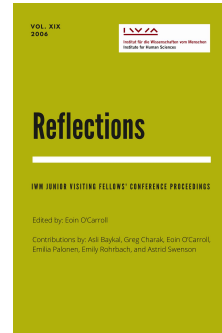


From Bolsheviks to Busheviks: The Uzbek Political Elite

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Introduction: “Transition” to What?

As in many postsocialist states, the buzzword in Uzbekistan in the last fifteen years has been “transition,” a term that obscures more than it illuminates. The common assumption is that the transition is from command economy to market economy and from authoritarianism to democracy. In many of these states, however, the end of socialism brought about a transfer of wealth from the state to a new bourgeoisie; and privatization resulted with plundering of public and state resources (Humphrey 2002, Nazpary 2002). Thus, transfer of wealth is resentfully questioned throughout the former Soviet Union. Another related development was the success of the former Communist Party elite in reproducing itself. Since the Soviet regime effectively eliminated alternative elites to emerge, the key political players remained the same, merely shedding their ideologies. As anthropologist Katherine Verdery argues, transition entailed a mixture of the old and new, rather than a simple replacement of the old by the new (Verdery 1996).

Dissertation research I conducted in Uzbekistan between 2002 and 2003 showed a rapid decline in the standard of living as a result of growing rates of unemployment, low or delayed government salaries and absence of state subsidies. The withdrawal of state support without an alternative has created serious social problems, transformed family and community relations and increased polarization of social classes. Since the 1990s, Uzbekistan has become a main transit point for the transnational drug trade originating from Afghanistan and for human trafficking. The results are widespread alcoholism and drug use, exacerbated by unemployment. The burden of providing alternative sources of income has fallen mostly on women and children. Uzbekistan today is a feared state isolated from society and fattened by international aid, a shattered society with its social safety nets worn thin.

While many of these problems are common when a country shifts to a market economy, the negative changes in the Uzbek society are as much the product of a dysfunctional state. The Uzbek state controls individuals' social and political activities by co-opting neighborhood organizations, turning community leaders into state employees and imposing stronger government control over the lives of inhabitants. It controls economic activities by arbitrarily closing markets and bazaars, enforcing new trading restrictions and tightening border controls. These state actions make it impossible to create new and acceptable roles within a new economy. Instead, they retain and promote the old Soviet stigma against entrepreneurship and wealth without taking responsibility for providing social services. In this paper, I do not wish to present the Uzbek people as passive recipients, or as victims, of state domination and violence. They quietly and indirectly try to undermine the state authority for their own needs; there are ongoing struggles and shifting coalitions. State power is not uncontested. What I want to address is the influence of transnational forces on social, political and economic control, and the way that the Uzbek elite have been manipulating these forces for their own ends. Hence the title, "from Bolsheviks to Busheviks".

Who Are the Uzbek Political Elite?

Inequality in status and power is not a new phenomenon in Uzbekistan. The Soviet system produced its own pattern of stratification and inequality. During this era, the main distinction was between the party elite and ordinary people. The Soviet elite was composed of individuals that were considered politically reliable by the center, and they were placed in the decision-making positions. In Uzbekistan, as elsewhere in the USSR, the elite consisted of the "partycrats," the high echelons of the Communist party and leaders of Komsomol, the communist youth organization. Although the highest political positions were controlled by Moscow, the power to nominate lower-level elite was designated to the authorities in individual republics. Members of the Uzbek elite were Russified Uzbeks[1], many of whom were educated in Moscow, as well as Russians, and they were often successful in passing their privileges on to their children. The political power of the Soviet elite was translated into economic power as their political positions provided access to housing and other goods and services. In an economy where shortages were endemic, this access meant having considerable power over the rest of the society. The privileges and benefits depended on one's relationship to the state, and individuals' educational or occupational opportunities were subject to resource transfers, hence to shifts in state policies (Zhou et. al. 1996).

In the final years of the USSR, and particularly after independence, the Uzbek elite started to transform their positions of political power into personal wealth, especially in real estate. In many of the ex-socialist states, the directors of privatized enterprises remained in their position and retained power (Humphrey 2002: 180). Privatization in Uzbekistan has been slow as the state still strictly controls the economy. Therefore, the elite in contemporary Uzbekistan is composed of the relatives and clients of the President and high-ranking officials. The so-called new Uzbeks (Ilkhamov 2001) are quite different from the more heterogeneous elite elsewhere in the post-Soviet space[2], but quite similar to the other Central Asian elite[3]. Obviously not all the old elite benefited from the regime

change equally. Yet, there is a remarkable degree of continuity among the Uzbek elite. Using their social and cultural capital as well as the political one, the old elite has been able to reproduce itself.

Regional Elite and Provisional Coalitions

Studies on the Uzbek political elite show that, in addition to the ability of reproduction, there is a strong element of regionalism among the elite[4]. French anthropologist Boris Petric points out that the nomination and selection of political personnel takes place in training institutions, which are the real antechambers of power (Petric forthcoming). He emphasizes two educational institutions in Tashkent, the capitol of Uzbekistan: the University of Diplomacy and World Economy, which used to be the school of the Party, and the brand-new Academy of Social and State Construction. The power struggles cannot take place in the parliament because of election fraud and banning of opposition parties, so they occur elsewhere. Petric suggests that the Academy imposes informal regional quotas and tries to balance the number of students from major regions of Uzbekistan (for example, Tashkent, Ferghana Valley, Samarkand-Bukhara). To join the Academy, students or interns need to have a sponsor in the regional administration where they come from who recommends them to the Academy. Once admitted, the students are expected to develop a personal relationship with a professor or administrator in the Academy from their native region, who then places him or her in a wide solidarity network. A civil servant's access to power and resources depends on these kinds of connections. After being trained at the Academy, students go back to their native regions to serve (Petric, *ibid.*). Therefore, the government, by requiring the local elite go through the centralized training, tries to create a common national identity that supersedes regional identities and eliminates the emergence of an alternative elite.

However, the regional elite has only temporary and precarious access to resources as President Karimov frequently reshuffles the bureaucratic personnel. He organizes regular visits to the regional governors, in which he often takes opportunity to dismiss them by accusing them of corruption. Petric notes that Karimov does what Moscow used to do: act as the arbiter between regional factions and assure a regional turnover among the political staff[5]. Reshuffling the high- and mid-ranking bureaucrats is also a way to ensure that no one becomes strong or popular enough to challenge him. Besides balancing various factions, Karimov monitors them as well. He appoints someone reliable from his own circle to serve as second-in-command at every administrative level.

Uzbek sociologist Ilkhamov argues that Karimov tries to bypass the regional elite and makes them do the dirty work, such as tax collection, to alienate people from them. The local governors, *khokims*, rely on him for export and import licenses, credit, and hard currency resources. The tension between the provincial elite is not displayed openly, yet the elite systematically try to undermine Karimov's authority. For instance, in agriculture, they try to manipulate the quota system in cotton[6] and wheat production and benefit from it.

Area specialists suggest that Karimov has three rivals: Rustam Inoyatov, the head of the National Security Council (SNB), former KGB, Zakir Almatov, the Minister of the Interior, and Ismoil Jurabekov, presidential advisor to Karimov. Some observers claimed that one of those key figures could be blamed for February 1999 bombings[7] that targeted the President. Others suggested that they could be planned by Karimov himself so that he could hold “Islamic fundamentalists” responsible and curtail rights and freedoms even further. Similarly, the explosions in Tashkent and Bukhara in the spring of 2004[8] were suspected to be organized by the National Security Council targeting the Interior Ministry, that is, by one competitor against the other. Soon after the bloody repression of the May 2005 demonstrations in Andijan, these two figures blamed each other for ordering the use of force[9]. The state control of mass media and the environment of suspicion and mistrust due to surveillance make it hard to obtain information to support any of these claims; yet, these accusations and rumors suggest that the struggle for succession has started. In terms of regional politics, Inoyatov is said to represent the Tashkent elite, and Almatov and Jurabekov belong to the Samarkand elite[10]. Karimov himself is from Samarkand as well, although since independence he did his best to play this down and present himself as the national leader above provincial rivalries[11]. Yet, it is widely believed that it is the Tashkent elite that receive most from the center[12].

A Paternalistic State?

According to Humphrey, the USSR involved an extremely complex division of labor, but one that was disguised by the positive function of distribution being taken over by the “fatherly” state (Humphrey 2002: 60). Paternalism has long defined the role of the Uzbek state[13]. After independence, however, the government has increasingly become pervasive and authoritarian, on the one hand, and withdrew social benefits that people had taken for granted for decades, on the other. In this respect, it has breached the contract it had with citizens. Ordinary Uzbeks feel today that they have been cheated. Although it discouraged initiative, the “socialist paternalism” provided cheap food, jobs, medical care, affordable housing, and education. The contemporary Uzbek state extracts, controls and monitors without giving back anything in return. Before moving on to a discussion about the relationship between state and society, and the way international dynamics influence them, I would like to expand on some of the Uzbek government’s policies, first in the political and then in the economic spheres.

Political Exclusion, Control and Surveillance

A good example of increasing political control in Uzbek society is the way neighborhood communities, or *mahallas*, are organized[14]. Whereas these institutions continued to function as sites where social networks could sustain themselves despite the Soviet efforts, in contemporary Uzbekistan, they are being more and more co-opted by the state (Abramson 1998). Article 105 of the Constitution defines *mahallas* as the institutions through which Uzbek citizens govern themselves (Mirolimov 1994). However, the state expands its control over the lives of citizens through *mahalla* committees, which now became the “eyes and ears” of the government[15]. A 1999 law on local government transformed the *mahalla* into an official institution by giving the *mahalla* committee the

responsibility to distribute state welfare payments and to organize neighborhood-watch patrols[16]. The *mahalla*, thus, has increasingly become a means for surveillance and control. In addition to their communal functions, such as organizing celebrations, coordinating collective volunteer labor for the maintenance of roads and irrigation networks and supporting the less fortunate members of the community, the *mahalla* committees now assume additional government functions. They support state-sanctioned Islam by choosing the candidates to go on Haj—the pilgrimage to Mecca—, contribute to the government run crackdown on so-called fundamentalists by keeping files on “overly pious” inhabitants, and function as *de facto* family courts mediating family disputes, including domestic violence.

The state also controls and censors the mass media. It is not possible to criticize the government in the newspapers or on TV, where one sees only Karimov opening factories and workplaces, or boasting about the cotton production that year. In fact, many of my informants called the news programs “News from Paradise”[17]. Moreover, the books of President Karimov are a part of the curriculum and students are expected to cite him in their term papers, no matter what the subject is. University professors also have to pass tests on a regular basis based on the President’s works. Even access to the Internet is occasionally controlled, as the government blocks certain Web sites[18].

The citizens’ movements are controlled as well, as the Soviet restrictions on travel and moving within the country remained in tact. To leave the country one needs an exit visa, which can be quite difficult to get. Furthermore, the requirement of internal visas, or *propiskas*, prevents people from freely moving from one city to another. Before the February 1999 bombings, buying a house in Tashkent was sufficient to get a residence permit. After the event, one needs to obtain the *propiska* first in order to buy a house.

Last but not least, children and students, as well as a number of teachers, doctors and nurses, are forced to work in cotton fields during the harvest at least for two months. The work is called “voluntary labor” for the state, a continuation of the Soviet policies; however, they are mandatory. Only the people who can afford the bribe to get a medical report documenting their poor health can avoid it. Thanks to what amounts to slave labor, because “volunteers” have to fulfill a daily quota of 80 kilograms per day per person, sleep in barracks, live on very limited food and drinks, and are paid cents if they are paid at all, the state profits enormously. No one really knows how much the state, as the monopoly buyer, earns from cotton, but it is sold to the international markets, and production costs are extremely low[19].

State interference into economy

In the summer of 2002, following an International Monetary Fund mission to Uzbekistan, the government tried to impose a series of new trading restrictions that led to unprecedented protests in the markets and bazaars, which are a key part of economic activity in the country. In July, the government imposed a 90 percent tariff (of the cost of imported goods) on most imported items, including those produced in other ex-Soviet countries, and a 50 percent tariff on packaged food[20]. Vendors were required to

provide a certificate of the payment of the tariff or prove that the goods they sold were made in Uzbekistan. The purpose was to wipe out the black market, but ordinary Uzbeks interpreted this as yet another attempt by the customs officials and tax collectors to extort bribes.[21] The immediate effect of the policy was the closing down of the bazaars, and thus, the loss of income for most traders, drivers, porters, cooks and the like. The implementation of the policy was first postponed due to the protests, and then the amounts were reduced to 70 and 40 percent, respectively.

In October 2002, merchants were also obliged to have cash registers, another reason for outrage. The reasoning behind the introduction of cash registers was to track purchases and increase tax revenues. Given the level of corruption in the country, people believed it would be the relatives and clients of the President and high-ranking officials who would sell these cash registers. According to the regulation, all non-food items were to be sold only in stores, not in bazaars. Traders viewed this as a case of squeezing the already poor simply to fill state coffers, and hence the pockets of the elite. An average trader earned \$2-5 a day, an amount barely enough to meet the basic needs of a family, and paid \$10 a month for a market stall. Many could not afford even that amount and sold their merchandise on the floor. Buying a shop or a kiosk at the market, alternatively, cost \$3000 to \$5000[22]. The fine for violation was around \$500.

Small-scale trade is the only way for economic survival for many people, and the state's encroachment in their economic activities, in addition to its withdrawal of social support, sparked popular anger. During the summer and fall of 2002, it was very hard to find any goods other than fresh fruit and vegetables at the bazaars. Most people could not afford the imported goods sold in state-run stores[23]. People tried to find ways to avoid getting certificates or buying cash registers. They also preferred to bribe some officials, which cost less than the register or the necessary documents. But according to an estimate by area specialists, over two million traders suffered economic dislocation as a result of the tariffs[24].

The government officials argued that these policies would stimulate local production of consumer goods and curtail the import of low-quality products. Since the purchasing power of the majority of the population had drastically decreased, shuttle traders have been bringing in cheap, affordable consumer goods. For the impoverished, even many of these goods are beyond reach. The government requirement for quality documents, "to protect Uzbek consumers"[25], was met with sarcastic comments by my informants. They obviously were unimpressed by the government's concern with the quality of the products they consumed while it did not pay them their salaries for months.

In the winter of 2002, as the markets remained empty and the prices at the state-owned stores were too high, consumers began to travel to markets in neighboring countries, particularly Shymkent in southern Kazakhstan[26]. The availability and affordability of goods compensated for the expense of traveling. IWPR reported that in the fall of 2002, 30,000 to 35,000 Uzbeks visited the region daily, netting the Kazaks an extra revenue of \$3.4 million in October alone[27]. Not surprisingly, President Karimov soon blamed Kazakhstan of "economic aggression", and the rumors about the government's plans to introduce visas for Kazakhstan followed. The Uzbek-Kazakh border was eventually closed

in December 2002[28]. The state-controlled media started a fierce propaganda campaign against citizens visiting these countries to buy goods[29]. Although the average weekly wage was the equivalent of just a few US cents, people were urged to buy only high-quality, high-price, legal imports.

These measures and the media campaign have failed to persuade the public who could not afford the high-quality, expensive goods the government encouraged them to buy. On the contrary, they became angry as they went to markets in neighboring countries because of the lack of options. Moreover, border closure caused the prices in Uzbekistan even further due to shortages, and inevitably worsened the climate of pessimism and despair in the country. The hostility toward the authorities deepened and people tried to subvert them without openly confronting them. The repressive measures of the state made direct opposition costly.

Import substitution policy is common among “developing countries”, aiming to protect domestic producers and increase exports. However, it is usually accompanied by subsidies or government credits or loans. The Uzbek government curbs one of the very few means of economic survival for households without providing alternatives. Because of the corruption at the very high levels and the general population’s mistrust of the authorities, even the well-meaning reforms cannot be implemented. Although the policy was damaging to the public interests, the people who were well-connected and had access to import licenses benefited greatly from this situation. Merchants at the bazaars and shuttle traders were not unwarranted when they argued that their businesses would be handed over to firms and companies registered in the names of the children, wives and other relatives of officials.

In short, doing small and medium business in Uzbekistan has been increasingly difficult due to restrictions on trade, arbitrary closing of bazaars and tightened border controls; and foreign businesses experience bureaucratic obstacles with payments and settlements. The major source of wealth for the political elite, however, has been foreign aid and the revenues from the cotton export.

State and Society

In the last few decades, scholars have argued that the state-society relations are not one-sided; state and society affect one another mutually (Migdal 2001, Singerman 1995). The states are not monolithic, all-powerful entities as they had been presented in the social science literature until recently. In his seminal work on peasant resistance, Scott examines the everyday forms of resistance through which the peasantry struggles against exploitation in Malaysia by slander, foot-dragging, embezzlement, and minor sabotage (1986). In a similar way, Singerman, based on her research among the popular classes in urban Cairo, suggests that the poor in Cairo have turned exploiting the government into a fine art (1995: 39). Individuals saw government as something to “take from”— an outside, external force to be patronized and exploited. They were not passive participants in the government’s policy of political exclusion.

In his work on state-society relations, Migdal shows that states are not always the unchallenged prime movers of macro-level societal change they are sometimes presented to be. They are often strictly constrained by their domestic environments. The societies in which they operate affects the autonomy of states, their policies, the preoccupying issues for their leaders and their coherence. According to Migdal, social organizations, including the state, coexist symbiotically. Society is also transformed by the state. The opportunities and obstacles that the state presents shapes social organizations and the structure of society as a whole. They are also influenced by other social organizations and by the openings and limitations posed by the world economy. Therefore, the interaction of states and other social formations is a continuing process of transformation. Neither states nor societies are fixed entities; they both change structure, goals, constituencies, rules, and social control in their process of interaction (2001: 56-7).

Uzbekistan is a new state that, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, became independent only reluctantly. Soviet institutions in Uzbekistan and in many other Soviet republics were shaped by the societies in which they operated. Scholars examined how non-Russian populations managed to appear “Soviet in public and ethnic in private” (Humphrey 1999, Kandiyoti 1998, Tohidi 1998). Even though the agents of the Soviet state gained access to the society to some extent, they tended not to transform accustomed ways but were traditionalized themselves[30]. Nonetheless, seventy years of Soviet rule had ingrained certain ideals, such as economic equality and social justice, as societal norms. Elsewhere, I have argued that a moral evaluation of trade was common in Uzbekistan as in many other postsocialist states (Baykal forthcoming). Thus, state and society constituted and transformed one another. Yet, the international dynamics is another factor that has to be considered as well. The recent transnational alliances has been influencing the state-society relations in Uzbekistan.

Recent Opportunities: Alliance in the War on Terror

One of the most successful moves of the Uzbek government has been to join the alliance in the “war on terror” after the September 11 attacks and give an airbase to the United States[31]. Since the collapse of the USSR, Karimov has been trying to justify his authoritarian government by emphasizing stability in a volatile region. In fact, in the early 1990s, some Western observers supported the repressive and homogenizing actions of the Uzbek state and other totalitarian regimes in the region in support of “stability”, mistakenly assuming that such situations are not inherently unstable[32]. Karimov has suppressed any kind of opposition against his rule by labeling them “Wahhabis”, “extremists” and “fundamentalists”. The opposition leaders have either been persecuted or are on exile to avoid persecution.

The “war on terror” led by the American President Bush gave Karimov regime another justification to crack down on dissent and continue human rights abuses. Although the U.S. has been the major donor of programs in the region to promote democracy and civil rights, the concerns over stability and security prevailed over issues of political and economic reform, and in the long run, fuel discontent and unrest. There are, indeed, underground Islamic groups in the region. Radical organizations such as the Islamic

Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Hizb-ut Tahrir support a regime change in Uzbekistan. These organizations, however, are not as strong as they are purported to be. Yet, the level of unemployment and poverty, as well as prohibitions on political expression, makes it easy for these groups to recruit young people. There are no alternative channels to express grievances. Moreover, the Western support for the corrupt and unrepresentative Uzbek government causes anti-Western sentiment among some people. In the case of Uzbekistan, the West, once again, has ended up supporting a regime as illiberal and violent as the groups it is claims to destroy.

Until the events in Andijon in May 2005, the Uzbek government has been successful in monopolizing foreign aid and getting away with human rights abuses in the country. Karimov has been praised by his American visitors Condoleeza Rice, Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld for his support in the war on terror. President Bush thanked Uzbek President Karimov personally[33]. Ironically, at the same time, other branches of the American government, such as the State Department, attacked Karimov's regime for abuses of political and civil rights. Uzbek people questioned the U.S. government's motives and found them hypocritical (that is, eager to abandon their democratic principles in exchange for economic or military advantage). The government was quick to realize that donor countries see security ties as more important than democratic reform. For instance, the United States announced in July 2004 that it was going to withhold millions of dollars in security and economic assistance to Uzbekistan because it was disappointed over Tashkent's human rights practices[34]. Yet, only one month later, during his visit, General Richard Meyers, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced that Washington would add \$21 million to a previous \$39 million commitment to help Tashkent prevent the proliferation of biological weapons[35]. Therefore, arrest and torture of people alleged to be the members of IMU, and harassment and intimidation of human rights activists continued; controls on political parties or media was intensified. Alliance in the "war on terror" gave government repression a new impetus.

In this respect, the transnational forces and alliances have to be taken into account in the analysis of state-society relations. The state and society often affect and transform one another. However, the Uzbek elite have survived perhaps longer than they would have thanks to international backing. In a way, they succeeded in finding sponsors for the authoritarian, repressive regime in the country, and resisted change.

The Prospects for Change?

The Western support for Karimov regime started to weaken when the government suppressed the unrest in Andijon[36] on May 13 and 14, 2005. Public expression of discontent over poverty and political repression ended in bloodshed. The troops fired indiscriminately at unarmed civilians in the crowd. Despite the Western criticisms, Karimov escaped isolation once again, receiving support from Russia and China, who are worried about their own Muslim populations. He bought himself some time[37].

In Uzbekistan, large numbers of people live below the poverty line, and even low-paid employment is hard to find. Particularly the poorest have little access to information and hardly have any time to think about making changes as they struggle to make a daily living. The apathy, especially among the young people, and the exit strategy most people favor leads one to believe that the change might be slow to come. On the other hand, economic hardships and political repression provides a breeding ground for extremist Islamic movements. Yet, the current regime's only remaining pillar is fear and repression, which may not be as strong as the Uzbek political elite think. Mere coercion can hardly keep a state intact. The question is who will be replacing them.

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Notes:

1. The most successful Central Asian intellectuals and politicians owed their success to their competency in Russian language and Soviet culture. No matter how Russified they might be, however, they often experienced discrimination outside their region for education or military service. [[return to text](#)]
2. See for instance Humphrey 2002: 175-201, for a discussion of the new Russians. [[return to text](#)]
3. See Nazpary 2002 on the post-Soviet Kazakh elite. [[return to text](#)]
4. Regionalism of the elite is in fact a reflection of society at large. In Uzbekistan, communal and regional identities prevail over other identities, and natal connections to a region is more important for most Uzbeks in their daily interactions than being an Uzbek. [[return to text](#)]
5. See also Gulnoza Saidazimova's report "Uzbekistan: Islam Karimov vs. the Clans", www.tribune-uz.info 24.04.2005, and Timur Abdullaev's piece "Uzbekistan Maneuvers" at <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol14/Abdullaev.html> [[return to text](#)]
6. Ilkhamov notes that although cotton is the least profitable crop for the producers, they do it to get land from the state for their own use. Personal communication, 2/22/01. [[return to text](#)]
7. On February 16, 1999, six bombs exploded in Tashkent killed sixteen people, according to official figures, and wounded at least a hundred. The attacks, which targeted key government buildings, were blamed on the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, but links to Islamic radicals could not be proven. The bombings set off a far-reaching government crackdown on civil rights, in which thousands of people were arrested for engaging in non state-sanctioned forms of religious expression. [[return to text](#)]
8. See <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032904a.shtml> for more information. [[return to text](#)]
9. Saidazimova, *ibid.* [[return to text](#)]
10. Specialists argue that there has been a historical rivalry between Tashkent-Ferghana and Samarkand-Bukhara factions. During the Soviet era, native politicians had their respective power bases. For instance, of the two major early leaders of Uzbekistan, Faizulla Khodzhaev and Akmal Ikramov were rivals from 1925 to 1938. Khodzhaev was a Bukhara/Samarkand figure whereas Ikramov was rooted in the Tashkent/Fergana regions and primarily oriented to Moscow. Khodzhaev symbolized the national-minded wing of the Jadid movement while Ikramov represented the internationalist Bolshevik branch. Therefore, the traditional institutions and loyalties continued to constitute a base for recruitment and promotion of native cadres, and regional rivalries persisted in the Soviet period as well. For a comprehensive analysis of regional rivalries in Uzbekistan, see Carlisle 1986 and 1991, and Critchlow 1991. On the other hand, the regional elite are not homogeneous either, as Almatov and Jurabekov, both from Samarkand region, are cited as rivals with their own networks. [[return to text](#)]
11. His growing up in an orphanage helps him in this respect. [[return to text](#)]
12. Ilkhamov, personal communication. [[return to text](#)]
13. Allworth argues that historically there was always the notion of a just ruler prevailing in Central Asia (1990). The Soviet regime continued the image of a redistributive fatherly state. In the post-Soviet era, President Karimov attempted to portray himself as the "father" of the Uzbeks; however, he could not sustain it due to his unpopular policies and increasing poverty and social stratification. [[return to text](#)]
14. *Mahalla* is a form of neighborhood organization specific to Central Asia and the Middle East. Bacon describes the *mahalla*, or ward, in pre-Soviet era as the strongest social unit in cities, towns and large villages that consisted of a street or segment of a street, with the lanes and cul-de-sacs branching from it and a mosque (1966: 72). The Soviet authorities incorporated Uzbek *mahallas* into the Soviet system and promoted them in order to gain legitimacy and control and to appear benign; yet, they had a limited access. [[return to text](#)]
15. Bukharbaeva 2003, Human Rights Watch Report 2003. [[return to text](#)]

16. The Law on Institutions of Self-Government of Citizens, HRW 2001, 2003. [\[return to text\]](#)
17. I was told that even September 11, 2001 attacks were not shown on Uzbek TV for many days and people who had access to Russian news and the Internet told the others. [\[return to text\]](#)
18. See for instance Hogan 2000 and Appelbaum 2002. [\[return to text\]](#)
19. For more information, see Eurasianet.org, 12/12/2002 and International Crisis Group Report No. 93 (28 February 2005). [\[return to text\]](#)
20. Eurasianet.org, 9/26/2002. [\[return to text\]](#)
21. Bazaar traders as well as grocery shop owners often complain about the frequent sanitary inspections and tax officials' visits, which mean paying them bribes in order to get a passing grade or to avoid falsification of their records. Inspectors take advantage from confusing and often-changing rules and regulations on private business. [\[return to text\]](#)
22. IWPR, 8 October 2003. [\[return to text\]](#)
23. One solution traders devised was selling their merchandise at their homes. If one appeared as she was looking for something at the bazaar, she soon was approached by men and women asking what she needed, who then offered to take her home to show the items they had. Or alternatively, one could locate the sellers of certain consumer goods through relatives, neighbors, and co-workers. [\[return to text\]](#)
24. Eurasianet.org, 9/26/2002. See also IWPR, 15 Nov 2002, for its impact on shuttle traders. [\[return to text\]](#)
25. President Karimov often spoke on TV about the negative impact of imports. He argued that they drained the country's precious hard currency resources. Also, he underlined the low quality of the imports. [\[return to text\]](#)
26. In fact, going to Kazakhstan was not a new phenomenon for Uzbeks. Due to the government restriction on movement of citizens within the republic, especially to Tashkent (partially due to the bombings in Tashkent and the fear of a popular uprising), the distribution of imported goods from one region to another slowed down. The fear of authorities made it safer for merchants in provinces to go abroad to Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan for goods rather than to the capital of their own country (IWPR, 12 July 2002). However, following the recent closing of the bazaars drastically not only traders went to the markets abroad, ordinary shoppers did as well. [\[return to text\]](#)
27. 15 November 2002. [\[return to text\]](#)
28. The justification for the border closing was 'hygiene scare' because of 'the growing frequency of cases of food poisoning among Uzbek citizens from food products bought in Kazakhstan'. IWPR, 10 January 2003. In January 2003, the border with Kyrgyzstan was sealed-off as well. [\[return to text\]](#)
29. Pro-government newspapers, such as Pravda Vostoka and Narodnoye Slovo, said "No to smuggling", "We don't need low quality goods", and "The prosperity of the country is created by its citizens" (IWPR, 24 January 2003). Officials appeared on TV everyday to explain the subtleties of economy and tell citizens how to conduct their business, spend their money, where to buy goods and what kind to buy. They denounced the opening of some 20 markets on the borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, where low cost goods could be bought. Deputy interior minister condemned Uzbeks traveling to neighboring states to make purchases as 'naïve children'. [\[return to text\]](#)
30. See for instance Humphrey 1999, on the way collective farms worked. [\[return to text\]](#)
31. Uzbekistan was among the first countries to offer a base for the coalition forces. [\[return to text\]](#)
32. Based on official anti-Islamic materials and in the absence of fieldwork, several Western authors predicted that all Soviet Muslims would incline toward a strong Islamic identity. Moreover, incidents of ethnic strife in Central Asia in the late Soviet era led scholars to believe that ethnic tensions will manifest themselves when the

Soviet power declined. But those conflicts resulted from socioeconomic and political conditions rather than “ethnic” motivation, and the predicted conflicts, fortunately, did not take place. Just as the religiosity of the Soviet Central Asians, their ethnic sentiments were exaggerated as well. [\[return to text\]](#)

33. Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, March 18, 2003. [\[return to text\]](#)

34. Eurasianet.org, 7/14/2004. [\[return to text\]](#)

35. Eurasianet.org, 8/13/2004. [\[return to text\]](#)

36. Andijon and other cities in the Ferghana Valley have a long history of revolts that go back to anti-Russian uprisings in the late 19 th century. [\[return to text\]](#)

37. He had already been granted immunity after he leaves office by the law passed on April 27, 2003 (Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, April 27, 2003; Eurasianet.org, 5/1/2003). [\[return to text\]](#)

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