCarthy, John: "The geopolitics of Caspian oil". *Jane's Intelligence Review* 2000, p. 21.

[10] Ghafouri, Mahmoud: "The Caspian Sea: Rivalry and Cooperation". *Middle East Policy* 15 (2), 2008, p. 81.

[11] Bahgat, Gawdat: "Energy Security…," p. 3.

[12] Ibid., p. 3.

[13] Ibid., p. 3; Misiągiewicz, Justyna: "Geopolitics…".

[14] BP: *Statistical Review of World Energy 2017*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/en/corporate/pdf/energy-economics/statistical-review-2017/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2017-full-report.pdf.

Table 10.1: Oil and gas potential in Caspian littoral states

	Oil proved reserves (billion barrels)	**Oil proved reserves share of total**	**Oil production (thousand b/d)**	**Oil production share of total**	**Gas proved reserves (trillion cubic meters)**	**Gas proved reserves share of total**	**Gas production (billion cubic meters)**	**Gas production share of total**
Azerbaijan	7.0	0.4 %	779	0.8 %	2.8	1.4 %	24.3	0.6 %
Kazakhstan	30.0	1.7 %	1931	2.0 %	2.7	1.3 %	23.4	0.6 %
Turkmenistan	0.6	?	264	0.3 %	19.5	9.8 %	63.2	1.6 %

Source: “BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020”. BP, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/downloads.html.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), it is the world’s largest undiscovered reservoir of energy resources.[15] In the World Energy Outlook, it is estimated that Caspian oil production will grow from 2.9 million barrels per day (mb/d) in 2009 to 5.4 mb/d between 2025 and 2030.[16] Caspian natural gas production is also projected to grow, from an estimated 159 billion cubic meters (bcm) in 2009 to nearly 260 bcm by 2020 and over 310 bcm in 2035.[17] “Oil and gas exports from the Caspian region could more than double over the next 25 years”, the International Energy Agency’s (IEA) Deputy Executive Director, Richard Jones, has declared.[18]

Azerbaijan is a major energy producer with rich deposits of oil and natural gas (see tables 10.2 and 10.3). Oil reserves ranked 18th in the world in 2018, at 7 billion bbl (1 January 2018 est.).[19] Natural gas reserves were estimated at 991.1 billion cubic meters (bcm) in 2018 (1 January 2018 est.).[20] It is ranked about 25 in comparison to the world. Additional 150–300 bcm are estimated at the Absheron field in the Caspian Sea, discovered in 2012.[21]

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[15] International Energy Agency: *Caspian Oil & Gas*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/1990/caspian_oil_gas98.pdf.

[16] International Energy Agency: *World Energy Outlook 2010*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/docs/weo2010/WEO2010_ES_English.pdf.

[17] Ibid.

[18] International Energy Agency: *Caspian oil and gas exports are poised for take-off*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.iea.org/newsroom/news/2011/march/2011-03-15--2.html.

[19] CIA: *World Factbook*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html.

[20] Ibid.

[21] International Energy Agency: *Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/IDR_EasternEuropeCaucasus_2015.pdf.

Table 10.2: Oil production in Azerbaijan (bbl/day)

2001	2004	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2016	2018	2019
307,200	312,800	477,00	1,099,000	1,011,000	1,041,000	987,000	931,9000	842,000	789,300	798,000

Source: "Index Mundi". Index Mundi, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?v=136&c=aj&l=en.

Table 10.3: Natural gas production in Azerbaijan (cubic meters)

2001	2003	2004	2007	2009	2010	2011	2013	2016	2018	2019
5,720,000,000	5,130,000,000	5,010,000,000	9,770,000,000	16,520,000,000	16,680,000,000	17,860,000,000	18,200,000,000	29,370,000,000	16,960,000,000	16,960,000,000

Source: "Index Mundi". IndexMundi, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?v=136&c=aj&l=en.

Table 10.4: Oil production in Kazakhstan (bbl/day)

2001	2004	2005	2007	2009	2011	2012	2016	2018	2019
798,200	1,200,000	1,300,000	1,445,000	1,540,000	1,635,000	1,606,000	1,621,000	1,777,000	1,856,000

Source: "Index Mundi". IndexMundi, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?v=136&c=kz&l=en.

Table 10.5: Natural gas production in Kazakhstan (cubic meters)

2001	2004	2007	2009	2011	2013	2016	2018	2019
10,080,000,000	20,490,000,000	27,880,000,000	35,610,000,000	20,200,000,000	20,400,000,000	21,380,000,000	22,410,000,000	22,410,000,000

Source: "Index Mundi". IndexMundi, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?v=136&c=kz&l=en.

Table 10.6: Oil production in Turkmenistan (bbl/day)

2001	2003	2004	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2015	2018	2019
162,500	203,400	213,700	180,400	197,700	216,000	222,200	244,100	243,100	0	244,000

Source: "Index Mundi". IndexMundi, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?v=136&c=tx&l=en.

Table 10.7: Natural gas production in Turkmenistan (cubic meters)

2001	2004	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2018	2019
48,200,000,000	58,570,000,000	68,880,000,000	34,000,000,000	42,400,000,000	59,500,000,000	64,400,000,000	84,800,000,000	76,000,000,000	77,450,000,000	77,450,000,000

Source: "Index Mundi". IndexMundi, retrieved 25.08.2020, fromhttps://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?v=136&c=tx&l=en.

Kazakhstan is rich in hydrocarbon resources and is one of the largest energy producers in Central Asia (see tables 10.4 and 10.5). The country is ranked 8th in the world with regard to crude oil resources and 11th highest in terms of crude oil reserves, with 30 billion bbl (1 January 2018 est.).[22] Natural gas reserves are 14th highest in the world, 2,407 bcm.[23]

Turkmenistan is ranked 4th in the world with regard to natural gas reserves, estimated at 7.504 trillion cubic meters (1 January 2018 est.).[24] Crude oil reserves are estimated 600 million bbl (1 January 2018 est.).[25] This puts it 43rd in the world.[26]

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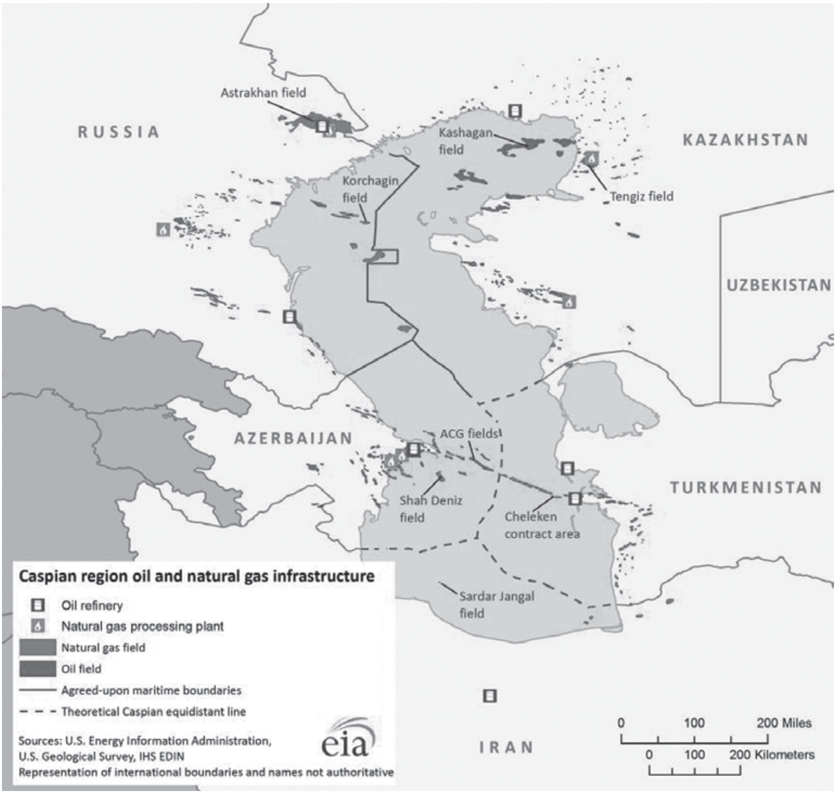
[22] CIA: *World Factbook*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html.

[23] Ibid.

[24] CIA: *World Factbook*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.


Astrakhan field
RUSSIA
Kashagan field
KAZAKHSTAN
Korchagin field
Tengiz field
UZBEKISTAN
AZERBAIJAN
ACG fields
TURKMENISTAN
Shah Deniz field
Cheleken contract area
Sardar Jangal field
IRAN
Caspian region oil and natural gas infrastructure
Oil refinery
Natural gas processing plant
Natural gas field
Oil field
Agreed-upon maritime boundaries
Theoretical Caspian equidistant line
Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration, U.S. Geological Survey, IHS EDIN
Representation of international boundaries and names not authoritative
eia
0
100
200 Miles
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200 Kilometers

Figure 10.2: Caspian oil and gas fields

Source: Wikimedia: File: Caspian region oil and natural gas infrastructure.png, retrieved 12.02.2017, from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/43/Caspian_region_oil_and_natural_gas_infrastructure.png.

There is an important role of the transnational companies in developing the Caspian energy resources. BP and Statoil took a pioneering role in the development of the Azeri, Chirag and Guneshli oil fields. BP also participated in finding the Shah Deniz gas fields in Azerbaijan. Kazakhstan has also attracted serious interest, with the American Chevron Texaco company, together with ExxonMobil, agreeing to develop the Tengiz oil field.[27] Kashagan is another source of oil, which offers a certain potential to become perhaps the world's largest oil field. That is why many corporations such as BP, Statoil, Agip, British Gas, Total Fina Elf, were interested in investments there.[28]

The lack of consensus on the legal status of the Caspian basin has been the main obstacle to the development of the energy market in the region.[29] It is also a risk that investors have to consider in doing business in the region. The problem with boundaries in the Caspian basin appeared with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.[30] The largest hydrocarbon resources are situated in the Azeri and Kazak sectors and to a lesser extent in the Turkmen sector of the Caspian. Russia and Iran are estimated to have fewer deposits in the Caspian region.[31] The question centered around whether it is a sea or a lake as this is of crucial importance when it comes to the division of the resources to be found there. Despite the absence of a formal resolution, an informal regime based on existing practices has begun to emerge and has not posed obstacles to the five states developing their hydrocarbon resources. After twenty-two years of negotiations, in Aktau on August 12, 2018, the leaders of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan signed the "Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea" (the Convention). "The Convention's consideration of diverse interests over the Caspian Sea, ranging from political to economic and beyond, is a welcome breakthrough. The *sui generis* regime builds on principles under international law, including the law of the sea. The littoral states have clearly signaled the exclusive nature of their rights and interests in the Caspian Sea."[32]

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[27] Newman, Sheila: *The final Energy Crisis*. Pluto Press: London 2008, p. 96.

[28] Ibid., p. 97.

[29] See: Misiągiewicz, Justyna: "Boundaries and energy security under dispute in the Caspian region". In: *Border Conflicts in the Contemporary World*. UMCS: Lublin 2014, pp. 175–193.

[30] Rasizade, Alec: "The great game of Caspian energy: ambitious and realities". *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 7 (1), 2005, p. 14.

[31] Bahgat, Gawdat: *American oil diplomacy in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville 2003, p. 164.

[32] Kadir, Rizal Abdul: *Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea*, Cambridge Core, 25.04.2019, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-legal-materials/article/convention-on-the-legal-status-of-the-caspian-sea/D002CAF45F8DDDF6D534AB742788CEFB/core-reader; "Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea." Presidential Executive Office, 12.08.2018, retrieved 4.4.2020, from http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5328.

The Energy Security Policy of People's Republic of China[33]

China's rise as a global power is likely to be the most significant event in international relations in the twenty-first century. China is rapidly emerging as a major force in both world energy markets and global energy geopolitics, especially in recent years, when its economy has developed rapidly and its energy needs have grown concomitantly.[34] The twenty-first century has been deemed a "period of strategic opportunities in the peaceful development of China"[35] and will be a time of industrialization and urbanization. The priority strategy of China has been to create energy cooperation with neighboring countries in order to establish a stable and reliable energy supply infrastructure. China has developed comprehensive bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Central Asia states. It appears to have three main goals in the Central Asia: provide security to the region, gain access to natural resources, and to become a regional power.

China enjoyed adequate domestic reserves to satisfyits energy needs prior to the 1990s.[36] It exported oil and coal until the early 1990s, when the booming economy inspired by Deng Xiaoping's reforms transformed this country into an energy importer.[37] There are two key reasons for its increased energy consumption: the rise in living standards and increased industrialization. However, the real energy security problem is providing adequate amounts of crude oil and natural gas.[38] With current oil import dependency at over 50 %, this is a source of alarm in China.[39] PRC also continues to increase its natural gas power generation capacity. It started a program in the 1990s to ship gas across the country and to build natural gas terminals to import it from overseas. Like other consuming states, China is concerned about maintaining "the reliable and affordable supply of energy on a continuing, uninterrupted basis."[40]

Another important energy security strategy is to concentrate on maximizing the development of domestic sources and creating strategic reserves. As a result, Chinese policy makers have to create an investment climate in order to get maximum profit from existing domestic resources and establish reliable oil and gas trading channels.[41]

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[33] See: Misiągiewicz, Marcin: "Energy security of People's Republic of China – western dimension". *Facta Simonidis* 1 (3), 2013, pp. 151–166.

[34] Xiaoqin, Chen: "Central Asian Factors In energy Relationship between China and Russia". *Asian Social Science* 8 (7), 2012, p. 33.

[35] Ibid., p. 34.

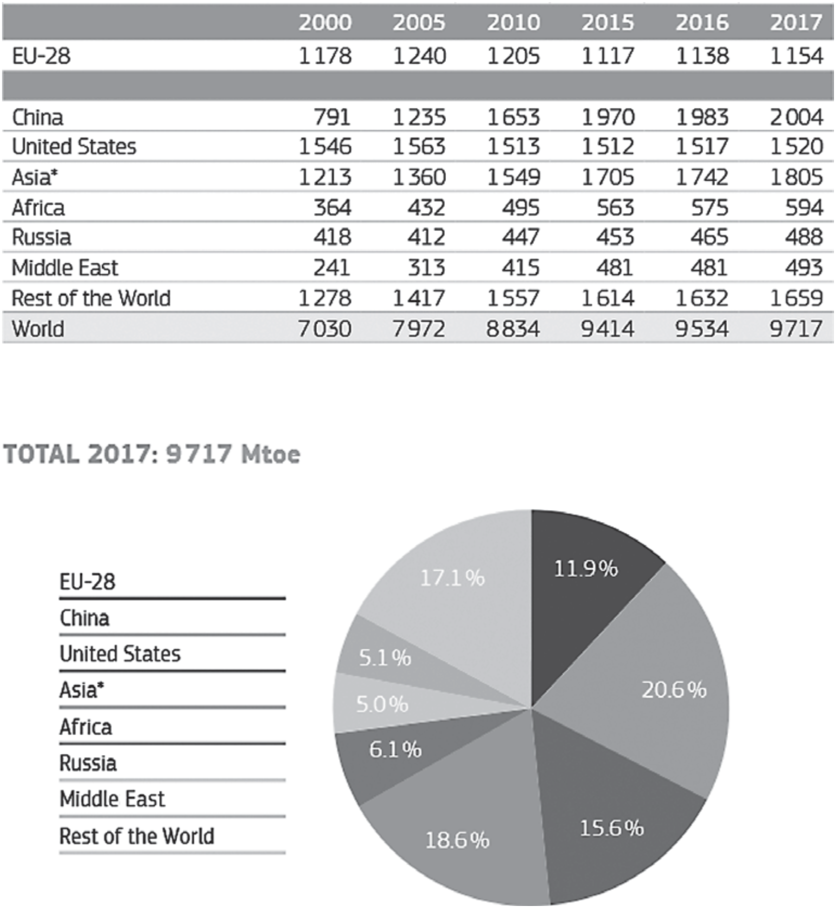
[36] Demir, Idris: "Revival of the Silk Road in terms of Energy Trade". *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 9 (3), 2010, p. 522.

[37] Howell, Sabrina: "Jia You! (Add Oil!): Chinese Energy Security Strategy". In: Luft, Gal / Korin, Anne (eds.): *Energy Security Challenges for 21st Century.* ABC CLIO: Santa Barbara 2009, p. 191.

[38] Demir, Idris: op. cit., p. 522.

[39] Howell, Sabrina: op. cit., p. 191.

[40] Klare, Michael T: "Energy Security". In: Williams, Paul (ed.): *Security Studies: an Introduction.* Routledge: London, New York 2008, p. 485.



	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017
EU-28	1178	1240	1205	1117	1138	1154
China	791	1235	1653	1970	1983	2004
United States	1546	1563	1513	1512	1517	1520
Asia*	1213	1360	1549	1705	1742	1805
Africa	364	432	495	563	575	594
Russia	418	412	447	453	465	488
Middle East	241	313	415	481	481	493
Rest of the World	1278	1417	1557	1614	1632	1659
World	7030	7972	8834	9414	9534	9717

Figure 10.3: World total final consumption by region (Mtoe)

Source: EU: Energy in Figures 2019, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e0544b72-db53-11e9-9c4e-01aa75ed71a1.

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[41] Demir, Idris: op. cit., p. 523.

Nowadays, China is regarded as one of the major players shaping the global economy (see Figure 10.3). Energy consumption in China grew by 1.3 % in 2016. Even though growth during 2015 and 2016 was at its lowest since 1997–98, China remained the world's largest growth market for energy.[42] China's dependency on energy imports has been increasing and PRC has experienced oil and gas demand growth that has accounted for nearly one third of the world's total oil demand growth during the past decade. As a result, the security of energy supplies is a principal issue for Chinese policymakers. According to the BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020, China was by far the biggest driver of energy, accounting for more than three quarters of net global growth.[43] "China dominated the expansion in global energy markets – contributing the largest increment to demand for each individual source of energy."[44]

Table 10.8: China oil and natural gas proved reserves

	1992	**2002**	**2011**	**2012**	**2016**	**2019**	**Share of total 2019**
oil(thousand million barrels)	15.2	15.5	17.3	17.3	25.7	26.2	1.5 %
natural gas (trillion cubic meters)	1.4	1.3	3.1	3.1	5.4	8.4	4.2 %

Source: "BP Statistical Review of World Energy". BP, June 2013, retrieved 25.08.2020, from http://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/statistical-review/statistical_review_of_world_energy_2013.pdf; "BP Statistical Review of World Energy". BP, June 2017, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/en/corporate/pdf/energy-economics/statistical-review-2017/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2017-full-report.pdf; "BP Statistical Review of World Energy", BP, 2020, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/downloads.html.

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[42] BP: *Statistical Review of World Energy 2017…*

[43] BP: *Statistical Review of World Energy 2020*, retrieved 4.08.2020, from https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/downloads.html.

[44] Ibid.

Table 10.9: China oil production and consumption

		2002	**2010**	**2012**	**2016**	**2019**	**Share of total 2019**
Oil production	Thousand barrels daily	3,351	4,077	4,155	3,999	3,836	4.0 %
	Million tons	166.9	203.0	207.5	199.7	19.0	4.3 %
Oil consumption	Thousand barrels daily	5,262	9,272	10,221	12,381	14,056	14.3 %

Source: "BP Statistical Review of World Energy". BP, June 2013, retrieved 25.08.2020, from http://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/statistical-review/statistical_review_of_world_energy_2013.pdf; "BP Statistical Review of World Energy". BP, June 2017, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/en/corporate/pdf/energy-economics/statistical-review-2017/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2017-full-report.pdf; "BP Statistical Review of World Energy". BP, 2020, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/downloads.html.

Table 10.10: China natural gas production and consumption

		2002	**2010**	**2012**	**2016**	**2019**	**share of total 2019**
natural gas production	billion cubic meters	32.7	94.8	107.2	138.4	177.6	4.5 %
natural gas consumption	billion cubic meters	29.2	106.9	143.8	210.3	307.3	7.8 %

Source: "BP Statistical Review of World Energy". BP, June 2013, retrieved 25.08.2020, from http://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/statistical-review/statistical_review_of_world_energy_2013.pdf; "BP Statistical Review of World Energy". BP, June 2017, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/en/corporate/pdf/energy-economics/statistical-review-2017/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2017-full-report.pdf; "BP Statistical Review of World Energy". BP, 2020, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/downloads.html.

Table 10.11: China's crude oil imports main sources

Kazakhstan	**Saudi Arabia**	**Angola**	**Russia**	**Oman**	**Iraq**	**Iran**	**Venezuela**	**UAE**	**Kuwait**	**Columbia**
2 %	16.8 %	9.5 %	15.3 %	6.9 %	9.9 %	3 %	1.9 %	3.1 %	4.5 %	2.3 %

Source: Workman, Daniel: "Top 15 Crude Oil Suppliers to China". World's Top Exports, retrieved 25.08.2020, from http://www.worldstopexports.com/top-15-crude-oil-suppliers-to-china.

Table 10.12: Chinese natural gas imports: main sources

Turkmenistan	**Uzbekistan**	**Qatar**	**Australia**	**Indonesia**	**Malaysia**	**Kazakhstan**
47.1 %	**5.6 %**	17.1 %	9.3 %	6.4 %	7 %	**0.1**

Source: Ishwaran, Mallika et al.: "International Natural Gas Supply and Quantities Available to China". ResearchGate, November 2017, retrieved 25.08.2020, from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Chinese-natural-gas-import-sources-Source-BP-Statistical-Review-of-World-Energy-2014_fig4_321259965.

According to S. Howell, there are some vulnerabilities of Chinese energy policy:

a) China is located far from its petroleum suppliers;
b) it suffers from a poor geologic endowment;
c) demand is increasing faster than supply;
d) the Chinese Communist Party is committed to continued improvements in Chinese standards of living, which is necessary to the regime's survival.[45]

China's energy strategy evolved along with continuous reform of the state institutions responsible for its formulation and implementation. China is one of the few countries in the world without a government-level body in charge of all energy sectors and the coordination of the state's energy development.[46] Due to the growing energy deficit, a specialized energy bureau affiliated to the National Development and Reform Commission was created in 2003 and supposedly acted as an integrating organ responsible for the strategy of the energy development of PRC.[47]

The first Chinese energy policy document to use the term "energy security" was "Twenty-First Century Oil Strategy," published in 2003.[48] It was a part of the 2004 State Council report "National Energy Strategy and Policy" and the Tenth Five – Year Plan (2001 – 2005).[49] Several elements of the Tenth Five – Year Plan underlined the importance of China's energy strategy for its overall economic development:

a) diversification of energy supplies;
b) enhance overseas energy investments by state oil companies;
c) increase investments in energy infrastructure;
d) established state-controlled strategic petroleum reserves;

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[45] Howell, Sabrina: op. cit., p. 192.

[46] Nechaeva, Elena / Wang, Li: "The Rise of China and Its Energy Security Prospect". In: Pietraś, Marek / Misiągiewicz, Justyna (eds.): op. cit., pp. 185–200.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Howell, Sabrina: op. cit., p. 193.

[49] Ibid., p. 193.

e) reduce dependence on oil by using coal and nuclear power;
f) establish a regional energy-security system.[50]

The Eleventh Five – Year Plan (2006 – 2010) called for the reduction of the energy intensity of GDP by 20 %.[51] The Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2011–2015) adopted in March 2011 devoted considerable attention to energy and climate change. The implementation of the Plan will require considerable reduction of the share of coal in China's economy. The share of natural gas would double and the new sources of energy would also increase their share.[52]

In the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan, covering 2016–2020, ten out of twenty-five core targets were related to energy and the environment.[53] The plan announced the establishment of a national "cap-and-trade system" for carbon emissions, updated targets for the share of energy generated from renewable sources (from 9,5 % to 15 %), and declared the need for a further reduction of carbon intensity by 18 % and energy intensity by 15 %.[54] The plan also set the "first cap on overall energy consumption for the nation."[55] The Thirteenth Five-Year Plan, ranging from the "Medium-and Long-Term Plan for Renewable Energy" to the "Thirteenth Five Year Work Plan for Controlling Greenhouse Gas Emissions."[56] Agencies responsible for the implementation of these objectives included the State Council and the National Energy Administration (NEA), but depending on the target sector, also extended responsibility to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.[57]

Given the current needs of the country, China's leaders set the following tasks for energy policy: 1) increase volumes of imported energy, 2) access foreign markets and oil deposits through investments in exploration, exploitation and processing of foreign energy resources ("going out" strategy), 3) diversify supply routes, 4) diversify supply sources, 5) participate in multilateral energy forums in order to stabilize global oil prices at a level which is acceptable to China.[58]

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[50] Hall, Gregory / Grant, Tiara: "Russia, China and the Energy – Security Politics of the Caspian Sea Region after the Cold War". *Mediterranean Quarterly* 2, 2009, p. 125.

[51] "The 11th Five Year Plan". *The State Council of the People's Republic of China*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from http://english.gov.cn/special/115y_index.htm.

[52] "Energy will be the basis of the 12th five-year plan of China". *Rosbalt*, 15.10.2010, retrieved 4.4.2020, from www.rosbalt.ru/main/2010/10/15/780995.html.

[53] Nahm, Jonas: "The Energy Politics of China". In: Hancock, Kathleen J. / Allison, Juliann Emmons (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Energy Politics.* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2019, pp. 1–28.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Koleski, Katherine: "The 13th Five-Year Plan". *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, 14.02.2017, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.uscc.gov/research/13th-five-year-plan.

[56] Nahm, Jonas: op. cit., pp. 1–28

[57] Koleski, Katherine: op. cit.

[58] Jun, Wang: *China's Oil Security System Build-Up.* Social Sciences Press: Beijing: 2010.

Analyzing Chinese energy policy, we have to mention the idea of the "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR).[59] It can be called a comprehensive domestic and foreign policy concept. The economic belt would serve this purpose for China's western and inland central Asian states. It is also the political framework for the economical and energy cooperation between China and its western neighbors.[60]

The oil and gas sector has been dominated by three major state-run companies: the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec). The Chinese government has directed its oil companies to acquire interests abroad[61]and, as a result, Chinese oil companies, especially the China National Petroleum Company, have been involved in energy projects in more than 20 countries.[62]

Pipeline Infrastructure

The region of Central Asia, with its rich energy resources, became one of the main directions for China to diversify its oil and natural gas supplies. In recent decades, China has pursued a more assertive policy in its relations with the countries of the region and this approach includes initiating new export routes.[63] Geography is one of China's crucial advantages in strengthening its influence over the region, constituting a "next door neighbor" for the Caspian states.[64]

China pursued the "Pan – Asia Continental Oil Bridge" project in 1996. It was a network of oil and natural gas stretching from the Middle East, Central Asia, Russia and China.[65] China's strategy towards Central Asia, outlining a 'silk road economic belt' that would open up the transportation channel from the Pacific to the Baltic Sea.

Over the past few years, China has poured investment into Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan through two main projects:

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[59] See: Misiagiewicz, Justyna: [in Chinese:] "Polish perspective on China's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative". *The Journal of China and the World* 2016.

[60] Wacker, Gudrun: "Shared Destiny: New Silk Road between China and Europe". *Friends of Europe*, 24.10.2014, retrieved 4.4.2020, from http://www.friendsofeurope.org/global-europe/shared-destiny-new-silk-road-china-europe/; Szczudlik-Tatar, Justyna: "'One Belt, One Road': Mapping China's New Diplomatic Strategy". *Bulletin PISM* 67 (799), 2015, pp. 1–2.

[61] Hall, Gregory / Grant, Tiara: op. cit., p. 124.

[62] Demir, Idris: op. cit., p. 524.

[63] Nechaeva, Elena / Wang, Li: op. cit., pp. 185–200.

[64] Demir, Idris: op. cit., p. 527.

[65] Cole, Bernard: "'Oil for the Lamps of China': Beijing's 21st-Century Search for Energy". *McNair Paper* 67, 2003, p. 28.

a) the Kazakhstan – China oil pipeline and
b) the Turkmenistan – China gas pipeline (also known as Central Asia – China gas pipeline).[66]

Kazakhstan

Oil Infrastructure

Kazakhstan, with its large hydrocarbon reserves, is one of most important trade partners for China. Both states signed an agreement in 1997 that initiated Chinese investment in the Kazakh petroleum sector.[67] China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) became the owner of 60 % of the shares in Aktubinskmunaigaz, which controls the main oil fields in northwestern Kazakhstan: Zhanazhol and Kenkiyak.[68] Moreover, CNPC purchased shares in the Uzen oilfields. China first proposed a pipeline infrastructure through Kazakhstan in 1996,[69] but both Russia and the United States opposed the pipeline. Russia wanted to be the only transit area for the Kazakh crude oil, while the US supported the trans-Caspian pipeline project to supply the European market.[70] Nowadays, China is able to import a volume of 10 to 20 million tons of crude oil from Kazakhstan each year. The Kazakhstan – China pipeline was built by a joint venture between China National Petroleum Corporation and KazMunaiGaz. The Atasu – Alashankou part of the project was initiated in 1997. In May 2002, CNPC and KazMunaiGaz started to build the first 449 km part of the pipeline from Kenkiyak (central Kazakhstan) to Atyrau (at the Caspian Sea shore). In December 2005, a 962 kilometer cross–border portion of the pipeline was completed.[71] In May 2006, Kazakh oil began to flow to China, with the pipeline carrying about 200,000 barrels per day to China's Dushanzi refinery.[72] The Kenkiyak – Kumkol oil pipeline is intended for the transportation of oil from the West-Kazakhstan and Aktobe oilfields. The initial point is Kenkiyak CTP, while the terminal point is Kumkol CTP. The maximum capacity of the pipeline is 10 mln tons a year and the pipeline length is 794.263 km. The project includes the construction of relay pump stations along the pipeline to increase oil transportation volumes and 5,580,000 tons of oil was transported through the Kenkiyak – Kumkol pipeline in 2019.[73]

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[66] Lin, Christina: "The Caspian Sea: China's Silk Road Strategy Converges with Damascus". *China Brief* 10 (17), 2010, p. 9.

[67] Misiągiewicz, Marcin / Ziętek, Agata: "Działania Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej w regionie". In: *Region Azji Centralnej jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych.* UMCS: Lublin 2008, p. 118.

[68] Ibid., p. 128.

[69] Howell, Sabrina: op. cit., p. 195.

[70] See more: Misiągiewicz, Justyna: "European Union and the energy security challenges". In: Chałupczak, Henryk / Misiągiewicz, Justyna / Tosiek, Piotr (eds.): *European Integration. Models, Challenges, Perspectives.* Oficina Simonidis: Zamość 2012, pp. 203–222.

[71] Demir, Idris: op. cit., p. 528.

[72] Howell, Sabrina: op. cit., p. 195.

Natural Gas Infrastructure

In June 2010, CNPC signed an agreement with KazMunaiGaz to build the second phase of the Kazakhstan-China Gas Pipeline in a bid to tap Kazakh gas reserves.[74] This transit route is part of a larger project to build pipelines connecting China with Central Asia's natural gas reserves. It stretches from Turkmenistan, through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and enters China's northwestern Xinjiang region. Commercial gas volumes were first sent across the Kazakh – Chinese border on October 2017,[75] as part of a deal under which Kazakhstan agreed to send 5 billion cubic meters of gas to China per year. This project is part of China's attempts to secure more energy sources worldwide and also an element of China's overall Silk Road strategy (OBOR) to diversify energy dependence on the unstable Gulf region and build overland routes to hedge against maritime supply disruptions.[76]

Turkmenistan

China also cooperates with Turkmenistan in the field of energy, with Beijing's main economic interest being to gain access to natural gas from the largest gas producer in the Caspian. On 3 April 2006, China and Turkmenistan signed an agreement on pipeline construction and a long-term gas supply. According to the bilateral agreement, Turkmenistan will supply China with 30 bcm of natural gas annually, beginning in 2009.[77] Turkmenistan also granted the China National Petroleum Corporation a license to develop the Bagtiyarlyk fields, situated near the Uzbek border.[78] The pipeline from Turkmenistan to China is the first leg of a wider system, collecting gas from Uzbekistan and also from Kazakhstan.[79] The

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[73] *Kenkiyak–Kumkol oil pipeline*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from http://www.kcp.kz/company/about?language=en.

[74] Lin, Christina: op. cit., p. 9.

[75] Reuters: *China's CNPC imports first gas from Kazakhstan ahead of winter*, retrieved 4.4.2020, from https://www.reuters.com/article/china-gas-imports/chinas-cnpc-imports-first-gas-from-kazakhstan-ahead-of-winter-idUSL4N1MY186.

[76] An estimated 85 % of China's imports and between 70–85 % of its energy supplies, mainly from the Middle East, are sea-borne and pass through several maritime chokepoints such as the Strait of Malacca in the South China Sea which continue to be secured by the USA.

[77] Kandiyoti, Rafael: "What price access to the open seas? The geopolitics of oil and gas transmission from the Trans-Caspian republics". *Central Asian Survey* 27 (1), 2008, p. 88.

[78] Ibid., p. 88.

[79] Ibid., p. 88.

Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline, linking the South Yolotan gas fields in Turkmenistan to the Xinjiang region, was inaugurated in December 2009.

China is also interested in energy cooperation with Azerbaijan, a country that is becoming a very important element of energy security not only in Eastern Europe but globally. This Caucasian state has always been able to play a more independent international role because of its energy wealth and very experienced political leadership.[80] However, Azerbaijan is nowadays engaged in western energy projects, such as the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum gas pipeline, and the future Southern corridor gas transportation project.[81]

In September 2013, President Xi Jinping visited four countries in Central Asia – Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. As part of this charm offensive, the Chinese delegation signed a natural gas agreement with Turkmenistan which will boost annual gas deliveries to China to about 65 billion cubic meters by 2020.

The Central Asia – China Gas Pipeline delivered over 47.9 bcm of natural gas to China in 2019.[82] As of December 31, 2019, 294.6 bcm of natural gas had been imported via the pipeline, benefitting over 500 million people in 27 provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions, and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The natural gas imports via the pipeline account for more than 15 % of China's total consumption in the same period.[83]

Despite the political and economic obstacles, Chinese academics regarded the transport of hydrocarbons from Central Asia as the "first choice for solving the energy transport security and bottleneck issues."[84]

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to verify two main hypotheses. The first one was that "the energy field is not only vital to economic development but also to the future geopolitical order of the region." We can safely assume that the Caspian region has a special geopolitical position in the center of Eurasia and is part of the biggest word trade route. As a result, it is becoming increasingly significant in global international relations. The Caspian region is not only an undiscovered reservoir of hydrocarbons, but also a strategic "chessboard" with many internal and external players. We can conclude that there are two conflicting scenarios for the future situation in the Caspian region. According to the optimistic one, the geopolitical rivalry might be replaced by more benign forms of geoeconomical competition, multilateral and cooperative relations between state and non-state actors. The second scenario is rather more pessimistic and reminiscent of the Cold War reality: the Caspian region will become a region for very aggressive great power politics because of their contradictory interests and increasing global energy demand.

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[80] Nuriyev, Elkhan: "Azerbaijan and the European Union: new landmarks of strategic partnership in the South Caucasus–Caspian basin". *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 8–2, 2008, p. 157.

[81] See more: Misiągiewicz, Justyna: "Turkey as an energy hub in the Mediterranean Region". *Spectrum: Journal of Global Studies* 4 (1), 2012, pp. 107–126.

[82] "China-Central Asia gas pipeline transports 47.9 billion cubic meters in 2019". *Xinhua*, 6.01.2020, retrieved 4.4.2020, from http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/06/c_138682150.htm.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Howell, Sabrina: op. cit., p. 197.

The second hypothesis stated that "China, as a rapidly expanding economy, and the largest energy consumer in the world, has given the Caspian region increasing geoeconomical importance." China's economic rise perhaps caught the world by surprise, partly because of its scale and speed.[85] China's extraordinary economic growth led to an increase in energy consumption and this is why energy security, and the availability of oil and natural gas in particular, has become an increasingly important concern for this state. China thus assigned greater geopolitical attention to the Central Asia and the Caspian region, looking for ways to build pipeline infrastructure to export hydrocarbon reserves eastwards and competing with the United States and the European Union which are looking to export energy resources westwards.[86] China's national oil companies are latecomers to the Caspian oil exploration and production scene, increasingly in competition with the major global oil companies from the United States and Europe. Other players in the great energy game have been playing it for decades, with China very much the new kid on the block. The idea of the "One Belt, One Road" is an important concept in this context. It will promote China as a soft power and attractive player in the global market (also the energy market). The Silk Road Economic Belt will connect China and Europe via Kazakhstan and Russia, serving this purpose for China's western and inland central Asian states. The term "silk road" has been in use since the nineteenth century and refers to the traditional east–west trading network across Eurasia and the Indian Ocean region. By using this term, the Chinese government emphasizes the commercial and open nature of the modern version of this network.[87]

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[85] Misiągiewicz, Justyna / Misiągiewicz, Marcin: "China's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative – the perspective of the European Union". *Annales UMCS* 23 (1), 2016, pp. 33–42.

[86] Labban, Mazen: "The Struggle for the Heartland: Hybrid Geopolitics in the Transcaspian". *Geopolitics* 14, 2009, p. 42.

[87] See: Wacker, Gudrun: op. cit.; Misiągiewicz Justyna / Misiągiewicz, Marcin: op. cit., pp. 33–42.

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Domestic Politics in Central Asia and the South Caucasus

Michał Lubina

11. From Clan Politics to Grand Politics: Central Asian Policies vis-à-vis the Great Powers

Abstract: Following neoclassical realism and a two-level game perspective, this article looks at Central Asian politics through the lens of clan politics. It presents five case studies of the correlation between domestic (clan) and foreign policies and argues that the circumstances of Russian-Sino political dominance in the region in the 2010s provide a continuously good ground for clan politics. It argues, too, that is it still Russia – despite its weakened position in comparison to Soviet times – rather than China and certainly not the West, that enjoys the greatest influence and leverage over clan politics in Central Asia.

Keywords: Central Asia, clan politics, Russia, China, tribalism, chiefdom political culture, patron-client

Central Asia has frequently been described as a playground for the great powers – the setting for another round of the Great Game. It has also been labeled in ideological terms: as a place where fragile democracies have lost out to authoritarianism. Or as a region threatened by Islamist fundamentalism. Much more rarely, however, have Central Asian policies been viewed through the systemic lenses of the clan politics. This paper will follow the latter approach and attempt to interpret the foreign policies of Central Asian states from the perspective of their clan politics. Thus, it will help to explain why Russia has partially secured its dominant position, China has attained the role of co-patron for the region and the West has lost out.

Introduction

This article will use the neoclassical realist concepts[1] of balancing in its attempt to describe Central Asian policies toward great powers and it will pay attention to the role of individuals in politics (here: national leaders) and tribalism (clan politics). Neoclassical realism seems to be an adequate approach to Central Asian conditions as the local elites were brought up in a Soviet realist strategic culture.[2] At the same time, neoclassical realism offers a chance to grasp both the domestic and foreign levels of politics in Central Asian countries. In Central Asian studies, despite valuable works on the correlation between foreign and domestic policy,[3] there is still a research gap that needs to be filled. Following the idea of a two-level game (national and international),[4] the research question in this article concentrates on correlation of two dynamics: 1) the impact of domestic politics (understood as a struggle for power inside a country on the example of clan rivalry) on the foreign policy of a country and 2) the impact of the foreign policy of a country in influencing the distribution of power within the country. Thus, the research hypothesis claims that there is a certain amount of feedback between those two: not only does domestic politics (the clan politics of authoritarian leaders) influence the foreign policy of a country, but also the outcomes of foreign policy influence the distribution of power within it. The research strategy will present five case studies of Central Asian countries, while the research method is the qualitative analysis of the existing sources. The structure is the following: introduction of the concept of clan politics followed by five case studies and a summary that concludes the findings.

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[1] Rose, Gideon: "Review: Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy" *World Politics* 51 (1), 1998, pp. 144–172; Wendt, Alexander: *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2000.

[2] Lo, Bobo: *The Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics*. Brookings Institution Press: Washington, D.C. 2008, p. 176.

Clan Politics and (Quasi-)tribalism in Central Asia

Following policymaking in autocracies is tricky at best. In Central Asian states, the most important decisions are made behind closed doors, during informal meetings of the select few.[5] In these circumstances it is the human factor, or the individual with his/her personality, rather than the rules and norms of the institution he/she works for or represents, that still has a predominant influence on a state policy. Real power still lies in the hands of the individual, or a group of individuals (here: clans), instead of being checked and balanced by control mechanisms. Central Asian conditions only enhance the personal factor – the personalization of power is typical for local societies and the Central Asian "chiefdoms' political culture" the leaders personalize the ambitions of their clans (see below).[6] Central Asian political culture is deeply rooted in tribalism and clan politics: the patron-client relations dominate over other forms of social relations and this transfers itself into the political sphere, where parties are just appendices to clans and leaders.[7] Tribalism or rather "quasi-tribalism" (as the bonds between clans are not necessary blood or ethnic bonds) remains the basic regulator of political life and the "main mechanism of legitimization, creation and functioning of elites."[8] The clans, which are formed on family-tribal, ethno-religious as well as a geographical basis, dominate over any other social bonds in Central Asia, let alone over such artificial state mechanisms/institutions or young national identifications.[9] This transforms the state institutions into pyramidal structures built on patron-client relations and produces a "political culture of bonds"[10] with its nearest equivalent in the Chinese "guanxi" system.[11]

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[3] On general studies on authoritarian countries, see e.g. Weeks, Jessica L. P. / Crunkilton, Cody: *Domestic Constraints on Foreign Policy in Authoritarian Systems*, Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Politics, retrieved 19.09.2018, from http://politics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-413; Kneuer, Marianne: *Autocratic Regimes and Foreign Policy,* Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics, retrieved 19.09.2018, from http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013. For Central Asian case study, see: Anceschi, Luca: "Integrating domestic politics and foreign policy making: the cases of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan". *Central Asian Survey* 29 (2), 2010, pp. 143–158.

[4] Putnam, Robert D.: "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games". *International Organization* 42 (3), 1988, pp. 427, 434 and 460.

[5] Lo, Bobo: op. cit., pp. 30–52.

Loyalty towards the clan remains the ultimate task of the political leader who has a primary responsibility over the rest of the clan, too: he, rarely she, has to protect it and enrich it. Power generates wealth, not the other way round.[12] Clans' goals overshadow "national" political imperatives in the same way as clan identity dominates over such artificial concepts as nation, state or national interest. Central

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[6] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna więzi w Azji Centralnej* [*The Political Culture of Bonds in Central Asia*]. Oficyna Wydawnicza Aspra-JR: Warszawa ASPRA-JR 2011, pp. 156 and 189.

[7] Ibid., pp. 95, 262, 267; Bodio, Tadeusz: "Etnokratyzm i trybalizm w działalności elit władzy [Ethnocratism and tribalism in the activities of the elites of power]". In: Bodio, Tadeusz / Załęski, Piotr (eds.): *Elity władzy w Azji Centralnej* [*The elites of power in Central Asia*]. Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: Warszawa 2008, p. 226; Odgaard, Karen / Simonsen, Jens: "The new Kazakh elite". In: Svanberg, Ingvar (ed.): *Contemporary Kazaks: Cultural and Social Perspective.* Curzon Press: Richmond 1999, pp. 28–29; Schatz, Edward: *Modern Clan Politics: the Power of "Blood" in Kazakhstan and Beyond.* University of Washington Press: Seattle 2004.

[8] Bodio, Tadeusz: "Układy klanowe jako mechanizm polityki (na przykładzie państw Azji Centralnej) [Clan relations as mechanisms of politics: the example of Central Asia]". In: Kaczmarek, Bohdan (ed.): *Metafory polityki. 3* [*Metaphors of Politics. Vol. 3*]. Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: Warszawa 2005, pp. 304–314; Wierzbicki, Andrzej / Załęski, Piotr: *Trybalizm a władza w Azji Centralnej* [*Tribalism and power in Central Asia*]. Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora: Pułtusk 2008, p. 298.

[9] Bodio, Tadeusz: "Etnokratyzm i trybalizm…," p. 220.

[10] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna …*, pp. 422–432.

[11] Zapaśnik, Stanisław: *Walczący islam w Azji Centralnej* [*Fighting Islam in Central Asia*]. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego: Wrocław 2006, p. 64.

[12] Which is reflected in the saying "bonds first, money later." Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, p. 432; Gortat, Radzisława: *Kirgistan. Natura zmiany systemowej (1990–1996)* [*Kyrgyzstan. The Nature of Systemic Change (1990–1996)*]. Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: Warszawa 2009, p. 119.

Asian clans value customary law and religious law over state secular law, tend to think in a collective way, respect tradition and community elders and ancestors.[13]

Tribalism was not eliminated during tsarist and Soviet times. The former did not fight with it; the latter failed to eradicate it.[14] The fall of communism helped to strengthen the tribal or quasi-tribal mechanism even further. Thanks to a mechanism known in Eastern Europe as "nomenclature' enfranchisement"[15] the clans' patron-client relations in Central Asia created a financial-bureaucratic clans' oligarchy that served the interests of the new class of capitalists, mostly former nomenclature members.[16]

Despite de-communization, Soviet features left a decisive impact on Central Asian elites, too. All Central Asian elites enjoy strong political, social and cultural ties with Russia,[17] with their mentality formed during Soviet times. Thus, the Central Asian elites may be classified as "neopatrimonial."[18] They concentrate the power in the center and personalize it; consider the state as their own property and state institution as sources of their personal wealth; and their political and economic functions are based on tribal, ethnic, clan and bonds (patron-client relations).[19]

From Balancing the Clans to Balancing Great Powers

Politically speaking, the preferred political model in Central Asian clan politics is the balance of power between different clans.[20] It is believed that informal and unwritten clan quotas for representatives of different clans in state administration and state-dominated commercial companies guarantee stability of the state.[21] In these circumstances the national leader, usually the president, is expected to keep "proportional representation of clans in the structure of power" and arbitrage between clans in case of disputes."[22] The leader strives to establish a system that benefits his clan while not alienating decisively other clans; so that the opposing clans – as rational actors – prefer to remain loyal and have partial access to resources than to risk rebellion. An inability to achieve this balance of power results in conflicts that risk undermining the entire Central Asian system of power and as such are viewed with concern by neighboring countries, particularly Russia, as it might force Moscow to intervene to guard the status quo if the situation becomes grave. This tribal understanding of the balance of power transfers into Central Asian leaders' attitude in international relations.

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[13] Bodio, Tadeusz: "Etnokratyzm i trybalizm …," p. 153.

[14] During Soviet times, tribalism evolved and permeated to party structures. Soviet politics was understood by many Central Asian elites as a variation of tribal politics (e.g. its fight with Trotskyism was understood as a fight with Trotsky's clan) where loyalty, promotions and personal choices were undertaken on clan/tribal basis and only later externally labeled by communist phraseology. Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, p. 159.

[15] A massive privatization and takeover of public assets by members of the former nomenclature followed by their usage of connections, knowledge, position, informal means, access to information and power or pressure to take up very exposed functions in the new institutions. Kieżun, Witold: *Patologia Transformacji* [*A Pathology of Transformation*]. Poltex: Warszawa 2013, pp. 236–247.

[16] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, pp. 407–421.

[17] These elites are usually former nomenclature members. Górecki, Wojciech: *Even Further From Moscow*. OSW: Warszawa 2014, p. 6.

[18] Shmuel: *Traditional patrimonialism and modern neopatrimonialism*, Beverly Hills: Sage 1973, pp. 11–15.

[19] Ishiyama, John: "Neopatrimonialism and the Prospects for Democratization in Central Asia". In: Cummings, Sally N. (ed.): *Power and Change in Central Asia.* Routledge: London, New York 2002, pp. 42–55.

[20] Bodio *Układy klanowe…* pp. 156–157.

According to IR realist theory, when dealing with stronger states, a small or medium country can adopt two general policies: to bandwagon or to balance.[23] The neoclassical realist theory claims that small states may apply balancing in four forms: appropriate balancing, inappropriate balancing (or overbalancing), underbalancing and nonbalancing. In Central Asia Kazakhstan tries to conduct an appropriate balancing policy, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan risks overbalancing whereas Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan chose nonbalancing. This takes place in an environment where China's position has increased, but this did not lead to Sino-Russian rivalry. Despite their competitive integration projects (OBOR and Eurasian Economic Union) all talk of a "new Great Game" misses the point: Moscow and Beijing were able to manage their competition and create a kind of joint great powers' political condominium. They designated their zones of influences: Moscow took security and politics whereas Beijing chose economics.[24]

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[21] Orozbek, Moldaliev: "Wyzwania transformacji a bezpieczeństwo narodowe [The Challenges of transformation and national security]". In: Bodio, Tadeusz (ed.): *Kirgistan. Historia-społeczeństwo-polityka* [*Kyrgyzstan. History, society, politics*]. Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: Warszawa 2004, p. 303.

[22] Tadeusz Bodio, *Modernizacja, elity i reżimy polityczne w państwach region po proklamowaniu niepodległości* [*Modernization, elites, and political regimes in the region after proclamation of independence*], in Bodio T., Załęski P. 2008, p. 183, Bodio, Tadeusz: "Etnokratyzm i trybalizm..," p. 219.

[23] Waltz, Kenneth: *Theories of International Politics*. McGraw Hill: Massachusetts 1979, p. 73; Mearsheimer, John: *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company: New York 2001, pp. 162–163. Recently there is another option: to hedge, but hedging may be understood as a softer version of balancing.

[24] Kaczmarski, Marcin: *Russia-China Relations in the Post-Crisis International Order*. Rutledge: London 2015, pp. 86 and 100–101.

Appropriate Balancing: Kazakhstan

After the fall of the USSR, Kazakhstan overtook its neighbor and competitor, Uzbekistan in the race for regional leadership. The Kazakhstani leader Nursultan Nazarbaev and his clan were able to correctly perceive the major players' intentions, which allowed Kazakhstan to balance accordingly. Thanks to its balancing policy, Astana (later Nur-Sultan) has maintained good relations with all major powers and remains the biggest winner of the post-Soviet conditions, although this is not a state of affairs which has been granted forever.

After 1991 Nazarbaev embarked on a nation-building process which emphasized stability, international cooperation and being a sovereign subject with global ambitions. Nazarbaev comes from side lineage of the "the Elder *zhuz*" (tribe or horde) which has dominated the power structure since the times of Dinmuchamed Kunaev.[25] In the late 1990s, Elder *Zhuz* formed a quasi-alliance with Middle *Zhuz* at the expense of the Younger *Zhuz*, sealed by the relocation of the capital to Astana in 1998.[26] Since then, the Elder *Zhuz* has dominated the system of power, Middle *Zhuz* has partial access while the Younger *Zhuz* is under represented. The latter constitutes the greatest challenge to the existing status quo, since it comes from oil-rich Western Kazakhstan; thus far, however, Nazarbaev has been able to keep it under control by means of the employment of a carrot and stick approach.[27] Nazarbaev's unexpected resignation from the presidency on 19 March 2019 and his replacement by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, did not change this status quo. Tokayev, also from the Elder *zhuz*, is a long term protégée of Nazarbaev's and a member of the ruling establishment (he was previously foreign minister and prime minister, among other posts). The events of January 2022 have shaken but not stirred the status quo. The protests failed to topple the regime while Tokayev used this opportunity to liberate himself from Nazarbaev by sending him into political retirement. The internal purges do not alter the fact that the Elder Zhuz still dominate (albeit with different men at the top table).

At the beginning of his reign, Nazarbaev had to compromise with other clans, but having consolidated and strengthened his power in the mid-1990s, he dominated other clans: previously existing balance of tribal interests was eliminated and Nazarbaev established his own system (although he prevented misbalances by allowing representatives of all clans to have their share in governance.)[28] Since then, he has worked as an arbiter that maintains the balance between clans and does not allow any to achieve dominance.[29] Nazarbaev has managed to establish his own family empire,[30] which has made Nazarbaev's family "clans' elite", "a clan of clans", a dominant force in the state's economy and the highest patron in the pyramidal patron-client structure that encompasses all of the country.[31]

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[25] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna* ..., pp. 390–391.

[26] Schatz, Edward: op. cit., p. 95.

[27] Nevertheless, the occasional terror attacks in Western Kazakhstan prove that the situation is bubbling under surface and, should the ageing Nazarbaev lose (some) control, it might become unstable.

[28] Тулегулов, Аскар [Tulegulov, Askar]: *Пути к Олимпу Власти: Политическая элита Казахстана сегодня* [*Roads to the Olympus of Power; The Political Elite of Kazakhstan Today*]. Bīlīk: Almaty 2000, p. 28.

Nazarbaev transferred his balancing skills into foreign policy where he tried to maneuver as much space for Kazakhstan as possible without alienating Russia. Nazarbaev's foreign policy ("multisector policy") helped to achieve good relations with all major players and even enabled to play Kazakhstan beyond its real position.[32] Astana's high geopolitical profile is best seen in the fact that the USA is one of the biggest investors in this country. It is Russia, however, than remains Kazakhstan's most important partner. In the 1990s, Nazarbaev slightly distanced himself from Moscow[33] though without burning bridges. Ties with Russia have remained strong in geopolitics (Kazakhstan being southern strategic frontier for Russia), economics (transportation of Kazakh's oil via Russian pipelines) the military (membership of regional organizations, the presence of the Russian army and the Baikonur enclave) psycho-political areas (protest against democratization and human rights). Despite that, Russia and Kazakhstan have been divided by some contradictory interests: Russia wants to maintain its dominant position in energy transit, while Kazakhstan tries to undermine it and lessen its dependence on the Russian transit routes. Nevertheless, two sides have been able to compromise and political relations remain good.[34] Thus, Nazarbaev has achieved a certain amount of independence without alienating Russia.

Nazarbaev also developed good relations with China. In the 1990s he sacrificed the Uyghur cause and started trading with China, something which has been relatively undisturbed by friction and anti-Chinese resentments.[35] In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Sino-Kazakh relations developed further, particularly in the economic sphere (increase of trade volume, especially in energy) – Astana became China's most important trade partner in Central Asia. Kazakhstan benefited from the increased Chinese engagement in the region and the Sino-Russian stalemate over the energy projects in the 2000s (2006, Kazakhstan-Xinjiang oil pipeline.) Nevertheless, most Kazakhstani oil continues to be exported via Russia.[36] In other words, Astana skillfully played the "Chinese card" without irritating Moscow.

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[29] "Only the president can secure the mechanism of check and balances (between clans – M.L.) that guarantee success of national bureaucracy and state apparatus," (quoted in: Gortat, Radzisława: "Kazachstańska ideologia modernizacji [The Kazakhstan ideology of modernization])". In: Bodio, Tadeusz / Wojtaszczyk, K.A. (eds.): *Kazachstan: historia, społeczeństwo, polityka* [*Kazakhstan: History, Society, Politics*]. Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: Warszawa 2000, p. 116.

[30] *Власть в Центральной Азии: семьи, кланы, жузы*, [Power in Central Asia], Radio Svoboda, 26.07.2001.

[31] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna* ..., p. 363; Olcott, Martha Brill: *Kazakhstan. Unfulfilled Promise.* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: Washington, D.C. 2002, pp. 216–217.

[32] Ziegler, Charles: "Russia and China in Central Asia". In: Bellacqua, James (ed.): *The Future of China-Russia Relations.* University Press of Kentucky: Lexington 2012, p. 243.

[33] Discrimination of Russian minority, nation-building on rejection of the Soviet heritage and transferring the capital to Astana due to anxieties over potential future Russian claims to Northern Kazakhstan were the main reasons.

[34] Górecki, Wojciech: op. cit., p. 79.

The strategy of maneuvering more space from Russia without making it into a hostile great power has been clearly seen after 2008. In the aftermath of the Georgian crisis, Nazarbaev withheld Georgian investments and rejected taking part in the NATO drills in Georgia, but at the same time intensified actions aimed at the diversifications of deliveries.[37] Kazakhstan has promoted the Russian project of the Eurasian Economic Union, but at the same time set the boundaries for this process and is distancing itself from Moscow – Kazakhstan's decision to start using the Latin script is a symbolic gesture in this context.[38] From Astana's perspective, the Eurasian Economic Union is a security net against too much dependence on China.[39] However, after Russian actions in Ukraine, Kazakh's anxieties over Russian dominance resurfaced – there has been "less love, more fear."[40] Although Russia hasn't expressed any claims to Northern Kazakhstan as yet, Nazarbaev and his successor are doing whatever they can to prevent such a "Ukrainian" scenario. Although Nazarbaev has achieved a certain degree of independence, the Kazakh leaders know their limits and choose not to provoke Moscow.

Nazarbaev and his successor know too well that Russia has widespread, albeit hidden, influence in all Kazakhstan's *zhuzes* and might activate it should Tokaev move too close to China or to the West. That would undermine the ruling clan's position or perhaps even topple it. That is why the best Tokayev may achieve is to secure the present conditions as an amount of sovereignty that is still acceptable for Russia. In other words, Tokaev perceive Russia's intentions correctly and this translates into an appropriate balancing policy, where Tokaev uses other "cards" (China, USA) to gain leverage over Russia. On the systemic level, Kazakhstan's balancing may (so far) be described as fulfilling the requirements for creating a system that benefits the most important major player (Russia) while not decisively alienating other major players (China, the West).

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[35] Olcott, Martha Brill: "Russia-China Relations and Central Asia". In: Sherman, Garnett (ed.): *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia.* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: Washington, DC 2000, p. 394.

[36] Kaczmarski, Marcin: op. cit., p. 92.

[37] Kozłowski, Krzysztof: *Państwo Środka a Nowy Jedwabny Szlak* [*The Midle Country and the New Silk Road*]. Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek: Toruń 2011, p. 253.

[38] Górecki, Wojciech: op. cit., p. 79.

[39] Jarosiewicz, Aleksandra / Strachota, Krzysztof: *China vs. Central Asia. The achievements of the past two decades.* OSW: Warszawa 2013, pp. 30–60.

[40] Jarosiewicz, Aleksandra: *Kazakhstan's attitude towards integration with Russia: less love, more fear.* OSW: Warszawa 2014.

Between Overbalancing and Appropriate Balancing: Uzbekistan

Tashkent, Astana's major competitor, under Islam Karimov and his Samarkandian clan, had been balancing even more spectacularly, yet perhaps less efficiently than Kazakhstan. Balancing in the Uzbek style meant vocal calls for sovereignty from major powers and the frequent changing of alliances. Under Karimov, Uzbekistan embarked on a clear course for independence, distancing itself from Moscow. This resulted in "sinusoidal" policy (periods of co-operation with the West, interspersed with periods of closer relations with Moscow).[41] Despite achieving a certain amount of independence, Uzbekistan performed poorly in the sphere of economics which cost Tashkent its Central Asian leadership position. Still, Karimov managed to enrich himself, his family and his clan while not provoking others; this enabled him to continue ruling despite the sorry state of the national economy. Karimov's successor Mirziyoyev, from the same Samarkandian clan, continued this policy albeit with important alterations. To his credit, Mirziyoyev embarked on quite spectacular reforms which improved the overall economic conditions of Uzbekistan and its regional diplomatic stance; if continued and further effective, they may make Uzbekistan into another regional success story.

The Samarkandian clan, alongside with its main rivals, the Tashkent and Fergana clans, had dominated Uzbekistan at the expense of other, minor clans.[42] Pivotal to Karimov's ascendance to power in 1989 was the clan consensus over the need to choose someone acceptable for all clans: politically unimportant, with only local legitimization, who would guarantee the continuity of the informal bonds and a certain degree of autonomy from Moscow.[43] After 1991, however, Karimov became more ambitious. Since the mid-1990s he pursued a policy of national unification (read: an attempt to limit the influence of clans, particularly the Tashkent and Fergana clans).[44] He conducted a policy of balance between clans with a certain degree of advantage to his Samarkandian clan.[45] It is disputed whether he did this skillfully or not. According to one narrative, Karimov achieved prominence via ruthless, yet successful methods in limiting democratic processes and due to social fatalism.[46] Accordingly, Karimov was apparently able to maintain the balance of power between the clans, particularly two most important, the Samarkandian and Tashkent, by balancing the influence of their members in domestic policy[47] and foreign policy, where he balanced the traditionally pro-Russian Samarkandian with the more pro-Western leaning Tashkent clan; keeping the balance between those two clans resulted in his strong position and more than two decades of rule.[48] Thus, this narrative concludes, Karimov created a hierarchical pyramid of patron-client relations where he remained the ultimate patron.[49] The opposite narrative claims that Karimov lost legitimacy among clans,[50] and became "dependent and subjugated by clans."[51] Although he had influence over certain aspects of governance, in his most important actions he was limited by the clans.[52] The post-Karimov succession of Mirziyoyev, the leader of Samarkandian clan, instead of some members of

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[41] Combined with complicated relations with neighbours that accuse Uzbekistan of being too assertive, Górecki, Wojciech: op. cit., pp. 56–57. The latter seems to be changing now as Mirziyoyev is improving relations with the neighbours.

[42] Such as Bukharian, Khorezmian, Kashkadarinian, Sukrhandrarian and Karakalipakskian clans, *8 кланов Узбекистана: Кто претендует на трон Каримова, 8 clans of Uzbekistan; who pretends for Karimov's throne?*, Depo.Ua, 02.09.2016. During Soviet times the subsequent general secretaries of the Uzbek SSR were chosen from those three clans only. Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, p. 403.

[43] Collins, Kathleen: *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge and New York, NY 2006, pp. 122–123. Karimov was considered as such and he started with low profile governance being overshadowed by his patron, Jurabekov.

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[44] Mohapatra, Nalin K.: *Political Culture and Democratic Development in Central Asia.* Bookwell: New Delhi 2006, pp. 203–204. Karimov "was personally against clans, fought with clan behaviour in public life and did not yield to clans' blackmails; at the same time he concluded tactical alliances with some clans and chose his apparatus in accordance with clan logic." Sajnóg, Miłosz: "Republika Uzbekistanu [The Republic of Uzbekistan]". In: Baluk, Walenty / Czajowski, Andrzej: *Ustroje polityczne krajów Wspólnoty Niepodległych Państw* [*The political regimes of the CIS countries*]. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego: Wrocław 2007, pp. 310–332.

[45] Consequently, the Samarkandian clan secured the status of "primus inter pares." Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, pp. 406–410.

[46] Uzbek people considered him a lesser evil: "it is better to have bad peace with Karimov than good war between clans", *8 кланов Узбекистана…*

[47] Home Office for Samarkandian clan, Secret Service for Tashkent clan. Zamarajewa, Aleksandra: "Masakra w Andiżanie – między biedą, dyktaturą a rywalizacją klanową [Andijan Massacre: Between Poverty, Dictatorship and Clans' Rivalry]". In: Bodio, Tadeusz / Jakubowski, Wojciech / Wierzbicki, Andrzej (eds.): *Transformacja społeczeństwa i władzy w postradzieckiej Azji Centralnej* [*The Transformation of society and authority in post-Soviet Central Asia*]. Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora: Pułtusk 2008, p. 115.

[48] Sajnóg, Miłosz: op. cit., p. 333.

[49] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, p. 375.

[50] Collins, Kathleen: op. cit., pp. 270–271.

[51] Sajnóg, Miłosz: op. cit., p. 332.

[52] E.g. he tried to nominate technocrats with little or no clan connections, ultimately became dependent on clans, Collins, Kathleen: op. cit., p. 273.

Karimov family, might suggest that, at least in the last days of his reign, Karimov was seriously constrained in his actions by the clans.

Equally disputable is Karimov's foreign policy. It can either be understood as appropriate balancing or overbalancing. In foreign policy after 1991, Uzbekistan has tried to liberate itself from Moscow's dominance. Despite signing of the Collective Security Treaty at the summit in Tashkent in 1992, Uzbekistan underwent the deepest desovietisation in Central Asia[53] and distanced itself from Moscow-dominated integration initiatives and embraced the West.[54] Even then, however, Karimov was unable to fully liberate himself from Moscow's influence as it turned out that Uzbekistan was too weak to resolve regional security challenges such as the "Batken crisis."[55] Flirtation with the West ended in 2005. Protests in Andijan, sparked by Karimov actions against Fergana clan, threatened Karimov as this, judged from the clan perspective, challenged the status quo. Thus, by the same clan logic, he had no other option but to react ruthlessly. Public outrage against the massacre in the West convinced Karimov that the "Western card" potentially threatened his political position while Russian and Chinese public support for quelling the protesters helped Karimov to reverse alliances.[56]

In other words, Karimov understood that playing the American card against Russia was dangerous for his personal power (and his clan's power) as the democratic agenda might undermine his regime. Instead, he returned to the safe post-Soviet political playground dominated by Russia. What was different, however, was that now new player emerged: China. Already in the early 1990s Karimov saw China as an alternative development model.[57] With China's increased profile in the 2000s, Uzbekistan could now use the "China card". Karimov cultivated close ties with Beijing that transcended the improvement of economic relations.[58] Contrary to Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan, however, Uzbekistan has not opened its market to Chinese goods as widely as these countries did.[59] The dire economic situation, however, limited Tashkent's anti-Western stance: Karimov needed solid cash, so he allowed the Germans to maintain a refueling station in Termez.[60]

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[53] Górecki, Wojciech: op. cit., pp. 56–57.

[54] In 1999, Uzbekistan joined the GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova), now GUUAM, an ephemeral attempt to establish a pro-Western alternative to the CIS. cooperated militarily with the United States while, as the only country in the region, without any Russian military bases and supported US forces in Afghanistan, Ziegler, *Russia and China…* 237, Naumkin, Vitaly V.: "The emerging political balance in Central Asia: a Russian view". In: Chuffrin, Gennadi (ed.): *Russia and Asia. The Emerging Security Agenda.* Oxford University Press: Oxford, London 1999, p. 84.

[55] Kuryłowicz, Michał: *Polityka zagraniczna Uzbekistanu wobec Rosji* [*Uzbekistan' Foreign Policy on Russia*]. Księgarnia Akademicka: Kraków 2014, p. 170.

[56] Karimov quitted the GUUAM in May 2005, demanded the Americans to leave Khanabad air base, signed ally treaty with Moscow in 2006, returned to the CSTO and agreed to have Russian soldiers on Uzbekistan soil.

[57] He was the first Central Asian leader to do so.Olcott, Martha Brill: "Russia-China Relations…", p. 374.

[58] Uzbekistan has been the key transit country on the Chinese gas pipeline from Turkmenistan.

Karimov's political strong rapprochement with Russia was short-lived as he remained committed to independent policy. In 2012 Tashkent suspended its membership of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) which undermined the regional image of Russia and was typical of Uzbekistan's tough balancing diplomacy. As a result, "total distrust" characterized political relations between Russia and Uzbekistan; nevertheless, Russia retained its transit monopoly over Central Asian resources to Europe and is still a vital trade partner for Uzbekistan.[61]

When summarizing Uzbek policy under Karimov, one may clearly see a better or worse but permanent attempt to balance Russia, China and the West and to keep them at arm's length. Karimov's biggest drawback was perhaps his heavy-handedness: Tashkent balanced spectacularly, switched alliances, made political twists and turns, favored and antagonized major players in the spotlight. Moreover, Uzbekistan tough-style diplomacy has antagonized its neighbors, too. All this has helped to secure independent position (to certain extend) and the domestic status quo that favored Karimov, his family and his clan, but it did little to gain Uzbekistan international respect and trust. The contrast with the calm, quiet and reserved diplomacy of Kazakhstan is visible and this perhaps explains why Kazakhstan overtook Uzbekistan as the regional leader. Spectacular balancing in foreign policy did not help the underdeveloped Uzbek economy either. That is why Uzbekistan case under Karimov is difficult to classify: it can either be considered an example of appropriate balancing or overbalancing, where the cons of balancing the most important major player (Russia) exceed its pros.

Karimov's death in September 2016 and the (thus far) successful transition of power within the clan to Mirziyoyev already improved Uzbekistan's foreign policy. Mirziyoyev, the leader of the Samarkandian clan and former prime-minister, was considered a traditionalist and pro-Russian, but he turned out to be much more reform-oriented that previously thought: he liberalized the economy (e.g. he lifted restrictions on exchanging foreign currency and eliminated the black market), opted for regional cooperation, eased relations with neighbors (especially with the minor ones: he treats smaller Central Asian countries more diplomatically than his predecessor) and hosted a regional summit on Afghanistan; moreover, he released some political prisoners and succeeded in courting the West: he was invited to the

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[59] Tashkent's preferred Asian partner is South Korea (be it because of historic reasons or concerns over China's economic dominance) but counting on Asian partners only is not a remedy for Uzbekistan's economy sorry state of affairs (foreign investments remains low and most of Uzbek people work either on cotton plantations or as seasonal workers in Russia) which Karimov's successor seems to understand.

[60] Ziegler, *Russia and China*… p. 239.

[61] Górecki, Wojciech: op. cit., p. 59.

White House in May 2018. Most importantly, however, he was able to dismiss his most important rivals, Rustam Azimov (head of the Tashkent clan and Karimov's former finance minister) and Rustam Inoyatov, the former chief of the all-powerful National Security Service (SNB), thereby enhancing and consolidating his personal power.[62] Furthermore, despite publicly kowtowing to Karimov (he built his mausoleum, renaming Tashkent airport and many streets in the country after him), Mirziyoyev dismantled Karimov's personal network, replacing it with his own; the jailing of Karimov's prodigal daughter Gulnara in 2019 was perhaps a symbolic illustration of this policy of de-Karimovisation in all but name. Despite all this, Mirziyoyev is in essence following Karimov's course, albeit with significant modifications (geopolitical environment is more hospitable to him than it was to Karimov) and with an emphasis on soft power instead of hard power.[63] Thus far he has been able to secure Karimov's achievements while improving Uzbekistan regional stance. He is on the way to bringing back Uzbekistan's central position in the region, though it still remains to be seen whether Mirziyoyev will be able to follow-up as successfully as the beginning of his rule has been.

… and Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan, thanks to its vast gas resources (Central Asia's bigger reservoir), has been guarding its independence via a policy of isolation. At the same time, it had quiet yet cordial relations with Russia until the late 2000s when Moscow's pressure pushed Ashgabat into China's hands. Ashgabat's policy may be understood in two ways: as appropriate balancing against an overly assertive Russia or as an act of overbalancing that went out of control.

Until 2006, Turkmenistan politics was dominated by Turkmenbasha. Its gas reserves allowed him to cut off the country from external world ("permanent neutrality,") and to concentrate on increasing personal power. Officially, Turkmenbasha was anti-Russian, but this did not disturb him from promoting Russians to top governmental posts[64] and selling gas to Moscow for low prices which allowed him to rule undisturbed. Thus, Turkmenbasha's foreign policy was classical nonbalancing, or rapprochement to biggest partner, Russia. He surrendered foreign policy in order to concentrate on domestic issues: keeping the status quo between different clans. His reign meant the restoration of Ahal-Teke's clan hegemony.[65] Niyazov initially did not try to interfere in the domestic balance of power between the clans – the regional posts were designated on a clan basis – but rather used the "divide and rule" tactics between various clans, allowing them to have limited access to his central power.[66] With the strengthening of his power in the late 1990s/early 2000s came the diminishing influence of the clans. Only "his" Teke's clan and, to much lesser extent, the Chardzhou clan remained influential, while the leaders of other clans surrendered, emigrated, became imprisoned or were killed.[67] Turkmenbasha eliminated all pretenders to his throne and achieved an unprecedented level of personal power, reflected in the cult of his personality. On the systemic level, this meant Ahal-Teke's restored hegemony,[68] or the "ahaltekization" of Turkmenistan.[69]

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[62] Geschwindt, Tim: *Cutting Out the Kingmaker: Mirziyoyev at a Crossroads.* The Diplomat, 03.09.2018, retrieved 19.09.2018, from https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/cutting-out-the-kingmaker-mirziyoyev-at-a-crossroads/.

[63] Bernardo Teles Fazendeiro, *Soft power under Mirziyoyev: Change and continuity in Uzbekistan's foreign policy*, ODR, 9.07.2018, https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/bernardo-teles-fazendeiro/soft-power-under-mirziyoyev (access: 19.09.2018.)

[64] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, p. 424.

[65] This is the major of 24 major tribes (main 5 are symbolically presented in the national flag.) Due to this Turkmenistan is sometimes called the "nation of tribes."

This situation was cemented under Niyazov's successor Gurbanguli Berdimukhamedov. Turkmenistan underwent the transition of power smoothly: Teke's clan members still constitute ¾ of all high governmental posts.[70] In foreign policy, Berdimukhamedov modified this isolationist policy by allowing foreign investment in the economy's most important sector: gas exploration. He has attempted to make himself independent from Russia by the internationalization of gas deliveries.[71] Moscow responded in 2009 in its own style: Gazprom cut gas deliveries from Turkmenistan.[72] Berdimukhamedov faced a dilemma: to

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Кадыров, Шохрат [Kadyrov, Shokhrat]: *«Нация племён». Этнические истоки, трансформация, перспективы государственности в Туркменистане* [*The Nation of Tribes. The Ethnic Sources, Transformation and Perspectives of Statehood in Turkmenistan*]. Центр цивилизационных и региональных исследований ИА РАН [The Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences]: Moscow 2003, pp.135–136; Geiss, Paul Greg: "Turkman tribalism". *Central Asian Survey* 18 (3), 1999, pp. 347–357; Wierzbicki, Andrzej: "Wpływ czynników trybalnych i quasitrybalnych na władzę we współczesnej Azji Centralnej [The Influence of Tribal and Quasi-Tribal Factors On Power in Contemporary Central Asia]". In: Bodio, Tadeusz / Jakubowski, Wojciech / Wierzbicki, Andrzej (eds.): op. cit., p. 324.

[66] Кадыров, Шохрат [Kadyrov, Shokhrat]: *Этнология управления в средней Азии: вчера, сегодня, завтра* [*The Ethnology of Governance in Central Asia: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*], retrieved 4.4.2018, from http://turkmeny.h1.ru/analyt/a12.html; Кадыров, Шохрат [Kadyrov, Shokhrat]: *Туркменистан: институт президентства в клановом постколониальном обществе* [*Turkmenistan: the institution of presidency in a clannish post-colonial society*], retrieved 4.4.2018, from https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/turkmenistan-institut-prezidentstva-v-klanovom-postkolonialnom-obschestve/viewer; Wierzbicki, Andrzej: "Wpływ czynników...," pp. 333–335.

[67] Кузнецов, Глеб [Kuznecov, Gleb]: *Кланы туркменской элиты* [*The Leaders of of Turkem Elite*], 21.04.2009, retrieved 4.4.2013, from Erastime.ru..

[68] Wierzbicki, Andrzej: "Wpływ czynników...," pp. 333–335.

[69] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna...*, p. 434.

[70] Кузнецов, Глеб [Kuznecov, Gleb]: *Кланы туркменской....*

[71] Kozłowski, Krzysztof: *Państwo Środka...*, p. 254.

[72] Górecki, Wojciech: op. cit., pp. 60–64.

subordinate himself to Moscow or to seek new sources of income. Thanks to the emergence of China, he had a choice and chose the "China option". Beijing extended a helping hand at the decisive point by offering a USD4 billion load for future gas deliveries. This resulted in fulfilling the Central Asia-China gas pipeline.[73] Since then, the ties between Ashkhabad and Beijing have been closer and closer and China has replaced Russia as Turkmenistan's main patron.[74]

Thus, Turkmenistan's foreign policy may be called appropriate balancing, as Ashgabat did not yield to Moscow's blackmail and survived thanks to the Chinese connection. Switching patrons from Russia to China shouldn't threaten the domestic status quo – the dominance of Akhal-Teke clan – as China does not intervene in the domestic issues of countries, at least not yet. On the other hand, it can be also seen as overbalancing: threatened by Moscow, Ashgabat used too many resources (it gave China the bulk of its gas reservoir) which caused an imbalance. Time will tell whether Beijing will be an economically less threatening option than Russia was.

From Underbalancing to Nonbalancing: Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Central Asia's two weakest states, have taken a different path. They tried to balance the influence of major players, but they lacked the resources to do so. Ultimately, their own weakness led them to cease balancing: they accepted Russia's political and military protection and China's economic dominance.

Kyrgyzstan has been poor and unstable, and torn by an internal North-South rivalry where the interests of Russia, China and the USA cross. After the fall of the USSR, the first Kyrgyzstan president, Askar Akayev, believed in democracy and human rights, but he lost his faith when these values threatened his position; thus he returned to authoritarian practices.[75] In foreign policy, he initially tried to balance Russia and Western influences, but with time he became compliant and did not question pro-Moscow *status quo* in the region. Akayev governed badly: he privileged his clan too much, broke the unwritten "quotas" of clans and consequently he was overthrown by the South-led 2005 Tulip Revolution, or rather "tulip war of clans."[76]

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[73] Petersen, Alexandros / Barysch, Katinka: *Russia, China and the geopolitics of energy in Central Asia.* Centre for European Reform: London 2011, p. 3.

[74] Jarosiewicz, Aleksandra: *Chinese tour de force in Central Asia.* OSW: Warszawa 2013; Kaczmarski, Marcin: op. cit., p. 90.

[75] Quoted in Gortat, R.: *Kirgistan…*, p. 112.

[76] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, p. 347; Kozłowski, Krzysztof: *Rewolucja tulipanów w Kirgistanie: geneza, przebieg, następstwa* [*The Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan. Origins, Trajectory, Aftermaths*]. Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: Warszawa 2009, pp. 216–217.

Underbalancing partially cost his successor, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, the leadership position. Bakiyev, an autocrat even more corrupt and brutal than Akayev, who represented a form of nepotism incomparable even in Kyrgyz conditions,[77] had for long allowed the stationing Russian and American bases alike. For Moscow it was unacceptable, so Kremlin had pushed Bakiyev to close an American base in Manas – Bakiyev pretended to do so, but cheated Russia by changing the name: from "air base" to a "transit point" and allowing Americans to stay; Moscow in return introduced 100 % export toll for oil and supported rebellion that removed Bakiyev from power in 2010. This lesson was not lost for Kyrgyz elites. The next president, Almazbek Atambayev, yielded and closed Manas in June 2014 and has steadily been making Kyrgyzstan increasingly dependent on Russia (e.g. by joining the Eurasian Economic Union). The next president, Sooronbay Jeenbekov, despite his spectacular quarrels with Atambayev, has not changed this policy and Jeenbekov's successor (who came to power following the third post-1991 Kyrgyz revolution in 2020) is unlikely to either.

Kyrgyzstan's nonbalancing towards Russia is complemented by China's economic dominance there; the latter fact pushes Bishkek into Russian hands even more, as anti-Chinese social resentments are a strong political factor that helps to secure the pro-Russian policy orientation.

Tajikistan, as Central Asia's must vulnerable country, torn by a North-South rivalry between major tribes, has the worst bargaining position vis a vis great powers. During Soviet times a peculiar division of power emerged with the dominance of "Northern" clans (Khojand clans.)[78] The moment Soviet support, as well as central control that hampered local animosities, ceased to exist, the clans found it impossible to forge an acceptable agreement and civil war broke out.[79] This war, waged in 1992–1997, became the founding event for present-day Tajikistan as it showed the danger of the clan politics: the state institutions became too fragile and weak to prevent civil war.[80] The bloody struggle between clans, wrongly perceived as a fight between the post-Soviet nomenclature and Islamists,[81] saw the diminished influence of the dominant Khojand clans and paved the way to power for the smaller Kulob clan under their leader Rakhmonov (later Rakhmon).[82] Rakhmon turned out to be a skillful politician who strove to maintain the balance of power between clans with his Kulob' clan advantage.[83] He achieved that with the assistance of Russia which helped to end the civil war with a compromise that sealed the present political conditions. The Kulob clan under Rakhmon won, but the opposition gained partial access to power.[84] After the war, Rakhmon maintained his balance of regional clans by supporting his clan in state structures while taking into account the power of local commanders, turned governmental officials.[85] With time, Rakhmon consolidated t power and monopolized it in the hands of his Kulob clan.[86]

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[77] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, pp. 266–288.

[78] Wierzbicki, Andrzej: "Wpływ trybalizmu i klanowości na władzę w Tadżykistanie [The Influence of tribalism and clans on power in Tajikistan]". In: Bodio, Tadeusz / Jakubowski, Wojciech / Wierzbicki, Andrzej (eds.): op. cit., p. 229; Jakubowski, Wojciech / Szaripov, Sukhrob: "Partie polityczne i ruchy społeczne [Political Parties and Social Movements]". In: Bodio, Tadeusz (ed): *Tadżykistan: historia, społeczeństwo, polityka* [*Tajikistan: History, Society, Politics*]. Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: Warszawa 2002, pp. 258–259.

[79] Collins, Kathleen: op. cit., pp. 130–131.

[80] Кузнецов, Глеб [Kuznecov, Gleb]: *Кланы туркменской…*

[81] Khalib, Abeed: *Islam After Communism. Religion and Politics in Central Asia*, Berkeley: University of California Press 2007, pp. 168–192.

[82] Collins, Kathleen: op. cit., p. 206.

Moscow secured itself the position of the country's stabilizer, manifested in political, social and military spheres. The US intervention in Afghanistan for a time being gave Dushanbe an illusion of balancing.[87] It intensified cooperation with China, too, particularly in the economic sphere,[88] but that came with a territorial price: in 2002 Tajikistan ceded thousands of kilometers in Pamir to China in return for dropping the claim for 28,000 km². This decision evoked anti-Chinese resentments in Tajik society. Strengthened by invigorated relations with USA and China, Dushanbe rejected a Russian proposal to put Russian soldiers on Tajik-Afghan border but soon the balancing act was over. Russia has too many assets to let Tajikistan maneuver (e.g. hydro energy and Tajik seasonal workers in Russia.) Thus, in the 2010s, Dushanbe gave up his half-heartened attempts to balance and decided to bandwagon to Russia.

To conclude, both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan represent cases of underbalancing that became nonbalancing. Bishkek and Dushanbe failed to balance due to a lack of resources and the inability to do so. Kyrgyzstan tried a bit longer, but Bakiyev's misperception of his Russian adversaries cost him power. His successor, Atambaev, did not repeat his mistake. Together with Rakhmon of Tajikistan, they surrendered their balancing attempts and chose bandwagoning to Russia in the hope of securing the stabilization of their domestic regime and dependent, peripheral development for their countries.

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[83] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, p. 418.

[84] Former guerrilla commanders that controlled their territories in the South became state civil servants, security servicemen or military men.

[85] Załęski, Piotr: *Kultura polityczna…*, pp. 382, 419.

[86] Thus Tajikistan underwent ""kulabiozation" of power" (Jakubowski, Wojciech / Szaripov, Sukhrob: op. cit., p. 259) or "dangarization of power" – from Dangara, Rakhmon's birth place (Wierzbicki, Andrzej: *Wpływ czynników…*, p. 251).

[87] Tajikistan has supported intervention and allowed the USA to use Tajik airports and air zones.

[88] Jarosiewicz, Aleksandra / Strachota, Krzysztof: op. cit., pp. 32–43 and 61.

Conclusions or Lessons from Clan Politics

The need to maintain the domestic status quo (the dominance of their clans) is the most important political imperative for Central Asian leaders. This structurally privileges Russia which, despite weakening after the fall of the USSR, is still the most important great power in the region as it has inherited Soviet-era influence factors that may seriously undermine a leader's positions or even topple them. China thus far does not have such influence, although it invests heavily in educating pro-Chinese elites, so in a decade or two Beijing might be able to establish its own lobby that may seriously influence clan politics. So far, however, China is neutral or positive to Central Asian clan politics. On the other hand, the economic dependence on China might become a burden for Central Asian elites in the future. Against this background, the Western position looks particularly grim, as the pro-democratic agenda has been understood by the Central Asian ruling clans as a threat to their dominance or even to the whole clan system of power. Although Central Asians proved to be skillful in extracting Western funds and loans for democratizing programs, they rejected the Western ideas of democratic policies as alien and hostile to their domestic conditions. Thus, clan politics helps to explain why Russia and China won in Central Asia while the West has lost.

On the more systemic level, clan politics dictates the balancing policy, where the preferred model is the equilibrium between the players: this guarantees the stability of the system. All Central Asian states tried to achieve that ideal in international relations but in due course it turned out to be impossible. Despite losing its superpower status, Russia remains the most important major player in the region: it plays the role of the arbiter, particularly during any crisis (China, despite improving its regional stance impressively in last decades, is still far behind although it may catch up in a decade or two). This reality of continuing (albeit weakening) Russian dominance forces Central Asians to accept the fact that they must balance within the limits set by Russia: they may do so but not to alienate Russia too much so as to provoke it to intervene.

Kazakhstan understood this well and conducted appropriate balancing that paved the way for its success. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan surrendered: they ceased to balance in the hope for receiving Russia's help and protection. Uzbekistan and (particularly) Turkmenistan are difficult to classify as their foreign policy may either be considered as appropriate balancing or overbalancing. Particularly the latter represents a fascinating case study as its stance perhaps heralds a new era of Central Asian clan politics with China, not Russia, as the main patron.

The new reality of the Russia-China condominium in Central Asia increases the options for Central Asian leaders to maneuver between Moscow and Beijing while at the same time limits their options for external maneuvers (the West). Although it is too soon to analyze how long this new order will last, one thing is certain: this condominium does not itself threaten the system of clan politics. On the contrary, it even enhances this system.

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Paulina Niechciał

12. Patterns of Nationalism and National Identity Construction in Central Asian Republics

Abstract: The article is focused on the analyses of key patterns of local nation-building programs in Central Asia. On the level of particular states, the process of the constant shaping and negotiation of these programs by different social actors is perceived as a "small game" in which the reward is gaining hegemony and control over citizens of the state. Within the scope of the sociological approach, the patterns are analyzed with the assumption that there are continuing similarities with the nation-building process which was developed in the region during the Soviet period. The main focus of the analysis are two case studies – Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Keywords: nationalism, nation-building, identity construction, post-Soviet states, Central Asia

The article concerns selected issues within the research on nationalism and national identity construction in Central Asia. Its main focus is to analyze the local nation-building programs as developed by their main constructors and to answer the question about the leading patterns they employ in this process. On the level of particular states, the process of the constant shaping and negotiation of these programs by different social actors may be perceived as a "small game" in which the reward is gaining hegemony and control over citizens of the state. Even though a variety of issues concerning nationalism in the region have been raised in the scholarly literature, both in the general comparative perspective[1] as well as in the form of case studies of chosen states,[2] the region still offers considerable scope for research by sociologists. While sociological discourse was dominated by a microsociological perspective on social identity in the 1970s, mainly related to social psychology and symbolic interaction, in the 1980s it began to shift to the level of the community. The interest was bestowed primarily on the formation of new political and social movements, the political implications of collective identification, and the mechanisms of creating, preserving and transforming collective distinctions. The analysis of collective identities from the viewpoint of social constructivism rejected the categories of essentialist and primoridal qualities of members of a given community.[3] It stressed that each community is a social artefact, an entity shaped, transformed and organized under the influence of prevailing power relations and the current sociocultural scenario.[4]

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[1] E.g. Abashin, Sergei: "Nation-construction in post-Soviet Central Asia". In Bassin, Mark / Kelly, Catriona: *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2012; Brubaker, Rogers: "Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Eurasia: An Institutionalist Account." *Theory and Society* 23, 1994, pp. 47–78; Carney, Christopher P. / Moran, John P.: "Imagining Communities in Central Asia: Nationalism and Interstate Affect in the Post-Soviet Era". *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 26 (4), 2000, pp. 179–198; Kudaibergenova, Diana T.: "National Identity Formation in post-Soviet Central Asia: The Soviet Legacy, Primordialism, and Patterns of Ideological Development since 1991". In: Akyildiz, Sevket / Carlson, Richard: *Social and Cultural Change in Central Asia: The Soviet Legacy.* Routledge: London, New York 2014, pp. 160–173; Roy, Olivier: *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations.* I.B. Tauris: London, New York 2000.

Following this approach, national identity as assumed in this article is not naturally generated but socially constructed. The contemporary interest in national identity as a social construction has been deeply inspired by the classic study *Nation and Nationalism* by Ernest Gellner. According to Gellner, nationalism is not a fight for the rights of natural communities, but the crystallization of new societies, appropriate to the given conditions, based on cultural and historical factors derived from past epochs. The "natural" nations are myths, but nationalism exists and has the power to turn cultures into nations, obliterating them or inventing new ones.[5] Following the interest in national identity and nationalism, Manuel Castells draws attention to a variety of sources used as building materials for the construction of identities: "materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations."[6] The symbolic content of a given national project is largely determined by those who construct it and the reasons for undertaking such efforts. As Shmuel N. Eisenstadt stresses, the process of collective identity construction is influenced by various social actors, especially by elites and social leaders in interaction with the rest of a group. These different promulgators of identity, attempting to attain hegemony, tend to activate the predispositions or propensities of a group's members in various settings. When their ideas of social boundaries and symbols are finally acknowledged by wider sectors of the community, the collective identities may crystallize.[7]

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[2] E.g. Khalid, Adeeb: *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, London 2015; Laruelle, Marlene: "The Nation Narrated: Uzbekistan's Political and Cultural Nationalism". In: Laruelle, Marlene: *Constructing the Uzbek State: Narratives of the Post-Soviet Years*. Lexington Books: Lanham, MD 2018, pp. 261–282; Laruelle, Marlene: "Which Future for National-Patriots? The Landscape of Kazakh Nationalism". In: Laruelle, Marlene: *Kazakhstan in the Making: Legitimacy, Symbols and Social Changes*. Lexington Books: Lanham, MD) 2017, pp. 155–180; Marat, Erica: *National Ideology and Statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, Washington, DC & Stockholm 2008); selected articles in: Isaacs, Rico / Polese, Abel (eds.): *Nation-Building and Identity in the Post-Soviet Space: New Tools and Approaches*. Routledge: London, New York 2016.

[3] It is worth stressing that the constructivist perspective as understood here is not the same as the theory of constructivism in the international relations studies, where it deals with the question of how national identity shapes the behavior of states on the level of international relations.

[4] Cf. Cerulo, Karen A.: "Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions". *Annual Review of Sociology* 23, 1997, pp. 385–409.

[5] Gellner, Ernest: *Nations and Nationalism*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, New York 2008, p. 47.

The process is not only symbolic, but continually influenced and interwoven with the undergoing economic and political processes within the given society, as well as being influenced by intersocietal and intercivilizational contacts.[8] Nationalism is an ideology that "stresses the cultural similarity of its adherents and, by implication, it draws boundaries vis-à-vis others, who thereby become outsiders. The distinguishing mark of nationalism is by definition its relationship to the state."[9] The ideology legitimizes and sanctions the structure of power and social as well as political boundaries, but also "offers security and perceived stability at a time when the life-worlds are fragmented."[10] It restores the individual's ties to society, reunites with the past, builds a community. The nation is, therefore, an ideological structure designed to meet the specific political and social objectives, as was required in Central Asia during the consolidation of Soviet political structures as well as after the collapse of the system and transformation of the Soviet republics into independent states. As Adeeb Khalid stresses – referring to the example of Uzbekistan, but also relevant to other local states – "the Soviet narratives has been replaced by a national one, even as methodological and institutional continuities with the Soviet past remain strong, as does the role of the state as sponsor of the work of historians. The result is often the inversion rather the subversion or outright abandonment of Soviet categories."[11] Following this assumption, I will analyze the patterns of nation-building programs in search of these continuities. In order to do this, I will briefly describe the nation-building process during the Soviet period before focusing on the post-Soviet reality. Due to the limited volume of this study, I will mainly focus on two case studies – Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan – both known to me due to my previous research experience.[12] Being similar when it comes to the patterns of shaping statehood in the twentieth century these are at the same time very different cases when it comes to the cultural and linguistic background (with Tajikistan being the only Central Asian state dominated by a language classified as Iranian, not Turkic), as well as political situation (with Kyrgyzstan being perceived as most "democratic" of the local states) – this is what I believe makes my juxtaposition very interesting.

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[6] Castells, Manuel: *The Power of Identity*. Blackwell: Malden, MA 2010, p. 7; cf. Gellner, Ernest: op. cit., pp. 54–55.

[7] Eisenstadt, Shmuel N.: "Cultural Programmes, The Construction of Collective of Identities and the Continual Reconstruction of Primordiality". In: Preyer, Gerhard (ed.): *Neuer Mensch und kollektive Identität in der Kommunikationsgesellschaft*. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden 2009, p. 142.

[8] Ibid., p. 145.

[9] Eriksen, Thomas Hylland: *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological perspectives*. Pluto Press: London 1993, p. 6.

[10] Ibid., p. 105.

[11] Khalid, Adeeb:, op. cit., p. 4.

Nation-building in Soviet Central Asia

The creation of new political and territorial structures in Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s within the project of national delimitation required definitions of the nations associated with them. The aim of the nation-building policy was, on the one hand, the institutionalization of new concepts in the form of territorial-administrative units and, on the other hand, the shaping of a sense of national belonging among their inhabitants.[13] The sentence by Khalid concerning the newly established Uzbekistan may be related to the tasks undertaken by policymakers concerning all of the Central Asian Soviet republics of that time: "They had Uzbekistan; now they had to make Uzbeks."[14] It was then when the labels "Tajik", "Kyrgyz", "Kazakh" or "Uzbek" were assigned to titular nationals within the newly established borders. It was necessary to prove to the members of each community the reasons for the new demarcation and to show who the Soviet Tajiks, Kazakhs or Kyrgyz were to be. However, this was not easy due to the multiplicity of communities that claimed various territorial or clan identities stemming from the pre-Soviet social world of Central Asia. There was also the important distinction between sedentary and nomadic populations as a determinant of cultural identity. Moreover, Islam was a significant unifying factor rather than language, since most of the inhabitants of the region were at least bilingual.[15]

New Central Asian nations were thought-out products, designed to minimize possible aspirations for independence and meant to be a transitional stage in the process of creating a socialist nation. They were linked to specific territories, literary traditions, and languages that differentiated them from one another as much as possible, following Stalin's definition that a nation is "a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of common language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup, manifested in a common culture."[16] For example, as a result of the policy, the idea of Tajikistan became a tool to cut off the local Persian-speaking sedentary population from the Turkic-speaking peoples of the region, as well as from Muslim Persian-speaking societies outside the Soviet Union – in Afghanistan and Iran.[17] In the 1920s and early 1930s, the policy of *korenizatsiya*, literally "putting down roots" – i.e. the nationalization of titular peoples of individual republics – was introduced by the promotion of "national" languages and cultures. With the system of identity documents, nationality (*natsional'nost'*) became an official component of personal status in 1932.[18] The policy legitimized a promotion of "national", local elites and was meant to make non-Russians "think of Soviet rule as their own."[19]

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[12] E.g. Niechciał, Paulina: "Ikony nacjonalizmu w Tadżykistanie i Kirgistanie – postaci Isma'ila Samanidy i Manasa w historyczno-mitologicznych narracjach o przedradzieckiej przeszłości narodów". In: Shukuralieva, Nartsiss (ed.): *Azja Centralna. Tożsamość, naród, polityka.* Nomos: Kraków 2018, pp. 171–192; Niechciał, Paulina: "Tożsamość narodowa po tadżycku: Odtwarzanie koncepcji narodu i jego historii w przestrzeni publicznej Republiki Tadżykistanu". *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* 1–2 (257–258), 2016, pp. 169–182; Olzacka, Elżbieta / Niechciał, Paulina: "The Press in Constructing the Cultural Strategies of War: An Example from the Conflict in the Republic of Tajikistan". *Securitologia* 22 (2), 2015, pp. 83–93.

[13] Cf. Brubaker, Rogers: op. cit., pp. 49–60.

[14] Khalid, Adeeb: op. cit., p. 281.

[15] Cf. Rzehak, Lutz: ""Das tadschikische Phänomen": Zum Verhältnis sprachlich und regional begründeter Identitäten". *Geographische Rundschau* 56 (10), 2004, pp. 66–70.

As mentioned above, a variety of social actors may influence the process of identity construction. When the new structures had been set up in Central Asia, Soviet authorities actively engaged themselves in inventing, categorizing and codifying the nations at the local level, which were all meant to come together to form the Soviet collectivity. They were supported by academics, such as Vasily Vladimirovich Bartold (1869–1930), Orientalist and historian, after the October Revolution of 1917 appointed director of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, who was engaged, among others, in the study of the ethnogenesis of the Kyrgizs.[20] It should be stressed that national delimitation was "*not* the application of preexisting ethnographic knowledge (imperial or colonial) to state policy. Rather, the political process reshaped ethnographic knowledge to a certain extent."[21]

Often underrated, there is yet another factor involved during the delimitation period: the engagement of local Muslim elites, as the Jadid movement of Muslim modernist reformers active in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Along with the Soviet policymakers and academics, indigenous activists and thinkers were involved in the process of nation-building.[22] We may mention Abdulhamid Sulaymon oʻgʻli Yunusov (1893–1938), most commonly known as Choʻlpon – an Uzbek poet, writer and literary translator, the father of modern Uzbek poetry and the contributor a host of innovations brought to the Uzbek language.[23] Another influential local activist was Abdurauf Fitrat (1886–1938), involved in the study of Uzbek heritage, and who claimed that the genealogy of the Uzbek nation was deeply rooted in the past. He also engaged himself in tracing the traditions of what he meant by Uzbek classical music, literature and language, in the last case referring not only to the modern Chagatay language, but also the Turkic language described by the eleventh-century lexicographer Mahmud Kashghari.[24] Another example is Sadriddin Ayni (1887–1857), a poet and writer who is today considered to be a founder of Tajik literature. He was the first to use the word "Tajik" (*tojiki*) to describe the language in which he was writing and in the contrary to several Russian scholars, who claimed that the Tajiks had no literary heritage, he linked contemporary Tajiks to centuries of Persian-language literary heritage, recalling mediaeval poets such as Rudaki and Firdausi.[25]

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[16] Quoted after: Kudaibergenova, Diana T.: op. cit., p. 161.

[17] Cf. e.g. Perry, John: "Tajik: I. The Ethnonym: Origins and Application". In: Yarshater, Ehsan (ed.): *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online.* 2009, retrieved 4.4.2018, from http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/tajik-i-the-ethnonym-origins-and-application; Roy, Olivier: op. cit., pp. 75–76.

[18] Brubaker, Rogers: op. cit., p. 54; cf. Dadabaev, Timur: *Identity and Memory in post-Soviet Central Asia: Uzbekistan's Soviet Past.* Routledge: London, New York 2015, p. 122–24.

[19] Khalid, Adeeb: op. cit., p. 166.

[20] Cf. Bartold, Vasily Vladimirovich: *Киргизы: исторический очерк* [*Kirgizy: istoricheskiy ocherk*]. Киргизгосиздат (Kirgizgosizdat): Frunze, 1927.

[21] Khalid, Adeeb: op. cit., p. 270.

The new Soviet order brought new labels for the local population along with the need for them to be absorbed by the locals themselves. For example, the term "Sart", in a variety of ways used to name the sedentary population of Muslim Turkestan, but on the objection of the Jadids, disappeared from the political lexicon after 1917.[26] An interesting example of the labels is the term "Tajik" that throughout the ages did not have a definite range of meaning in relation to language or territory, and some groups in Soviet times included into this category used to describe themselves mainly by territorial expressions (e.g. *Darvozi* – the inhabitants of Darvoz, or *Kulobi* – the inhabitants of Kulob). The etymology of the ethnonym is unclear, but it is known that the Middle Ages, the term *tazik* was used to describe members of the Muslim army, that consisted not only of Arabs but also of Persian converts from Fars or Zagros. Later it was used among others to distinguish the Persians from the Turks or the Mongols, and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the dialects of the rural communities of the Iranian Fars were identified as "Tajik" to be distinguished from the Persian language of the urban population and the non-Persian languages of the nomads (e.g. the Lurs).[27] It is worth noting that contemporary Tajiks associate their own name with the term *toj* – "crown". Other national labels in the region also took their newly defined meaning in the twentieth century. What is today indicated by the term "Kyrgyz" is also relatively new and there are several theories on the origin of this ethnonym. Until the 1920s, the terms "Kyrgyz" or "Kyrgyz-Kaisak" in Russian and then Soviet terms meant primarily people living on the steppes. Finally they were renamed as "Kazakhs" and the people living in the mountains, perceived as having a darker complexion due to exposure to the sun, obtaining the name of "Karakyrgyz" – *kara* in the Kyrgyz language means "black."[28] As the Kyrgyz themselves stress, *kara* may also mean "strong", "courageous", "great", "cruel".

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[22] Cf. ibid., pp. 13–18.

[23] Ibid., pp. 51–52.

[24] Ibid., p. 282.

[25] Bergne, Paul: *The Birth of Tajikistan: National Identity and the Origins of the Republic.* I.B. Tauris: London 2007, pp. 77–79.

[26] Khalid, Adeeb: op. cit., p. 259.

[27] Perry, John: op. cit.

In the 1960s, symptoms of "ethnic awakening" and greater interest in ethnic origins emerged, as illustrated for example by the works of historian, ethnologist and translator Lev Nikolayevich Gumilyov (1912–1992), but they flourished only in Mikhail Gorbachev's time in the 1980s. In that period, debates over the aims and intentions of nationalist ideologies and the liberalization of political life revived the discourse of ethnogenesis, that is defining ethnonational groups as stable entities based on their historical formation. Soon the old structures collapsed and in the new post-Soviet countries, these studies have become one of the most powerful aspects of academic discourse as support for nationalist political ideologies.[29]

Nation-building in Post-Soviet Central Asia

When the Soviet republics of Central Asia became independent states in 1991, the past regime left a "set of deeply structured, and powerfully conflicting, *expectations of belonging*."[30] When analyzing the problems of constructing national identities and nationalism in post-Soviet Central Asia, it should be kept in mind that the modern nations of the region were formed in Soviet times, but as Olivier Roy states, "One cannot imagine Kyrgyzstan making Stalin the father of its nation."[31] Facing this dissonance, the political elites of the new republics had to propose a new concept for the nation after 1991. Thus, for any sociologists interested in the process of identity-construction it becomes very interesting to trace how these new concepts have been shaped and negotiated by different social actors using a variety of building materials. The post-Soviet nation-building policy in Central Asia demanded new symbols and themes. The difficulty lay in the fact that – unlike in many other former Soviet states, as Latvia or Estonia – there were no pre-Soviet models of independent state structures that could be directly referred to in the narrative of the history of the nation. Neither of use were the local khanatas, emirates, tribal confederations, nor the idea of the "Muslim nation" promoted by the Jadid movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result, the nationalist ideology has largely been based on ahistorical, mythological patterns and visions of an ancient glorious past. As an example, we may refer to the Turkmen case. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the main constructor of Turkmen nationalism was the president Saparmurat Niyazov, until his death in 2006. His ideas were concentrated around his tribe Akhalteke and the symbols connected with it, such as the horse and carpet[32] (he even incorporated the depiction of his horse Yanardag into the State Emblem of Turkmenistan). In Turkmenistan, as well as in all other states in the region, new monuments were erected, some of the street or squares renamed and new national symbols were adopted, although when one analyses their design, it is impossible to overlook the influence of the Soviet legacy.

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[28] Gullette, David: *The Genealogical Construction of the Kyrgyz Republic: Kinship, State and "Tribalism"*. Global Oriental, Folkestone 2010, p. 76.

[29] Ibid., 123–24.

[30] Brubaker, Rogers: op. cit., p. 71.

[31] Roy, Olivier: op. cit., p. 161.

An interesting case for the search of new concepts for the legitimization of a nation is Tajikistan, where at the beginning of independence there was even space for competing national discourses, among which a democratic as well as Islam-oriented opposition played an important role. One of the promulgators of new identity concepts were members of the People's Movement Rastokhez ("Renaissance"), founded by some Tajik intellectuals during the period of *perestroyka.* It was meant to be a tool for the revival of Tajik national culture and the Tajik language along with the Arabic-Persian script (withdrawn in the region by the Soviets at the end of the 1920s), disseminating knowledge of classical Persian literature among citizens as well as other reforms of Tajik society.[33] This was meant to strengthen the Tajiks' sense of national belonging and highlight their links with the culture of Iranian peoples via a common language, literature, symbols, customs and history that they were separated from under Soviet rule. At the same time, the Tajik post-communist government attempted to minimize the role of the democratic and Islamic media within the new national discourse. It focused on creating a positive vision of a secular national state, assuring that contemporary authorities are legitimate and guarantors of the rebirth of national culture and heritage, as well as desovietization, but without a total rejection of the communist past.[34]

Soon social tensions and internal crises in Tajikistan led to the outbreak of a bloody civil war in 1992, which clearly shows the weakness of many decades of Tajik national consolidation under Soviet rule. Officially, the conflict ended five years later, but only in the period until the 2005 parliamentary elections can one speak of some degree of rivalry between the discourses on national identity.[35] Later, the narrative about the "Tajik nation" (*millati tojik* or *khalki tojik*) was completely subordinated to the ideas of Emomali Rahman, who has served as a president since 1994 and nowadays is the only significant player on the Tajik political scene. He produces a vast amount of literature aimed at strengthening the sense of belonging of the Tajik nation, although on these issues he often refers to local historians such as Rahim Masov – the eulogist of the idea of the Aryan origins of Tajiks, or Nugmon Negmatov – the author of the concept of a "historical Tajikistan."[36]

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[32] Kudaibergenova, Diana T.: op. cit., pp. 163–164.

[33] Cf. "Барномаи созмони Растохез – ҷунбиши мардумии Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон" ["Barnomai sozmoni Rastokhez – junbishi mardumii Jumhurii Tojikiston"]. *Rastokhez*, 4, 1990, pp. 2–3.

[34] Olzacka, Elżbieta / Niechciał, Paulina: op. cit., pp. 83–93.

[35] Cf. Włodek, Ludwika: "Osiadły Tadżyk vs. koczowniczy Uzbek: Osiadłość jako wartość w tadżyckiej ideologii narodowej". *Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny* 162 (4), 2016. pp. 57–75.

One of the guiding values promoted by Rahmon is "national unity" (*vahdati milli*) aimed at uniting the Tajiks and preventing another civil war – in this context, the president is the creator and a guarantor of peace, in 2015 given the title of "Founder of Peace and National Unity, Leader of the Nation" (*Asosguzori sulhu vahdati milli, Peshvoi millat)* by Tajikistan's parliament. This clearly shows how nation-building policy is still very "Soviet," in a way, and the promotion of the omnipresent father figure of a nation, its protector and its only leader resembles very closely the so-called personality cult known from the Soviet period. In other post-Soviet republics in Central Asia, even though their transformation did not end so bloodily, the values of peace and stability, as well as the slogans of "unity in diversity" became key motives of political rhetoric in order to preserve the unity, prevent conflicts of the ethnically fragmented region and make the economic development of the country possible. In Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan "such slogans were directly linked with the leaders who proclaimed that their rule was based 'on their ability to deliver these benefits', and later on even crystallized around the idea that only these leaders could keep such stability and unity, thus leading to the development of cults of personality."[37]

In the ideas of defining the nation, the president of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akayev – in comparison to the rulers of other Central Asian states[38] – presented the most liberal approach. Beside the category of the nation based on Kyrgyz ethnicity, it left room for a broader category of the inhabitants of the state, one perhaps closer to the Western understanding of citizens.[39] One of the leading ideas of his ideology was the idea of "our common home" (*jalpybyzdyn üyübüz*), belonging to the Kyrgyz and other localities. This assumed their harmonious existence along with emphasizing the originality of the Kyrgyz language and culture by referring to nomadic traditions, the mythical and romantic vision of the past, and the unity of Turkish peoples.[40] Akayev's presidency ended with the Tulip Revolution of 2005 and his successor, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, president until 2010, put much less emphasis on actively shaping the ideology of nationalism, without interfering specifically with the ideas of his predecessor. Certain steps were only taken before the end of his mandate, through a "culture"-focused project (*madaniyat*), centered on the traditions and customs of the nomads, backed by academics such as the historian Zaynidin Kurmanov.[41] This idea in the Kyrgyz national narrative is used until this day.

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[36] Cf. Negmatov, Nugmon: *Таджики. Исторический Таджикистан. Современный Таджикистан* [*Tadzhiki: Istoricheskii Tadzhikistan, sovremennyi Tadzhikistan*]. [no data]: Gissar, 1992.

[37] Kudaibergenova, Diana T.: op. cit., p. 163.

[38] Cf. e.g. Laruelle, Marlene: "The Nation Narrated…," pp. 261–282.

[39] Cf. Marat, Erica: op. cit., pp. 31–34.

[40] Gortat, Radzisława: *Kirgistan: Natura zmiany systemowej (1990–1996).* Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: Warszawa 2009, pp. 102–106.

As the glorious past needs its heroes, important figures replaced the statues of Lenin and other "fathers" of the Soviet Union. For example, in Tajikistan this was Isma'il Samani (892–907), the eponym of the Samanid dynasty, most likely of Iranian origin. Although the dynasty did not break ties with the Abbasid caliphate, it succeeded in the unification of part of the Central Asian territory under one authority, referring to Islam but skillfully linking it to the heritage of the Iranian civilization. Under the protectorate of the Samanids, a renaissance of the pre-Islamic Iranian heritage and of Persian-speaking culture took place. Whereas the Uzbeks authorities chose the cult of Amir Timur (1336–1405) – in Europe also known also as Tamerlane, a conqueror of Turco-Mongol origins and the founder of the Timurid Empire. In Kyrgyzstan, from the mid-1990s, the key figure of the national narrative has been the hero Manas, the main character of the *Epic of Manas* (*Manas dastani*), which dates back to the eighteenth century but is claimed to be much older by the Kyrgyz people (its episodes describe the period between the ninth and the eleventh century). Manas's greatest merit was the unification of the Kyrgyz tribes and the defeat of their enemies – in the contemporary nationalist ideology, this unifying project plays an important role, placing the hero as the builder of the Kyrgyz nation. All of the above examples are based on the idea that the "founding fathers", recognized as those thanks to whom national consolidation took place for the first time in the history of a given nation, have never been forgotten and, therefore, their work can now be resurrected.[42]

Even though the specific states of post-Soviet Central Asia have developed different attitudes towards the period of Russo-Soviet dominancy,[43] the past nation-building legacy has heavily influenced the ideological narratives in all of them. In the period following independence mainly the same politicians remained in power, only occupying new positions, and the political and social institutions remained almost unchanged.[44] After the collapse of Soviet structures the studies in ethnogenesis have become a popular support for nationalist political ideologies.[45] Ethnogenesis, in the previous political order serving to legitimize the coexistence of various peoples in the frames of the Soviet community, this time became a means of demonstrating the independence and separatism of new states.[46] Still, in the region ethnicity is understood as a biological rather than a cultural category,[47] and a great emphasis is placed on the reconstruction of the nation's history. The purpose of this is to take over local history and to prove that a given nation is old and indigenous, and therefore fully legitimized in residing in a given territory, not because of Soviet policy but due to much older events and processes. For example, the Tajik historian Yusufsho Yokubov, raised under the intellectual influence of Soviet historian Bobojon Ghafurov (1908–1977), places the beginnings of the Tajik history even thousands of years ago, stressing that it is the most ancient civilization that created the first urban centers in the region.[48] By the same token, official narratives in Kyrgyzstan promote the assumption that the Kyrgyz people are one of the oldest in the region and they already enjoyed statehood in the Middle Ages, when in the ninth century, after conquering the Uighurs, they created their own kingdom over the Yenisei River. Although they lost it, they never forgot this idea. We may comment on this by referring to Eisenstadt, who states that the *primordiality* is one of the main themes constituting the constructions of collective identities. Continually reconstructed in different historical contexts, it is always "presented by its promulgators as 'primordial,' as naturally given,"[49] in order to constitute the existence of a given group and legitimize social borders. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, both facing the lack of material symbols of their histories, this large-scale historical claims reaching back the ancient times, are employed to compensate this issue and legitimize their link to a local territory – being "at home."[50]

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[41] Roy, Olivier: op. cit., p. 161; Gullette, David: op. cit., pp. 42–48.

[42] Niechciał, Paulina: "Ikony nacjonalizmu...," pp. 180–184.

[43] Cf. Abashin, Sergei: op. cit., pp. 152–154.

[44] Ibid., p. 162.

[45] Gullette, David: op. cit., pp. 123–124.

[46] Ibid., 124.

[47] Marat, Erica, op. cit., p. 8.

Conclusions

What happened in the Soviet Union perfectly illustrates the Gellner's statement that "Nations are not inscribed into the nature of things; they do not constitute a political version of the doctrine of natural kinds. Nor were national states the manifest ultimate destiny of ethic or cultural groups."[51] The creation of a new political order within the frames of the Soviet Union in Central Asia required precise definitions of the titular nations inhabiting given states and the promotion of a sense of national belonging. Nations were labeled and linked to specific cultures and languages that underwent a variety of reforms. The national delimitation of 1924 was a complex process in which many actors were involved, both of Russian and local origin. It irreversibly influenced the formation of modern national identities.

After the collapse of the Soviet system, local elites had to propose a new national ideology. However, the Soviet-style patterns have not disappeared, only being transformed rather than abandoned. As the new independent republics had no pre-Soviet independent political entities to reflect on in their narratives, a variety of heroes and dynasties were used in the nationalist narrations, even taken from the ahistorical, mythical order. The cult of local authorities as nation-builders and peace-guarantors are not far from the Soviet cult of personality. Moreover, ethnogenesis – as a source of legitimacy of a pre-Soviet existence of a given nation – became a key support for nationalist ideologies, recalling the Soviet means of defining a nation and legitimizing deep historic roots as well as the existence of a given nation on a specific territory.

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[48] Jakubov, Jusufsho: "U źródeł organizacji państwowej Tadżyków". In: Bodio, Tadeusz (ed.): *Tadżykistan: historia, społeczeństwo, polityka*, Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa: Warszawa 2002, p. 67.

[49] Eisenstadt, Shmuel N.: op. cit., p. 146.

[50] Abashin, Sergei: op. cit., p. 155.

[51] Gellner, Ernest: op. cit., p. 47.

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Jakubov, Jusufsho: "U źródeł organizacji państwowej Tadżyków". In: Bodio, Tadeusz (ed.): *Tadżykistan: Historia – społeczeństwo – polityka.* Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, Warszawa 2002, pp. 67–83

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Rafał Kuś

13. Between Public Service and Serving the State. The Role of the Media in the Political System of Kazakhstan

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to provide readers with a comprehensive description of the Republic of Kazakhstan's mass communication system, within the state's political context and against the background of media environments of other Central Asian countries, as well as to discuss its usefulness as an instrument of national policy. Employing a set of criteria for assessing and classifying media systems, proposed by Hallin and Mancini in 2004, it attempts to give a full and detailed picture of Kazakh media and the ways in which they are used by state authorities in order to achieve political goals. It is established that Kazakhstan's media outlets, controlled to a large extent by the government, are utilized extensively to advance Nur-Sultan's objectives, especially in regard to bolstering national identity.

Keywords: media systems, press freedom, authoritarianism, democracy, Kazakhstan, Central Asia

Media are an important element of the political system of any state. Their exact functions and *modus operandi* in a given case depend on many diverse factors, including the government system, present legal and economic conditions, historical circumstances, levels of technological development, sometimes even the physical features and religious traditions of an individual country. It may also be argued that the very process of shaping a media system within a country's political landscape is a form of a power struggle, a "small game" with potentially large rewards to be gained.

Denis McQuail notes that "in democracies, the media have a complex relationship with sources of power and the political system. On the one hand, they usually find their *raison d'etre* in their service to their audiences … on the other hand, they also provide channels by which the state and powerful interests address the people". In authoritarian or totalitarian societies, however, this relationship is much more straightforward, as "ruling elites use their control of the media to ensure conformity and compliance and to stifle dissent by one means or another."[1] Kazakhstan's political system, although hailed as democratic in the country's fundamental legal acts,[2] may be most accurately described as authoritarian.[3] Its press freedom status is generally categorized as "not free"; the authors of the 2019 Freedom House report described the independence of Kazakhstan's media as "severely limited", assigning it 0 out of 4 possible points.[4] A 2019 analysis of media sustainability conducted by International Research and Exchanges Board described Kazakh mass communication system as "unsustainable mixed", yet still more professional and liberal than in the case of the majority of other Central Asian countries.[5]

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[1] McQuail, Denis: *Teoria komunikowania masowego*. PWN: Warszawa 2007, p. 511.

The benefits of an efficient media system are not limited to domestic policy, as it may also be a precious "soft power" asset of a state, acting as a "shop window" for other nations to appreciate and follow. According to Joseph S. Nye, soft power is exercised when "a country may obtain the outcomes it wants … because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it."[6] The case of the British public media, introducing (and endearing) millions of viewers around the world to the United Kingdom's culture is a good example of this phenomenon. The same may be said about the thriving American media industry and its role in creating the attractive image of the United States abroad. Hollywood movies, Netflix series, and even children's shows such as PBS's "Sesame Street"[7] serve as effective ambassadors of the American state. It can be argued that the most appropriate conceptual models to describe such mechanisms of influence in the field of international relations are associated with constructivist theory, focusing on the role of social constructs in shaping national identities and ways of proceeding in the global arena[8] (especially in its unit-level variety, putting emphasis on the internal, domestic determinants of national policies[9]).

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[2] Wojtaszczyk, Konstanty: "Konstytucyjno-prawne podstawy systemu politycznego". In: Bodio, Tadeusz / Wojtaszczyk, Konstanty (eds.): *Kazachstan: historia, polityka, społeczeństwo.* Elipsa: Warszawa 2000, p. 167.

[3] Junisbai, Barbara: "Oligarchs and Ownership: The Role of Financial-Industrial Groups in Controlling Kazakhstan's "Independent" Media". In: Freedman Eric / Shafer Richard (eds.): *After the Czars and Commissars: Journalism in Authoritarian Post-Soviet Central Asia.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2011, p. 35. Karin, Erlan: "Wyzwania dla bezpieczeństwa modernizującego się państwa". In: Bodio, Tadeusz / Wojtaszczyk, Konstanty (eds.): op. cit., pp. 149–151. Freedom House: *Freedom in the World 2017 Kazakhstan Profile*, retrieved 1.12.2017, from https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/kazakhstan.

[4] Freedom House: *Freedom in the World 2019 Kazakhstan Profile*, retrieved 1.9.2020 from https://freedomhouse.org/country/kazakhstan/freedom-world/2019.

[5] International Research and Exchanges Board: *Media Sustainability Index 2019. Tracking Development of Sustainable Independent Media Around the World*, retrieved 1.9.2020, from https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2019-full.pdf, p. 236.

[6] Nye, Joseph: *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.* PublicAffairs: New York 2005, p. 5.

[7] Stewart, David: *The PBS Companion. A History of Public Television.* TV Books: New York 1999, p. 107.

The aim of this paper is to provide readers with an up-to-date description of the Republic of Kazakhstan's mass communication system, within the state's political context and against the background of media landscapes of other Central Asian countries, as well as to discuss its usefulness as an instrument of national policy. In order to present the intricacies of interactions between media and politics in Kazakhstan in a detailed and faithful manner, a framework of criteria used by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini in their seminal theoretical work on media systems[10] was used.

The fundamental question this paper attempts to answer concerns whether Kazakh media can be used as an effective tool for the state government's initiatives, while the research hypothesis can be stated as follows: due to politicization of Kazakhstan's media environment, resembling to some extent the Mediterranean model of media systems, mass communication outlets can be (and actually are) used by Nur-Sultan (was until recently known as Astana) authorities for political purposes.

The problem of Kazakhstan's media landscape has been already covered in scholarly literature by several authors, focusing usually either on individual phenomena (such as TV shows or movies) or large-scale analyses of the recent transformations in the country or the whole region of Central Asia. Many of these works however offer a purely descriptive approach, without any reference to contemporary theoretical frameworks of media studies. My paper attempts to fill this gap by applying Hallin and Mancini's concepts to the Kazakh mass communication system.

The analytic part of the paper is divided into three distinctive sections, including discussions on the two main components of Hallin and Mancini's classification (media and politics dimensions of mass communication systems) as well as a brief review of communication strategies and initiatives employed by Kazakh authorities to forward national policy goals.

Methodology of Comparing Media Systems

Hallin and Mancini's 2004 study *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* was an illuminating attempt at differentiating fundamental varieties of media systems with the use of a coherent yet wide set of categories; as the title suggests, three models were identified: Polarized Pluralist (or Mediterranean), Democratic Corporatist (or North/Central European), and Liberal (or North Atlantic). While the analysis was focused on eighteen Western European and North American countries and its authors cautioned against trying to employ criteria of their design as an universal method of describing media systems, as it was practiced for decades with Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's classic typology of *Four Theories of the Press*,[11] efforts to expand the duo's research methodology to communication systems in other regions of the world have been made virtually since the date of the book's printing. In 2011, Hallin and Mancini published a sequel of sorts in the form of a collection of papers entitled *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, which proved a remarkable usefulness of their approach for analysis of different media environments. Although both the original study and its 2011 continuation focus mainly on more or less stable democracies,[12] Hallin and Mancini's methodology has been used to describe "not free" media systems as well. *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* includes, for example, chapters applying the American-Italian authors' criteria to Russian and Chinese structures of mass communication.[13] Of course, in such analyses category names such as 'Liberal' or 'Pluralist' should be understood as mere labels, without any additional political implications.

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[8] Jackson, Robert / Sørensen, Georg: *Introduction to International Relations. Theories and Approaches*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 2013, pp. 208–230.

[9] Reus-Smit, Christian: "Constructivism". In: Burchill Scott et al. (eds.): *Theories of International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan: London, pp. 217–240.

[10] Hallin, Daniel C. / Mancini, Paolo: *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2004, pp. 21–88.

In the following analysis, applied to the media system of the Republic of Kazakhstan were the following criteria related to media themselves: 1) structure of media markets, 2) political parallelism, 3) professionalization of journalism, and 4) role of the state,[14] as well as criteria concerning the political context of a given country: 1) role of the state, 2) consensus vs. majoritarian democracy, 3) individual vs. organized pluralism, 4) rational-legal authority vs. clientelism, 5) moderate v. polarized pluralism.[15] Data used for this analysis were gathered primarily from comprehensive reports on the Kazakh society and media system, published in recent years by entities such as Central Intelligence Agency, Freedom House, Heritage Foundation, and International Research and Exchanges Board, and secondarily from various other sources.

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[11] Siebert, Fred / Peterson, Theodore / Schramm, Wilbur: *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do.* University of Illinois Press: Champaign 1963.

[12] Voltmer, Katrin: "How Far Can Media Systems Travel? Applying Hallin and Mancini's Comparative Framework outside the Western World". In: Hallin, Daniel / Mancini, Paolo (eds.): *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2011, p. 225.

[13] Vartanova, Elena: "The Russian Media Model in the Context of Post-Soviet Dynamics". In: Hallin, Daniel / Mancini, Paolo (eds.): op. cit., pp. 119–142; Zhao, Yuezhi: "Understanding China's Media System in a World Historical Context". In: Hallin, Daniel / Mancini, Paolo (eds.): op. cit., pp. 143–176.

[14] Hallin, Daniel / Mancini, Paolo: op. cit., pp. 19–45.

[15] Ibid., pp. 49–62.

Media Dimension

Kazakhstan's media system, just like the other mass communication environments of Central Asian countries, was built on the pre-existing press structure of the USSR. Janusz Adamowski notes that "vestiges of the former Soviet media system may be seen in the majority of the post-Soviet federal republics, especially in the form of the old republican, district, regional, and urban press, radio and television stations …, and the local press agency."[16] The disintegration of the totalitarian empire did not however bring about a wave of press liberalization in the region: "the preservation of political stability and public accord have been the most frequently used justification by the Central Asian leaders to define the operational parameters of the media."[17]

As a result of many years of Russia's political domination, whether in the times of the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union, and the complex ethnic structure in the region,[18] the populations of Central Asian republics are in large part multilingual (in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan the Russian tongue has the status of an official state language). This leads to a multi-language media environment;[19] Kazakhstan's newspapers are printed in Kazakh, Russian, German, Ukrainian, Uyghur, Korean, and Uzbek, while radio shows are broadcast in six languages.[20] The close vicinity of the regional media powerhouse that is the Russian Federation, its solid political and cultural position in the area, and the lack of language barriers creates a situation of strong influence of the Russian media on Kazakhstan's system (not unlike the dominance the US broadcasters have over the Canadian media environment). It has been noted that these circumstances have an important correlation with the political context of the Kazakh media, since

> most television viewers continue to consume Russian-language news, viewers are heavily influence by Russian perceptions of world and local events. Indeed, some reports find that Russian television stations and news programming are part and parcel of the Russian government's soft-power influence in the "near abroad" … The availability of Russian media means that news and current events tend to be biased

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[16] Adamowski, Janusz / Satpajev, Dosym: "Środki masowego przekazu". In: Bodio, Tadeusz / Wojtaszczyk, Konstanty (eds.): op. cit., p. 288.

[17] Haghayeghi, Mehrdad: "Media and Politics in Central Asia". *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 2, 1995, p. 215.

[18] Shafer, Richard: "Soviet Foundations of the Post-Independence Press in Central Asia". In: Freedman Eric / Shafer Richard (eds.): op. cit., p. 19.

[19] Nurtazina, Roza: "Współczesne tendencje informacyjnej polityki Republiki Kazachstanu". *Nowa Polityka Wschodnia* 1 (2), 2012, p. 193.

[20] Adamowski, Janusz / Satpajev, Dosym: op. cit., p. 290.

> … also in favor of interpretations proffered by an extra-national government located in Moscow.[21]

The significant factor of media use in contemporary Kazakh society paints an interesting picture of the relative importance of printed press and electronic media as sources of information. In 2012, a little more than 6 percent of Kazakhs declared reading newspapers every day while about 2 percent said they read magazines. At the same time, 16.5 percent of respondents listened to radio news; the most popular current events source in the country is by far television with 80 percent of Kazakhstan citizens tuning in daily. About 19 percent of the population search for news online.[22] These values, together with a low circulation rate for press in the country, place Kazakh media on the extreme point of the Polarized Pluralist model with the ratio of television/newspapers use at 12.3 (even countries most typical for this model such as Greece, Portugal, and Spain have this index at 5, 3.2, and 3, respectively, while Liberal and Democratic Corporatist media systems are characterized by even lower ratios[23]). This overreliance on audiovisual media may be explained by the late modernization of Central Asian societies, where the tradition of reading press was not well-established before the twentieth century. Robert Shafer notes that printing presses first appeared in Central Asia only after the Russian conquest in the late nineteenth century and even then printed media remained a niche enterprise in the region, controlled by tsarist authorities, heavily censored, and unable to attract quality personnel.[24] Another reason is associated with a high cost of printing materials, which are typically imported from Russia as "Kazakhstan has never produced high quality paper."[25]

Several other issues are associated with the notion of political parallelism, defined by Hallin and Mancini as a feature of political systems referring to the character of connections between political actors and the media or more generally the extent to which political divisions are reflected on the media scene.[26] In case of the Kazakh audiovisual media, these kinds of relations have been traditionally very strong, due to the state's ownership of several important broadcasters (such as the radio and TV channels controlled by the state-run Qazaqstan Radio and Television Corporation) and informal ties between the ruling group and private media companies. It can be argued that the evolution of Kazakh media landscape in the last decades has actually strengthened those ties in many ways.[27] Oleg Katsiev wrote that while "to run a private television station in the early 1990s did not require major financial resources … it was easy to rent state-owned transmission facilities and to operate with relatively inexpensive home equipment," the early adoption of copyright laws and the introduction of a system of television licensing raised the requirements for independent broadcasters, not associated with the circles of power and money.[28] For Kazakh authorities the licensing competitions were an occasion for gaining additional layers of control over private media;[29] it should be noted however that the government did not attempt to quell private broadcasting altogether. Katsiev suggests that maintaining a dual system of both state and private media has been beneficial for the ruling elites in many respects: "Allowing private broadcasting helps preserve the image of a democratic state and president. Maintaining at least the appearance of democracy is important for Kazakhstan's international affairs and for obtaining foreign financial support."[30] Non-state media outlets might also be useful for the regime domestically as safety valves in case of social unrest. As of 2017, there were more than 5,000 registered media organizations in the country; 82 percent of them private[31] (for example, only 11 out of Kazakhstan's 63 television companies were owned by the state[32]). No autonomic public broadcasters (understood as those "serving the society, not the authorities"[33]) are present in the system. The authors of the 2019 IREX Media Sustainability Index note: "The media is divided into two categories: state and private. No community-based media exist in Kazakhstan."[34]

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[21] Junisbai, Barbara / Junisbai, Azamat / Fry, Nicola Ying: "Mass Media Consumption in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan: The View from Below". *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 23 (3), 2015, pp. 252–253.

[22] Ibid., pp. 247–252.

[23] Hallin, Daniel / Mancini, Paolo: op. cit., p. 25.

[24] Shafer, Richard: op. cit., pp. 19–20.

[25] Adamowski, Janusz / Satpajev, Dosym: op. cit., p. 291.

[26] Hallin, Daniel / Mancini, Paolo: op. cit., pp. 26–30.

[27] Grochmalski, Piotr: *Kazachstan. Studium politologiczne*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika: Toruń 2006, pp. 407–408.

The labyrinthine network of connections between the ruling elite and media institutions may involve ties of various character. A glaring example of the sometimes obscure dealings in this field is the shady ownership history of the country's information agency Khabar and its several television and radio channels. A state enterprise until 1998, the agency became a joint stock company under control of President's Nursultan Nazarbayev's daughter Dariga. The government later regained ownership of the majority share in Khabar after Nazarbayeva's husband's fall from grace in 2007,[35] which obviously did not alter the persistent pro-authorities stance of the institution. Some controversies were raised in 2017 over the case of Bela Kudaibergenova, a London-based correspondent for Khabar 24, a news channel belonging to the agency. Ms. Kudaibergenova resigned from her post in December 2015, accusing the state-controlled enterprise of being a propaganda bullhorn for the Kazakh regime. In an interview for the French magazine *Society*, she said:

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[28] Katsiev, Oleg: "Development of an Independent Media in Kazakhstan". In: Holt, Ruffin / Waugh, Daniel (eds.): *Civil Society in Central Asia*. University of Washington Press: Seattle 1999, p. 126.

[29] Junisbai, Barbara: op. cit., p. 38.

[30] Katsiev, Oleg: op. cit., p. 131.

[31] International Research and Exchanges Board: *Media Sustainability Index 2017. Development of Sustainable Independent Media in Europe and Eurasia*, p. 231, retrieved 1.12.2017, from https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2017-full.pdf.

[32] Nurtazina, Roza: "Social Role of the Mass Media – a Component of the Strategy «Kazakhstan – 2015»". *Studia Politologiczne* 44, 2017, p. 326.

[33] Jakubowicz, Karol: *Media publiczne. Początek końca czy nowy początek*. Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne: Warszawa 2007, p. 11.

[34] International Research and Exchanges Board: *Media Sustainability Index 2019. Tracking Development of Sustainable Independent Media Around the World*, p. 242, retrieved 1.9.2020 from https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2019-full.pdf.

> Censorship is one of the fundamental principles of the channel and the journalism in Kazakhstan. One is not allowed to criticize President Nazarbayev and his family. … The whole communication machine serves solely this one goal: to allow Nazarbayev to remain President till his death. … As a correspondent in London, I covered the relations between Kazakhstan and Great Britain: in politics, economy, culture, sports etc. There was only one rule: to show how corrupt and unhealthy the West was and how great Nazarbayev and his family were. We were asked to depict Great Britain as a country of paedophiles, homosexuals, the poor, suicides, and criminals, to question their excessively liberal values. We interviewed only people who were of this opinion.[36]

The government has a vast range of means at its disposal to subdue inconvenient media voices. In case of the printed press, efficient instruments of censorship policy might be simply ordaining print shops controlled by the state to refuse to print dissident press titles, or harassing them by excessive scrutiny from regulatory or fiscal authorities. There have been also some mysterious media takeovers resulting in radical changes in editorial commentary lines, such as the 1998 sale of the *Karavan* paper and associated businesses by Boris Giller, a private entrepreneur: "presumably under pressure from the authorities, he sold all these enterprises 'to private structures that wished to remain incognito' … Not incidentally with the change in ownership these media ceased criticism of President Nazarbayev's policies."[37]

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[35] Laruelle, Marlene: "In Search of Kazakhness: The Televisual Landscape and Screening of Nation in Kazakhstan". *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 23 (3), 2015, p. 327.

[36] Coutard, Hélène: *Bela Kudaibergenova: "La censure est une règle de base du journalisme kazakh"*, retrieved 1.12.2017 from https://www.society-magazine.fr/bela-kudaibergenov-la-censure-est-une-regle-de-base-du-journalisme-kazakh/. Nazarbayev resigned from office three years later, in 2019. Presidential power was transferred "to a handpicked successor, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, through a rigged election …, and the authorities used arrests and beatings to break up mass protests against the move". Freedom House: *Freedom in the World 2020. A Leaderless Struggle for Democracy*, retrieved 1.9.2020, from https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2020/leaderless-struggle-democracy.

[37] Katsiev, Oleg: op. cit., pp. 124–125. See also Grochmalski, Piotr: op. cit., pp. 408–409.

Perhaps the most flagrant example of a systematic persecution of a dissident medium was the case of the independent weekly newspaper *Respublika*, founded by Irina Petrushova. First, its premises were firebombed by unknown perpetrators in 2002, then it was targeted with several expensive libel claims, closed by court decisions, and rejected by several print shops (which forced the editorial team to print the weekly on a home printer and ordinary A4-sized paper), while its website was blocked by the state-run Internet provider Kazakhtelecom.[38] After changing its title several times (to escape successive court bans), the corruption-exposing newspaper was finally shut down by legal authorities in 2012.

The 2016 Freedom House report on Freedom of the Press in the Republic of Kazakhstan was highly critical of the country's government, accusing it of silencing dissenting opinions: "The courts banned dozens of leading opposition outlets for 'extremism', and further closures were reported in the subsequent years. Opposition-leaning publications *Pravdivaya Gazeta*, *Assandi Times*, *Respublika*, and *ADAM bol* remained shuttered in 2015."[39] Similar charges have been issued earlier by international entities such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, whose Representative on Freedom of Media, Dunja Mijatović expressed concern that "legal proceedings initiated against several media outlets in Kazakhstan might severely undermine media pluralism in the country" already in 2012.[40] While the recent years brought about some amendments to the Central Asian republic's media legislation, commentators point out that the situation "did not change for the better" and the governmental "control over Kazakhstan's information space has intensified."[41]

Peter Rollberg and Marlene Laruelle suggest that the present state of the media in Central Asian republics (with the exception of Kyrgyzstan) may be best described by the "authoritarian" model of the classic 1963 typology of Siebert et al. While the national governments attempt to present their respective mass communication systems as shielding the fragile civil societies of the region in a paternalistic manner (not unlike the British BBC in its early years[42]), "the real ownership and decision-making structures – often carefully hidden from society – demonstrate that the majority of Central Asian media are, above all, geared toward reinforcing the authoritarian status quo."[43] In the case of Kazakhstan, sometimes even the very wording of official documents on the media system betrays the real concerns and sympathies of the government milieu. In a 2006 article, Anton A. Morozov, head of the Socio-Political Department of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, while describing the early years of the country's media history, wrote: "during this period an ideology of 'fourth power' and a myth of independent press were popular among Soviet and Kazakhstan journalists."[44]

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[38] Allison, Olivia: "Loyalty in the New Authoritarian Model: Journalistic Rights and Duties in Central Asian Media Law". In: Freedman, Eric / Shafer, Richard (eds.): op. cit., p. 156.

[39] Freedom House, *Freedom of the Press 2016 Kazakhstan Profile*, retrieved 1.12.2017, from https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/kazakhstan.

[40] Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: *OSCE representative concerned over threat to media pluralism in Kazakhstan*, retrieved 1.12.2017, from http://www.osce.org/fom/97680.

[41] International Research and Exchanges Board: *Media Sustainability Index 2019…*, p. 236.

[42] Jaskiernia, Alicja: *Publiczne media elektroniczne w Europie.* ASPRA-JR: Warszawa 2006, p. 32.

According to recent reports, Kazakh standards of journalism professionalization leave much to be desired. While the Kazakhstan Union of Journalists formally adopted a code of ethics, its provisions are not observed by a significant number of the country's media personnel. Commentators quoted by the authors of the 2017 IREX Media Sustainability Index lamented over "scandalizing and sensationalizing of the news flow", lack of thorough analysis of covered issues and investigative journalism of any sort, unbalanced and sometimes sloppy reporting as well as excessive commercialization of media content; "more and more, the concept of lazy journalism is in use, where the publications are engaged in reprinting press releases."[45] These concerns were seconded in the 2019 edition of the report, which asserted that "serious material gives way to short news items of criminal content (traffic accidents, murders, rapes) and to reports on the life of »stars« and descriptions of online community life" and "social network posts often become »news« without proper verification and editing."[46]

The problem of insufficient journalism professionalization in the Republic of Kazakhstan stems from several profound maladies at play in the country's mass communication system. One of those is the fact that salaries of media workers are low, which leads to mediocre standards of fact-checking and a tendency to blur the boundaries between reporting and advertising. Some analysts identify another reason of the media profession's troubles in the state of journalist training in Kazakhstan. While it may be argued that Kazakh universities came a long way since the Soviet Union times, eschewing "courses on propaganda, demagoguery, Marxism-Leninism, communistic theory, and other features of Soviet journalism" in order to offer their students modern and competent teaching curricula,[47] there are also voices expressing dissatisfaction with the level of journalist education in the country. “As a whole, journalist training in Kazakhstan is low”, argues business journalist Tulegan Askarov.[48] Yet another reason involves the uneasy political environment in which journalists work in Kazakhstan. The country’s press personnel report instances of self-censorship; in some cases, supervisors routinely check their employees’ articles for conformity with the official policies and documents with the intention of avoiding legal or administrative prosecution of some sort.

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[43] Rollberg, Peter / Laruelle, Marlene: "The Media Landscape in Central Asia". *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 23 (3), Summer 2015, p. 230.

[44] Morozov, Anton: *Развитие сми Республики Казахстан за годы независимости: основные этапы и современное состояние*, retrieved 1.12.2017, from http://kisi.kz/ru/categories/politicheskaya-modernizaciya/posts/razvitie-smi-respubliki-kazahstan-za-gody-nezavisimosti.

[45] International Research and Exchanges Board: *Media Sustainability Index 2017…*, pp. 229–230.

[46] International Research and Exchanges Board: *Media Sustainability Index 2019…*, p. 241

As far as the legal conditions for conducting journalist activities are concerned, Kazakhstan’s media landscape is marked by a divergence between official regulations and common practice. While article 20 section 1 of the Constitution provides that “The freedom of speech and creative activities shall be guaranteed. Censorship shall be prohibited,”[49] the last decades saw numerous infringements of this law. Provisions penalizing libel/defamation and spreading false information are often used to subdue journalists criticizing or investigating the circles of power; such cases constitute the majority of legal proceedings involving press professionals (according to the 2016 Freedom House report, there were more than 100 civil cases against journalists or media in both 2014 and 2015, the number of criminal cases went up from 20 in 2014 to 35 in 2015). Recent years have also brought about numerous legal cases involving the media: e.g. a journalist was fined in 2018 for disclosing personal information about a Pavlodar city official’s wife (whose foreign travels were tracked on Instagram).[50] Although “the courts frequently rule in favor of media outlets, the threat of substantial penalties and protracted court cases may contribute to self-censorship.”[51] In 2015, the international organization Reporters Sans Frontières informed about a provincial Kazakh journalist accused of extortion while investigating a rape case involving a regional governor’s son. The journalist was sentenced to prison in what RSF described as a politically charged trial.[52] As Olivia Allison puts it, concluding her analysis of the region's media laws, "the relationship between journalists and government in post-Soviet Central Asia continues to be framed by loyalty."[53]

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[47] Nemecek, Maureen et al.: “Journalism Education and Professional Training in Kazakhstan: From the Soviet Era to Independence”. In: Freedman Eric / Shafer Richard (eds.): op. cit., pp. 223–224.

[48] International Research and Exchanges Board, *Media Sustainability Index 2019…*, p. 231.

[49] Adilet. Legal information system of Regulatory Legal Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan: *Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan,* retrieved 1.12.2017, from http://adilet.zan.kz/eng/docs/K950001000_.

[50] International Research and Exchanges Board: *Media Sustainability Index 2019…*, p. 239.

[51] Freedom House: *Freedom of the Press 2016….*

[52] Reporters Sans Frontières: *Affaire Golychkine: RSF dénonce une affaire politique*, retrieved 1.12.2017, from https://rsf.org/fr/actualites/affaire-golychkine-rsf-denonce-une-affaire-politique.

Increasingly strict legal framework regulates Internet communication as well. Due to its growing popularity in Central Asian countries (the share of Internet users soared from 1 percent in 2001 to almost 77 percent in 2016 in Kazakhstan),[54] new media are rapidly gaining significance as an instrument of political communication in the region. While they are widely regarded around the world as having the potential to spread information about grass-roots initiatives and facilitate mass mobilization against oppressive authorities,[55] their immediacy and ubiquity can be also used to strengthen the existing regimes as "autocrats might devise a wide arsenal of repressive methods to harness the power of digital technology."[56] Luca Anceschi argues that due to aggressive government tactics, including "restrictive law-making and repressive methods" (including incarcerating dissident bloggers) Kazakh authorities were able to effectively de-politicize the country's cyberspace, creating "an essentially lowbrow medium", deprived of discussion on serious matters. In recent years "Kazakhstan has seen an increase in the number of court cases related to the incitement of national, religious, and social hatred. They have applied mainly to posts and comments on social networks and often have had a political basis".[57] It's worth mentioning, however, that Astana's policies in the field of Internet communication seem to be nonetheless milder than the ones of its neighbors, such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.[58]

This phenomenon of the deliberate de-politicization of media content seems to be symptomatic for the whole Kazakh mass communication landscape. "Entertainment programs prevail over news programs. … Glamour and fashion journalism is thriving. Journalism in the country is becoming less and less adventurous and more and more entertaining. Often, only content deemed safe is published."[59]

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[53] Allison, Olivia: op. cit.: p. 155.

[54] Central Intelligence Agency: *The World Factbook: Kazakhstan*, retrieved 1.12.2017, from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html.,

[55] McQuail, Denis: op. cit., pp. 166–167.

[56] Nikolayenko, Olena: "Youth Media Consumption and Perceptions of Electoral Integrity in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan". *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 23 (3), 2015, pp. 258.

[57] International Research and Exchanges Board: *Media Sustainability Index 2019…*, p. 239.

[58] Anceschi, Luca: "The Persistence of Media Control under Consolidated Authoritarianism: Containin Kazakhstan's Digital Media". *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 23 (3), 2015, pp. 282–294.

[59] International Research and Exchanges Board: *Media Sustainability Index 2019…*, p. 231.

Political Dimension and Classification

Political criteria included in Hallin and Mancini's classification involve several pairs of extremes on continuums related to various fields of public life and based on literature on comparative politics.[60] Although no existing political system fits a given ideal model perfectly, it is nevertheless possible and indeed illuminating to place an examined case on these scales in order to understand it better.

The first category deals with the role of the state in the economy and involves the contradictory ideals of libertarian and welfare states. Due to a series of reforms undertaken by the Kazakh leadership (and made possible because of a lack of powerful domestic opposition), the country embraced a liberal model of economy with an emphasis on private property and modest social welfare expenditures (both in absolute numbers and in the percent of the GDP).[61] This is reflected in the relatively high place of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the 2020 Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom (39nd in the world, ranked in the upper echelons of the category "Moderately Free").[62] Linda J. Cook notes that "during the 1990s Kazakhstan's welfare state underwent rapid, radical retrenchment and liberalization by its executive, in a manner reminiscent of the Chilean experience under Pinochet."[63] The liberal nature of the state's economic system is not cancelled by the high levels of entanglement between the authorities and the private sector.

Another category involves the distinction between consensus and majoritarian democracy, with the fundamental issues of whether compromise and cooperation is necessary to effectively exercise political power and whether the power is divided in the system. The case of Kazakhstan – an authoritarian state with limited tradition of power transfers in its recent history, weak opposition, and many structural restraints of political participation, is obviously more closely related to the majoritarian model (it resembles to some degree the dynamics of power in early "governmental" systems of electronic media in Western Europe[64]). The next criterion, concerning models of pluralism (individual and organized) is perhaps less clear. However, deep traditions of collectivist social structures in the region and existing distinct groups within the Kazakh society (for instance, the numerous Russian ethnic minority) suggest that the country is closer to the pole of organized pluralism.

As far as the contradictory models of rational-legal authority and clientelism are concerned, Kazakhstan's system of murky, entangled network of informal connections between the ruling elite and all spheres of public and business life[65] clearly puts the country in the second category. The clientelist nature of the state's social interactions is clearly discernible at the junction of politics, law, and media. Olivia Allison notes that "where both pro-governmental and oppositional media outlets broke law – for example, failing to pay taxes or writing libelous articles – it was the oppositional media outlets that were punished."[66] The final distinction, between moderate and polarized pluralism, does not apply well to the authoritarian regime in Astana as the political discourse is virtually monopolized by the President's camp and its allies. Against the loud symphony of Nursultan Nazarbayev's political orchestra, dissident voices are feeble and rarely heard.

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[60] Hallin, Daniel / Mancini, Paolo: op. cit., pp. 49–62.

[61] Mołdabekov, Zhakhan: "Wokół modelu strategii rozwoju państwa". In: Bodio, Tadeusz / Wojtaszczyk, Konstanty (eds.): op. cit., pp. 130–131.

[62] Heritage Foundation: *Index of Economic Freedom 2020 Kazakhstan Profile*, retrieved 1.9.2020, from http://www.heritage.org/index/country/kazakhstan.

[63] Cook, Linda: "Negotiating Welfare in Postcommunist States". *Comparative Politics* 40 (1), 2007, p. 55.

[64] Hallin, Daniel / Mancini, Paolo: op. cit., pp. 30–31.

Recapitulating the above analysis and considering all factors examined, it can be argued that Kazakhstan's media system displays many of the characteristics included in Hallin and Mancini's threefold classification.[67] Its traits most closely resemble the Polarized Pluralist model, typical for Mediterranean countries and numerous mass communication environments outside the Western world.[68] Among the most important properties of the Republic of Kazakhstan's media, compatible with this model, are: domination of audiovisual media among sources of information, governmental management of electronic media outlets, low degree of journalist professionalization, political instrumentalization of the media, frequent government interventions in the media system as well as incomplete democratization and modernization of the society. On the other hand, one can also find there traits typical for the Liberal (or North Atlantic) model, such as: focus on entertainment and information instead of political commentary, a strong private sector in the media market, and no tradition of consensus democracy. It is worth noting that Kazakhstan's media system does not fall easily into one of the three models devised by Hallin and Mancini; instead of adhering to the "catch-all" categories, it is a complex communication environment deserving further comprehensive studies. This, of course, doesn't make the application of the American-Italian duo's framework any less meaningful in this case; their models constitute certain ideal arrangements, resembling three vertices of a triangle on whose surface individual media systems can be placed (as it was done in Hallin and Mancini's original work).

Kazakh Media as an Instrument of National Policy

Having a strong grip of the national system of media, as ascertained in the previous parts of this article, Kazakhstan's authorities are able to employ means of mass communication to achieve their political goals at home and abroad. As Roza

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[65] Junisbai, Barbara: op. cit., p. 36.

[66] Allison, Olivia: op. cit.: p. 155.

[67] Hallin, Daniel / Mancini, Paolo: op. cit., pp. 67–68.

[68] Voltmer, Katrina: op. cit., p. 224.

A. Nurtazina observed, the presidential camp is fully aware of the challenges and significance of an effective information policy:

> President of the RK, N. Nazarbayev noted during a meeting with journalists: "Tasks of the media with relation to public security can be completely compared with those that fall on the shoulders of the Armed Forces. While the latter are necessary in order to preserve security against external threats, the media strengthen national security by educating people spiritually."[69]

Among the duties of mass communication outlets are such diverse responsibilities as countering Islamist propaganda, consolidating interethnic harmony in the Kazakh society, and socialization of the young people. In the context of this paper, however, the most important functions of the Republic of Kazakhstan media are those associated with soft power: bolstering national identity and creating an attractive image of the country for the world to behold.

In the case of Kazakhstan, a young country (albeit with long historical traditions) whose history of the last three centuries was dominated by a powerful neighbor, the problem of strengthening common symbols, values, and ideas is obviously of utmost significance. Kazakhstan wants to be recognized all over the world and wants to be seen in a positive light. Hence, for example, the creation of the high-profile road cycling team Astana (sponsored by a consortium of state-owned companies), whose exploits put Kazakhstan – for some time – in the centre of attention of sports fans everywhere. This aspiration may also explain nervous reactions of Kazakh officials to the 2006 hit comedy film *Borat! Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*, about a clueless Kazakh reporter in the United States (the choice of Kazakhstan as a butt for ridicule seemed to be entirely random and the movie primarily made fun of Americans' vices).[70] The search for "Kazakhness" seems to be even more important because of the complex ethnic structure of the Kazakh society, a large Russian minority, and the predominance of the Russian language in everyday communication in the country, including the media (the vast majority of the most popular shows in Kazakhstan's TV market are broadcast in Russian).[71]

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[69] Nurtazina, Roza: *Республика Казахстан: сми и политика.* Asia Print: Astana 2011, pp. 276–277.

[70] What is interesting (and might indicate a change in the government's public relations tactics) is that a catchphrase from *Borat!*'s 2020 sequel, *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm: Delivery of Prodigious Bribe to American Regime for Make Benefit Once Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan* was actually used in a Kazakh tourism promotion campaign. Stein, Joel: *Kazakhstan, Reversing Itself, Embraces 'Borat' as Very Nice*, retrieved 29.10.2020, from: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/business/kazakhstan-embraces-borat.html?fbclid=IwAR27dK88gnb2u5sWsGITx0Fc9DOv1VbD41iJdRZMtLll25puG49wFDmDRqU.

Kazakh authorities have already used audiovisual communication for national PR purposes in the last decade, most notably in the epic drama *Nomad* (2005). The movie, set in eighteenth-century Kazakhstan, produced by the renowned Czech American filmmaker Miloš Forman, and subsidized with a 40 million USD donation from the national government, was created with both a domestic and foreign audience in mind. Although not a commercial or critical success outside of Kazakhstan (*Nomad* currently has only a 6.0 rating in the International Movie Database[72]), it nonetheless gained some recognition abroad for spectacular action scenes, music, and technical excellence.

For some reason, however, the Kazakh government had been reluctant in the past to invest heavily in television as a vehicle for their historical policy initiatives. Only recently, after the Russian annexation of Crimea, Kazakhstan's media officials began to focus more on televised patriotic productions.[73] The individual topics covered in those historical documentaries are carefully selected in order to create a message that is precisely crafted for national identity strategies. Most popular themes include ancient and mediaeval heroes of Central Asia, and – more recently – events of the Second World War (as both topics offer a unifying and familiar narration that can be shared by all citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan). Largely avoided, on the other hand, is the Soviet period of Kazakh history. Marlene Laruelle notes that this omission "reflects the hesitations of the current political regime, which descended directly from the Soviet elites, and tries to avoid opening painful memories of the Soviet era."[74]

Instead of exploring the heroic past, some of the new patriotic productions look into the glorious future. The 2010 drama miniseries *Astana – My Love* is an unlikely combination of romance, slick production values, and state propaganda. It is a love story of a Kazakh boy and a Turkish girl, who meet in Astana years after their destinies were intertwined at the girl's birth (on a Turkish airplane flying over Kazakhstan, no less). The symbolic environment of the show is remarkably rich: the plot takes place in Kazakhstan's modern and beautiful capital, the majority of characters work as architects (metaphorically building the future of the nation?), and the heavens-approved feeling connected lovers of ancient Turkic origin. The miniseries' premiere was celebrated as a major cultural event, with the Kazakhstan's Minister of Culture pointing out that "such a large-scale project could only be carried out due to the economic growth that Kazakhstan had achieved under the leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev."[75] What is even more peculiar, a quotation from Nazarbayev ("Cities create a country, the capital creates a nation") was displayed at the beginning of each installment of the show, while in the final episodes "Kazakhstan's president himself makes repeated appearances via documentary footage, simultaneously watched on TV by several characters of the miniseries."[76]

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[71] It should be noted that as a part of Kazakhstan's authorities' plan to emancipate the country from the Russian cultural sphere, it was decreed in 2017 that the Kazakh language would transition from using Cyryllic to Latin alphabet by 2025.

[72] *Nomad*, International Movie Database, retrieved 1.12.2017 from https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0374089/.

[73] Laruelle, Marlene: op. cit.: p. 328.

[74] Ibid., p. 331.

It should be emphasized that patriotic documentary and drama series produced in the 2010s by Kazakh media are characterized by high production values, both in concept and execution, drawing from popular media formats and motifs as well as offering attractive role models and a meaningful symbolic setting for the viewers. An example of the above, the TV series "Signs: Legends of the Steppe" (2013) takes its inspiration from Western reality shows to embark viewers on a 10,000 km journey across Kazakhstan that is "simultaneously geographical, historical, and spiritual."[77]

Conclusion

According to constructivism theory, "the social world is a world of human consciousness: of thoughts and beliefs, of ideas and concepts, of languages and discourses, of signs, signals, and understandings among human beings, especially groups of human beings, such as states and nations."[78] Thus, national identities may also be constructed and nurtured by intentional actions of political entities, and are actually capable of influencing – along with the more often analyzed "hard" assets (economical, military etc.) – the interplay of actors in the global arena. A young nation such as Kazakhstan needs that identity boost more than established countries with long traditions of statehood.

The above analysis of the Republic of Kazakhstan's media system, showing characteristics of Hallin and Mancini's Polarized Pluralist and Liberal models as well as creativity and a remarkable efficacy in its political communication endeavors, proves that it is more than capable of serving the Central Asian state in this manner. The only question is whether the goals of the country's leaders, enjoying nearly absolute control over the country's mass communication outlets, are coherent with the goals of Kazakh society. One can only hope that in the long term this is actually the case.

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[75] Rollberg, Peter: "Small Screen Nation Building: Astana – My Love". *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 23 (3), 2015, p. 342.

[76] Ibid., p. 343.

[77] Laruelle, Marlene: op. cit., pp. 334–339.

[78] Jackson, Robert / Sørensen, Georg: op. cit., p. 212.

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Tomasz Pugacewicz, Marcin Grabowski

Conclusion

Central Asia and the South Caucasus is still an underresearched phenomenon, even though it is attracting more political attention and its role is growing in the international system. This volume was aimed at contributing to the existing state of the art and the main findings of chapters are summarized in this conclusion. At the same time, some general remarks, especially in the context of multilevel and multidimensional analysis, as well as fields for further exploration and research are discussed here, as we realize this contribution is a stepping stone for obtaining a better understanding of the region, being at the same time a starting point for interesting research in the future.

In the introductory chapter, after describing different notions employed to understand the politics of Central Asia and the South Caucasus at the international, intraregional, and intrastate levels, the editors noted that actors from those (analytically) distinct levels (in the real-world) interact in the form of cooperation or conflict. The authors conclude that processes developed at those three levels in Central Asia and South Caucasus are undermining Western international relations theories based on the concept of the unity and sovereignty of states. In the case of the analyzed region, firstly, at the domestic level, we can observe how intra-elite disagreements on rent-seeking, radical Islam, ethnic issues, and interclan clashes threaten territorial integrity. Secondly, at the intraregional level, we find conflicts on borders, water, and energy resources management also eroding territorial integrity. Finally, at the international level, out-of-region great powers compete for influence, undermine territorial integrity, and try to control the analyzed region's states economically. As a result, following Emilian Kavalski's reflection, the editors have concluded that this region forces researchers to focus on non-Western international relations theory to be able to understand the international, (intra-)regional, and domestic actors shaping this region.

Great Powers in Central Asia and the South Caucasus

In his paper, **Piotr Bajor** noticed that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Central Asian states became a priority in Russian political, economic, and military policy. This is affirmed not only at the level of Russia's recent strategic documents but also in reference to bilateral and multilateral policies implemented by Kremlin. As a result, Bajor described how Russian and Central Asian interests are interlocked, especially in the area of security. At the same time, the author pointed out that U.S. incursions in this region (more stable in terms of economic interest, but also temporarily in military terms) and growing Chinese influence, especially in the form of the Belt and Road Initiative, have created a new and more challenging environment for Russia. This process is fueling the Russian perception of great powers rivalry in this region as Central Asia has not only become important in itself but also as a prize in great power politics among Russia, China, and the U.S. In his final paragraph, Bajor concluded that “in the foreseeable perspective, Russia will [in the context of Central Asia] continue to indicate increasing threats and emphasize a necessity to cooperate closely in combating them. In this way, Russia will try to play a more important role in these countries’ internal policies and within the framework of multilateral structures of cooperation and thus, maintain its position and secure its interests in the area of Central Asia.”

Tomasz Pugacewicz’s chapter concluded that foreign policy decision-making theories – bureaucratic politics model and advisory system theory – had enough explanatory power to explain U.S. choices on drone operations conducted over Afghanistan from Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, the paper pointed that in some cases this was achieved due to additional assumptions on decision-makers’ participation in the decisional unit or their preferences. Further studies – especially after the gradual opening up of archives – need to confirm the relevance of these assumptions. Pugacewicz also concluded, in the context of stalemate as a type of a decision, that decisions made in U.S. foreign policy often take this shape. In the analyzed case, about half of the initial or final decisions took the form of a clinch. Pugacewicz also pinpointed that a gridlock as a result of decision-making leads to the low effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy, which seems to be particularly important given the frequent occurrence of this type of decision. This case study also shows that the U.S. president was only involved in shaping American policy towards Central Asia and the South Caucasus when it concerned critical military or intelligence issues. In general, the paper raises the question of whether limiting the out-of-region involvement of great powers in Central Asia and the South Caucasus to the rivalry with other states is sufficient, as sometimes frames of domestic interagency and “interadvisors” conflicts are a more effective way of explaining the foreign policy of those powers.

In his chapter, **Przemyslaw Osiewicz** concluded that the growing involvement of other powers in Central Asia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union forced Iran to refocus its previous strategy of engagement in this region from religious, identity, and historical issues to the economic sphere. Simultaneously, it led Teheran to compete and cooperate with the great powers by taking part in this rivalry, particularly in the form of (mostly unsuccessful) attempts to block U.S. presence with the help of Russian and Chinese partners. The author especially emphasized the role of China as a growing economic player in Central Asia and, at the same time, as an actor willing to involve Iran in developing infrastructure and economic projects in this region. This development is especially crucial as Iran’s actions in this part of the world were highly restrained by American policy centered around isolating Teheran. Nevertheless, Osiewicz has pointed out that Iran’s policy toward Central Asia in the post-Cold War era was characterized by inconsistency since it has been formulated on an ad hoc basis.

Magdalena Kania, in her paper, challenged the apparent idea that the European Union as a normative power used development assistance toward Central Asia only to promote values (e.g. human rights, good governance, and democracy). She concluded that in this case, due to the out-of-region powers' involvement in the region, that kind of activity was also one of many foreign policy tools aiming at the implementation of material interests (associated with energy and security). Overall, Kania identified three issues evoked in EU policy: (1) reducing risks emerging from Central Asia toward European internal security; (2) ensuring alternative sources of oil and gas from the Caspian Sea region to Russian ones and, finally, (3) values promotion. In different documents produced at various times, one of those issues could be prioritized, but in practice, those three elements have been a constant element of the EU's developmental undertakings towards Central Asia since 2001. As a result, the European Union has implemented an incoherent strategy which has reduced its effectiveness. Even the unsatisfactory results of those policies in the field of values promotion has not discouraged the mentioned institution from advancing this kind of goal. As Kania acutely remarked, "It seems that development assistance to Central Asia is less about Central Asia as a region and more about the EU and its self-perception of an actor capable of providing internal security and economic well-being and, last but not least, a worldwide actor with a strong normative voice."

Agnieszka Batko concluded in her chapter that, due to its geographical location and engaged resources, Japan was not able to become the dominating power in Central Asia. That became especially clear with respect to the PRC after this country launched the Belt and Road Initiative and devoted substantial resources to this purpose. As a result, as Batko indicated, Japan avoided direct competition with other powers engaged in the region, especially China, and focused on support for the stability and accessibility of this part of the world for other states. Since the second half of the 1990s, we can observe the development of a coherent Japanese strategy, especially in the form of the "Central Asia Plus Japan" Dialogue, and at some point, this country became the most significant foreign aid donor toward Central Asia (before China outpaced it). Investment in transportation and telecommunication infrastructure became a "distinctive feature" of the Japanese model of developmental assistance. The author also points out that for almost two first decades of the post-Cold War period Japan's policy toward this region was not directly associated with its energy resources and instead concentrated around developing contact with local elites using aid and assistance. As Batko has shown, that situation changed when Japan's energy market was redefined due to the earthquake and Fukushima disaster in 2011, and interest in additional directions of importing energy resources emerged in Japan. Finally, as the author summarized, "the attempts made by Japan on the regional level … along with maintaining the donations, have made Tokyo one of the important actors in the region."

Regional Issues and Regionalism

Randall Newnham's paper perfectly described the complexity of economic links interconnecting the Russian Federation and post-Soviet states, like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, using the notion of "asymmetrical interdependence." As a result, it explains why the Russian government was able to employ a mixture of economic threats and incentives – an example of peculiar carrots or sticks – toward those two states in the process of building the Eurasian Union. At the same time, Newnham has shown how Russian economic instruments were tailored toward specific countries' needs. In the case of the more prosperous Kazakhstan, Russia was keen to highlight its control of energy resources routes as essential sources of Kazakh export income and access for Kazakh products to the Russian economic market. In reference to Kyrgyzstan, Newnham indicated that Kyrgyz workers' access to the Russian labor market and direct payments to the Kyrgyz government was the main economic tools employed by Russian negotiators. In conclusion, the researcher inferred that economic leverage – not only military instruments – should be perceived as the main tool in Russian foreign policy. This instrument should not only be associated with the quantity or price of the oil and gas delivered by Russia. Overall, Newnham shows how Central Asian states' sovereignty is narrowed due to an economic dependence dating to Soviet times, and although many Western countries also face this kind of dependence it is usually a mutual situation and based on a voluntary decision. In conclusion, the paper makes the case for asserting that Central Asian statehood should not be easily identified with the Western one.

In reference to their first hypothesis, **Marcin Grabowski and Jakub Stefanowski** determined that the BRI is not a full-scale game-changer at the level of the regional system in Central Asia. As the authors have shown, the mentioned undertaking is only partially altering Central Asia's system as it is only strengthening the economic position of China, e.g. at the level of FDI flows. Nevertheless, it is not undermining the Sino-Russian duopoly in the studied system as the division of labor between those two countries still operates with the Russian Federation as the leading security provider. At the same time, in economic terms, the Russian monopoly has evolved into the Sino-Russian duopoly, with a growing role for China. Even though the value of BRI as a system changer is still limited at this moment, Grabowski and Stefanowski have concluded that we should expect future changes in this matter because the People's Republic of China has the transformational power (capabilities and resources) to do so. The authors, bearing in mind the overall level of Chinese engagement in Central Asia, the potential of this state, and expecting the consolidation of efforts within the BRI, have assumed that this initiative is going to be a "tool for reinforcing and institutionalizing the Chinese position." This paper shows the dynamic between two main out-of-region great powers in Central Asia – i.e. Russia and China – while at the same time pinpointing that not all those kinds of powers rival each other, instead choosing cooperation. Simultaneously, this brings a more dynamic image of this Sino-Russian cooperation as it shows how the power transition in Central Asia between those two states is occurring and raises the question of how long this kind of (growing unbalanced) cooperation might last.

Alessia Chiriatti, in her chapter, described how non-state actors in the analyzed Georgian case bypassed state's institutions and undermined policies developed by the central government, including foreign policy and processes oriented toward region-building. She also concluded that the tendency of non-state actors to cluster on a regional basis could not be excluded, but there is a strong tendency among state and non-state actors in the South Caucasus security cluster to develop relations based on bilateral interconnections. Simultaneously, Chiriatti pointed out that Turkey could help stabilize Georgia by the inclusion of non-state actors, e.g. ethnic minorities, in the process of conflict resolution. However, as the author noticed, Turkey's policy, in this case, is not solely based on Georgia's national interest but also a result of other great powers – Russian, Iran, the U.S., and the EU – involved in this region interactions. In general, this paper describes the influence of non-state actors at the domestic and (intra-)regional (Georgian-Azeri) level. In addition, the importance of out-of-region great powers (in this case: Turkey) at the (intra-)regional level is described. Here we could perfectly observe the interrelations between non-state actors, analyzed region states, and out-of-region power clusters.

In her chapter, **Justyna Misiągiewicz** concluded that the Caspian Sea region is not only an important source of energy resources for international markets but also this part of the world has become a chessboard for the competition between great powers. At the same time, she has sketched two scenarios regarding the future of this region. According to the optimistic one, the competition between great powers is going to evolve and produce some form of multilateral economic cooperation between regional, out-of-region states and non-state actors, lessening the scale of the rivalry. Under the more pessimistic scenario, the Caspian Sea region could emerge as a zone of conflicting spheres of influence, even resulting in some proxy wars among great powers along the lines of Cold War logic. Regarding China's policy toward the Caspian Sea region states, Misiągiewicz concluded that the availability of oil and natural gas in this part of the world and China's rising economy's needs have forced this state to look for ways to build pipelines importing Caspian hydrocarbons eastwards. She has noted that China's national oil companies are latecomers in the competition for the exploration and export of energy resources in this region, as many European and American global energy companies arrived earlier in the 1990s. In this context, Misiągiewicz underlined the importance of the "One Belt, One Road" project, especially in the form of the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative, as an undertaking aimed at connecting Central Asia and the South Caucasus states and China. In general, this paper proves superbly how economic issues – i.e. energy resources exploitation and transportation – in the analyzed region became part of the newest edition of a Great Game.

Domestic Politics in Central Asia and South Caucasus

In his chapter, **Michał Lubina** described how domestic politics in Central Asia's states shape the foreign policy of those actors. According to the author, political leaders of Central Asian republics were (and are) focused on securing the domestic status quo in the form of the dominance of their clans. As a result, as Lubina indicated, the Russian Federation was perceived as the most important foreign player because this country was not willing to undermine clan politics and still manages instruments highly capable of influencing the domestic situation in the analyzed states, including toppling anti-Russian politicians. The paper also concluded that China still does not have similar tools at its disposal and accepts or even supports the clan structures in Central Asia. However, China is working to establish pro-Chinese elites in those countries in the next decade or two and is seeking to gain more leverage by increasing the Central Asian states dependence on their economic relations with the PRC. In opposition to Russia and China, the Western powers – inherently associated with an agenda of democracy promotion – are perceived in Central Asia as a threat toward established domestic clan structures on which the authoritarian regimes in the region are based. The most prominent case of this kind of situation was the 2005 protest in Andijan which forced the leader of Uzbekistan to limit relations with the United States as those were undermining his personal (and his clan's) power. In conclusion, Lubina stated, "Thus, clan politics help to explain why Russia and China won in Central Asia while the West has lost … this [Russian- Chinese] condominium does not itself threaten the system of clan politics. On the contrary, it even enhances it." As a result, the paper proves that cooperation between out-of-region great powers is possible in the analyzed region and how it is managed (with divided responsibility for security and economics between Russian and China). At the same time, Lubina also shows how the interplay between domestic (i.e. interclan) and international level shapes the foreign policy of regional states.

Paulina Niechciał describes the nation-building process in Soviet Central Asian republics as the creation of new identities correlating with new political and territorial order imposed by the communist government. The mechanism of the "national delimitation" of titular nations associated with the established Soviet republics was developed in cooperation between Russians and local elites who supported this undertaking. Niechciał indicated that the collapse of the Soviet Union forced local elites to reconsider their previous national ideology and gave them an opportunity to establish a new one. Surprisingly, as the author notes, "the Soviet-style patterns have not disappeared, being only transformed rather than abandoned." Even the Soviet concept of political authorities as nation-builders and ethnogenesis as a tool to legitimize a particular nation with a specific territory was continued in the post-communist period. Nevertheless, the end of Soviet domination opened the space for reintroducing pre-Soviet elements in national identity. Still, as these had not been previously established, post-Soviet states cherry picked different previous figures and dynasties, sometimes even mythological ones. Overall – as Niechciał summarized – the Soviet national-building process “irreversibly influenced the formation of the modern national identities” in Central Asia. The paper is a case study on how identity conflicts in post-Soviet Central Asia were intra-elite disputes and how some of them ended in the form of armed domestic conflict.

Rafał Kuś has identified Kazakhstan’s media system as being at the crossroads of the models described by Hallin and Mancini as Polarized Pluralist and Liberal. At the same time, the author concluded that Kazakhstan’s mass communication outlets are used as an efficient tool for advancing government domestic and foreign policies. Kuś described how the shape of the domestic media system is the element of intra-elite rivalry, as he wrote: “It may also be argued that the very process of shaping a media system within a country’s political landscape is a form of a power struggle, a “small game” with potentially large rewards to be gained.”

In the general conclusion of the edited volume, it should be stated that the conclusions of particular papers support many of the findings from the introductory chapter, bringing explicit examples with them in the process. It includes claims on how great and small games undermine Western types of international relations and statehood in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

The relevance of the different **types of “great games” concepts** is supported by e.g. Piotr Bajor’s arguments on the self-powered new Great Game in Central Asia as Chinese and American incursions in this region are motivating Russia to pursue additional involvement (which should, we expect, result in more engagement of the two other powers). Also, Przemysław Osiewicz concluded that the growing involvement of other powers has fueled Iran’s strategy toward the redesign of the analyzed region. Even Magdalena Kania, doing research on the EU’s attempts to become a normative power, concluded that – due to the out-of-region powers involved in the region, emerging risks from Central Asia, and energy resources – the EU was ready to use development assistance as a tool to implement its material interest over declared values. Additionally, Alessia Chiriatti describes how Turkey, as an out-of-region great power, is influencing the (intra-) regional relations in the South Caucasus in the context of its policy toward e.g., European Union.

Also, the understanding of “great games” in Central Asia and the South Caucasus as a source of not only rivalry, but also **cooperation** is reinforced by e.g. Przemysław Osiewicz’s paper, which points out that growing engagement of out-of-region great powers (i.e. United States) in Central Asia not only forced Iran to compete in the analyzed region with the mentioned Western power, but also created space for cooperation with other anti-American powers engaged in this part of the world (i.e. Russian Federation and China). Also Agnieszka Batko – based on the Japan case – highlights that the growing relevance of Central Asia’s energy resources and Chinese engagement with those states are raising the stakes for other powers and motivating them to reassess their strategies to counter the Chinese offensive. Batko’s research on Japan’s policy toward Central Asia also reinforces the image of great games in the analyzed region as not only a rivalry introducer, but also a cooperation producer. As Batko shows, being too far from the region and commanding too modest resources to compete with China over dominance in Central Asia, Japan decided to focus on reinforcing the openness of this region for international initiatives other than Chinese. Jakub Stefanowski and Marcin Grabowski not only show the state of Sino-Russian – two out-of-region great powers – cooperation in Central Asia, but also point out the dynamics of this process, which raises the question of whether this kind of (more and more unbalanced) collaboration can continue. Additionally, Michał Lubina highlights the cooperation of Russia and China in Central Asia and their division of work into spheres of security and economy, respectively.

Nevertheless, not all of the chapters' conclusions support the findings from the introductory chapter on out-of-region powers foreign policies in the mentioned region. E.g. Tomasz Pugacewicz's papers shows that, against the assumption of strong and strategic U.S. interests in a Great Game in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, the U.S. president was highly selective in his involvement in foreign policy decision-making toward this region. Also Przemysław Osiewicz has constructed the main hypothesis of his paper around the issue that Iran's foreign policy toward the analyzed region after 1991 was formulated *ad hoc* by successive presidents and Teheran's policy does not constitute a coherent strategy. This highlights the need for more studies focused on out-of-region great power foreign policy decision-making toward Central Asia and the South Caucasus, assuming that the implemented policies could result from intragovernmental conflicts (e.g. bureaucratic politics or advisors rivalry) rather than rational decision-making by unitary actors based on clearly perceived national interests.

The case for the incomparability of Central Asia and South Caucasus and Western statehoods is supported by research on how out-of-region powers are limiting the independence of the analyzed region. For instance, Piotr Bajor's insights on post-colonial-type interdependence in the security sector between Russian Federation and Central Asia raise the question of the limited sovereignty of countries from the analyzed region. Also, Randall Newnham has shown how Central Asian states' sovereignty is narrowed due to (unwilling) economic dependence from Soviet times toward Russian Federation. Additionally, Michał Lubina showed how powerful an out-of-region actor in Central Asia is Russia, given its ability to topple anti-Russian politicians.

Nonetheless, contrary to the conclusion of the introductory chapter, Agnieszka Batko shows that out-of-region great powers, like Japan, unable to dominate the analyzed region, are deciding to support the independence of Central Asia's states against the advances of other great powers interested in monopolizing and limiting external relations of mentioned states. In this regard, it should be stated that some out-of-region powers are, in fact, fortifying the statehood of Central Asia and the South Caucasus republics.

The dissimilarity between Central Asian and South Caucasus states and their Western counterparts has also been illustrated thanks to research on domestic forces undermining states coherence. E.g. Alessia Chiriatti describes the influence of non-state actors on the coherence of Georgia and their impact on (intra-) regional level (i.e. Georgian-Azeri relations). Michał Lubina has shown how it is not national interests but domestic factors – i.e. interclan rivalry for power – that are shaping the foreign policy of Central Asia states, especially in the context of relations with out-of-region great powers. Additionally, Paulina Niechciał described how Tajikistan is an example of a state without one coherent national identity and how this newly independent state was ripped apart by identity conflicts which were in fact a form of intra-elite dispute. In the same way, Rafał Kuś described Kazakhstan's media system as proving how intra-elite conflicts have shaped this element of the analyzed state.

Overall, the final conclusion of all those papers should compel International Relations scholars to be more cautious when applying Western-originated international relations theories, since the types of ties and statehood in Central Asia and the South Caucasus do not fit perfectly with those in the Western world. This does not mean that we should reject those kinds of concepts a priori, but rather that we should understand that this analyzed part of the world has its own character that cannot be ignored.

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