

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY  
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATION INSTITUTE  
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**M.A. THESIS**

**The role of urban religiosity in cultural resistance to Soviet-  
Style-Secularization: The case of Uzbekistan**

**by**

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**MOKHIRAKHON NOSIROVA**

**A thesis submitted to the Alliance of Civilizations Institute in partial  
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## ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

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## ÖZ

### **The role of urban religiosity in cultural resistance to Soviet Style**

#### **Secularization: The case of Uzbekistan**

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Bu tezde Özbekistan örneği üzerinden Sovyet tarzı sekülerleşmeye karşı direniş mücadelesi öğrenilmiştir. Komünizm ve Sovyet tarzı sekülerleşme, Orta Asya bölgesinde İslam inancı ve İslami değerlerle savaştı. SSCB'nin çöküşü, İslam'ın Sovyet 'seküler' ideolojisini dengelemesine ve 'geri dönmesine' izin vermiş olsa da, Sovyet politikalarının devamında ifade edilen baskı nedeniyle bölge yine de gerçek özgürlüğe ulaşamamıştır. Sovyet ve Sovyet sonrası Özbekistan'da İslam dini üzerindeki baskı durumu, toplum içinde direniş duygularının ortaya çıkmasına yol açtı. Bazı yerel aydınların güçlü dini iradesi, tarihsel olarak karmaşık olan bu süreçte hayati bir rol oynamıştır. Tezde ulema, gayri resmi ulema, Ceditler ve yeni ortaya çıkan Neo Ceditlerin devlet politikasına karşı direniş ve muhalefetteki rolü tartışılacaktır. Bu çalışma, şehir kavramının direniş süreci üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olduğunu savunmaktadır. Özbekistan'ın, Sovyet işgalinden önce Orta Asya'daki neredeyse tüm devletlerin tarihi başkentlerini kapsayan ve en büyük medreselere, kütüphanelere ve ulema geleneklerine sahip konumu, belirli bir İslami miras oluşturmuştur. Bu şehirlerin yüzyıllardır İslami okulların merkezi olması, yerel halk arasında bu mirasın korunmasına yönelik güçlü bir sorumluluk anlayışının gelişmesine yol açmıştır. Bu, son yüzyıllarda İslam adına birkaç savaş yürütülmesinin nedeni oldu. Özbekistan nüfusu en yakın tarihte bile, Sovyetler içinde ve sonrasında, İslam'a olan bağlılığını korumuştur.

## ABSTRACT

### THE ROLE OF URBAN RELIGIOSITY IN CULTURAL RESISTANCE TO SOVIET-STYLE SECULARIZATION: THE CASE OF UZBEKISTAN

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Communism and Soviet-style secularization sought to suppress Islam and dismantle Islamic values in Central Asia. Although the collapse of the USSR allowed Islam to reassert itself against Soviet 'secular' ideology, the region did not achieve true religious freedom due to the continuation of Soviet-style policies in the subsequent period. In Soviet and post-Soviet Uzbekistan, state pressure on Islam led to the rise of sentiments of resistance within society. The strong religious will of certain local intellectuals played a critical role in this complex historical process. This thesis examines the roles of the ulema, unofficial ulema, Jadids, and the newly-emerged Neo-Jadids in resisting and opposing state policies, particularly emphasizing urban life and culture. The study argues that the city itself—its vibrant religious life, madrasas, libraries, and long-standing traditions of Islamic scholarship—significantly shaped the resistance. Uzbekistan, home to the historic capitals of nearly all Central Asian states before the Soviet invasion, developed a distinct Islamic heritage that fostered a deep sense of responsibility among the local population to protect it. This sense of duty has fueled several Islamic revolts over the past centuries. Even under Soviet rule and in the post-Soviet era, Uzbekistan's population maintained a higher level of religiosity compared to other Soviet Muslim communities. This thesis will explore how urban religiosity played a pivotal role in shaping cultural resistance to Soviet-style secularization and continues to influence struggles for greater religious freedom in contemporary Uzbekistan.

**Keywords:** Islam, Jadidism, KGB, Uzbekistan, Soviet-style secularism, cultural resistance

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The Soviet Union was officially an atheist state and promoted Marxism-Leninism as the state ideology. The Soviet government perceived religious beliefs, including Islam, as a potential threat to its power and the ideology it sought to propagate. Islam as a religion has always challenged this atheistic worldview. In regions with significant Muslim populations within the Soviet Union, such as Central Asia and the Caucasus, there were movements advocating greater autonomy or independence and Islam often served as a unifying factor for these activities, causing Soviet authorities to fear its potential to mobilize dissent against the state. Some Muslim figures opposed Soviet rule and policies, considering them oppressive or contrary to Islamic principles. This opposition could manifest itself in the form of political activism, resistance, or even armed rebellion, further exacerbating Soviet authorities' concerns. The Soviet Union also feared external influence on its Muslim population, especially from the Islamic world or the West. It feared that foreign powers might use religious sentiments to undermine Soviet power or advance their interests within the Soviet sphere of influence. Islam was a cultural and ideological system that was contrary to the secular system and Marxist-Leninist orientation of the Soviet regime. The Soviet authorities tried to promote a homogenized Soviet identity, downplaying religious and ethnic differences, and viewing them as potential sources of division and instability. In this regard the Soviet government used the KGB (*КГБ-Комитет государственной безопасности*) – State Security Committee. The KGB was a powerful and feared institution in the Soviet Union, serving as a key instrument of state control and repression. Its activities contributed to the maintenance of the authoritarian regime and the suppression of political opposition throughout the Soviet era. From the beginning, this system was built to maintain an extensive surveillance network to monitor the activities of Soviet citizens, including wiretapping, intercepting mail, and infiltrating organizations suspected of anti-Soviet activities. It was even in charge of carrying out operations to counter foreign espionage and sabotage, both within the Soviet Union and abroad. The Soviet government used to claim that this organization was important for its role in protecting state secrets. It was very active in preventing Soviet citizens from fleeing abroad as well. It had been actively involved in suppressing political dissent and opposition to the Soviet government. It was involved in tracking and infiltrating dissident movements, carried out arrests and interrogations for

perceived threats to the regime, and operated a vast network of prisons and labor camps (such as the Gulag system) for political prisoners.<sup>1</sup> The KGB's fear of Islam was rooted in its concern for maintaining internal stability, ideological control, and territorial integrity within the Soviet Union. It viewed Islam, like other religions and identities, as a potential threat to its power and control. Even after the collapse of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) the present system still exists in almost all post-Soviet regions. It means the Islamic faith is still a threat in many post-Soviet republics including Central Asia. However, we should highlight that globalization with its digital era is challenging the repressing policies to be kept hidden. In this regard, we argue that the regions with traditions of urban religiosity have been successful in resistance to this type of political tradition.

As per the history of Islam, even the city of Yathrib was renamed Medina by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) after he migrated to that city (*hijra*)<sup>2</sup>. There is some speculation on the choice of such a name, the following presents a few reasons; the word "Medina" translated from Arabic refers to 'city', by renaming Yathrib to Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) indicated its significance as the city of the Islamic community (*ummah*) that was forming around it. Moreover, the renaming of Yathrib to Medina was part of a broader effort to unite the region's various tribes and communities under the banner of Islam which symbolized the creation of a new community based on common religious beliefs and principles rather than tribal affiliation. The renaming of Yathrib to Medina emphasized its role as the center of a growing Islamic community and the site of many significant events in early Islamic history, including the establishment of the first Islamic state and the Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w.) mosque.<sup>3</sup> This was an important moment in the history of Islam, symbolizing the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) and the emergence of Islam as a separate and cohesive community. Islam is an urban religion and it's stable in cities due to *ulema* tradition and access to religious education. Moreover, urban religiosity can save and hand over cultural values for the next generations. The author of the book about Ibn Haldun's thought and approaches Fuad Baali referring to Ibn Haldun, states that Haldun writes in his 'Muqaddimah' about the nature of cities, highlighting that there is the interaction between

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<sup>1</sup> Adler, Nanci (2017) *The Gulag Survivor: Beyond the Soviet System*, Routledge 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

<sup>2</sup> 'There is a hike in changing the name of Yathrib into Medina' was suggested by Dr. Alpaslan Açıkgenç

<sup>3</sup> Blogging Theology (31 Mar 2024) *'How to Build Islamic Civilization with Dr. Sohail Hanif'* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ded1pdfpiOw> (starting from 2:35 min.)

Islamic values and urban culture.<sup>4</sup> He saw cities as spaces where Islamic principles could flourish and shape the social, moral, and intellectual life of communities, contributing to the vitality and sustainability of Muslim societies. Ibn Haldun recognized the role of Islamic education and science in urban centers, especially in the fields of theology, law, and philosophy. He saw the pursuit of knowledge and intellectual exploration as central to Islamic civilization, contributing to the cultural richness of cities. Moreover, Ibn Haldun discussed the importance of Islamic law (*sharia*) in the governance of urban life, including its role in regulating trade, resolving disputes, and ensuring justice. He emphasized the importance of a fair legal system based on Islamic principles to protect individual rights and preserve social order. Along with this, he highlighted the adherence to Islamic values, he also recognized the diversity of cultural expressions in urban societies. He accepted the influence of local customs, traditions, and artistic endeavors as long as they did not contradict Islamic principles. Accordingly, we agree that urban religiosity can contribute to a certain gene pool's resistance to many types of challenges.

### 1.1 Background

According to French orientalist scholar Ernest Renan (1823-1892), Islam by definition was the enemy of reason and freedom of thought. He believed that it was impossible to carry out meaningful work in a Muslim environment. Ernest Renan with this idea in mind, characterized Ibn Rushd, since he did investigations on Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), as a lonely and irreligious freethinker of European descent who lived in constant fear of persecution and whose activities could be seen as resistance to Islam. Thus, Renan's view of Ibn Rushd and Islam is strongly colored by his Orientalist approach.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, it motivated many Christian theologians and scholars. However, this very Renan stated Islam is an urban religion, he stated that the mosque likewise synagogue, and church are fundamentally tied to urban environments and Islam is a religion primarily centered around the cities.<sup>6</sup> The concept of city and urban culture as attributes of civilization has long been recognized and emphasized in historical and sociological studies. Urban centers have traditionally been hubs of cultural, economic, and political activity, playing

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<sup>4</sup> Baali, Fuad (1988) *'Society, State, and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought'*, State University of New York Press, Albany, Chapter 4 Urban Sociology

<sup>5</sup> Sandwijk, A. Wang (2011) *'Ernest Renan (1823-1892): An Orientalist View of Islam'*, p. 1  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/298556046\\_Ernest\\_Renan\\_1823-1892\\_An\\_Orientalist\\_view\\_of\\_Islam](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/298556046_Ernest_Renan_1823-1892_An_Orientalist_view_of_Islam)

<sup>6</sup> Abu-Lughod, Janet L.(1987) *'The Islamic city, historic Islamic essence, and contemporary relevance'*., International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 19, No. 2 (May), pp. 155-176./ p.156

a pivotal role in the development of civilizations. Ancient civilizations, such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and China, centered around urban areas. Cities like Babylon, Thebes, Mohenjo-Daro, and Anyang were not only political and economic centers but also places where culture, science, and technology flourished. These cities facilitated trade, enabled administrative control, and provided a space for cultural and intellectual exchange. Sociologist Lewis Mumford in his work 'The City in History' emphasizes that cities are the natural homes of civilization. He argues that cities, by bringing people together, create environments where human creativity, innovation, and social organization thrive. Cities have been the engines of economic growth. Urban areas provide markets for goods, labor, and capital.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Jane Jacobs, discusses how cities drive economic innovation and development through the dense interaction of diverse people and ideas. Cities have often been the birthplace of cultural movements and artistic expression.<sup>8</sup> The Renaissance in Florence, the Enlightenment in Paris, and the Industrial Revolution in London are examples of how urban centers have spurred significant cultural and intellectual developments. In modern urban studies, cities are seen as critical nodes in the global network, impacting everything from international trade to cultural exchanges.

These references underline the essential role of cities and urban culture in shaping and sustaining civilizations throughout history and into the modern era. Inspired by this, we attempted to explore the role of urban religiosity in one of the regions that was the famous center of the Islamic school. In our opinion, the urban religious culture in Central Asian Uzbekistan has been able to resist the communist ideology based on atheism and continues to shape promising sentiments in Uzbek society.

Uzbekistan has significant geopolitical importance due to its strategic location as it borders all four Central Asian countries also shares the borders with Afghanistan, making it a key player in regional security dynamics, especially in counter-terrorism efforts and stability in the region. Uzbekistan is important for regional security. Its political and social stability can affect neighboring countries and regional dynamics, especially security issues such as terrorism, extremism, and organized crime. After the collapse of the USSR, the entire Western world including the US government, who used Islam as an ideology to fight the Soviet Union in

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<sup>7</sup> Mumford, Lewis (1961) *The City in History*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World

<sup>8</sup> Desrochers and Hospers, (Nowlan 1997; Steigerwald 2001).

*Cities and the economic development of nations: an essay on Jane Jacobs' contribution to economic theory.* Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301676662\\_Cities\\_and\\_the\\_economic\\_development\\_of\\_nations\\_an\\_essay\\_on\\_Jane\\_Jacobs'\\_contribution\\_to\\_economic\\_theory#fullTextFileContent](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301676662_Cities_and_the_economic_development_of_nations_an_essay_on_Jane_Jacobs'_contribution_to_economic_theory#fullTextFileContent)

Afghanistan, feared that Central Asia could become a victim of the 'wrong kind of Islam'.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, they feared that the region with rich resources would provide the necessary support to certain rebellious groups. The location of Uzbekistan makes it a vital hub for regional connections and trade routes between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Moreover, it has the biggest number of the Muslim population in the region. Besides, Uzbekistan has significant natural gas and oil reserves, making it an important player in the Central Asian energy landscape since its energy resources contribute to regional energy security and are important for global energy markets. Uzbekistan is known to be the world's fifth-largest uranium supplier.<sup>10</sup> The country's gold mining industry plays a significant role in its economy and contributes to its status as a key player in the global gold market. It is in the list of the top ten gold producers in the world. The rivers Amudarya and Sirdarya flow through Uzbekistan, which are the most important sources of water for the region. Control of these rivers and water management are important factors in regional politics and can influence relations with neighboring countries. After the collapse of the USSR, there were two expectations in the world, the first one was a fear or concern of the Western world, as mentioned above, while the Islamic-oriented countries had hope that the region would join them in a very short time. This is the case, that Uzbekistan with its Muslim population which is the biggest in the post-Soviet area, was a subject of attention and discourse. From the historical perspective, the region, with its conservative religious past raised concerns on one hand, and hopes on the other, which were not unfounded. Neither the Mongol invasion nor the brutal Stalinist repressions could remove the peculiarity of adherence to Islamic values from this region. In this regard, the cities and urban culture played a vital role. As the region gained independence, the sedentary population of Central Asia –which is mostly in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, began to demand more freedom to Islamic values. It should be emphasized that the Soviet regime did not disappear with the collapse of the USSR, but continued and continues with some formal changes. It means there is still a struggle against the cultural and religious pressure. Current research emphasizes the continuities between the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. It discusses the struggle between the religious and secular realms in Uzbekistan, highlighting the geo-political impact of post-Soviet Russia. The dissertation aims to show the failure of the forceful approach of the State policy in the area with thousands of years of Islamic heritage. Moreover, the thesis describes the

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<sup>9</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2014) *'Islam after communism: religion and politics in Central Asia'*, University of California Press, Berkeley, (Ch.6 Islam and opposition) p.143

<sup>10</sup> World Nuclear Association: (2014, Apr.02) *'Uranium in Uzbekistan'* <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-t-z/uzbekistan.aspx>

specificities of the Soviet-style secularization and the resistance mood of the local religious and intellectual activists. To understand the problem, the related historical issues were analyzed accordingly.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The application of one ideology in the social and political aspects of the state and society by forcefully muffling any other ideas brings chaos and leads to tragic results. The USSR (United States of Soviet Republics) was built according to Vladimir Lenin's principles and views who was under the deep influence of Marx and Engels – the fathers of rational socialism, moreover, it became a symbol of the most secular and well-developed society and state. The main principles of Social Communism were to delete religion, class discrimination, and competition from society since they were obstacles to a person's development and happiness. Now looking back it could be stated that the USSR was an experimental Communistic State. In that state there was no place for religion and class distinction, there was no competition in economic issues, and the state was based on the theory of equality – between the genders and "classes". The society of this 'ideal' state had to accept the rules of the founders according to the historical principle popular in the Modern West '*cuius regio, eius religio*' a Latin phrase that means "Whose realm, his religion," meaning that the religion of the ruler was to dictate the religion of those who are ruled. This led to the formation of Soviet-style secularism which had rude consequences in a vast region.

The split of the USSR made the world reconsider many rules and principles. The present paper analyses the concept of the city or the role of urban religiosity that is emphasized in the formation of certain resistance groups that took place in the process of religious and cultural revival in Uzbekistan. This concept is given in comparison to different cultural contexts. The paper discusses the notion of secularism since its wrong interpretation has an impact on some post-Soviet Muslim societies by highlighting the difference between two types of secularism which are Anglo-Saxon and Communistic types. The thesis looks through the history, economic, and social circumstances of the Central Asian region before and within the formation of the USSR. Moreover, it will cover the discussion of the consequences of Communistic ideology-based politics in the region which was part of the Islamic world. The dissertation will give an analysis of the socio-political changes in the Central Asian region during the Russian Empire, and Soviet Union, and after its collapse, highlighting the struggle between certain groups in Uzbekistan and will look through the consequences of this struggle.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Thesis**

During the progressive development of China and its attempts to increase its influence in neighboring Central Asia and Afghanistan, besides at a time when Russia is trying to reunite the post-Soviet region into a new Union since it considers the Central Asian lands to be Russian area of interests, we attempt to show the role of urban religiosity in Uzbek society's confrontation to this kind of challenges in the context of its resistance to the Communistic and Post – Communistic regimes.

Comparison of different cultures and analyses of different literature allowed us to state that Islam was more important for people with sedentary lifestyles if to be more specific, among urbanites. We argue that urban culture makes religion, especially Islamic heritage more sustainable in large cities. Application of Islamic values in pivot cities live long due to a mood of resistance to restrictions and also because of excess to the holy literature and *ulema* tradition. Moreover, it explores current changes in Uzbek society in the context of geopolitical circumstances, since the region has an important role in the region and the Islamic world. We attempt to show the role of religion for the population of Uzbekistan, the Uzbeks, and the socio-political changes in the region during different stages of history and religious politics in Uzbekistan, where policy regarding Islam was sensible. The research suggests that there are some arguments inside of post-Soviet Uzbekistan that should be analyzed and solved accordingly. Moreover, there is a disagreement on 'secular' and 'modern state' conditions and understanding of policy regarding Islam. It's important to analyze because Communist and Post-Communist regimes left very deep trauma to society.

### **1.4 The Importance of the Research**

The research investigates the socio-political changes and current politico-religious problems in Uzbekistan, a region of significant geopolitical and strategic importance. This exploration is critical for several reasons, first of all, Uzbekistan's strategic location has historically made it a focal point for trade routes, such as the ancient Silk Road, and periodically it was a site of geopolitical interest for major powers. Understanding the contemporary socio-political dynamics within Uzbekistan provides insight into broader regional stability and international relations. Historically significant cities were not only important centers of commerce but also

cradles of Islamic culture, education, and science. The rich heritage of these cities underscores Uzbekistan's historical role as a crucial Islamic center. This research sheds light on how historical legacies influence current socio-political and religious landscapes. Moreover, the region faces a complex interplay of politico-religious issues. The rise of religious extremism, the role of Islam in state politics, and the government's approach to religious issues are pivotal factors shaping the socio-political environment. By examining these challenges, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the balance between secular governance and religious influences in Uzbekistan. The stability of Uzbekistan has implications for the security of the broader Central Asian region. Issues such as border security, inter-ethnic relations, and economic development are intertwined with the socio-political fabric of the country. This research highlights how internal dynamics in Uzbekistan affect regional cooperation and conflict. Recent political and socio-economic reforms and initiatives in Uzbekistan are important to the country's development trajectory, but they must be implemented alongside freedom in religious matters for the population. The study examines the socio-political context in which these changes are occurring, offering insight into the potential successes and challenges of these reforms. The outcomes of this research have global relevance, particularly for policymakers, scholars, and international organizations interested in Central Asian politics and Islamic studies. By providing a nuanced understanding of Uzbekistan's current issues, the research aids in formulating informed strategies for engagement and cooperation with the region. This research is crucial for comprehending the ongoing socio-political transformations in Uzbekistan and their broader implications. By delving into the historical, cultural, and contemporary politico-religious context, the study not only enhances academic knowledge but also informs policy and strategic decisions relevant to regional and global stakeholders.

#### **1.4.1 What Distinguishes the Research**

This research distinguishes itself by utilizing new data and information to examine the issues facing Uzbek society, particularly in the context of urban religiosity and city culture. We contend that the role of cities from an Islamic perspective has been largely overlooked, especially regarding Central Asian cities. Additionally, the dissertation provides an analysis of the newly emerged Neo-jadid mood in the region, a topic previously unexplored in academic literature. It also offers a political review of the systems under Karimov and Mirziyoyev, highlighting their continued use of Soviet-style approaches, along with the discontinuity of this policy in their politics. It also compares the politico-social views towards Islam in different

stages of history; it compares some aspects of the different cultures by providing analysis of recent sources including social media ones.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The current paper aims to answer the following research questions: 'Why Islamic values are considered the most important ones for people with urban culture compared to others?'; 'Does Uzbekistan society's urban background have an impact on its resistance against Soviet and post-Soviet secular policy? Along with the answers to these questions, we attempt to cover the role of certain personalities in the crucial turns of history. Moreover, we will emphasize the importance of information data exchange that influences to ruins certain ideologies.

### **1.6 Methodology**

In the dissertation, we attempted to use a combination of methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Aspects such as document analysis, observation, case studies, content analysis, ethnography, narrative analysis, grounded theory, phenomenological research, and content analysis, which we have attempted to cover in this dissertation, fall under the qualitative research method.

Application of them helped us examine shared experiences, attitudes, and perceptions in context and allowed us to use data derived from observations, interactions, and events in natural settings. Document analysis that involves the study of written or visual materials such as texts, images, and political or historical records was very useful. We also found analytical methods very accurate since they involve precise methods of collecting and analyzing data. This helped to provide an understanding of the cultural and historical context. We used the analytic method since it enables us to identify causal relationships between cases and notions and draw accurate conclusions from their data.

Case studies that involve an in-depth study of a certain case or several cases were especially useful for understanding a complex aspect in several numbers of existing lives and for providing a detailed description of the features of the situation. The use of an ethnographic approach has in some ways facilitated interaction with a particular group or community. The goal was to explain the culture, practices, and perspectives of the group from the perspective of different sources. Narrative analysis helped us to focus on analyzing the stories or narratives of individuals. It has helped us to create meaning through storytelling and reveal an understanding

of identity, culture, and social relationships. Moreover, we used grounded theory since it is an inductive approach to research that involves developing theories or conceptual frameworks based on collected data. We used a phenomenological approach to gain insight into the lived experiences described by individuals. It aims to uncover the underlying structures and meanings of experience without imposing preconceived theories or frameworks. Besides, the application of content analysis or discourse analysis, which was used to analyze documents, media, or online discussions helped us to involve the systematic analysis of the content of texts or other forms of communication to identify patterns, themes, or trends. That is very effective in understanding complicated socio-political issues. Propaganda is the strongest weapon of regimes, moreover, it changes its methods and shape very frequently to get flexible and make its influence wider and stronger. In this regard, the discourse analysis approach is very actual. Under the qualitative method, we also applied the comparative research method to examine similarities and differences across different socio-political contexts. By comparing different cases, we were able to identify patterns, trends, and factors that contribute to differences in political views of societies, certain institutions, and behavior. Moreover, comparative analysis helped us to check existing theories and develop new ideas by examining how they are applied in different contexts. By comparing cases, we tried to evaluate the generalizability of theories and refine them to a better explanation of socio-political phenomena. Overall, we applied the qualitative research methods that cover many aspects.

### **1.7 Research Challenges:**

As a consequence of the strict regulatory environment surrounding data exchange in Uzbekistan, as well as the significant constraints placed on the exercise of freedom of speech, it was not feasible to employ the interview method as initially planned for this research. These restrictions not only created an atmosphere where candid communication was difficult but also limited access to valuable firsthand insights. This, in turn, prevented the researcher from engaging with and interviewing several selected representatives of Uzbek society, whose perspectives and contributions would have been critical to the depth and breadth of the study. Consequently, the research had to be conducted without their input, which may have had implications for the overall scope and richness of the findings.

## 1.8 Literature Review

While writing the current dissertation among many investigated literature we referred much to the works of Dr. Adeeb Khaleed. His key books about Central Asia which we have looked through are the following:

"The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia" (1998) - This book explores the Jadid movement, an intellectual and cultural reform movement among Muslims in Central Asia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

"Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia" (2007) - In this book, Khalid examines the role of Islam in the post-Soviet Central Asian states, analyzing how the collapse of communism has influenced religious and political dynamics in the region. "Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR" (2015) - This work focuses on the formation of Uzbekistan as a nation-state within the Soviet Union, looking at the interplay of nationalism, revolution, and imperial policies in the early Soviet period. Besides, Adeeb Khalid is the author of several articles like 'Society and Politics in Bukhara, 1868–1920', *Central Asian Survey* (2000), and 'The Quest for Autonomy in Turkestan: Hopes, Challenges, and Tragedy' (2020). These works provide in-depth analyses of various aspects of Central Asian history, culture, and politics. Along with it, we used as main sources 'Religious Revival in Tajikistan: The Soviet Legacy Revisited' written by H el ene Thibault as a Doctoral thesis of 2014 and her article 'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Adaptation and Institutional Legacy' written in 2015 which completes her thesis mentioned above. Moreover, we used the research works of Martha B. Olcott like 'Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia' (2007), 'Islam in Uzbekistan: Religious Education and State Ideology' (2008) written as co-author with Diyora Ziyayeva, Ahmed Rashid's 'Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia' (2002), Master thesis of Nuska Botoiarova 'Islamic Fundamentalism in Post soviet Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan: Real and Imagined Threat' (2005) as our main resources. Besides, Yelena Muzykina's 'The Dimensions of Islam in Contemporary Kazakhstan' (*Muslim Society, Politics and Islamic Education in the Former Russian Empire Chapter IX*) (2009. — C. 328-426.); Shahram Akbarzadeh's article 'Political Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan' (*Central Asian Survey* (2001), Eric M. McGlinchey's 'Islamic leaders in Uzbekistan' (2003), also significant and important in understanding the problem. [ziyo.uz](http://ziyo.uz), [azon.uz](http://azon.uz), Azon Global, and other internet websites have been used as sources of published articles by Muslim intellectuals. While investigating the relationship of the urban culture with Islam and its influence on Islamic traditions we looked through several literature. 'The Islamic city, historic Islamic essence, and

contemporary relevance' by Janet L. Abu-Lughod, 'Cities, states, and trust networks' by Charles Tilly, Lewis Mumford's 'The City in History' and some articles from 'Nizams: The hidden syntax under the surface. Urban morphology in traditional Islamic cities' written by Somaiyeh Falahat could be counted among them.

In addition, we utilized Ismail Gasprinski's 'Adventures of Mulla Abbas to depict the historical aspects of Uzbek society, and we referenced Craig Murray's 'Murder in Samarkand' in describing the Karimov era.



## **CHAPTER II**

# **ABOUT URBAN CULTURE. PRE-SOVIET UZBEK SOCIETY**

In this chapter, we aim to explore the characteristics of urban culture about historical developments. Additionally, we will present historical facts about Uzbek society with a focus on urban religiosity, emphasizing the role of Islam in shaping their identity.

### **2.1 Essential Features of the City and Urban Culture**

Generally, we can state that the urban culture thrives on diversity, bringing together people from different backgrounds and fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas and traditions. The city's essential features often include a vibrant arts scene, a range of entertainment options, and a blend of historical architecture and heritage. Urban culture is marked by its fast-paced lifestyle and a strong sense of community through local events and neighborhoods. However, these took long historical stages.

According to an Italian historian and scholar Mario Livani, whose research focuses on the political, social, and economic aspects of ancient Mesopotamian civilizations, the first city in history, emerged in Mesopotamia and was named Uruk.<sup>11</sup> Charles Tilly, an American sociologist and historian, popular for his extensive work on social structures, political processes, and the development of states and cities agrees with this theory. He is the author of the 'Cities, States, and Trust Networks'. In his article, Tilly quotes scholar Adams, who likewise, shares the same theory as Livani, however adds that Uruk is considered the first city-state<sup>12</sup>. Tilly in his article recounts the story of Gilgamesh, a figure who offers insights into the early city-state. Gilgamesh, both a legendary hero and a historical ruler of the ancient city-state Uruk, ruled around 2100-2500 BC. Besides, the city of Uruk is mentioned in the Bible as Erech, which is present-day referred to as Al-Warka, located approximately 300 kilometers southeast of Baghdad, at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers flowing into the Persian Gulf. The rulers of Uruk were prominent in Mesopotamia, later known as Sumer. As the city

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<sup>11</sup> Liverani, Mario (2006) *'Uruk: the first city'*, First published in Italian in 1998 by Gius. Laterza & Figli S.p.a., Roma-Bari, entitled Uruk: La Prima Citta. English edition published by arrangement with Eulama Literary Agency, Roma.; English translation © Zainab Bahrani and Marc Van De Mierop, Equinox, London Oakville

<sup>12</sup> Adams, R. M. C. C. (1972). *'Patterns of urbanization in early southern Mesopotamia'*. In M. J. Ucko, R. Tringham, & G. W. Dimbleby (Eds.), *Man, settlement and urbanism*. Cambridge: Shenkman.

expanded, it attracted settlers from surrounding regions, contributing to its growth and development.<sup>13</sup>

From the epics of Gilgamesh, we gain insights into the origins of the first cities and states, which often emerged simultaneously. The ancient texts reveal that religious legitimacy was crucial for rulers, with temples enclosed by city walls indicating efforts to protect the city from external threats. Sustaining a city requires a steady supply of goods and services, highlighting the importance of coercion, capital, and commitment to maintaining urban life. The author suggests that coercion entails using or threatening force, that capital is crucial for delivering goods and services, and that commitment is vital for building relationships that promote mutual recognition and coordination. Tilly emphasizes that the first cities and states depended heavily on coercive connections—essentially, forceful methods of integration and control. The author also introduces the concept of trust networks, defining them as connections that maintain commitment. Trust networks were crucial for the survival of early cities and states, and their existence predates the formation of urban centers. Such networks were vital for mutual support in activities like hunting and dealing with natural disasters or illnesses. He claims that cities and states first developed in Eurasia and later in Africa, with all of these urban centers interconnected through various forms of communication and exchange.<sup>14</sup> Tilly completes his argument by discussing the link that city and state has with the concept of trade. The development of trade significantly strengthened trust networks, it is illustrated by the Great Silk Road in his article, which linked cities and states across Asia with those in Europe. The author also mentions the Mongol Empire, the largest empire ever established, as an example of how coercion, capital, and commitment were crucial to its existence.

If we consider that early cities functioned as states, then the members of these city communities—citizens—were expected to have certain obligations and responsibilities. According to this statement and similarly to Tilly's commitment idea Robert F. Gorman notes that citizenship is a relationship between man and state tied with a certain obligation.<sup>15</sup>

So, the dweller of the city meant the person with responsibilities. The idea about the importance of the role of trade within city life was further developed by Ward-Perkins. He mentions that

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<sup>13</sup> Tilly, Charles (2010) '*Cities, States, and Trust Networks*', [Vol. 39, No. 3/4, Special Issue in Memory of Charles Tilly \(1929–2008\): Cities, States, Trust, and Rule \(May 2010\)](#)) Published By: Springer Nature

<sup>14</sup> IBID.

<sup>15</sup> Gorman, Robert F (1992) '*Citizenship, Obligation and Exile in Greek and Roman Experience*', [Vol. 6, No. 1, \[Special Issue on Refugees\] \(Jan., 1992\)](#), pp. 5-22

cities have historically served as key hubs in long-distance trade networks, this idea was developed by Tilly with an example of the Great Silk Road while Ward-Perkins brings the example of Rome during Augustus's reign. He states that with a population exceeding one million, Rome acted as a central node in a sophisticated trade system that spanned from northern Europe to the southern Mediterranean and extended into Persia. He notes that the importance of recognizing extensive trading activity often leads to significant economic specialization within individual urban centers.<sup>16</sup>

In his book 'The Ancient City' Fustel de Coulanges described the city as a confederation. He says, that in ancient times in its system the community membership was exclusive and defined by shared faith, values, ancestry, land, and rights. Only those who met these criteria could be part of the community, effectively excluding outsiders.<sup>17</sup> He argues that early Greek and Roman societies were initially organized around the family, tribe, or clan, and their religious practices. The shift to a settled lifestyle was influenced by the veneration of deceased ancestors, whose graves were considered sacred, leading people to remain close to these burial sites. Religion provided comfort for the living, and over time, religion and politics became intertwined, merging the church (or temple) with the state into a single unified entity. In general, the author highlights the important role of religion in urban culture by comparing Greek and Roman approaches.<sup>18</sup>

On this topic, Lewis Mumford gives an excellent description of the city, accumulating above mentioned ideas:

..one finds it in history is the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of community...The city is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship: it is the seat of the temple, the market, the hall of justice, and the academy of learning...here is where human experience is transformed into viable signs, symbols, patterns of conduct, and systems of order. Here is where the issues of civilization are focused: here, too, ritual passes on occasion into the active drama of a fully differentiated and selfconscious society.<sup>19</sup>

As we can see, Mumford emphasizes the role of religion and temples along with educational institutions as significant attributes of the city. He develops the idea in his article 'What is a

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<sup>16</sup> Ward-Perkins, B. 2005. *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilisation*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>17</sup> de Coulanges, Fustel(1916) '*The Ancient City*' Originally published in 1864 as *La Cité Antique*, translated into English by Williard Small, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton Kent &Co LTD, 4 Stationers Hall Court:London E.C., Book III, Chapter III p.173 <https://ia601502.us.archive.org/10/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.81548/2015.81548.The-Ancient-City.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> IBID

<sup>19</sup> Mumford, Lewis (1938) '*The Culture of Cities*', Harcourt, Brace and Company New York, p.14 (3)

city?’ while discussing a city as a social institution. He refers to John Stow, who states that people in cities are more polite and are often influenced in their religious beliefs through frequent exposure, and because they live under the scrutiny of others, they are more readily guided towards justice through example and are deterred from wrongdoing by feelings of shame. Additionally, since the love and goodwill between individuals is the strongest foundation for a society or kingdom after divine guidance, this mutual affection is cultivated and sustained in cities. In urban environments, people form alliances, communities, and organizations through their interactions and relationships.<sup>20</sup>

As time passed the number of cities increased in the World, moreover, cities kept developing throughout the ages improving their shapes and rules.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the city fostered a certain culture and commitment, protecting the internal heritage and the confederation itself, as well as passing on this tradition to new generations of residents.

The authors of the book ‘Nature of the Cities state that trying to create a broad concept of the city is complicated by the fact that cities often encompass a vast range of diverse elements. Therefore, urban theory must give the challenge of understanding and integrating a complex mixture of similarities and differences within urban environments, emphasizing the uniqueness of each city.<sup>22</sup>

The description of essential features of cities shows that cities represent the accumulation of capital, they represent the accumulation and coordination of coercion and trust networks which represent the coordination of commitment. The city is defined by unique characteristics that shape its culture, encompassing various institutions such as those related to religion, justice, and education. Cities also serve as hubs of innovation and creativity, where diverse ideas and cultures intersect, fostering an environment of continuous growth and adaptation. This framework not only highlights the distinctiveness of urban life but also symbolizes protection for its residents and the heritage embedded within the city.

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<sup>20</sup>Mumford, Lewis (1937) ‘What is a City?’ <https://citysynthesis.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/mumford-what-is-a-city-1937.pdf> ; p. 2 (29)

<sup>21</sup> Mumford, Lewis (1961) ‘*The City in History: its origins, its transformations, and its prospects*’ Harcourt, Brace and World, New York

<sup>22</sup> J. Scott, Allen & Storper, Michael (2014) ‘*The Nature of Cities: The Scope and Limits of Urban Theory*’,<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261569365> The Nature of Cities The Scope and Limits of Urban Theory

If to look into this notion from an Islamic perspective we can bring Ibn Khaldun's approach from his 'umran' concept. In the book 'Society, State, and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought' Fuad Baali referring to Ibn Khaldun, states that Khaldun writes in his 'Muqaddimah' about the nature of cities, highlighting that there is the interaction between Islamic values and urban culture.<sup>23</sup> He saw cities as spaces where Islamic principles could flourish and shape the social, moral, and intellectual life of communities, contributing to the vitality and sustainability of Muslim societies. Ibn Haldun recognized the role of Islamic education and science in urban centers, especially in the fields of theology, law, and philosophy. He saw the pursuit of knowledge and intellectual exploration as central to Islamic civilization, contributing to the cultural richness of cities.

## **2.2. About Uzbek Identity. Urban Culture: Trade, Scholarship, and Cultural Heritage in Uzbek Society**

The dwellers of nowadays Uzbekistan are descendants of the settled people who built cities in Central Asia, who are about 3000 years of history and were called Sogdians, Bactrians, Kharezmians, Margianians, or later just 'Turkis' for centuries<sup>24</sup>. In between those regions, there was an assimilation with invaders of the Kushan Empire who were replaced by Hephthalites (white hunns). Later the territory became a part of the Gokturk khanate which was divided into two Turkic khanates. The region was known as Turan, Transoxiana, and Turkestan as well<sup>25</sup>.

Turkic peoples are any of the various peoples whose members speak languages belonging to the Turkic family within the Altaic language group. They are historically and linguistically related to Tujue, the name given by the Chinese to the nomadic peoples who, in the 6th century A.D., founded an empire stretching from what is now Mongolia and the northern border of China to the Black Sea.<sup>26</sup>

The great Silk Road passed from this location connecting China with other known parts of the World and this notion also had a significant influence on the economic and political progress

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<sup>23</sup> Baali, Fuad (1988) '*Society, State, and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought*', State University of New York Press, Albany, Chapter 4 Urban Sociology

<sup>24</sup> Kamalova, Zebiniso (2017) '*Özbeklerin Ulusal Oluşumu*', Millî Kültür Araştırmaları Dergisi (MİKAD) Cilt: 1- Sayı: 2- Aralık, p.161

<sup>25</sup> Kamalova, Zebiniso Husayn (2022) '*Özbekistan'ın Gelişim Tarihi: Yeni Özbekistan Ulus ve Devlet Milli Kimlik*' Yeni Türkiye 125, p. 24-25

<sup>26</sup> Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "*Turkic peoples*". Encyclopedia Britannica, 9 Mar. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Turkic-peoples>. Accessed 27 April 2024.

of the region. Though there are different legends in local folklore proving the confrontation of locals against Persian occupiers,<sup>27</sup> for a certain period the region was under the influence of the Persian Achaemenid dynasty which dominated Central Asia in the 6th century BCE. Two centuries later, Alexander the Great ended their rule and the Hellenic culture brought by his soldiers was assimilated with existing local traditions during the existence of the Greko-Bactrian kingdom in the region. So, the whole region had gone through control of Persian, Hellenic, and Turkic dynasties and all these aspects had a deep influence on the region's development history and culture.

Turan or Turkestan has been home mostly to Persian and Turkic-speaking nations, which were settled and nomadic. The religion of nomadic tribes was Tengrism while for urbanites mostly Zoroastrianism. The Turkic language was a uniting feature for the hundreds of Turkic tribes. The Old Turkic (Proto-Turkic) languages were spoken in some parts of Siberia and Central Asia from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century the region was conquered by Arabs and starting from that point the region became part of the Arab caliphate. The introduction of Islam to the region successfully replaced another existing faith along with the Arabic language in cities. With the advent of Islam, the region became one of the cultural centers of Hanafi Islam. Many educational institutions were formed as the region became home to many Islamic scholars like Imam Bukhari, Abu Isa at Tirmizi, Imam Maturidi, Mahmud az-Zamahshariy, Burhaniddin Margilani, Hoja Ahmad Yassavi, Bahauddin Naqshbandi and many others between 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, the Mongol invasion (1227-1229) destroyed the prosperous life and deeply affected the region. Only one and half centuries later the region was able to gain pre-Mongol status, when Timur could build a centralized Empire and again made Central Asian cities an attractive center of religious studies and science. He actively patronized scientists, poets, and artists, attracting them to his court in cities such as Samarkand and Herat. He provided them with financial support, allowing them to concentrate on their work and contribute to the development of knowledge. The cities within Central Asia became important nodes on the Silk Road during his time, attracting traders, scholars, and travelers from different parts of the World. Timur's vast empire promoted trade and cultural exchange throughout Eurasia. This exchange of goods and ideas enriched the intellectual and cultural life of these cities. Timur loved to patronage Islamic architecture and art by commissioning the construction of magnificent mosques, mausoleums, and palaces. These architectural marvels not only served

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<sup>27</sup> Legends about Tumaris and Shirak, which are very popular among the population of C.A.

as religious and cultural centers but also symbolized the power and grandeur of Timur's empire. Even though Timur was a Muslim ruler, he was known for his tolerance towards people of different religions and cultures. It welcomed scholars and artisans from different spheres of life, fostering an atmosphere of cultural exchange and cooperation. Timur ordered the construction of numerous madrasas and libraries in his capitals. These institutions became centers of learning where scholars from different parts of the Islamic World gathered to study and exchange ideas. One of the most famous examples is the Bibi-Khanym mosque and madrasah in Samarkand. During Timur's rule, Central Asia emerged as a hub of Turkic influence and resistance to Persian control. His capital, Samarkand, became renowned for its architectural splendor as Timur brought artisans from across his empire. He also shifted the court language from Persian to Chagatay Turkish.<sup>28</sup> Timur exemplified the fusion of Mongol and Turkish civilizations, as noted by Olaf Caroe, who observed that Mongol culture in Transoxania was absorbed by Turkic and other regional cultures. Timur's reign saw the increasing integration of nomadic Turks into Islamic traditions, blending Turkic and Islamic cultures.<sup>29</sup> Caroe highlighted Timur's role in adapting Turkic culture to Islamic norms, enhancing Turkish political traditions with Islamic thought. Timur was a follower of the Sufi Naqshbandi order, which thrived under his rule.<sup>30</sup> Overall, Timur's policies and patronage played a decisive role in transforming the cities of Central Asia into attractive centers of science and Islamic culture during his and his descendant's reign in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

A century later Timurid's dynasty was replaced by Shiybanids or Uzbek Khans – another Turkic family coming from Chingiz Khan's dynasty. Being under the invasions and influence of different civilizations became a reason for many discourses regarding the original dwellers of Central Asia. The name of the nation and the country has long been a subject of discussion. Professor Karmysheva Bilkis H. who was an expert on ethnic tribes of Central Asia, in her article 'On "Turkic" ethnographic element of Uzbeks (historico-ethnographic data), writes the following:

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, two parts could be traced among the Uzbek population: 1) the traditionally settled rural and urban population with no tribal divisions in their midst (whom Pre-revolutionary literature called 'Sart') and 2) Semi-nomads who retained their tribal names. The semi-nomad population was not homogeneous falling into two groups that markedly differed from one another: a) historical descendants of Dashti Kipchak Uzbek tribes which migrated to Mavernahr early in the 16th century and b) the historical descendants of the earlier Turco-Mongol tribes of

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<sup>28</sup> Rashid, Ahmed (2002) *Jihad: The Rise of Millitant Islam in Central Asia*, Yale University press, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Caroe, Olaf (1967) *Soviet empire: the Turks of Central Asia and Stalinism*, McMillian St. Martin's press, New York, p. 36.

<sup>30</sup> Boyle, John A. (1943) *Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World*. New York.

Central Asia. In special literature, as well as among the local population the latter group is given the name of Turks.<sup>31</sup>

The author emphasizes that there were local settled Uzbeks who were identified as Turks like other Turkic local nations and there were arrived from Dashti Kipchak nomadic Uzbeks. According to Uzbek historian Gaybulla Babayarov, there was a practice of naming tribes and states after prominent leaders or successful military commanders, this tradition was indeed common among Turkic peoples throughout history. For example, the Nogay people after Nogay Khan, Timurids after Timur, Ottomans after Osman, and Baburids after Zahiriddin Babur.<sup>32</sup> Based on this approach we can state that most probably in this process the name of Uzbek Khan took an important role. Uzbek Khan was a descendant of Chingiz Khan and ruled the Golden Horde in 1312-1342.<sup>33</sup> His full name was Sultan Giyasiddin Muhammad Uzbek Khan who converted to Islam and during his ruling period with his efforts Golden Horde became a Muslim state. Besides being a devout Muslim, Uzbek Khan was a talented general and reformer.<sup>34</sup> Uzbek Khan was the son of Toghrilcha - Chingizid prince<sup>35</sup> while Shiyban was the fifth son of Jochi and the grandson of Chingiz Khan; Toghrilcha and Shiyban were cousins. The descendants of Shiyban as well were called Uzbeks. The personality of Uzbek Khan and other leaders of the Golden Horde was not much popularized during the Soviet period, because accepting that Russian territories were under the rule of the Golden Horde was the image-spoiling notion for the 'big brother' who did not want to emphasize this historical fact much. The history of Uzbek khan was mostly mentioned in Ibn Batuta's "*Tuhvat ul buzzer fi gharaib al amsar va ajaib al afsar*"<sup>36</sup> and 'Chingizname' written by Ottemish haji. Both of them mention Uzbek Khan as a brave reformist who successfully ruled the Golden Horde and was a successful diplomat.<sup>37</sup> Another important personality in the history of Uzbeks was Abulkhayir Khan - a grandson of Shiyban, he was the founder of the Uzbek Khanate with the capital of Tura city in Western Siberia which existed in 1429-1469. Abulkhayirkhan's grandson Muhammad Shiybani Khan was able to re-organize the power of Uzbek khanate and Uzbek tribes around 1480 and led them

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<sup>31</sup> Karmysheva, Bilkis. H (1960) 'On "turkic" ethnographic element of Uzbeks (historico-ethnographic data)/Summary'(Этнографическая группа "тюрк" в составе Узбеков (историческо-этнографические данные) 'Советская этнография', 1960 Издательство Академии наук, Москва

<sup>32</sup> Kun.uz (Feb 17, 2024) 'O'zbekxon davrida o'zbek degan nom shuhrat topdi' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lufYspAV-Fc> (2:19-2:45min.and highlighted in 42-45 min)

<sup>33</sup> Yudin, Veniamin Petrovich (1992) 'Chingizname' of Otemish haji' Translation Alma-ata,p.58-59

<sup>34</sup> 'History of Tatar nation' <http://historytat.ru/3/113.html> (in the article there is a reference to Ibn Battuta)

<sup>35</sup> Yudin, Veniamin Petrovich (1992) 'Chingizname' of Otemish haji'. Translation, Alma-ata, p.58

<sup>36</sup> Tizenhausen, V. G. (1941) 'A collection of materials related to the history of the Golden Horde. Extracts from Persian works'. 605: Power..Electronic copy source: Bin RAS

<sup>37</sup> IBID

to the Central Asian region from steppes. Central Asia was conquered by them in the 1500s. As a result, the conquered territories started being called after the tribe name as Uzbek Khanates. Most probably it was meant extension of the power of the Uzbek Khanate.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Abulkhayirkhan was a son-in-law of Ulughbek since he married Ulughbek's daughter Rabia Sultan. Ulughbek was the grandson of Timur and ruler of Samarkand from 1409 to 1449. Ulughbek's grandsons as descendants of his daughter Rabia Sultan and Abulkhayirkhan were able to rule for a few more decades the Uzbek Khanate after Muhammed Shiybanid's death. All these historical facts show that nomadic Uzbeks were in close relationship with local Central Asian Turks and did not feel like outsiders due to their common language and faith. Moreover, Uzbek Ulus<sup>39</sup> was mentioned in 80's of 14<sup>th</sup> century in the place of White Orda:

After the defeat of Tokhtamysh (1395), civil strife and distemper intensified in the White Horde, which since the 80s of 14th century began to be called the Uzbek ulus (diar-i uzbek or vilayat-i uzbek) 'После поражения Тохтамыша (1395 г.) междоусобица и смуты усилились и в Белой Орде, которая с 80-х годов XIV в. стала именоваться Узбекским улусом (дий- ар-и узбек или вилайат-и узбек)',<sup>40</sup>

The authors of the 'Bukharan Armies and Uzbek Military Power, 1670–1870: Coping with the Legacy of a Nomadic Conquest' state that the Uzbek tribes were nomadic and Muhammed Shiybani as their leader in 1500 took them from the Great Steppe, towards Mawaraunnahr. This area became the Uzbek Khanate, the area was mixed with vast agricultural oases of Bukhara and Samarkand, as well as agro-pastoral region. The majority of the population was settled, however there were nomadic as well, and the total number was up to four million while the number of conquerors was up to four hundred people. The author notes that this was the last wide conquest by nomads in the history of the region.<sup>41</sup> As we see, the author highlights that the number of arrived nomadic Uzbeks was much less compared to the settled population. Newcomers assimilated with the local population very soon. Since both of them spoke Turkic language and followed the same religion, the process of assimilation went very smoothly. It's important to note that, when Uzbek tribes moved to the region, there were already several central mosques with libraries, madrassas, schools, and Institutions that were responsible for the learning and preservation of Islamic heritage. Uzbeks, starting from Uzbek Khan's period,

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<sup>38</sup> Toraeв, Halim. (2020) *'Buxoro Tarixi' (The History of Bukhara)* "Durdona", Buhara .p.131

<sup>39</sup> "Ulus" means country, district or region in old Turkic and in Mongol language

<sup>40</sup> Ahmedov, B. A. (1965) *'The State of Nomadic Uzbeks'* Moscow, p.38 (Государство кочевых узбеков)

'«НАУКА» Главная редакция восточной литературы, Москва, 1965 p.274/5-6

<sup>41</sup> Forbes, Manz Beatrice. (2005) *'Bukharan Armies and Uzbek Military Power, 1670–1870: Coping with the Legacy of a Nomadic Conquest'*, chapter in the book edited by Jörg Gertel, Stefan Leder, Jürgen Paul, and Bernhard Streck as part of the series "Sonderforschungsbereich Differenz und Integration Wechselwirkungen zwischen nomadischen und sesshaften Lebensformen in Zivilisationen der Alten Welt" (SFB Series) Volume XVIII p.274/5-6

realized that Islam was a key to successful governance due to its nizams and culture. We can refer to the Russian historian N. Veselovsky, who wrote about Uzbek Khan: “This was a wonderful Khan who set discipline in the Horde... During his rule, the state reached its highest level of development and power”.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, Islam brought discipline to the nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Golden Horde because of the Uzbek Khan’s efforts. To maintain every aspect of Islamic rules, there was a need for an urban culture. We can assume that ancient cities with very rich Islamic heritage attracted descendants of Uzbek Khan to the urbanite region of Central Asia. Especially, Samarkand which became one of the important Islamic centers through the efforts of Amir Timur and his grandson Ulughbek. After their arrival, Shiybanids, to demonstrate their importance changed the capital of their state from Samarkand to Bukhara, but still both cities kept their importance in regards to Islamic studies and *ulema* heritage. The Shiybani dynasty, which managed to conquer the cities of Herat and Balkh<sup>43</sup> as well, was able to control the region as rulers of a centralized empire for about one century.

The settled lifestyle and the predominance of urban centers among the various Turkic states in the region, coupled with a strong commitment to Islamic values, are distinctive features of contemporary Uzbeks compared to their neighbors. Urban culture fostered a population primarily composed of traders and artisans, with many individuals being educated. For centuries, education in Central Asia encompassed a wide range of scientific fields, including mathematics, linguistics, astronomy, medicine, physics, philosophy, geometry, history, and geography,<sup>44</sup> alongside religious studies such as fiqh, kalam, and aqidah. Examples of Beruni, Ibn Sina, al-Kharezmi, Ahmed Ferghani, etc. could be mentioned here. The Mamun Academy was founded under the Abbasids in the 10th century, in the capital of Khorezm region Urgench City. It was closed and re-opened under different ruling dynasties, although it remained a center of science and scholarship for a long time. Bukhara was the capital of Samanids during the Golden Age of Islam, and much later during Shiybanids again gained the status of capital. Samarkand with the name Marokanda was the capital of Soghdiana and an important city of all ruling dynasties of the region. It became Timur’s and his dynasty's capital. During Timur (1336-1405) many scholars and masters were brought to Samarkand from all over the World, many

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<sup>42</sup> Nogaibayeva, M.S. (2023) ‘Uzbek khan’ <https://iie.kz/?p=26057&lang=en>

<sup>43</sup> Usmonov, Q., Sodiqov, M., Burhonova, S. (2006) ‘O‘zbekiston Tarixi’ Oliy o‘quv yurtlari barcha bakalavr yo‘nalishlari uchun darslik Toshkent, p.184

<sup>44</sup> Masharipova Gularam K, Alimova Madina. (2021) ‘Natural Science, Philosophical Heritage and its Features during the Period of the Anushteginid’s Khorezmshahs’ (Global Technovation 5th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference, Berlin, Germany <https://conferencepublication.com> March 30th pp. 41-44

libraries were built and thousands of books were written, investigated, and translated. Thousands of madrasas were built, and people from neighboring states used to come to study in these madrasas. Timur was fond of Sufis, out of admiration he was known to have built several *medrese* complexes in different parts of the region, however, Samarkand was his favorite. Shiybanids built the famous Mir-Arab *medrese* complex and sponsored thousands of Islamic scholars as well. All these notions influenced the formation of culture which was strongly built on Islamic values. As we know, the turning point in the translation movement during the Abbasids was the establishment of Baghdad as a city by making it the center of Islamic Studies. Baghdad, founded by Caliph al-Mansur as the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate in 762 AD, played a crucial role in this movement. The establishment of Baghdad as the capital of the Caliphate and the founding of institutions such as the House of Wisdom helped consolidate the translation movement and made it a center of intellectual exchange. This facilitated the translation of numerous works in various fields, contributing to the flourishing of Islamic science during the Abbasid era.<sup>45</sup>

The famous Islamic school in the region was and still is *Māturīdiyyah*, a Muslim orthodox school of theology named after its founder Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad al-Māturīdī (died 944).<sup>46</sup> The famous *tariqa* order or Sufi approach for which Uzbeks are famous is – Naqshbandiya. The Naqshbandi Sufi Order is a spiritual path in Islam that emphasizes the importance of silent meditation, remembrance of God, and following the Sunnah (traditions) of the Prophet Muhammad. The Naqshbandi order is known for its emphasis on individual spiritual development and self-discipline. It was founded by Sheikh Bahauddin Naqshbandi (Khoja Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Bukhari 1317-1389). We assume, that there was a strong belief in the Islamic World that Uzbek students would continue to protect the Islamic heritage and the tradition of Muslim scholarship which could be seen by opened Uzbek dervish houses or Uzbek lodges in the territory of Islamdom. Uzbek lodges were shelters to people coming from Uzbek lands or Central Asian region in their travel to different parts of the World with the purposes of education or pilgrimage. However, according to conditions written in the will or other documents of the founders of these lodges, we can see that the main purpose was to support students or *sufi*-practicing individuals coming from Uzbek lands or Central Asia. From the Mamluks until the end of the Ottoman period, there were more than fifteen functioning Uzbek

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<sup>45</sup> Al-Khalili, Jim (2011) *The house of wisdom (How Arabic Science saved ancient knowledge and gave us Renaissance)*, part 3 – Translation., The Penguin Press, New York

<sup>46</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "*Māturīdiyyah*". Encyclopedia Britannica, 3 Apr. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Maturidiyah>. Accessed 17 January 2024.

lodges. These lodges were dominating in number among Indian, Afghan, and very few Kazan Lodges. The author of the article "Sufi Pilgrims from Central Asia and India in Jerusalem" Thierry V. Zarcone mentions the following while discussing the role of lodges: "...they played a prominent role in bringing the cultural and religious traditions of India and Central Asia to Turkey and the Arabic World. The Ottomans were more sympathetic and accommodating to the Uzbek lodges because of the common culture they shared..."<sup>47</sup>

It emphasizes the important role of lodges and the desire of other Muslims to learn the cultural and religious traditions of Central Asia and India.

In this part, we will mention some of the Uzbek lodges that were opened in pivot cities of the Islamic World. The earliest Uzbek lodge was Jerusalem (Kuddus) lodge named Al-Zawiya Al-Naqshbandiyya (al-Uzbekiyya) and it is situated in the southern part of Via Dolorosa, across from the Church of Zion, to the north of Bab al-Ghawanmah, one of the gates of al-Aqsa Mosque.<sup>48</sup> It was built during Mamluk's era in the XIV century to provide residence for the followers of the Naqshbandi order during their visits to Jerusalem and could be considered the oldest such lodge. Between the years 1616 and 1623, Osmanbey bin Abdulmuin built an additional four private rooms and a mosque to this complex<sup>49</sup> and extended it. Currently, it's not functioning, but according to Thierry V. Zarcone, the author of the "Sufi Pilgrims from Central Asia and India in Jerusalem," in 2009, there was Sheykh Abdulaziz who was responsible for this lodge<sup>50</sup>, means it was open for visitors that year. Along with the lodge named Mekka Lodg, in 1750 As-Seyyid Mehmed Hoca Kuchuk bin as-Sayyid Mehmed al-Özbekî Nakshibandî, dedicated his property in Mecca that consisted of 1 zaviye - 7 dwellings (halls), 1 ribat (dervish lodge), 17 domed private (dhikr) rooms, his 2 houses - 1 with ten private rooms and ribat and another 1 house which belonged to Seyyid Shakir bin Abdulmuin before and 1 suprun to be a lodge. He willed as a condition to let poor Uzbek dervishes living in Mecca and in one part of the lodge to let poor Uzbek women stay.<sup>51</sup> In addition to the Medina Lodge, Hodja as-Seyyid Rahmetullah (bin Hoca Mehmed Shafi' an-Nakshibend al-Husayni as-Samarkandi) in 1761

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<sup>47</sup> Thierry V. Zarcone., (2009) 'Sufi Pilgrims from Central Asia and India in Jerusalem', Research Center for Islamic Area Studies Center for Islamic Area Studies at Kyoto University (KIAS) Japan, p.44

<sup>48</sup> Sufi Path Love (December, 2023) <https://sufipathoflove.com/jerusalem-visit-1441/>

<sup>49</sup> Alkan, Mustafa (2019) 'Osmanli Devletinde Özbek Tekkeleri' p.270/24

<sup>50</sup> Thierry V. Zarcone., (2009) 'Sufi Pilgrims from Central Asia and India in Jerusalem' Acknowledgments. Research Center for Islamic Area Studies Center for Islamic Area Studies at Kyoto University (KIAS) , Japan

<sup>51</sup> Alkan, Mustafa (2019) 'Osmanli Devletinde Özbek Tekkeleri' p.270/ 'es-Seyyid Mehmed Hoca Küçük bin es-Seyyid Mehmed el-Özbekî Nakşibendî Vakfıyesi, Şubat/Mart 1750 (Rebiülevve 1163), VGMA, Defter nu: 747, s. 175, sıra: 148.

established a madrasa foundation in Medina. The madrasah was two stories and had nine rooms, it was built in a place called Daru'l-merhamet, at the end of Haccamin Street in Medina.<sup>52</sup> Hodja al-Sayyid Rahmatullah built this madrasa (complex) together with the great scholar who was from the dynasty of Hz. Ali and Hz. Fatima as-Sayyid Muhammad ash-Sheikh al-Uzbekî, who resided in the Uzbek community. It was built for Uzbek community members, those who were single and studying science. If there were no Uzbek children left, it was allowed to allow other community members to acquire knowledge there.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, Sheykh of Istanbul Eyüp Lodge Sheikh Abdulgafur bin Abdullah on the 3rd of August of 1853 converted his house into the "Nakshibendi Uzbek Lodge" and dedicated it together with all its outbuildings for Uzbeks of Naqshbandi sect that stayed in Medina, outside of Sur, in Menaha. The foundation was registered by Debbagzâde es-Seyyid Mehmed Arif, the judge of Medina. Sheikh Abdulgafur willed those who came to Medina for a visit, poor Uzbeks who were obedient and patient should stay there. Besides, there is other evidence that Sheikh Suleiman bin Abdurrahman, on 17th August of 1867, established a foundation for the New Uzbek Madrasa in Medina. This foundation was a house on the left side of Hapis Street in Tayyibe City in Medina which he bought for 30,000 gurush from Haji Mehmed et-Tavîl. He dedicated this house and after his death, the house would be rented and its collected income should be spent on the new Uzbek Madrasa located on Beni Hüseyin Street in Medina.<sup>54</sup> Uzbek lodges in Istanbul have a very important role in many Muslim intellectuals' lives, especially it was significant for Jadids. There were several Uzbek lodges in Istanbul and here we give information about three of them. The first Uzbek lodge was built in the Fatih district in 1692-93 by Ismail Efendi<sup>55</sup> who was Defterdar<sup>56</sup> of Istanbul. The lodge was named Kadirga Bukhara Uzbek Lodge. In 1900 the governor of one region in Bukhara Emiret Arslankul Gunkush built a foundation (*vakf*) that was responsible for the expenses of the lodge. He also built an additional mosque that year and in 1903 a small house in the complex of this lodge. It is still situated on Kuchukayasofya Street in the Kumkapi district of Istanbul.<sup>57</sup> The second Istanbul lodge is in Eyyup, on Kalendarhane Street, it was built in 1743 by Lali-zade Abdalbaki.<sup>58</sup> The third lodge is in Uskudar, Sultantepe and it was built in 1753 by the Governor of Marash, Abdullah Pasha.<sup>59</sup> A philanthropist

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<sup>52</sup> IBID p.267/21

<sup>53</sup> IBID p.268/22

<sup>54</sup> IBID

<sup>55</sup>Tahman, M.Baha (2007) 'Özbekler Tekkesi' <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ozbekler-tekkesi--kadirga>

<sup>56</sup> This position *refers to an individual who is responsible for bookkeeping and accounting tasks.*

<sup>57</sup> Alkan, Mustafa (2019) 'Osmanli Devletinde Özbek Tekkeleri' Pruva yayinlari p.16 (262)

<sup>58</sup> IBID p.9 (255)

<sup>59</sup> IBID p.18 (264)

Chaprastlı Hasan Ağa had installed a pulpit - *minbar* and dedicated it to the Naqshbandi sect. The lodge was expanded by Sheikh from Samarkand es-Sayyid Abdulkber and rebuilt in its current form by Sultan Abdulmejid in 1844.<sup>60</sup> Besides these mentioned lodges there were famous Uzbek lodges in Baghdad, Damascus, Halep, and Cairo except in Anatolian cities. During Wahabi and Kemalist governments these lodges lost their religious importance, however continued as some other educational institutions.<sup>61</sup> These lodges show us the importance of certain leaders or personalities who, in my opinion, emerged under urban Islamic culture. They took part in the formation of a certain heritage.

In conclusion, urban culture and Islam have played a pivotal and profound role in shaping the development of Uzbek identity. The interplay between these two forces has not only influenced the social and cultural fabric of Uzbekistan but also contributed to the preservation and evolution of its national identity over time. Urban centers have historically been hubs for intellectual, cultural, and religious exchanges, fostering a dynamic environment where Islamic traditions could merge with local customs. This has resulted in a unique synthesis that has deeply embedded both urban and Islamic elements into the very core of Uzbek identity, making their influence both significant and enduring.

### **2.3. Central Asian Diversity in Comparative Context**

Central Asia is home to a diverse array of societies and nations. Among the various ethnic groups, the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen, and Uzbeks are regarded as the principal populations of the region. To continue the discussion on the role of the city in applying Islamic issues, it's expedient to bring the idea developed by the scholar Shahram Akbarzadeh, who compares the role of Islam in settled and nomadic cultures in the context of Kyrgyz and Turkmen traditions. The author in his article states a fact.

Islam means different things to different people but distinguishing two disparate ideal types based on access to the scripture of the Quran and Hadith is of great importance, he refers to Ernest Gellner who identifies two forms of Islam based on access to the scripture. These two forms are high and low, high Islam means having access to the script while low Islam means

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<sup>60</sup> Tanman, M. Baha (2007) '*Özbekler Tekkesi*', DİA, 34), pp. 123-124.

<sup>61</sup> Thierry V. Zarcone. (2009) '*Sufi Pilgrims From Central Asia and India in Jerusalem*' p.126 Research Center for Islamic Area Studies Center for Islamic Area Studies at Kyoto University (KIAS), Japan ISBN 978-4-904039-11-3

folkloric Islam which relies on traditions that are passed from generation to generation.<sup>62</sup> Here the author highlights an essential point of view, he states that high and low forms of Islam are associated with different social contexts. High Islam is common in urban areas, where literacy and access to religious texts are well-known. Under these conditions, a class of clergy emerged dedicated to preserving and interpreting Islamic teachings, drawing on the Quran and hadith to solve modern problems. This class has exclusive authority in matters of religious interpretation. Low Islam, by contrast, flourishes among nomadic peoples whose access to the Quran and religious education is seriously limited by the very nature of their mobile lifestyle and they are unlikely to have the necessary resources to maintain a permanent clerical class.<sup>63</sup> Shahram Akbarzadeh states that Kyrgyz and Turkmens are relatively new to Islam. The Kyrgyz were among the last groups in Turkestan to convert to Islam, even after their conversion, their nomadic way of life led to a less stringent adherence to Islam compared to their settled counterparts.<sup>64</sup> Similar notions are stated about Kyrgyz society's relation to Islam by different scholars. Johan Engvall in his 'Religion and the Secular State in Kyrgyzstan' notes that Islam to Kyrgyz society who mostly lived in mountainous areas reached in the 16<sup>th</sup> century from Ferghana valley and Turkestan. He highlights:

Compared to the Uzbeks that had settled in southern Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz nomads developed a lighter attachment to Islam, preferring to retain many of the pre-Islamic beliefs and rejecting dogmatic Islamic rituals. This was particularly the case with Tengrism, the erstwhile belief of the Kyrgyz, with its strong focus on ritual about the cult of the sky.<sup>65</sup>

He also notes that the veneration of holy sites and ancestral spirits continued to be prevalent for Kyrgyz people. Over time, as Islam spread, many traditional practices and ancient beliefs began to adapt and merge with Islamic customs. Even now, he says, Islam is more firmly established in the southern part of the country, where a more traditional form of Islam took root, particularly among the large Uzbek ethnic group, compared to the northern regions.<sup>66</sup> The conclusion of the author on the general religious condition of Kyrgyz society states that closeness to Islam is more observed among the ethnic Uzbeks or in the regions that border with nowadays

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<sup>62</sup> Akbarzadeh, Shahram(2001) '*Political Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan*', Central Asian Survey 20(4) pages 451-465; p.452

<sup>63</sup> IBID

<sup>64</sup> IBID p.451

<sup>65</sup> Engvall, Johan (2020) '*Religion and the Secular State in Kyrgyzstan*', Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program – A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center American Foreign Policy Council, 509 C St NE, Washington D.C. Institute for Security and Development Policy, V. Finnbodavägen 2, Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden, p.12

<sup>66</sup> IBID p.13

Uzbekistan, where some historical cities take place.<sup>67</sup> He refers to researchers Jacob Zenn and Kathleen Kuehnast while stating ‘Uzbeks generally have a stronger Muslim identity compared to Kyrgyz’,<sup>68</sup> this is because of the lifestyle and environment they live. The same idea is developed by Nuska Botoiarova Kyrgyz researcher, in her thesis she highlights that the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz of the steppe were converted to Islam in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. She notes that when the Russians began their expansion, Islam had minimal impact on the social and legal frameworks of the nomadic Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, whose social organization was rooted in a clan system—a union of several families. Islam arrived in the nomadic tribes of the steppes and mountain regions relatively late, and as a result, it did not significantly alter their social or legal systems. The primary influence of Islam on these tribal societies was cultural, but even then, it was constrained by the realities of their nomadic lifestyle.<sup>69</sup> She also notes that settled populations - Uzbeks and Tajiks, were converted to Islam relatively earlier as compared to the nomadic Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, and Turkmen, whose conversion process continued up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>70</sup>. Analyzing this issue closely, she states: “Even today, the Kazakh and Kyrgyz retain much of their Pre-Islamic way of life including mastery of horse, drinking kumis and extensive personal independence of women, so characteristic of nomadic societies”.<sup>71</sup>

The same analysis of Kazakh society was made by Elena Myrzykina. The researcher attempts to determine the place and role of Islam in modern Kazakh society in the study of its religiosity. She brings several types of ‘Islam’ suggested by different researchers, who state that there is no homogeneous Islam in Central Asia, especially in Kazakh society, there are types of Islam which are ‘traditional Islam’, ‘government-sponsored Islam’ and ‘radical Islam’.<sup>72</sup> She states that religion in Kazakhstan has an ethno-cultural status.<sup>73</sup> She connects this to a widespread belief common in the post-Soviet region, where people often equate ethnic identity with religious identity according to traditional views. This leads to the assumption that all Turkic peoples are automatically associated with Islam, while all Slavic peoples are considered Orthodox Christians.<sup>74</sup> However, the author emphasizes that considering the historical

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<sup>67</sup> IBID p.23

<sup>68</sup> Zenn, Jacob and Kuehnast, Kathleen (2014) ‘*Preventing Violent Extremism in Kyrgyzstan*’ United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 355, p.5

<sup>69</sup> Botoiarova, Nuska (2005) ‘*Islamic Fundamentalism in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan: Real or Imagined Threat*’, M.A. Thesis, The Graduate School of Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, p.39(50)

<sup>70</sup> IBID p.25(35)

<sup>71</sup> IBID p.39(50)

<sup>72</sup> Myzikina, Yelena (2020) ‘*The dimensions of Islam in contemporary Kazakhstan*’, Muslim Society, Politics and Islamic Education in the Former Russian Empire, p.175

<sup>73</sup> IBID p.182

<sup>74</sup> IBID

background of Islam in Kazakhstan, its validity with the ethno-cultural traditions may be questioned. She explains that the nomadic culture of the Kazakhs had little to no role in the spread of Islam, which was introduced to the southern regions of what is now Kazakhstan between the late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. Before this, local traditions were imbued with animism, shamanism, and the cult of ancestors, which were much better suited to the nomadic lifestyle of the Turkic tribes than the strictly regulated sedentary reality of Islam. She brings Central Asian scholar Martha Olcott's argument about this issue: "...the hold of Islam over the nomadic Kazakhs remained weak—so much that in the sixteenth century, the Bukharan *ulema* condemned them as idolaters."<sup>75</sup>

The author also refers to Chokan Valikhanov (1835-1865) scholar, the first national researcher of Kazakh culture, historian, ethnographer, and folklorist, who described the role of Islam for Kazakh people. The author says that according to Valikhanov 'zhyrau tradition' (a steppe tradition of storytelling) was more important for Kazakhs in improving a 'person's spiritual image' and it was a normative principle for organizing Kazakh society.<sup>76</sup> She brings the quotation of Valikhanov: "Islamic beliefs were not an integral part of the life of the Kazakhs even in mid of the 19th century. Since Islam has not taken deep roots in the steppe, it was under dual power, when traditional folk religious beliefs, the cult of Tengri, in particular, were widespread along with Islamic doctrines"<sup>77</sup>

On those terms, Valikhanov highlights that Tengristic cults existed even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century along with Muslim doctrines, however, the Islamic faith was not the most important part for the Kazakhs, due to the Islamic religion being unpopular in nomadic culture. Further, the author brings Valikhanov's other argument, which emphasizes that the 'zhyrau tradition' (a steppe tradition of storytelling) was more important for Kazakhs in improving a 'person's spiritual image' and it was a normative principle for organizing Kazakh society<sup>78</sup>.

Tajiks are another settled population of Central Asia, who live in the most mountainous area of Central Asia and speak the Iranian dialect<sup>79</sup>, which differs Tajiks from other Turkic populations of the region. According to the famous Uzbek poet Muhammad Yusuf Tajiks and Uzbeks are

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<sup>75</sup> IBID p.184

<sup>76</sup> IBID

<sup>77</sup> IBID p.185

<sup>78</sup> IBID

<sup>79</sup> Kamalova, Zebiniso (2017) '*Özbeklerin Ulusal Oluşumu*', Millî Kültür Araştırmaları Dergisi (MİKAD) Cilt: 1- Sayı: 2- Aralık, p.162

one nation speaking two different languages. Tajikistan was part of Uzbek society until 1929.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan also comes into Ferghana valley, which is one of the hubs of the Islamic teachings. The important Islamic cities that succeeded in keeping Islamic heritage and traditions for centuries played an important role in the valley. Adam Saud in his article 'Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan: Past, Present and Future' notes that Tajikistan has long been shaped by Islamic teachings, with the prominent Ferghana Valley, a key center of Islamic activity, located within its borders. The southern regions of Tajikistan were historically governed by the Emir of Bukhara, contributing to the deep integration of Islam into the social fabric of the area.<sup>81</sup> As a result, Tajik society has been significantly influenced by Uzbek society in terms of Islam, with Uzbek *ulema* playing a key role in maintaining the presence of Islam in the region. The role of Mulla Hindistani from Kokand City of present day Uzbekistan is very crucial in Islamic phenomena in Tajik society.

Nuska Botoiarova, in her research, cites Mehrdad Haghayeghi, an Iranian-American scholar, and British scholar Shirin Akiner, both of whom emphasize the Uzbeks' strong commitment to Islam. They state, 'It is important to note that the strength of Islamic inclination throughout Central Asia is closely related to the presence of the Uzbek population.'<sup>82</sup>

According to these arguments, we can say that Islam was more important to settled urban people based on their access to the scripture and closeness to the ulema, and Uzbeks as representatives of the Islamic urban culture take an active part in preserving Islamic heritage. Islamic values were among the fundamental pillars when the population of Central Asian cities opposed the Mongols or fought against Shiite Muslims, as mentioned by Nasir Raza Khan, 'Since its introduction in the seventh century, Islam has played a crucial role in shaping the culture, political conduct, and economic interactions of Central Asia'.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Perekrests, Lea (2015) 'The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan', [https://www.academia.edu/23229199/The\\_Islamic\\_Renaissance\\_Party\\_of\\_Tajikistan](https://www.academia.edu/23229199/The_Islamic_Renaissance_Party_of_Tajikistan)

<sup>81</sup> Saud, Adam (2010) 'Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan: Past, Present and Future', *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (July 2010), pp. 77-91 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24711009>

<sup>82</sup> Haghayeghi, Mehrdad (1996) 'Islam and Politics in Central Asia', St. Martin's Press, New York, p.78; Akiner, Shirin (1993) 'Central Asia: New Arc of Crisis?', pp. 38-39; Botoiarova, Nuska (2005) 'Islamic Fundamentalism in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan: Real or Imagined Threat', The Graduate School of Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, p. 26 (37)

<sup>83</sup> Khan, Nasir Raza (2012) 'Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia and its Neighbourhood', *Orta Asya'da Islam Temsilden Fobiye*, Cilt 3, Aydınlıktan Aydınlatmaya, Ahmed Yassewi Universitesi, Ankara, p.5 (1420)

## 2.4. Invasion of Russian Empire: Russification Policy

In the XVI century, the Great Silk Road lost its importance due to geographic discoveries that influenced economically the region. Moreover, the ongoing wars significantly impacted the economic and social sectors. As a result, the education system also experienced considerable setbacks.<sup>84</sup> Lack of teachers and scholars with scientific backgrounds, limited scholarly and scientific exchange, corruption, and nepotism caused disorder in many vital fields. *Madrasas* started teaching only Islamic studies, and science and non-Islamic education slowly disappeared from the local education system.<sup>85</sup> The region plunged into chaos and crisis, opening a new page in its history with the new mood.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, three Turkic states arose in the region previously occupied by a vast empire.<sup>86</sup> These states were: 1) the Khanate of Khiva, which currently covers the Khorezm and Karakalpak regions of Uzbekistan, including the regions of Turkmenistan, as well as part of Kazakhstan extending to the Caspian Sea; 2) the Kokand Khanate, which covered the Fergana Valley and the Tashkent region of Uzbekistan, almost all of Tajikistan, some regions of Kyrgyzstan, as well as the Eastern Turkestan region of China; 3) Bukhara Emirate, covered all the central regions of present-day Uzbekistan and the border regions of Afghanistan. These States emerged after the collapse of the centralized system of the Uzbek Khanate and as a result of civil wars in the region. While Central Asia was affected by civil wars and conflicts, the Western World was in a similar period, going through significant changes. One of the main revolutions took place in Great Britain, referred to as the Industrial Revolution in 1760; it led to industrialization and inventions becoming popular in the European continent. Later, with the French Revolution of 1830-1848, a wave of profound changes began to take place. Governments shifted their focus toward enhancing their wealth and expanding their economies, driven by a desire to modernize and industrialize. This period saw the adoption of new political and economic ideologies and innovative technologies and reforms. The revolution ignited

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<sup>84</sup> Olcott, Martha Brill & Ziyayeva, Diyora (2008) *Islam in Uzbekistan: Religious Education and State Ideology*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. p.4 (8)

<sup>85</sup> Fitrat, Abdurauf (1991) *'Hind sayyohining qisasi,'* «Шарк юлдузи» журнали, 8сон; first published in 1912 in İstanbul  
[https://www.ziyouz.com/books/uzbek\\_nasri/Abdurauf%20Fitrat.%20Hind%20sayyohining%20qisasi.pdf](https://www.ziyouz.com/books/uzbek_nasri/Abdurauf%20Fitrat.%20Hind%20sayyohining%20qisasi.pdf);  
Olcott, Brill, and M. (2007) *'Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia,'* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington

<sup>86</sup> Bregel, Yuri (2009) *'The New Uzbek States: Bukhara, Khiva and Khoqand c. 1750–1886'*, in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chingissid Age* ed. Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J Frank & Peter B. Golden, Cambridge University Press

social and political upheaval and marked the beginning of a transformative era where states increasingly prioritized economic growth through new inventions, industrial advancements, and more structured policies aimed at capital accumulation. However, while this was happening in the West, the Central Asian region remained deeply under the influence of the feudal system, and its population continued to suffer from political disorder. Conservative religious sentiments had a deep impact on the field of education, too, as they did not allow any subjects other than religious ones to be taught in schools, preventing the introduction of new ideas into the region.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, there were groups of local intellectuals who wanted to find a solution to the problems of the society in which they belonged. These intellectuals were able to see the changes taking place in the world. Traveling was one of the reasons to be aware of these changes. The cities within the Russian and Ottoman Empires were highly popular among Central Asian traders, merchants, and students seeking education, as they were closer to Europe and regarded as prominent trading hubs. The holy Islamic pilgrimage, *Hajj*, was another destination for those who could afford it. To go to *Hajj*, passing through several countries and cities was compulsory. Destinations near the European subcontinent were strong reflections of Western changes, and these transformations were widely discussed, particularly within the Russian and Ottoman Empires. If Russians could be seen as foreigners by some local groups, Turkic-speaking intellectuals would be considered very close ones. The population of the Ottoman Empire historically, spiritually, culturally, and by language was very close to Central Asians; Istanbul was the center and a pivot city that could reflect all changes happening in the world. As a result, those who traveled to or through Istanbul experienced these changes firsthand.

The press was another vital source of information, talking about the changes taking place in the world. Moreover, it was a means of ideological exchange between different groups. However, the economic underdevelopment of Central Asia created an opportunity for adversaries to exploit, before the region became widely aware of the changes happening in the West. It was obvious that the circumstances in Central Asia had led to a lag in the military sphere and industrialization. This condition attracted the British Government<sup>88</sup> Also, the Russian Empire – the region's northern neighbor- succeeded in colonizing the region. Russians had an interest in

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<sup>87</sup> Fitrat, Abdurauf (1991) '*Hind sayyohining qisasi*,' «Шарк юлдузи» журнали, 8сон; first published in 1912 in Istanbul. [https://www.ziyouz.com/books/uzbek\\_nasri/Abdurauf%20Fitrat.%20Hind%20sayyohining%20qisasi.pdf](https://www.ziyouz.com/books/uzbek_nasri/Abdurauf%20Fitrat.%20Hind%20sayyohining%20qisasi.pdf); Olcott, Brill and M. (2007) '*Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia*', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington

<sup>88</sup> Кастельская З.Д. (1980) '*Из истории Туркестанского края (1865-1917)*' (Kastelskaya Z.D. 'From the history of Turkestan region 1865-1917')., Nauka/Moscow, p.19

occupying the territories inhabited by Turkic tribes starting from Russian king Ivan Grozni. He successfully conquered Kazan Khanate in 1552, Ashtarkhan (Astrahan) Khanate in 1556, and Siberia Khanate between 1581 and 1590. He started gathering data on Turkestan, which was as popular as Uzbek lands even before he occupied Siberia. He sent as ambassador Antony Jenkins to Bukhara, where he stayed between 1558-59. In total Russian Government sent ambassadors nine times during the XVII century to Bukhara and Khiva Khanates to learn about the economic and military situation inside of the region. This politics continued during Peter I with the logo 'Conquer the East', and between 1715 - 1724, three military spy groups were sent to the region.<sup>89</sup> All of the previous attempts were unsuccessful for Russia. Decades later, they built 46 big and 96 smaller military forts and fortifications where they placed their soldiers.<sup>90</sup> Coming to 1840 most of the north-eastern and central Kazakh territories were already controlled by Russian Empire. The Russians planned the colonial wars to invade Uzbek Khanates, which happened from 1852 to 1895. Despite hard and bloody confrontations from the local population, the entire territory of Central Asia became part of the Russian Empire, with all three Turkic states turning into Russian protectorates. In 1867, Russians formed the Turkestan General Government primarily on the territory of the Kokand Khanate.<sup>91</sup> with the capital in Tashkent. Nevertheless, the Kokand Khans continued to govern under Russian oversight until 1876. The same condition was true for the rulers of Khiva and Bukhara, who had already lost significant territories in their states but remained vassals of the Russian Empire. The colonialists allowed these two rulers of protectorate states to stay on their thrones. The occupation wars of the Russian Empire claimed the lives of thousands of people, destroyed many cities, and worsened the situation of the local population. The colonialists aggravated the existing disorder, crisis, and chaos in the region, but their arrival accelerated the process of familiarization with the achievements of modernity. They introduced a new type of education system by opening several Russian-foreign schools (*rus-tuzem* schools), opening press and print houses, and theaters. As it was mentioned above, the press was a main tool of data exchange. The first Central Asian newspaper, "Turkestanskiye Vedomosti," was published in 1870 in Tashkent and functioned until 1917. It was designed to satisfy the needs of the tsarist colonial administration for a comprehensive study of the conquered region. Articles in this newspaper were written based on archival historical sources. The published materials were scientific articles on the history, ethnography, and folklore of

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<sup>89</sup> Usmonov, Q., Sodiqov, M., Burxonova, S. (2006) '*O'zbekiston Tarixi*' Oliy o'quv yurtlari barcha bakalavr yo 'nalishlari uchun darslik Toshkent, (The History of Uzbekistan) p.218

<sup>90</sup> IBID p.219

<sup>91</sup> ToraeV, Halim. (2020) '*Buxoro Tarixi*' (*The History of Bukhara*) "Durdona," Buhara, p.189

Central Asia.<sup>92</sup> Along with it, there were newspapers and journals released from Russian and Ottoman print houses that could introduce local people to new ideas and Western thought. Furthermore, this notion encouraged local intelligentsia to open printing houses in their homeland and publish their newspapers.

Teachers, medical personnel, and various specialists relocated to serve the Russian authorities in the region. Hundreds of orientalist and other scholars arrived to study the heritage contained in the thousands of local libraries. Additionally, they constructed railways, including the Trans-Caspian Railway (also known as the Central Asian Railway), which follows the historic route of the Silk Road through much of western Central Asia. It was built by the Russian Empire during its expansion into Central Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The railway was opened in 1879 after the Russian victory over Kokand, and initially, it served military purposes, helping the Russian Imperial Army in the fight against local resistance. Its significance was not just local military control it also was used to take more of the robbed to the Russian coffers. To make the life of arrived Russians easier new type of Russian-foreign (*rus-tuzem*) schools were opened in the region. The first such school was opened in 1884 in Tashkent, in 1891 in Khiva, and 1894 in Bukhara. The number of such schools increased up to one hundred very soon. The school was opened to let children of the arrived Russian population get basic knowledge. Besides Slavic kids, local kids were also accepted into the schools to be used as skilled labor in the future. Later colonizers started announcing that organizations would give the jobs only to Russian-speaking candidates. Education in Russian-Foreign schools lasted four years and covered disciplines like mathematics, geometry, writing and speaking skills, and history; for groups with local kids, there were lessons in the Uzbek language and the basics of Islam as well. The last two subjects were taught by Uzbek teachers.<sup>93</sup> It was the beginning of the Russification policy of the Empire. At the same time with the initiative of Jadids, there was a tendency to open Jadid-type schools as well. Jadid schools were balancing between science and religious subjects, covering both. Books were written by Jadids themselves. This was a kind of resistance against the ideological war of colonizers.

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<sup>92</sup> Sundetbayeva, Sandugash. (2018) *'The Newspaper "Turkestanskije Vedomosti" and The Beginning of The Development of The History of The Press in Central Asia'* ('BILIG' - Winter /N 84)p.1

<sup>93</sup> Uzbek National Encyclopedia(O'zME) (2000) *'Rus tuzem maktabi'* the first volume, Tashkent

If to summarize the impact of Tsarist Russia on the region, we can refer to Keller, an American scholar, who states that the Russians introduced industrialization to the region to exploit their newly colonized territories. They began constructing irrigation canals, railroads, and telegraph lines. The first irrigation canal was initiated in 1874, the transportation railroad was completed in 1881, and the new rail line facilitated a significant influx of Russian settlers. Cotton became a key trade commodity, exported to Russia via this railroad. The introduction of long-staple cotton in the 1880s shifted Turkistan's economy to a cash-based system, fostering the rise of merchants as a powerful urban class.<sup>94</sup> The introduction of the local population to cotton production, which was not proper for the dry climate caused serious and heavy consequences. The policy of the cotton industry continued during the Soviet era and that later became the reason for the Aral Sea tragedy.

Regarding Tsarist Russia's policy on Islam, we can refer to Nuska Botoiarova, who states that the Empire opted neither to persecute nor to protect Islam in Turkistan. She highlights that the Governor-General of Turkestan, Kaufman, stated that "the Muslim faith in Turkestan will be tolerated but not protected from now on."<sup>95</sup> The author of 'The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia' Geoffrey Wheeler also shares this idea and notes that Kaufman did not directly interfere with religious practices but took measures to reduce the influence of Muslim leaders since he believed that by doing so, Islam would eventually diminish.<sup>96</sup> However, things changed after the Andijan revolt in 1898. According to Keller, it was an anti-Russian uprising led by the Naqshbandi leader Dukchi Ishan,<sup>97</sup> attacks were organized against the Russians in Andijan, Osh, and Margelan cities. The revolt was eventually crushed, and Dukchi Ishan was executed, but the Russians were taken aback by the suddenness and intensity of the uprising, revealing their lack of awareness about the region's dynamics. In response to the Andijan revolt, the Russians reassessed their approach to governing the local population. They recognized that their ignorance of Central Asian life and Islam had led to a counterproductive policy. Consequently, Governor-General Vrevskii, under whose administration the revolt occurred, was replaced by

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<sup>94</sup> Keller, Shoshana (2001) 'To Moscow, not Mecca', Praeger, Westport Connecticut, London, p.8 and p.10

<sup>95</sup> Botoiarova, Nuska (2005) *Islamic Fundamentalism in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan: Real or Imagined Threat*, The Graduate School of Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, p.41(52)

<sup>96</sup> Wheeler, Geoffrey (1964) *The modern history of Soviet Central Asia*, Praeger, New York p. 187

<sup>97</sup> Keller, Shoshana (2001) 'To Moscow, not Mecca', Praeger, Westport Connecticut, London, p.8 and p.16

S. M. Dukhovskoy. Dukhovskoy declared that the previous policy of indifference towards Islam, established by Kaufman, was no longer feasible due to the rising 'fanatical' Islamic sentiment against the Russians. He emphasized that further neglect of Islam was not only undesirable but also impractical. His strategy focused on fostering mutual understanding between Russians and the local population through the education of Turkistani youth.<sup>98</sup> However, this also was not easy, Bengali Kasimov, an Uzbek expert on Jadidism in his book states the following on this issue:

Russian chauvinism has created the notion of “intruders” (non-gender, inhuman). According to Z. Validiy, the “chief specialist” in this area was Miropiev<sup>99</sup>. According to him, there is no meaning in organizing education for “introverted” Muslims (i.e. for Turkestani People). Their fate is the same as the American Indians...<sup>100</sup>

Adeeb Khalid states that the Russian Empire could manage to rule the region for just fifty years and in some areas, it was even less.<sup>101</sup> The 1916 rebellion, also known as the Jizzakh uprising, was the final reaction to the Tsarist regime. Although it was swiftly quelled, it ignited a significant anti-Russian sentiment among the local communities. Geoffrey Wheeler suggests that Islam was used effectively as a powerful tool for anti-colonial resistance during this uprising. The 1916 events, according to Wheeler, ‘certainly fueled Muslim religious fervor aimed at the Russians.’<sup>102</sup>

Examining the fifty years of Tsarist Russia's rule in Central Asia from 1867 to 1917 reveals several significant uprisings against colonial authorities. While some of these movements initially began as revolts against local authoritarian regimes, they quickly escalated into anti-Russian rebellions. The chronology of the uprisings could be summarized as such:<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid p.18

<sup>99</sup> Mikhail Alekseevich Miropiev (1852-1919) - Russian Orthodox missionary. Worked as an inspector in the Orenburg educational region. He is the author of a number of works devoted to Islam and the conversion of Russian Muslims to the Russian Orthodox faith.

<sup>100</sup> Qosimov, Begali (2002) *‘Milliy uyg‘onish: Jasorat, Ma‘rifat, Fidoiylik’*, ‘Ma‘naviyat’, Toshkent. Ī. Uzb. P.19-20 ‘National renaissance’

<sup>101</sup> Khalid, Adeeb (2000) *‘The Quest for Autonomy in Turkestan: Hopes, Challenges, and Tragedy’*(УДК 94(47).084.3+94(57)«1917/1918» DOI)p.63(1)

<sup>102</sup> Wheeler, Geoffrey (1964) *‘The modern history of Soviet Central Asia’*, Praeger, New York p. 188

<sup>103</sup> Çelebi, Ercan (2019) *‘Turkestan National Struggle: An Evaluation in Terms of Soviet Historical Perspective’*, Academic Journal of History and Idea Vol.6 /Num.4 Çelebi / pp 1916-1940,p.1922(6)

Table #1

#	THE YEAR OF THE EVENT	THE NAME OF EVENT IN HISTORY
1.	1868	Samarkand and Bukhara uprisings
2.	1870-1873	Mangishlak uprising
3.	1873-76	Polatkhan revolt in Kokand – it started as an uprising against Khudayarkhan of Kokand but turned into a massive struggle against colonizers.
4.	1875-76	Kurbanjan datka revolt in Os. <sup>104</sup>
5.	1878	Yetimkhan uprising
6.	1880	Khojand uprising
7.	1882	Dervish Khan uprising in Marghilan
8.	1889	the riots of Shakir Jan around Khokand
9.	1892	Tashkent uprising
10.	1898	Andijan uprising or Dukchi Ishan rebellion
11.	1916	The Jizzakh uprising against the Empire's mobilization policy in Central Asia. The empire needed soldiers to fight for the Russian Empire in World War I. This revolt played a very crucial role in the Empire's collapse which happened very soon in 1917 with the October Revolution.

## 2.5. Jadidism: The Role of Jadids and Qadimids in the Struggle for Independence. Autonomous States in Turkestan

Jadidism as a movement was founded by Ismail Gasprinski in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and spread among Muslim societies throughout the Empire. The reasons that Gasprinski came with the formation of the Jadid movement are two – the first reflection of the changes in the world, especially in Europe and the Ottoman Empire, and the second reason is the political and social situation inside of the Russian Empire. There are different opinions among scholars regarding this movement. Tatar scholar on Jadidism Dilyara Galiulina in her article titled 'Special Aspects of Tatar Jadidism', admits that Jadidism began to form as an idea among Russian Muslims a century before the initiative of Ismail Gasprinskiy, with the Islamic

<sup>104</sup> Laruelle, Marlène, Johan Engval, eds. (2015-12-03). 'Kyrgyzstan beyond "Democracy Island" and "Failing State": Social and Political Changes in a Post-Soviet Society.' Lexington Books. p. 173. ISBN 978-1-4985-1517-7

education reforms of the Kazan Tatars.<sup>105</sup> Galiullina admits that there are several periods of its development, and this movement took its shape when Batirshah (Abdulla Aliyev) - the author of the 'Garizname' for the first time highlighted in his book the social problems of the Russian Muslim community and explained solutions for them.

However, the actual starting point of Jadidistic ideas according to Galiullina should be accepted as the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Abu Nasr Qursavi (1776-1812) called for religious reforms in teaching. Abu Nasr Qursavi who got his education in Bukhara Islamic school argues that the '*taqlid*' method should be replaced with the '*tahqiq*' method in learning Islam. Abu Nasr Qursavi opened a madrasa in his hometown of Qursa, where he started to provide education using '*usul-e tahqiq*'. He argued that all scientific positions must be tested to ensure their correctness, and that *ijtihad* was the responsibility of all Muslims to determine their actions. Despite its criticisms, his reformism was based on the existing scientific tradition. Its content was not subject to European influence, and it can be seen as a response to the incorporation of Islamic institutions into the bureaucracy of the Russian imperial state in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, which changed the realization of Islamic law and religious authority in the Empire.<sup>106</sup> In brief, the term '*usul-e tahqiq*' refers to the concepts of 'testing' or 'examining.' It encompasses a methodical approach to inquiry and analysis, emphasizing the importance of thorough investigation and critical assessment in various contexts. This phrase suggests a dedication to understanding and verifying information or theories, highlighting its significance in research and scholarly pursuits.

The second period of the Jadidistic movement is related to the activity of Shihabuddin Merjani (1818—1889).<sup>107</sup> Merjani is a historian and another reformer in the field of Islamic studies. It is interesting that, in the beginning, Merjani finds Qursevi's ideas to be contrary to the religion, but over time he changes his mind and decides to support him, even continuing his work. Merjani also studied in Bukhara and Samarkand for eleven years (1838-1849), and after returning to Kazan, he wrote several books related to Islamic Sciences and Tatar history. Merjani was the first Ulema to support Ismail Gasprinskiy's initiative and his newspaper named

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<sup>105</sup> Galiullina, D. (2018) '*Specific features of Tatar jadidism late XIX - early twentieth centuries*'. Proceedings of the Society for Archaeology, History and Ethnography at the Kazan University;38 p. 65

<sup>106</sup> Spannaus, Nathan. (2019), '*Preserving Islamic Tradition: Abu Nasr Qursawi and the Beginnings of Modern Reformism*' DOI: [10.1093/oso/9780190251789.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190251789.001.0001) ISBN: 9780190251789

<sup>107</sup> Galiullina D. (2018) '*Specific features of "Tatar jadidism" late XIX - early twentieth centuries*' Proceedings of the Society for Archaeology, History and Ethnography at the Kazan University;38 pages 65-66(3-4)

'Terjuman' - 'The 'Interpreter', though he considered the Islamic society of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and not 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe as an ideal model of State to be built for Volga-Ural Muslim communities.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, Merjani does not give much importance to the Turkic language, considering it is not well developed compared to Arabic.

Tatar historian expert and writer Aydar Yuzeev describes Abu Nasr al Qursavi and Shihabuddin Merjani as *ijtihad* scholars and does not connect them with the Jadidism movement. Aydar Yuzeev states that Jadidism is a social movement created by Ismail Gaspirinski with the sole purpose of spreading a new style of education and emphasizing women's education.<sup>109</sup> He states that this movement spread in Russia in two periods: the first period was between 1880 and 1905, and the second period was between 1905 and 1917<sup>110</sup>. It cannot be denied that a very important environment was prepared by Islamic reformers for the formation of Jadidism before Gaspirinski's initiative. In our view, Ismail Gaspirinski emerged as the pioneering thinker who juxtaposed Islam with modern sciences. He emphasized the significance of women's education and journalism while also successfully fostering political unity among Muslims in Tsarist Russia.

Ismail Gasprincki was born on March 21, 1851, in a small town named Avjıköy in the Bahchesaray municipality of Crimea. He studied in *mekteb* (*medrese* type school) and later in the gymnasium for boys. In 1871, he relocated to Paris to learn French, where he continued his studies until 1874. In that same year, he traveled to Istanbul and applied to join the Ottoman army as an officer. After a year of waiting, he did not receive any response and returned to Crimea. Ismail Gaspirinski worked as a teacher between 1875 and 1878; the same year he became a Deputy Mayor of Bahchesaray municipality and served as a Mayor of the same municipality in 1879-1883. Changes in Europe and within the Ottoman Empire greatly affected him. To share his ideas and experiences with others, he starts working as a journalist. He decides to unite Muslims and all Turkic-speaking peoples of the Russian Empire. In 1883 Gaspirinski published the first newspaper called 'Tercüman' – 'Interpreter' in Bahchesaray. In the

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<sup>108</sup> Mukhametgaliyeva, Aysina.(2013) '*Şihabuddin Mercani'nin Din ve Eğitimi Görüşleri*' (Yüksek Lisans Tezi) Bursa, s.22

<sup>109</sup> Юзеев, Айдар. (2005) '*Татарская нация и ислам в 90-е годы XX В. и в настоящее время // Россия и мусульманский мир*'. №4. (Yuzeev Aydar, 'Tatar nation and Islam in 90s of XX century//Russia and Muslim World' 2005 # 4, page 5)

<sup>110</sup> IBID

newspaper, he published articles, novels, and little stories for children with the pseudonym Molla Abbas Fransevi. He talks about the changes in the world by describing the adventures of 'Mullah Abbas of Tashkent' who travels to Africa and Europe. Between 1882 and 1885 Gaspirinski meets with Muslims in several regions of the Russian Empire and gives speeches about the importance of education and journalism. In 1884, he opened *Usûl-i Jadid* School (The school based on new methods) in Crimea, and the word 'Jadidism' officially started being used.<sup>111</sup> In 1885, Gaspirinski traveled to Istanbul once more to closely monitor the social and political changes in the Ottoman Empire. This trip once again made a great impression on him and strengthened his belief that Turks should lead the Islamic world after completing their development and ensuring their unity. According to him a social structure with a just administration should be organized and implemented where everyone is equal. Moreover, education, skills, religion, and science should be given much importance and attention. For this reason, the understanding that promotes progress which exists in Islam should be emphasized.

To achieve the goal, the basic motto should be 'Unity in language, idea and work'. He sees the need to unite the Muslim population of Russia through a linguistic tool. Gaspirinski replaces Arabic and Persian words with original Turkish words in all his newspapers and published works. Furthermore, Ismail Gaspirinski analyzes and lists the main reasons for the collapse of the Muslim society, these are 1) Lack of education and ignorance; 2) Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the Islamic religion; 3) Bad administration, unjust, unintelligent, and incompetent rulers/administrators, greedy governors; 4) Unfair judges, troublemakers; 5) Bad morals and bad behavior; 6) Arrogance, laziness, carelessness, grudge and discord.<sup>112</sup>Oppression leads to resistance. Islam and the Muslim population were under oppression during Tsarist Russia, which led to mistrust of the government. For this reason, the ideas of Jadidism brought forward by Gaspirinski quickly became popular among Muslims. Gaspirinski had a significant influence on many intellectuals throughout the Empire. In particular, Tatar, Azerbaijani, and Central Asian intellectuals applied Jadidistic ideas, and due to their activities, the Jadid movement gradually gained momentum.

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<sup>111</sup> Killioglu, Mehmet Erkan. (2019) '*Çarlık Rusyasında Cedircilik / Yeni Usul Hareketi*', Journal of Awareness, Cilt / Volume:4, Sayı / Issue:1, s.67

<sup>112</sup> Parlak, Nizamettin. (2015) '*İsmail Gaspıralı'nın Dârürrahat Müslümanları Adlı Eserindeki Endülüs Algısı Üzerine*', s.150 Erzincan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi (ERZSOSDER) ÖS-I: pp.141 -160

In 1905 and 1906, Ismail Gaspirinski convened the Russian Muslim Congress. He speaks at the congress, saying that Muslims must unite against the ignorance that has gripped the entire country. The beneficial aspects of Western civilization should be used, and the principles of Islam and national culture should be protected. He emphasizes that Islam does not affect the backwardness of Muslims and that this problem does not arise from the nature of Muslims. In 1906 to gather all Russian Muslims under one roof Gaspirinski and his friends opened the party named 'Ittifaq al Muslimin'. His newspaper 'Tercüman' (Interpreter) was read in Russia, Turkestan, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran. He believed that social and political changes could be achieved by developing the education system with new teaching methods, emphasizing the education of girls and women, and learning the foundations of Islam together with new sciences. Gasprinski wanted to reach Turkestan, especially Bukhara, and shake the people of the region through education because he thought that an awakening that could occur in this region would make a significant contribution to the Islamic world's struggle for decolonization. In addition to local demands, Gasprinski also made a great contribution to the opening of '*usul-u jedit*' schools in Bukhara and Central Asia in general. His newspaper 'Tercüman' (Interpreter) also became very famous in the Turkistan region and local intellectuals started to publish such newspapers. After the death of Gaspirinski on 24<sup>th</sup> of September 1914, his daughter Shafika Gaspirinskaya continued his struggle to enlighten people, especially Muslim women in the region of Crimea and Caucasus. Ismail Gasprinski had a very big impact on the formation and development of Turkistani Jadidism. Dream of an Islamic state and 'Mulla Abbas Tashkandi' of Gaspirinski proves his future hopes for a prosperous Muslim society which would be possible if Turkistani Muslim societies changed their look to the new notions. 'Mulla Abbas Tashkandi's Adventures', is a novel by Gaspirinski. For this novel, Gaspirinski chooses Molla Abbas Tashkandi, a young Tatar man from the Turkistan region of Tashkent city. Especially his novel "The Muslims of Darrurakhat" conveys very important ideas of the author. The novel is a part of the above-mentioned collection of stories dedicated to the adventures of the fictional character Mulla Abbas Tashkandi. The story is set in the fictional city of Darrurahat and revolves around the lives, beliefs, customs, and struggles of the Muslim population in the region. It is a utopic novel that describes the author's vision of Muslim society. The author highlights that the continuation of the true Islamic traditions is possible in the city and by applying urban culture. He has chosen a Turkistani young man as his main character who travels to many parts of the world which has changed and learns new notions, aspects, and approaches

that are necessary to stay afloat. It was the symbolic message to the Muslim Central Asia or even the Turkic world that the region is important in keeping Islamic heritage. He takes Mulla Abbas to Spain, which is also symbolic. As we know, during the Golden Age of Islam, Andalusia (Spain) and Mawerannahr (Central Asia) were the main contributors to the development of the Islamic culture. In our opinion, the author shows his hope that the re-birth of the “Golden Age” is possible for the Islamic World, if it applies the true Islamic principles based on a comprehensive education system, application of innovations into lifestyle, treating women equally in the field of education, as it was described in Islam. The author emphasizes that all these are possible in an urban environment.<sup>113</sup>

The followers of Gaspirinski in Turkistan also kept on applying all the principles introduced by him in their struggle against illiteracy and injustice. They wanted educational reforms based on Islamic and national values, which were the exact sources that could bring solutions to all social, political, and economic problems of the region. Local intellectuals were impressed by Ismail Gaspirinski’s brave behavior and actions. Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov applied the work of Ismail Gaspirinski in Turkestan. In 1893 the first "*Usuli Jadid*" school was opened in Samarkand under the leadership of Ismail Gaspirinski, which operated only for a few months; later in 1901, Munavvarqori opened the next "*Usuli Jadid*" school in Tashkent. Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov, one of the reformers who grew up in Turkestan, was closely familiar with all the textbooks, educational manuals, and artistic and journalistic works of Gasprinski, and was influenced by his political views. He also created textbooks for modern schools in Turkistan and brought up a generation of modern teachers.<sup>114</sup>

Munavvarqori Abdurashithonov could bring together many rich families in sponsoring selected youth for abroad education. The name of Mehmuthoja Behbudi is also important. He was a revered personality in Jadidism and the political life of Turkistan. Mehmuthoja Behbudi was born in 1875 in Samarkand, graduated from Mir Arab *medrese*, and was a well-known judge, mufti, educator, translator, writer, and journalist. He is the spiritual leader of the Turkestan autonomous republic as well. The roster of Turkestani Jadids is extensive and diverse, comprising numerous influential figures who played pivotal roles in the intellectual and cultural

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<sup>113</sup> T.C. Kültür Ve Türişm Bakanlıđı, (2020) 7. Basım: *İsmail Gaspıralı Seçilmiş eserleri 1, roman ve hikâyeleri*, Otuken neşriyat A.Ş, İstanbul, pp.181-288

<sup>114</sup> Dolimov, Ulug‘bek (2010) *Jadidchilik tamal toshi*, Jahon adabiyoti jurnali, 1-son. Tashkent

revitalization of the region. This lengthy list reflects the significant contributions of these reformers to the modernization and educational advancement within Turkestan, highlighting their commitment to promoting new ideas and practices that aimed to improve society. Each individual on this list represents a unique perspective and approach to the challenges faced by Turkestani society during their time, collectively shaping the discourse around reform and progress in the region.

We can bring the examples of Uzbek Jadids by mentioning the author of innovative methods in the field of pedagogy Abdulla Avlani whose ideas are still in demand; the founder of the Uzbek novel writing school Abdulla Qadiri, who could describe in his novel historico-political and social environment in very realistic way; the first Uzbek professor Fitrat, the names of famous poets and writers like Cholpan, Usmon Nasir and thousands of other intellectuals who were martyred for their enthusiasm and struggle.

Jadids as a progressive Muslim intellectual saw illiteracy and ignorance as the main reason for all problems. According to them, the solution was in the ‘emergence of national interests’ likewise in Western societies that could achieve results by developing ‘nation building ideology’. Another important solution was the true interpretation of Islam, which was education based on Islamic thought but covered new scientific disciplines as well. Central Asian Jadids opened several schools and publishing houses and wrote necessary textbooks, journals, and articles similar to Gaspirinski’s example. Some of the Jadids<sup>115</sup> were under deep impact of the ‘Jon Turks’ of the Ottoman Empire who saw the progress in the Republic System and not in the existing Monarchy. It is for this reason that some Jadids saw the Soviet State as a solution to achieve progress and Independence. The Jadids were considered state enemies of both - representatives and admirers of the Tsarist Empire and followers of the new Soviet Russia. Central Asian Jadids were intellectuals, among which there were a big number of *Ulema* as well. For example, Behbudi himself was among the *Ulema*, he graduated from the Mir Arab *medrese*, was an imam, a *mirza* (secretary), and even a *qadi* (judge). However, there were many *Ulema* among corrupt authoritarian figures. Dr. Adeeb Khalid describes corrupted *Ulema* in the example of Bukhara Emirate, however, it could be applied to all three Turkic States of the region even when they became a protectorate of the Russian Empire:

Cultural capital could be put to good use: many *ulama* rose to positions of power through intermarriage with the ruling family. Such connections provided the amirs with legitimacy and access to august lineages, while also placing considerable authority in the hands of the *ulama*. Such alliances were especially important for the early Manghits, whose Chingissid credentials were

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<sup>115</sup> Abdurauf Fitrat and Fayzullah Khojaye, including some of their followers

suspect. The sister of Amir Haydar (r. 1800–1820) was married to Sayyid Ahmad Khoja, a descendant of Sayyid Ata. As brother-in-law to the amir, Sayyid Ahmad served as governor of Chirchik and Qarshi and held numerous other posts in Samarqand and Bukhara. The *ulama* also provided a means for mediating disputes between the amirs and their governors. The *ulama* also controlled vast amounts of *waqf* property and, in addition, enjoyed tax immunities granted by individual amirs.<sup>116</sup>

Cities Samarkand and Bukhara were important centers of Islamic studies where thousands of students from many parts of the Islamdom used to come and study, and both of these cities were in Bukhara Emirate in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, accordingly, there was stronger *ulema* authority as well. Dr. Adeb Khalid counts four important characters in the struggle for Bukhara's future. His idea applies to the entire region. He states the following:

The struggle for Bukhara's future, as it was waged in the decade before the revolution, had four main protagonists: the amirs, the *ulama*, the Russians, and the Jadids. Each of these groups had its interests, which could sometimes overlap and were at all times defined by imperatives and strategies rooted in access to resources of power.<sup>117</sup>

As can be seen, the author emphasizes four main actors who had a direct impact on Bukhara Emirates politics and society, and we can conclude that the same sources were influencing another part of the Central Asian region as well. If the local society was into opposition groups then there were Government representatives, Qadimids, and Jadids. In general, Qadimids were representatives of local conservative *Ulema* and their supporters. The Qadimis (proponents of the old order) as the main group representing the majority of Turkestani society, which attempted to preserve its prestige and status quo. They did not want to allow any innovation to be applied neither in society nor in the education since were afraid to lose their authority, therefore they were interested in the obedience of the local population.

Turkestani Jadids had to struggle against conservative religious authoritarians who were in relationship with the Government. Also, the Jadids had to stay against the Russian colonizers. Before the Soviet revolution, Jadids tried to achieve political autonomy, since thinking about complete Independence was impossible due to economic and socio-political conditions in the region. That's why they struggled accordingly, however after the collapse of Turkestan and Alash autonomous states those who remained in the Jadid lines decided to change the vision and tried to achieve independence with the support of Soviet ideology, though soon they were made to be disappointed since this ideology and its regime destroyed them and their plans.

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<sup>116</sup> Khalid, Adeep. (2000) '*Society and politics in Bukhara, 1868–1920*', Central Asian Survey, 19(3/4), 367–396, p.6 (369)

<sup>117</sup> IBID, p.30 (392)

Local intelligentsia in the face of Jadids saw the future in development and reforms in socio-political spheres. The formation of autonomic regions or states was the first step in achieving real independence. But even this was very tough to realize since there were very few opportunities for the civil Muslim population of Turkestan to participate in political life. Three years after the establishment of the Turkistan General Governate, Tashkent city was ruled by a local municipal дума<sup>118</sup> likewise in other important cities of the Empire. According to the law of 1870, the number of Muslim representatives in it was limited to one-third. However, local intelligentsia continued struggling for their rights.

Behbudi sent a letter of proposals to the Muslim fraction of the Third Duma with the hope that it would be attached to the official program of Ittifaq ul-Muslimeen, a party of the Muslim population of the European part of Russia. He hoped that the Muslim fraction in the Duma would use it as a guideline when searching for new legislation. Behbudi saw the political future of Turkestan the following way: “Muslims of Turkestan should have representation in the State Duma in proportion to their number. All cities of Turkestan should have city councils with proportional representation of Muslims<sup>119</sup>. Though this document was never accepted and did not have any legality, still it was a reflection of Jadid’s view on the region’s development. In 1917 the news of the abdication of Nicholas II arrived in Turkestan. Local activists immediately began to create political and cultural organizations. In March of 1917, local Muslim intellectuals and activists organized a party ‘Shuro-i-Islamiya’ which consisted of Jadids and Qadimids.<sup>120</sup> By this time, Jadids already succeeded in formulating a program of cultural reform based on new types of education and a new vision of the world. They strongly believed that any society with these three principles and Islamic *ahlak* (behavior) would have success. There were three principles of Turkestani Jadid’s program: Hurriyat – Freedom; Musavvat – Equality; Adolat – Justice.<sup>121</sup>

In complicated conditions ‘Shuro-i-Islamiya’ was able to convene the Muslim Congress of Turkestani Muslims. During this Congress among sixteen important issues, the most crucial was the matter of establishment of the Council of Muslims of Turkestan. At the end of the

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<sup>118</sup>Khalid, Adeeb (2000) *‘The Quest for Autonomy in Turkestan: Hopes, Challenges, and Tragedy’*(УДК 94(47).084.3+94(57)«1917/1918» DOI)p.64(2)

<sup>119</sup> Khalid, Adeeb (2000) *‘The Quest for Autonomy in Turkestan: Hopes, Challenges, and Tragedy’*(УДК 94(47).084.3+94(57)«1917/1918» DOI)p.65(3)

<sup>120</sup> Usmonov, Q., Sodiqov, M., Burxonova, S. (2006) *‘O‘zbekiston Tarixi’* Oliy o‘quv yurtlari barcha bakalavr yo‘nalishlari uchun darslik Toshkent, (The History of Uzbekistan), p.251

<sup>121</sup> Salamov, Shuhrat (2015) *‘Turkistan and South Caucasus’* (Туркестан и Южный Кавказ: Дашнаки от Ферганы до Карабаха), ‘Yangi avlod’, Tashkent, p.87

Congress, the Turkestan Muslim Council was established and Mustafa Chokayev was elected as it's in charge. Mustafa Chokayev is another very important personality among Munavvarqori, Behbudi, and Fitrat. 'Shuro-i-Islamia' organized branches of the party in different regions, so the party functioned based on regional branches like the Tashkent branch, Samarkand branch, and Ferghana branches. All three branches were recognized as administrative representation in the 'Shura-I-Islamiya'.<sup>122</sup> Despite many attempts to keep the unity, disagreement and split inside the party increased, and Qadimids left by organizing their own 'Shura-i-Ulema'. Conservative "Qadimids" believed in getting the country's independence from the ruling colonialists only through armed struggle, while the Jadid representatives wanted to gain Independence by taking advantage of favorable revolutionary conditions through political strategies - step by step, without unnecessary bloodshed.<sup>123</sup> Still, the main problem was the achievement of unity in the region, since Central Asia besides Turkestan General Governate consisted of Khiva and Bukhara protectorate states as well and these two protectorate states remained with their monarchs on the throne. Besides, Qadimids wanted the 'sharia' system to remain in the state in each field, they saw Jadids as reformists who wanted to destroy the existing system.

The abdication of Nicholas II presented a significant opportunity for uniting the region; however, this potential was rendered unattainable due to existing divisions within society. Though 'Shura-i-Islamia' in the beginning did not include Khiva and Bukhara protectorate territory in their Autonomous state plan, still there were attempts and hope between local intelligentsia to build a Great Turkistan. There was ideological competition between different powers and approaches. The ideas of the communistic view also were spreading very fast by representatives of such community, mostly by Russian workers and soldiers in the region.<sup>124</sup> Already in the beginning of March, there was the first soviet organization in Tashkent the number of which increased up to 63 very soon. However, its members were mostly Russians. 'Shura-i-Islamiya' organized the second Congress of Turkestani Muslims in September to discuss the activities of the Turkestan Muslim Council, land, water, food issues, and the political future of Turkestan.<sup>125</sup> Meanwhile, Qadimids announced this as a 'Congress of atheists' and did

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<sup>122</sup> Usmonov, Q., Sodiqov, M., Burxonova, S. (2006) '*O'zbekiston Tarixi*' Oliy o 'quv yurtlari barcha bakalavr yo'nalishlari uchun darslik Toshkent, (The History of Uzbekistan), p.252

<sup>123</sup> IBID p.251

<sup>124</sup> Khalid, Adeeb (2000) '*The Quest for Autonomy in Turkestan: Hopes, Challenges, and Tragedy*'(УДК 94(47).084.3+94(57)«1917/1918» DOI)p.67(5)

<sup>125</sup> IBID p.68(6)

not attend; the total number of expected guests was 500, but only around a hundred. Very soon, Qadimids convened their own Congress to review the same questions seen by Jadids in their Congress.<sup>126</sup> They called 'Shura-I-Islamiya' to join them by changing their name to 'Ittifaq' Muslimin', like making a coalition. However, it meant that Jadidism was supposed to be finished as a reformist ideology.<sup>127</sup> It was a time when the Soviets with Russian workers and soldiers getting stronger, split was creating chaos and Jadids came to a very important decision. They convened the fourth congress in Kokand city together with moderate Russian representatives of Turkestan on November 26. After some debate and discussions, the congress adopted the resolution according to which extraordinary regional Muslim congress, expressing the will of the people of Turkestan for self-determination by the principles proclaimed by the Great Russian Revolution, announced Turkestan as a territorially autonomous state inside of the Russian Federal Democratic Republic. It entrusts the development forms of autonomy to the Constituent Assembly of Turkestan, which should be organized as soon as possible, also it solemnly declares that the rights of national minorities inhabiting Turkestan will be protected in every possible way.<sup>128</sup> According to Uzbek historian and journalist, Shuhrat Salamov, Fitrat described that significant night as 'it is our national Laylatul Qadr'.<sup>129</sup> Jadids were full of hope and ambitions for the future of the region.

The administration of the Turkestan autonomous state consisted of 8 members of the Turkestan Interim Council. It has attracted qualified lawyers to prepare the project of the Constitution. Several newspaper publications were established in Uzbek, Kazakh, and Russian languages. The pages of the previously published newspaper 'Great Turkestan' began to focus on special attention to government activities of the autonomy. Most of the ministers of the autonomy had professional education and were highly qualified specialists: M. Tynyshbaev – railway engineer, I. Shoakhmedov, Mustafa Chokayev, Ubaydulla Khojaev, A. Urazaev and S. Hertzfeld - lawyers, Kh. Agayev - agronomist, O. Makhmudov - miner. The Autonomous Government began to create a people's army under the leadership of the Minister of Military Issues of Turkestan Ubaidulla Khojaev in 1918, the number of soldiers was 2000 people except for approximately the same number of *mishaps* (local police) in Kokand. However, there was

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<sup>126</sup> IBID

<sup>127</sup> IBIDp.69(7)

<sup>128</sup> IBIDp. 70(8)

<sup>129</sup> Salamov, Shuhrat (2015) *‘Туркестан и Южный Кавказ XIX-XX в.в.: дашнаки от Ферганы до Карабаха (Turkistan and South Caucasus), “Yangi avlod”, Tashkent*

a lack of weapons. In the economic sphere, the government has established the issue of domestic loan bonds in the amount of 30 million. The government has taken practical actions for the delivery of grain from the Caucasus through Orenburg for the starving population of Turkestan. Activists of the Samarkand region convened their regional congress in Samarkand and agreed on the decision to join Turkistan Autonomy. They elected five representatives of the People's Assembly. According to the news newspaper *'Ulug Turkiston'*, in December of 1917, a rally took place in Tashkent organized by Munavvarkari Abdurashidhanov. The participants came out to support Turkestan and recognize its legitimacy. After the announcement of the Turkestan autonomous state on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December of 1917, in the same way as Jadids in Turkestan, Kazakh activists announced the Alash-Orda autonomous state inside of the Russian Federative Republic in the territory of today's Kazakhstan. The formation of the autonomous states of Turkestan and Alash shows us how strong was the political will of the local intelligentsia. This signaled to the newly established Soviet authority that it would be challenging to handle these states. Bolsheviks and the Tashkent Soviet organization's head – Tobolin Ivan, saw in these autonomous states great danger and took action for their liquidation. Starting from January 30, 1918, the Council of People's Commissars of the Turkestan Region, together with armed Turkestan Bolsheviks, began its military operations. Members of the Armenian Dashnaktsutyun party participated in this violent aggression, with eleven echelons of infantry, cavalry, and artillery dispatched to Kokand to support the Bolshevik armed forces. For three days, the city endured relentless artillery bombardment. The Bolsheviks mercilessly defeated the government of Turkestan. Robberies and murders of civilian Muslims continued not only in Kokand but also in its environs. By the end of February 1918, over fifty thousand residents had lost their lives, and Turkestan autonomy was effectively dismantled, having been operational for only 72 days. While some members managed to flee, the confrontation subsequently escalated into partisan warfare, referred to locally as the 'Korbashi movement' and more broadly recognized as the 'Basmachi movement'<sup>130</sup> by Russian historians, it went on up until the 1930<sup>th</sup>.

Another Central Asian autonomous state the Alash Orda also was determined by the spring of 1919<sup>th</sup>. Some Jadids tried to continue their struggle even under the Soviets after its bordering policy in Central Asia that divided the region into five Republics according to their national identity. However, this struggle as well could not last long since local intelligentsia was always an obstacle to developing Soviet-atheistic ideology. Thousands of innocent people, mostly local

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<sup>130</sup> 'Basmachi' means occupant or colonizer in Uzbek.

intelligentsia, died during the Stalinist authoritarian regime in Uzbekistan. From 1929 to 1937, hundreds of people were subjected to repression, thirteen thousand of them were brutally shot. Many families were destroyed, and children were left orphans. During the great repressions only in the years of 1937-1938 alone, about seven thousand Uzbeks were shot, and more than 43 thousand people were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and exile in Uzbekistan. After Stalin died in 1953, some Jadids were found not guilty, however only with politics of 'Perestroyka' activities of Jadids started being investigated widely. However, the process of vindication of Jadids officially started after gaining independence and the collapse of the USSR and still goes on. In the field of this process, hundreds of Jadids and their creative and political activities have been and continue to be investigated and their work published. In conclusion, it can be asserted that the principal cities of present-day Uzbekistan served as pivotal centers for the Jadidist movement, which aimed at reforming and modernizing society. These urban hubs became focal points for progressive ideas and educational advancements that sought to challenge the traditionalist perspectives represented by their opponents, known as the Qadimids. This dynamic interplay between the Jadidists and the Qadimids not only shaped the sociopolitical landscape of the region during that era but also laid the groundwork for the ongoing discourse surrounding reform and cultural identity in Uzbekistan today.<sup>131</sup> Accordingly, these cities remained as the centers of political resistance against new ideologies and power.

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<sup>131</sup> Olcott, Brill M. (2007) *'Roots of Radical islam in Central Asia'*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington

## CHAPTER III

# SOVIET PERIOD: EMERGENCE OF SOVIET-STYLE SECULARIZATION. THE ROLE OF URBAN RELIGIOSITY IN CULTURAL RESISTANCE

In the previous chapter, we explored the role of urban culture in shaping the identity of Uzbeks of Central Asia. In the following chapter, we will build on these ideas by examining them in the context of Soviet-style policies. We also aimed to highlight the role of traditional heritage keepers who were influenced by urban religious culture.

Central Asia came under Russian control in the 19th century. The influence of the Russian Empire laid the foundation for subsequent Soviet policies. The integration of the territories of Central Asia into the Russian Empire destroyed traditional feudal structures. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Central Asia was predominantly agrarian and characterized by a feudal system of land ownership and exploitation<sup>132</sup>. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks expanded their influence into Central Asia and pursued policies aimed at modernizing and industrializing the region<sup>133</sup>, including land reform and collectivization of agriculture. These policies aimed to dismantle feudal structures and establish socialist systems of ownership and production. However, it is important to note that the transition to socialism was not smooth and was met with resistance from local elites, traditionalists, and religious leaders. Moreover, this process has varied across the Central Asian region, with some experiencing greater changes than others. During the early transition to socialism in Central Asia, there were cases of expropriation of property from wealthy people, often justified by the ideology that property should belong to the state and not to private individuals. This has been a common feature of socialist revolutions and transitions throughout the world, including in Central Asia. In the Soviet state, it was called ‘collectivization (*коллективизация*)’<sup>134</sup>. The collectivization process involved the forced consolidation of private farms into collective or

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<sup>132</sup> Morrison, Alexander (2020) *The Russian Conquest of Central Asia. A Study in Imperial Expansion, 1814 - 1914* Cambridge University Press, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139343381>

<sup>133</sup> Thibault, Helene. (2015) *The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies*, Eurostudia- Revue Transatlantique De Recherche Sur L’Europe Vol.10, No.1: pp.11-31, p.11 (1)

<sup>134</sup> Kokaisl, Petr. (2013) *Soviet collectivization and its specific focus on Central Asia*, Agris Online Papers in Economics and Computer Science, Vol. V, N 4

state farms. During this process, wealthy landowners, often called *'kulaks'*, were persecuted and their land and property were forcibly confiscated by the state. Accordingly, we can state that the transition from feudalism to socialism in Central Asia was a complex and multifaceted process influenced by a range of historical, political, and economic factors. One of the painful points in this process is that for the high positions and ranks in the newly established Soviet state, people were selected from the poor sections of society and the disadvantaged in pre-Bolshevik times, who were very grateful to the new State. Gradually, this led to the formation of a new elite in the region, which supported Soviet ideology and all of its policies with great loyalty. Many of them quickly became atheists and actively started spreading new ideologies and new policies, some became members of KGB (NKVD – *(Народный комиссариат внутренних дел)*-People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs<sup>135</sup>, and some cooperated with them with great enthusiasm. The brutal policies of this era which included the forced collectivization of agriculture, the creation of the Gulag system, and the persecution of kulaks, mass deportations, and deaths left permanent trauma in local people's memory. Overall, the transition from feudalism to communist-era socialism with atheistic principles left its dire consequences with fewer benefits.

### 3.1 Features of Soviet Style Secularization

According to social studies, societies have three periods of development that are pre-modern, modern, and post-modern. Pre-modern could be defined as agrarian society while modern society is a fruit of Industrialization.

What is the "Modernity"? According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, it is:

The self-definition of a generation about its own technological innovation, governance, and socio-economics. To participate in modernity was to conceive of one's society as engaging in organizational and knowledge advances that make one's immediate predecessors appear antiquated or, at least, surpassed.<sup>136</sup>

To make it more clear, I would like to refer to Antony Giddens who describes "modernity" as: "a notion that refers to modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about

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<sup>135</sup> This was the previous name of the Committee for State Security

<sup>136</sup> Snyder, Sharon L.. "modernity". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 20 May. 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/modernity>. Accessed 17 June 2022.

the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence".<sup>137</sup>

These two definitions, describe “modernity” as the period where technological innovation started being applied to life and that fact changed people’s attitude towards traditions. Moreover, this attitude, which started in Europe, became world spread. Another term “Modernization” explains the process of turning into modernity. In sociology, it means the transition from a traditional rural agrarian society to a secular urban industrial society.<sup>138</sup> Modernism and Modernization are terms, closely connected with emergence of the Industrialization, new technologies, and urbanization. These terms pushed the formation of new ideas, rejecting or criticizing traditional ones, and turned into the development of science. Consequently, it has an important place in the development of Western Civilization. What is Secularism? Its definition is given as “Secularism is any movement in society directed away from ‘otherworldliness’ to life on earth”.<sup>139</sup> In general, understanding Secularism is the separation of spirituality or religiosity from State or civil issues. Larry Shine defines this term in his article as:

The English term "secular" comes from the Latin saeculum, which meant a generation, or an age, or the spirit of an age, and could also signify a century. By the time of the Vulgate the Latin saeculum had already achieved considerable ambiguity, bearing both the religiously neutral sense of an immeasurably great period (e.g., in saecula saeculorum, I Tim. 1:17) and the religiously negative sense of "this world" which is under the power of Satan (e.g., Et nolite confirmari huic saeculo, Rom. 12:2).<sup>140</sup>

This means a certain period that is under the influence of Satan. The author referring to Stallmann, notes that the starting point of usage of the term “secularism” is “negotiations of Peace of Westphalia” (in 1644), where it was used to identify the lands (territory) that went away from Church control into Civil [Stallmann, op. cit., pp. 5-7]<sup>141</sup>. Shinner says that this term further was used in the 19th century by G. J. Holyoake and his freethinker's organization known

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<sup>137</sup> Giddens, Anthony. (1991) *‘Consequences of modernity’*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA. Introduction p.1

<sup>138</sup> Kumar, Krishan. "modernization". Encyclopedia Britannica, 29 Oct. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/modernization>. Accessed 17 June 2022.

<sup>139</sup> Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "secularism". Encyclopedia Britannica, 13 May. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/secularism>. Accessed 17 June 2022.

<sup>140</sup> Shine, Larry (1967) *‘The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research’*, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn,), pp. 207-220. [URL:https://www.jstor.org/stable/1384047](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1384047) p.208

<sup>141</sup> IBID

as the "Secular Society" where the term meant "practical philosophy for the people" and aims to interpret and structure life without relying on supernatural explanations.<sup>142</sup>

As we can see, the term was related to the lands, and it was used to define being apart from Church. Gradually, the term started to be used to the person and later to the approach. Secularization is the process of turning from a spiritual or religious society into a society where religious or spiritual issues and State issues are formally separated. This process has influenced the emergence of rationalist ideas and positivism, as well as materialist views, which later became the basis of secularism. According to Dr. Alpaslan Achikgench, there are two breaking points in the development history of Western society, which can be considered as the starting point of positivist thought. First, the emergence of a new understanding of the solar system, along with scientific progress and Newtonian physics. Due to the mechanical understanding of the world, an important break point occurred in Western society, where till then the Church was the leader in explaining the Universe and its existence. The second breaking point is connected with the name of August Comte.<sup>143</sup> Auguste Comte (1798-1857) divided the period of man's search for the truth into three phases: 1) the theological period - the stage in which man believes in supernatural power as well as everything his ancestors thought 2) metaphysical or investigative stage - when a person begins to question and reason about authority and religion 3) Scientific stage- time when science begins to answer all questions and the necessity to seek answers in religion ends.<sup>144</sup>

As these ideas became widespread, some philosophers started claiming with no hesitation about "the death of God"(Nietzsche) or describing religion as a poison (Marx). Furthermore, with the acceptance of the "Evolution theory" of Charles Darwin instead of the existing "God's creation" approach in some powerful societies, secularism became an officially authorized notion in the Western world. All these steps were leading towards 'being released from God and religion'. If to agree with Larry Shine, while discussing the types of secularization he mentioned one type

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<sup>142</sup> IBID

<sup>143</sup> From the text of Alpaslan Açıkgenç's presentation on 'Islamization of knowledge Ismail Faruqi, Fazlul Rahman and Al-Attas' at MEDIT on June 1, 2023, The same idea is brought by Charles Taylor in his book *The Secular Age* (IV part) russian translation (СЕКУЛЯРНЫЙ ВЕК/ Тезлемная беземная Cambridge University Presskna). Massachusetts, and London, England 2007 -Пер. с англ. (Seriya «Философия и bogoslovie»). — М.: ББИ, 2017.-xiv + 967с.(ISBN 978-5-89647-307-7) pages 414-415.

<sup>144</sup> Конт, Огюст (2003) 'Дух современной философии' (Слово о положительном мышлении)"Феникс", Ростов на Дону, ББК А5Я72 К 64. Перевод с французско. Шапиро., pp. 55-64; p.64-71; p.72-74]

which is the decline of religion and according to that type in the final stage, religion should completely disappear.<sup>145</sup>

However, there were some societies where religion was more than just faith, but the society's lifestyle. Certain Muslim and Christian societies and India could be good examples of this. Moreover, human beings' life is surrounded by natural disasters, epidemics, and wars which always follow heavy uncontrolled consequences. To survive in tough conditions just being tied to the material world is not enough and a human being needs spiritual - faith-related or moral support as well. These types of conditions showed that being completely irreligious could not last long. The religious revival process' in the West started in the 40-70 years of the 20th century and became popular in the 80s. Furthermore, now looking back, we can see that 'religion' and 'spirituality' have never disappeared in societies but were interpreted differently. Since 'secularism' as a term and a notion was born in the West I share Ceniz Dinc's idea that considers 'modernity' to be with features first of all specific to the western society, though it was spread worldwide.<sup>146</sup> This notion or phenomenon has affected the non-Western and even some Western societies differently, which has brought various consequences in their lives. That's why it's important to note that secularism has several types according to the conditions of assimilation into a certain society. Dr. Talal Asad anthropologist defines the term secularism as political doctrine. He says that secularism as a political ideology originated in modern Europe and America. While it's common to perceive a clear separation between religion and secularism within public or administrative spheres, this distinction isn't exclusive to modern times. Even in medieval Christian and Muslim empires, there were indications of such separation. The emergence of secularism introduces novel ideas like "religion," "morality," and "politics," along with new responsibilities associated with them. These innovations are felt by the majority and cause different reactions.<sup>147</sup> As we see, the author means that secularism covers three distinct features of society that are religion, morality, and politics, and that affect the majority differently. In my opinion, it is likewise the 'ulama', 'umara', and 'adalah' concepts in Islamdom, which were supposed to function independently. Another scholar Dr. Charles Taylor in his book "The Secular Age" argues that the 'sense of fullness' – is something that gives meaning to one's existence and it is an appropriate basis for one's existence. The scholar

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<sup>145</sup> Shine, Larry (1967) 'The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research', Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 2 (autumn.), pp. 207-220. [URL:https://www.jstor.org/stable/1384047](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1384047)p.209

<sup>146</sup> Dinc, Cengiz (2007) 'Modernity and the West: Evolution of Their Relationship', Kocaeli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi (13) / 1:82-107

<sup>147</sup> Асад, Т. (2020) 'Возникновение секулярного: христианство, ислам, модернность' / Т. Асад «НЛО», (Studia religiosa) p.7

highlights this concept as one that might fit modern values and perspectives.<sup>148</sup> This means that a person needs an explanation of his existence, and the answer for some people is mostly found in spiritual or religious concepts. The author identifies that the faith of people in 1500 and the faith of people in 2000 are different and this point could be identified with the possibility of an 'alternative' in having and not having the faith. This means, in pre-modern periods a human being's belief in God was compulsory and in modern times people started having an alternative to believe or not to believe, to believe in God, or to believe in any other 'power' or subject. The idea of compulsory believing in God with no argument was also stated by August Comte as we mentioned above. Having choices became a feature of democracy or freedom in societies, however, it took decades of human beings' social and political experience to prove this fact. Cengiz Dinç in his article emphasized that the defining aspect of the modern cosmic imagination is not simply the promotion of materialism or the promotion of a revival of spiritual perspectives despite materialism, although both take place. Rather, it is about creating a space in the imagination where people can freely explore different worldviews without feeling forced to definitively choose one. This creative space acts as a neutral ground, allowing people to refrain from taking sides in the ongoing conflicts between faith and unbelief. This neutral zone is large enough to accommodate those who wish to abstain from participating in these hostilities altogether. Consequently, the heat of the war between faith and unbelief in modern civilization is gradually dying out, despite the efforts of minorities.<sup>149</sup> According to the above-mentioned ideas we admit that in the Western modern world, there is a neutral zone in societies where the confrontation between belief, faith, or unbelief is disappearing or not being too highlighted. The term 'religious revival' was popular during World Wars. Now the turn comes to the post-Soviet region and the term has become popular with the effect of globalization and the development of social media in the post-Communist area. The Soviet system or Communism with a complete rejection of religion and spirituality had high ambitions to build an ideal state at the beginning of the XIX century and failed. Belarusian researcher Mojayko L. M learns about the relevant changes in her country she highlights that: "Today is the time of interaction between religion and processes of secularization and religious revival. The current age is the time of "collision

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<sup>148</sup> Taylor, Charles. (2017) *The Secular Age*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England 2007 -Пер. с англ. (Серия «Философия и общество»). — М.: ББИ, -xiv + 967с.(ISBN 978-5-89647-307-7 p. 507 (с. 627)

<sup>149</sup> Dinc. Cengiz, (2007) *Modernity and the West: Evolution of Their Relationship*, Kocaeli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi (13) / 1 : 82-107

of two antagonistic processes of secularization which is specific to the modern and modernizing societies and the phenomena of "religious revival" occurring around the world.<sup>150</sup>

So, Mojayko, as a person with a post-Communist background thinks that there is a notion of confrontation or opposition between secularism and religion in the world, however, there are societies where religion co-exists with religion. Larry Shine counts six types of secularism and discusses secular-religious polarity as well. To understand this notion we decided to look through types of secularism according to Larry Shine. The first type of secular society is the decline of religion. The author defines it by saying that previously accepted symbols, doctrines, and institutions lose their status and impact. In such a society, "*religionlessness*" is the final stage. The author refers to J. Milton Yinger, who says that it is a type of secularization where people, things, and meanings shift from ecclesiastical or religious use to civil or secular use.<sup>151</sup> The author analyses this approach and at the end of his analysis, he states based on two problems in identifying this type of secularization, that it is a notion that is related to the nature of the religion in a certain society. According to the author, firstly the problem of determining when and where one should find the supposed "religious" period, from which the decline began. He refers to David Martin, who argues that even secularists tend to adhere to a utopian view of medieval religious life. The second problem is doubtfulness of the criterion of the "religiousness" of societies.

The second type of secularism according to the author is "conformity with "this world", which he describes as a type when the focus of a religious group or a society influenced by religion shifts away from the supernatural and increasingly directs itself towards worldly matters."<sup>152</sup> This means that religiosity will move to the next plane as a result of being carried away by the privileges of this World. The author refers to Harold W. Pfautz who has described this type of secularization when the Sectarian religious movements often show a tendency to integrate into and resemble the mainstream of the society.<sup>153</sup> It is like today's religious groups actively open schools, hospitals, businesses, etc.

The third type is "disengagement of society from religion". The author describes it in his statement when the society distances itself from its prior reliance on religious principles, aiming

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<sup>150</sup> Mojayko, L. M. (2010) *Inter-action between the processes of secularization and religious revival in modern Belarus*, Vesnik, 1(91) p.132

<sup>151</sup> Shine, Larry (1967) *The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research*, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn) pp. 207-220, p. 209 [URL:https://www.jstor.org/stable/1384047](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1384047)

<sup>152</sup> IBID

<sup>153</sup> IBID

to establish itself as an independent entity. Accordingly, this process results in relegating religion to the realm of personal belief, with little influence on public institutions or collective endeavors. The final stage of such secularization would be a religion focused solely on individual spirituality, with minimal impact on broader societal dynamics, and a community where religious expression is confined within specific religious circles.<sup>154</sup> According to the author, historians see two forms in it: intellectual-existential and institutional-social. Institutional secularization is usually traced in terms of the emergence of the "secular" state and its gradual assumption of the educational and social functions once performed by churches. For the first form, he brings a non-Western example of an Indian society referring to Donald E. Smith, based on his book "India as a Secular State". The book looks through the Indian government which was secularized by adopting an attitude of neutrality toward both individual and group religious belief and practice. As an example of the intellectual-existential aspect of disengagement, he refers to Bernhard Grotheuysen who describes the process likewise the trying to create a domain of knowledge that is independent and free from supernatural or faith-based assumptions. To be clearer, it is about the secularization of science ethics or art insofar as they are separated from ecclesiastical control or the context of a particular version of the Christian worldview.<sup>155</sup>

"Transposition of religious beliefs and institutions" is the fourth type mentioned by the author in his article and described as a secular society where the traditional beliefs, behaviors, and systems that were once attributed to divine influence are now seen as entirely human constructs and commitments. The final stage of this secularization will be a religion focused exclusively on human aspects, and a society that has assumed all the roles previously held by religious institutions. That means the transmission of earlier known knowledge, ethics, or virtue systems that had a religious base into a human-made system. The author argues that though it is difficult to show the survivals of this transmission, it could be a transposition of Jewish and Christian elements of belief into Marxist theory despite hard critics of this theory<sup>156</sup>. The fifth type is "de-sacralization of the world", according to the author in this type of secularization the world is gradually losing its sacred character, as man and nature become the object of rational-causal explanation and manipulation. Secularization will culminate in a completely "rational" world

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<sup>154</sup> Shine, Larry (1967) 'The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research', Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn) pp. 207-220, p. 213 [URL:https://www.jstor.org/stable/1384047](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1384047)

<sup>155</sup> IBID

<sup>156</sup> IBID p. 215

society in which the supernatural or even “mysteries” will not have any importance. Here the author refers to the historian Eric Kahler who writes that secularization means "that man became independent of religion and lived by reason, face to face with objectified, physical nature".<sup>157</sup> So, a person accepts only rationally proven things and lives accordingly. And in the end, the last the sixth type of secularization is given as “movement from "sacred" to "secular" society”. It is a general concept when societies change in several stages and reach the rational level, according to the author. He notes referring to scholar Meland who says that with the sensitivity, that is, the ability to “react thoughtfully and modestly to established norms of emotion and behavior,” secularization goes beyond religious matters to embrace all generally accepted standards and understandings.<sup>158</sup> Further, the author discusses the religious and secular polarity and concludes by saying that the secular-religious divide only adds confusion to the notion that religion is a distinct entity. If we don't define religion based on institutions or behaviors, there's no need to create a polar opposite. When we use "religious" to describe a particular quality of life or aspect of the individual and societal experience that involves the entirety of humanity and society, this aspect can be present in activities labeled "secular" just as much as it may be absent in some activities labeled "religious."<sup>159</sup> In my belief, this is the exact definition of the western type of secularism which is known as Anglo-Saxon secularism type. There is religious pluralism in it. Anglo-Saxon secular societies often adhere to religious pluralism, allowing the coexistence of different religious beliefs and practices. The state generally remains neutral in matters of religion, treating all faiths equally under the law and protecting people's rights to freedom of religion. However, Communistic secularism is the opposite of this concept. Since Communism from the beginning treated religion as a ‘poison’, this type of secularism sees religion as a main threat. In this regard the Soviet government used the KGB (КГБ- Комитет государственной безопасности) – State Security Committee. The KGB, a formidable and feared institution within the Soviet Union, played a pivotal role in enforcing state control and quashing dissent throughout the Soviet era. Through its extensive surveillance capabilities, including wiretapping, mail interception, and infiltration of perceived anti-Soviet groups, it bolstered the authoritarian regime's grip on power. Tasked with countering both domestic opposition and foreign espionage, it was touted by the Soviet government as vital for protecting state secrets and preventing citizens from going abroad. The KGB's activities extended to suppressing political dissent by tracking and infiltrating dissident movements, carrying out

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<sup>157</sup> IBID p. 216

<sup>158</sup> IBID p. 217

<sup>159</sup> IBID

arrests and interrogations, and operating a vast network of prisons and labor camps, such as the Gulag system, for political prisoners. The KGB's fear of Islam was rooted in its concern for maintaining internal stability, ideological control, and territorial integrity within the Soviet Union. It viewed Islam, like other religions and identities, as a potential threat to its power and control. H el ene Thibault investigated Soviet politics regarding Islam in Central Asia, in her article *'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies'*, she described this process saying that Soviet ideology, characterized by unshakable principles and goals, attempted to establish a new social order and reshape the individual. Soviet intellectuals recognized the comprehensive nature of the ideology promoted by the Communist Party, viewing it positively rather than negatively. She brings the following citation from Lenin: "The Marxian doctrine is omnipotent because it is true. It is complete and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world conception which is irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction, or defense of bourgeois oppression."<sup>160</sup>

The leaders of the Communistic ideology decided that the soviet doctrine was 'complete' and applicable to their future. There was no chance to discuss the diversity of the ideas in the Soviet State, and this type of approach led to the collapse of its entire system.

Helen Thibault, in her research, does the conclusion drawn from specific cases and writes that there are many examples cited by Central Asians of secret observances of religious rituals such as Islamic weddings (*Nikoh*), circumcisions (*Khatna*), and funerals (*Janoza*), along with stories of people praying in secluded places such as caves or among trees. According to her, some even describe secretly riding bicycles at night to participate in secret religious teachings. Participation in such practices posed serious personal risks as individuals risk prosecution for engaging in or conducting such activities outside of officially sanctioned services.<sup>161</sup> So, there was oppression to practice religious rituals, since it was found against the State ideology. Gradually, some researchers like Ernest Gellner were sure that religion had completely disappeared in the USSR. Gellner noted in 1991 that: "in the USSR, "faith has now totally disappeared"<sup>162</sup> This statement corresponds to the general understanding of the Soviet Union's policy regarding religion. The Soviet government under Lenin and later leaders pursued an

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<sup>160</sup>Thibault, Helene. (2015) *'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies'*, Eurostudia- Revue Transatlantique De Recherche Sur L'Europe Vol.10, No.1: pp.11-31 p.3

<sup>161</sup> Lenin, V. I. (1977). *'The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism'* [1913] H el ene Thibault., (2015), *'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies'*, Eurostudia

<sup>162</sup> Gellner, E. (1991). *'Islam and Marxism: Some Comparisons.'* International Affairs 67(1); 1-6

aggressive policy of secularization, seeking to reduce the influence of religion in society. Mosques, churches, synagogues, and other places of worship were frequently attacked, and religious practices were subject to significant restrictions. However, it is important to note that religion persisted to varying degrees throughout the Soviet period, despite official efforts to suppress it. So while it is true that religion was severely limited, it would be more accurate to say that by 1991 religious practice was severely limited rather than completely absent. Helen Thibault as well argues that religion in Central Asia (a part of the USSR), which means mostly settled areas, still existed despite of anti-religion policy of the regime. Besides, she states that USSR authorities treated religion as a type of custom and the creation of religious administrations in the post-war period provided them to attempt to influence the believer's religious practice.

To sum up, we can state that in general there are two types of secular approaches in the world, the first is, the Anglo-Saxon approach which believes that religious notions are impossible to remove from societies' lives, though there could be some individuals who prefer life with no faith. The second approach is Communistic secular ideology, according to that secular means irreligious and atheistic. Even after the collapse of the USSR, its atheistic system still exists in many parts of post-Soviet Central Asia. However, due to globalization and the development of data exchange, the situation would change.

### **3.2. Soviet Style Secularization: the Case of Uzbekistan**

Before 1917, Central Asia consisted of the Turkistan General Governorate which was established in 1867, and two vassal states under control of the Tsarist Empire.<sup>163</sup> In 1917, with the Soviet Revolution, the Russian Empire gradually turned into a Soviet State based on Marxist ideas. According to Alisher Ilkhamov, an Uzbek–British researcher of political and social aspects of Central Asian history<sup>164</sup>. Jadidism representatives from the whole region perceived the transition from monarchy to republic as a solution to the problems facing their society. They believed that a republican system would provide greater opportunities for social and political progress, as well as modernization.<sup>165</sup> Moreover, joining the Soviet State seemed attractive to them as a means to achieve the goal of creating a republic, as the Bolsheviks emphasized equality and anti-imperialistic ideas.

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<sup>163</sup> Morrison, Alexander (2021) *'The Russian Conquest of Central Asia'*

<sup>164</sup> Alisher Ilkhamov is a Research Fellow at the University of London, SOAS

<sup>165</sup> Merip (December 2001) Ilkhamov, Alisher *'Uzbek Islamism'* <https://merip.org/2002/12/uzbek-islamism/>

In this regard, the name Fayzulla Khodjayeov is crucial to Uzbekistan's history. The life and career of Fayzulla Khojaev illustrate the complex and often contradictory dynamics of politics in Central Asia during the early Soviet period, as well as the harsh realities of Stalin's repression. He was born in 1896 in a family of rich merchants in Bukhara and got an education in Moscow for five years. In 1912, after the death of his father, he returned home and started his political and social activity<sup>166</sup>. Fayzulla Khojaev was one of the close friends and supporters of Abdurauf Fitrat, and the latter was a fan of Ismail Gaspirinski and Behbudi. He saw the Soviet State as a means to build a modern state. Bukhara Jadids like Fitrat and Khodjayeov were under the deep impact of the 'Jon Turks' of the Ottoman Empire<sup>167</sup> who saw progress in the Republic System. Jadids saw the monarchy as a supporter of the old style of education since they cooperated with ulema in this field. Ulema were afraid to harm the religion by applying reforms it was the fear of losing their authority.

Kharezm and Bukhara Protectorate states lost their status after the Russian Revolution, and the intervention of the Red Army meant Bolsheviks. Khodjayeov, who always advocated modernization and educational reforms in Muslim societies of Central Asia, defected to the Bolsheviks and became a key figure in establishing Soviet power in the region. Intelligentsia in the face of Jadid activists like Fayzulla Khojaev and Fitrat, who survived after the determination of the Turkistan Autonomy by Dashnaksutun<sup>168</sup> members and Bolsheviks, continued their struggle in another form. In 1920, Khojaev participated in negotiations on the inclusion of the Bukhara and Khorezm regions into the newly formed Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>169</sup> Umid Hayitov, in his article 'Activities of Faizulla Khojaev as the Chairman of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of the Uzbek SSR', which describes the policy of national-territorial demarcation in Central Asia in 1924–1925, writes that local leaders did not approve the policy of national-territorial delimitation. They even knew that the Soviet government's policy of national-territorial delimitation would have negative consequences, leading to a split of the people of the region. Fayzulla Khojaev was among those leaders who,

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<sup>166</sup> Arboblar.uz. (2023). 'Khodzhaev, Faizulla Gubajdullaevich'. Retrieved January 12, 2023, from <https://arboblar.uz/uz/people/khodzhaev-fajzulla-gubajdullaevich><https://arboblar.uz/uz/people/khodzhaev-fajzulla-gubajdullaevich>

<sup>167</sup> Merip (December 2001) Ilkhamov, Alisher 'Uzbek Islamism' <https://merip.org/2002/12/uzbek-islamism/>

<sup>168</sup> Dashnaksutyun is an Armenian nationalist and socialist political party founded in 1890 in Tbilisi, Russian Empire, by Christapor Mikaelian, Stepan Zorian and Simon Zavarian

<sup>169</sup> Hayitov, Umid.(2021) 'Activities of Faizulla Khojaev as the Chairman of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of the Uzbek SSR' International Journal on Integrated Education, Volume 4, Issue 5, (May)p.48; ia-center (May, 11 2009) ИАЦ МГУ : 'Противоречия в политических взглядах Файзуллы Ходжаева' <https://ia-centr.ru/experts/iats-mgu/protivorechiya-v-politicheskikh-vzglyadakh-fayzully-khodzhaeva/>

in 1924, at the beginning of the policy of national-territorial division in Central Asia, stated that if this policy were implemented, BPSR (Bukhara Peoples Soviet Republic) would lose its state independence. Indeed, Fayzulla Khojaev was critical of the policies realized by the Soviet government, which created artificial borders and divisions among the various ethnic groups in Central Asia. His views on the artificial nature of the political borders and the need for greater unity among the Central Asian republics led him to advocate for the creation of a Federation of Central Asian Republics. This initiative was raised by Khojaev during the 4th Congress of the Communist Party of the Uzbek SSR in 1929. The idea reflected a broader sentiment among some Central Asian leaders at the time who were concerned about the realization of the Soviet policies on the region's ethnic and national dynamics. However, despite his efforts, the Federation of Central Asian Republics did not materialize, and the Soviet Union continued to maintain its control over the region through its policy of national-territorial division. However, he could keep most cities inside of the Uzbek State.<sup>170</sup>

Khojavev held various high-ranking positions in the Soviet government, including chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (equivalent to prime minister) of the Uzbek SSR. However, despite his initial support for the Bolsheviks, Khojaev eventually fell out of favor with the Soviet leadership. He was accused of nationalistic struggle and arrested in 1937 during Stalin's repressions. Khojaev was later executed in 1938 as part of a large-scale crackdown on perceived political opponents in the Soviet Union.

Coming back to Central Asia, which was divided into four Soviet Republics with two autonomous regions during 1923-1925. Tajikistan was inside of Uzbekistan until 1929 and Karakalpakistan was a part of the Russian Federation as an autonomous region. In 1936, Karakalpakistan became a part of the Uzbek Soviet Republic as an autonomous region within the State. Kazakhstan also was a region inside the Russian Federation until 1936.<sup>171</sup> This political process Adeeb Khalid mentions as 'korenizatsiya' – 'identification of roots', which means demarcation according to national identities. This step was accepted to disable the 'Korbashi' movement's activity in the region. Jadids were another target since they were progressive Muslim intellectuals who fought against illiteracy in the region and saw the solution in the true interpretation of Islam. They believed that education based on Islamic thought and

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<sup>170</sup> Hayitov, Umid.(2021) *'Activities of Faizulla Khojaev as the Chairman of the the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of the Uzbek SSR'* International Journal on Integrated Education, Volume 4, Issue 5, (May)p.46-50

<sup>171</sup> Malysheva, Dina (2020) *'Problems of regionalization of Post-Soviet Central Asia'* in Russian: *'Проблемы регионализации Постсоветской Центральной Азии'*// *Контуры глобальных трансформаций: политика, экономика, право*, Том 13, № 3 сс.140-155, с.142-43

also embracing new scientific disciplines would lead people to a prosperous society since ignorance was the main reason for all problems, which was a danger for the Soviet Ideology. Moreover, among Jadids, especially among Jadids of Bukhara and Kharezm, some intellectuals saw the solution in the 'emergence of national interests'; likewise, Western societies could achieve results by developing a 'nation-building ideology'. They struggled for their goals by opening several schools and publishing houses, and writing necessary textbooks, journals, and articles, however, they were too weak in front of the Soviet repression machine. With the establishment of Soviet power, Central Asia plunged into another wave of chaos, although there were some positive developments, for example, in the field of public health care or public education and social support for certain segments of society.

Soviet secularism had a deep impact on many political and social aspects of Central Asian states including the Uzbek society.<sup>172</sup> There are several aspects to consider this influence. First of all, the policy which was oriented to destroy religion or at least to diminish the influence of religion on society somehow succeeded, that religious practices and institutions were actively suppressed or marginalized. Mosques were closed, religious leaders were persecuted, and religious education was restricted.<sup>173</sup> The idea is highlighted by Alisher Ilkhamov as well, who clearly describes the Soviet approach towards Islam, stating that the Soviets implemented militant atheism, and the region's Islamic institutions were severely weakened. Muslim courts were abolished, most mosques were closed, their properties confiscated, and their clergy was under suppression. The unveiling campaign of the 1930s, known as *khujum* (attack), led to significant secularization of marriage and family life. Islam was nearly forced underground, existing mainly as a private faith, with public prayers limited to a few remaining mosques attended by a small number of elderly worshippers.<sup>174</sup> This policy led to a decrease in religiosity among the population or to the concealment of their faith. Soviet authorities promoted a pan-Soviet identity that emphasized loyalty to the State rather than to ethnic or religious identities. Central Asian culture was often portrayed through the lens of Soviet ideology, with an emphasis on secular values and Marxist principles.<sup>175</sup> This promotion of a Soviet identity tried to unify

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<sup>172</sup> Thibault, H el ene (2015), 'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies', Eurostudia; Khalid, Adeb (2003) 'A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan', Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, International Journal of Middle East Studies

<sup>173</sup> Ko ak, Muhammet (2018) 'Official and Unofficial Islam in the Soviet Union During the Cold War', T rk Tarihi Arařtırmaları Dergisi / Journal of Turkish History Researches, Vol. 3, Fall/ISSN: 2459-0185 ISSN: 2548-091X, p.111(10)

<sup>174</sup> Merip (December, 2001) Ikramov, Alisher 'Uzbek Islamism' <https://merip.org/2002/12/uzbek-islamism/>

<sup>175</sup> Thibault, H el ene (2015), 'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies', Eurostudia, p.20

the diverse ethnic groups within the Soviet Union under a common ideology. Helen Thibut, referring to scholars like Agadjanian, Codevilla, and Marsh, argues that Soviet authority developed a system of moral principles (code of conduct or behavior), which was even considered a religion by some supporters of atheism.<sup>176</sup> She continues her idea by emphasizing that ‘despite the civic rituals, the cult, and the myths Communists have built over time, I do not regard Materialistic-Atheism as a religion’ since, and here she refers to Gellner and notes that at the doctrinal and intellectual level, the proud boast of Marxism was that it had exiled the supernatural from social life<sup>177</sup> Here I agree with Helen Thiubut's approach, as she argues that despite the presence of civic rituals and myths developed by Communists, Materialistic-Atheism should not be classified as a religion. Moreover, Thiubut is right that Marxism, at its core, rejected the supernatural from social life, emphasizing a doctrinal and intellectual commitment that distinguishes it from traditional religious systems.

The Sovietization policy had its consequences. One of them was reflected in the emergence of a search for national identity within the entire State, including the countries of Central Asia.<sup>178</sup> In countries such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, attempts have been made to revive or preserve elements of Tengrism, while in the regions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, interest in Islamic religious beliefs has increased<sup>179</sup>. This revival is often linked to a broader cultural revival and a desire to reconnect with Tengrist, even pre-Tengrist or Islamic roots. The emergence of Pan-Turkic ideas and interest in folkloric traditions like zhurau among originally nomadic Turkic states and the revival of some religious traditions among the settled population of the region could prove our statement. In the post-Soviet region, Kazakh scholar Oljaz Suleymanov was the first to introduce the term ‘Tengrianism’ in the 1970’s, to identify the religion of proto-Turks in which Tengri was the main God.<sup>180</sup> Shireen Hunter in her ‘Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security’ highlights that this attempt turned into a passive movement that made hundreds of local scholars investigate national history deeper. The mood of this movement spread out to other small Turkic tribes of the Soviet Union, and it was some kind of anti-reaction

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<sup>176</sup> Thibault, H el ene (2015), *The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies*, Eurostudia, p.12

<sup>177</sup> Thibault, H el ene (2015), *The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies*, Eurostudia, p.13; Gellner, E. (1991). *Islam and Marxism: Some Comparisons.* International Affairs 67(1); 1-6

<sup>178</sup> Hunter, Shireen (2004) *Islam in Russia: The politics of identity and security*, M.E.Sharpe, New York, USA, p.173

<sup>179</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2003) *A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan*, Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, International Journal of Middle East Studies

<sup>180</sup> Suleymanov, Oljaz (1975) *‘AZ и Я. Книга благонамеренного читателя’* [AZ-and-IA. Book of a well-meaning reader] (in Russian). Alma-ata, ‘Jazushi’, p.36; in general the term was used first time by Jean Paul Raux in 1956.

to the Russian nation as a dominant nation and an ideological struggle of the Soviet government to unite all nations of the Union under one ideology.<sup>181</sup> The process of making Tengrism a separate religion from Shamanism is related to the search for national identity by Kazakh and Kyrgyz nations, which is a consequence of Soviet-style secularism. As we mentioned Uzbek cultural practices that were closely tied to Islamic religion, such as traditional ceremonies and rituals, faced challenges under Soviet secularism. Soviet secularism tried to create a generation gap in Uzbek society, particularly among older generations who had stronger ties to religious and cultural traditions, and younger generations who were more influenced by Soviet secularism and its emphasis on secular values.<sup>182</sup> In some areas, this gap succeeded in damaging the understanding and appreciation of cultural and religious heritage contributing to shifts in the perception of national identity. Many of these practices were either discouraged or reinterpreted through a secular lens. Despite the efforts of Soviet secularism, elements of Uzbek cultural and religious identity persisted, and the impact of urban culture contributed to this persistence. This resurgence reflects a desire among many Uzbeks to reconnect with their cultural and religious heritage and reaffirm their national identity.<sup>183</sup>

The religious policy of the Soviet Union was under the "iron curtains" for seventy years, it began to be learned without pressure only after its collapse. Religion was never destroyed even in the Soviet regime and it was only "systematized" according to Soviet ideology. Helen Thiabuit highlighted the 'pressure' of the Soviet State and the Union administration in the socialization of the population, she notes that despite coercion by religious leaders, brutal repression of believers, and seventy years of persistent atheistic propaganda, religious beliefs, and rituals continued to live on, although they were somehow modified<sup>184</sup>.

Moreover, the author criticizes Yurchak – the author who considers that some scholars find the process of socialization as a unique and effective one that is comparable with the secularization process of the West even as an accelerated modernization process<sup>185</sup>. She argues that this approach is the overrating of the Soviet regime's policy since it was too much interfering with

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<sup>181</sup> Hunter, Shireen (2004) *Islam in Russia: The politics of identity and security*, M.E.Sharpe, New York, USA, p.173-174

<sup>182</sup> Khalid, Adeeb (2014) *Islam after communism: religion and politics in Central Asia*, University of California Press, Berkeley,(Ch.6 Islam and opposition)

<sup>183</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2003) *A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan*, Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, International Journal of Middle East Studies

<sup>184</sup> Thibault, Hélène. (2014) *Religious Revival in Tajikistan: The Soviet Legacy Revisited*. University of Ottawa, Canada, p.103

<sup>185</sup> Yurchak, A. (2003). *Soviet Hegemony of Form: Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More*. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45(3): 480- 510. p. 48

education and other social procedures with forcible imposition of its ideology and rules that can not justify it to be close to Western secularization. She states that the Soviet State made a code of behavioral and moral rules and controlled the assimilation of these rules into society with propaganda and education, sometimes even forcefully. As a result, religion was affected much. The traditional religion was suppressed in the countries of the Soviet State because it did not fit to the communist ideology of the Union. By examining the secular policy of the Soviet government in Central Asia, we can understand how Communism did an awful experiment with people's life. The control extended to various aspects of religious expression, organization, and influence, reflecting a continuation of the historical pattern where the State has significant power over religious affairs, shaping its role within society.

The most tragic part of the Sovietization policy was the period of Stalin's Great repressions, which happened during 1929-1939, however, it did not stop completely till the death of Stalin. The Islamic pressure which was a part of these repressions started with taking off the *waqf* funds and the organization itself was replaced with the new establishment of the new State like commissariat of the education. During this period some mosques and madrasas were closed which got a massive character by the end of the decade, Brill Olcott argues that some mosques were even 'used for sacrilegious purposes. For example, the Juma (Gumbaz) mosque in Namangan was made into a wine factory<sup>186</sup>. Many ulema were either killed, imprisoned, or sent for labor work.<sup>187</sup> The NKVD was formed for this purpose, as we mentioned above. Moreover, the USSR to build a strong ideology used many scholars to make the process trustworthy and to strengthen the belief that this is the right choice for people. Just when the World War II started, the oppression was reduced since the government had to stay against the Nazi occupants.

Communism based secularism was experimental process and there was always necessity of 'proving' that it is the only true method of existing and developing. Several ideologists were responsible for reproducing and spreading the Soviet materialist ideology in each new generation.<sup>188</sup> Starting with orientalists like Vasilii Bartold, Evgenii Bertels and continuing with names of Kurochkin Pavel, Skazkin Sergei etc. who served hard to the State to last the Soviet

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<sup>186</sup> Olcott, Brill M. (2007) *'Roots of Radical islam in Central Asia'*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, p.8 (6)

<sup>187</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2003) *'A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan'*, Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, International Journal of Middle East Studies p.581

<sup>188</sup> Thibault, Hélène. (2015) *'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies'*, Eurostudia 10(1/ (11-31); p 13.

ideology longer. Such ideologues have always feared religious revival among communist citizens. Soviet State officials believed that high levels of social and economic development combined with education based on materialist and atheist ideology would lead to the transformation of a 'God-fearing' society into a 'Godless' society. However, due to the failure in this matter, the Soviet authority decides to implement the strategy of Catherine the Great. This strategy was - 'cooperating for control'<sup>189</sup>.

World War II caused the people of the Soviet Union to experience very tough days. Due to continued and harsh repressions majority of people had very little sympathy towards the State. In those years, we can see that the government needed its citizens to support the army and be in solidarity with the government. In our opinion, Stalin had to find a way out, and it consisted of accepting a compromise with the spiritual leaders of the country. The communistic ideology was not enough to die for, that's why there was a need for the spiritual notion. Eshon Babakhan (1858—1957) as a representative from Central Asia was invited to meet with Stalin among others from different parts of the Union. Eshon Babakhan was born in Tashkent city, and graduated from Mir Arab medrese in Bukhara, till the 1920's he was the imam of Tilla Shayh mosque and was from an ulema family who could resist the repressions.<sup>190</sup> According to folkloric stories, he could convince Stalin to open several central mosques in the region, for Stalin's request to motivate people to support the Government during those tough days. In 1943 Stalin ordered to establish Centers for religious matters in the four regions of the Soviet Union to avoid a sociological crisis in the country, also to ensure the unity of citizens during the war. It was done as an imitation of Queen Catherine's policy since Catherine the Great accepted Islam as one of the state religions and established a Muslim spiritual assembly in Ufa<sup>191</sup> in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Those centers were: 1) The Spiritual Administration of European Russia in the city of Ufa. 2) The Spiritual Administration of the Caucasus in the city of Buinaksk. 3) Transcaucasia Spiritual Administration in Baku and 4) Central Asian Muslims Spiritual Mission in Tashkent - SADUM.<sup>192</sup> These centers were supposed to solve the problems of people's spiritual and religious needs. In the future, some Islamic schools will be opened under these centers for

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<sup>189</sup> Thibault, H el ene. (2015) *'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies'*, Eurostudia 10(1/ (11-31); p 14.

<sup>190</sup> Ozodlik Radiosi (2012, January 24) *'O'zbek imomlari'* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NULq53GxfJ4> (first 4 minutes)

<sup>191</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2003) *'A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan'*, Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, International Journal of Middle East Studies p. 580

<sup>192</sup> Keller, S. (2001) *'To Moscow Not Mecca: the Soviet Campaign Against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941'* Westport (CT): Praeger Publishers, p. 251

religious education. This factor proves that the Soviet communist government could not make the society completely irreligious and failed in this regard. However, religion was under the strict control of the State ideologists and administration, who used propaganda as their weapon. Thus, the Soviet State establishes a code of conduct and morality for its citizens and controls the assimilation of these rules into society through propaganda and education, very often by force. This, according to Helen Thibuit, was an attempt to control religious behavior as well as by establishing religious standards and trying to harmonize them as much as possible with Soviet standards. People were convinced that being religious is not 'modern' and this feature is still alive among the older generation of the region.

There is a phrase in Russian «Потёмкинские деревни» - "Potemkin villages" which is used to refer to a fake thing deliberately constructed to create a false appearance of prosperity. According to the legend, this expression was coined by Prince Grigory Potemkin during the Russian Empress Catherine II's trip to Crimea in 1787. It is connected with the story of the lavish decorations and luxurious banquets that he organized to impress Catherine II and her foreign entourage. Potemkin orders to inhabit the naturally empty steppes by people. Fake villages were visible at a great distance, but they were painted on screens; people and herds were brought to appear for this occasion to give the autocrat a favorable idea of the wealth of this country.<sup>193</sup> The same practice was very often used by the Soviet Government as well it became a custom to create a fake illusion of success for others.

Another important notion of Sovietization policy was in the field of regional languages. Since the language is an invaluable gift and a source of power. With no hesitation, we can state that the significant impact of Soviet State policy was on language and through language. The impact of its language-related political approach towards Union Republics still is there. Orientalist scholar Vasiliy Bartold was one of the leader representatives of Soviet State ideology guards who initiated changing the existing in Central Asia Arabic script into Cyrillic. However, in 1928 (the same year as the Republic of Turkiye) with the initiative of local reformist intellectuals- Jadids, Uzbek SSR as the first Soviet State Republic accepted Latin script to replace existing Arabic one. And only by 1941, it was replaced with Cyrillic.

These changes in the script also hurt having access to Islamic sources. However, Islamic reproduction did not disappear completely. *Hujra's* and unofficial *ulema* continued to contribute in this field. During the 'perestroika' (renewal period) policy of Gorbachyov M. (*the*

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<sup>193</sup> <https://arzamas.academy/materials/141> (Потемкинские деревни, которых не было Обманывал ли Потемкин Екатерину II, украшая города во время ее путешествия по Крыму)

*first and last president of the USSR*) who gave some freedom of speech and self-expression to the people. This time was the base for the strengthening of some hidden nationalistic and religious moods in the society. For example, on October 21 in 1989 Uzbek language was announced as a State language after a certain struggle by Uzbek activists. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan also emerged at that time but the official date of its formation was 1998 which later was announced as a militant terroristic organization. One of the reasons for the formation of this militant group was the war in Afghanistan. The Soviet State with its invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989) used Central Asian men as main soldiers against the Afghan people, explaining this as if Central Asians are similar to the Afghan population by appearance and may know languages spoken in the region. USSR Government did not oversee that Islam existed in Afghanistan. Moreover, the Western world has used Islam against the Soviets there.<sup>194</sup> No one considered the consequences. This war had a profound impact on some people with militant inclinations. Later when the Taliban came to the Government it became obvious that some leaders of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan had connections with them. Besides, as we mentioned and will be discussing in detail below, in the territory of Uzbekistan, there were a lot of hidden Muslim *hujras* organized during Soviet times by many official and unofficial *ulema*. Those *hujras* were educating thousands of Muslim children, and many of them could gain respect and get the positions of imams in local mosques.<sup>195</sup>

### **3.3. The Role of Urban Religiosity in Resistance to the Soviet Style Secularism**

Islam is considered an urban religion and this feature makes Islamic culture and heritage to be stable in the urban population's traditions. This idea is emphasized by many scholars like Janet L. Abu-Lughod (1928-2013), an American sociologist, who states in her article the following referring to W. Marçais:

The first is that Islam is essentially an urban religion. In support of this contention, W. Marçais notes that Muhammad himself was urbanite suspicious of nomads, that the leadership cadres of the early Islamic proselytizers were members of the urban bourgeoisie of the Peninsula, and that the requirement that the Friday communal prayer be solemnized at a congregational mosque made urban living necessary for the full Muslim life.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Khalid, Adeb. (2014) *Islam after communism: religion and politics in Central Asia*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p.143-144(Ch.6 Islam and opposition)

<sup>195</sup> Saud, Adam (2015) *Death of Islam Karimov and the Future of Islamism in Central Asia: Case Study of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*, Central Asia Journal No. 77, (Winter),p.47

<sup>196</sup> Abu-Lughod, Janet L.(1987) *The Islamic city, historic Islamic essence and contemporary relevance*., International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 19, No. 2 (May), pp. 155-176./ p.156

Marcais relies on Renan, who notes that the mosque, likewise synagogue and church, is fundamentally tied to urban environments, and Islam is a religion primarily centered around the cities.<sup>197</sup> Abu Lughud, like Renan or Marcais, emphasizes that cities were crucially important in applying Islamic lifestyle and comments as follows on Renan's idea that Islam has the same features as Judaism and Christianity, and this emphasizes the importance of the Islamic city.<sup>198</sup> Moreover, she highlights this idea by referring to Marcais's other important point where he writes that Islamdom's new powers or dynasties built new cities to show that the Civilization of Islam is not just faith and orders based set of rituals but is a successful society which can organize the life of Muslims as a doer's community as well.<sup>199</sup> So, cities in the Islamic world were important in organizing how the society should function and deal. Also, cities have been crucially important in saving and developing the religious heritage and passing it to the new generation likewise in Christianity or Judaism. In this regard, we can refer to Gustave von Grunebaum as well, in his book 'Medieval Islam' discusses the role of the city in Islam where he notes that: "Islam, from its very outset unfolding in an urban milieu, favored city development... Only in a city, with its Friday mosque, its markets and, possibly, its public baths, can the duties of the religion be fully performed"<sup>200</sup>

As the author states here, only the city can give the feeling of completeness of Islamic cannons. also, on the other hand, he emphasizes that Islam can promote urban development. We agree with this point of view and would like to emphasize the role of the city in Islamic resistance in the central part of Central Asia (Uzbekistan), which succeeded in remaining Islamic despite the Mongol invasion and Communist eras due to the city culture. The territory of current Uzbekistan is the home to ancient cities like Urgench, Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand, and Tirmez, and the cities in Ferghana Valley like Marghilan, Kokand, and Andijan - almost all of them had the status of pivot city in different stages of history. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, with Arab conquers, Islam was introduced to the Central Asian population, and with the arrival of Islam, those cities became centers of Islamic studies and scholarship.

### 3.4. Some Words about Cultural Resistance

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<sup>197</sup> IBID

<sup>198</sup> IBID

<sup>199</sup> IBID

<sup>200</sup> OG, von Grunebaum, (1954) '*Medieval Islam*' (the first edition -Chicago, 1946),the second edition,p.173

Cultural resistance plays a critical role in challenging hegemonic narratives and promoting social change. Marginalized groups, through the preservation of language and traditions, community solidarity, artistic expression, and literature, assert their identities and values, creating a rich tapestry of cultural resistance that resonates across time and space.<sup>201</sup> This type of resistance promotes awareness and enriches the cultural landscape. Thinkers like Homi K. Bhabha argue that cultural resistance often occurs in the ‘third space’, where hybrid identities emerge in response to colonial influences. This space allows for negotiation and redefinition of cultural practices.<sup>202</sup>

It could be stated, that cultural resistance refers to how individuals and communities resist dominant cultural narratives, norms, and practices, often in the context of social, political, or economic oppression.<sup>203</sup> This form of resistance can manifest through art, music, language, and everyday practices, serving as a means of asserting identity, preserving heritage, and challenging the status quo. Famous writer on culture and politics Stephen Duncombe defines it as: ‘cultural resistance is the practice of using meanings and symbols, that is, culture, to contest and combat a dominant power, often constructing a different vision of the world in the process. The practice is as old as history.’<sup>204</sup>

Accordingly, it could be stated that cultural resistance has played a crucial role in preserving heritage and fostering a sense of national pride in the context of the historical influence of Soviet ideology on Uzbekistan. There were people, even communities, actively making efforts to revive and glorify the Uzbek language, literature, and traditions, resisting the homogenizing pressure of the dominant narrative of Sovietization and Russification. One of the key aspects of cultural resistance in Uzbekistan is the efforts to revive and preserve the Uzbek language in response to the Soviet language policy, which sought to diminish its prominence. This step highlights the importance of language in asserting cultural identity and resisting hegemonic influences. As noted, Cyrillic script was adopted in Central Asia in 1941, and Russian became the official language throughout the USSR. Despite this, local activists successfully preserved

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<sup>201</sup>Moralli, Melissa (2021) ‘*Creative resistance Cultural practices, artistic activism and counter-hegemonic narratives on diversity*’, Studi Culturali  
[https://www.academia.edu/109667866/Creative\\_resistance\\_Cultural\\_practices\\_artistic\\_activism\\_and\\_counter\\_hegemonic\\_narratives\\_on\\_diversity](https://www.academia.edu/109667866/Creative_resistance_Cultural_practices_artistic_activism_and_counter_hegemonic_narratives_on_diversity)

<sup>202</sup> Bhabha, Homi K. (1994) ‘*The Location of Culture*’. London: Routledge

<sup>203</sup> Adorno, T. Arnold, M., Bakhtin, M., & Baudrillard, J. (2002). *Cultural Resistance Reader*. National Geographic Books.

<sup>204</sup>Duncombe, Stephen (2007) Wiley online library  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosc178>

the Uzbek language. In this context, folklore traditions played a crucial role, serving as a vital means of maintaining cultural identity and continuity. The existing *Shashmaqom* music tradition was not just preserved by local musicians and composers but also enriched and developed during the Soviet era.<sup>205</sup> The role of *Shashmaqom* is important in the preservation of classic poetry as well. Additionally, masters of handicrafts in carpet weaving, ceramic art, copper embossing, embroidery, gold embroidery, jewelry making, lacquer painting, Samarkand paper production, and wood carving continued to preserve and continue their ancient traditions despite the changes in the region.<sup>206</sup>

Stuart Hall argues that people can subvert dominant narratives through everyday practices, thereby creating space for alternative meanings since the role of popular culture in identity formation and resistance is very high.<sup>207</sup> Cultural resistance in Uzbek society helped to maintain cultural identity but also reinforced a collective memory and continuity, empowering individuals to connect with their history and assert their distinctiveness. This includes initiatives to revive traditional practices such as music and art forms that embody Uzbek identity. Additionally, efforts to educate the younger generation about Islamic values are equally significant, as they help reinforce cultural heritage and provide a sense of belonging.

### **3.5. The Unofficial *Ulema* Tradition during Soviets in the Region**

Helen Thiubout asserts that between 1948 and 1991, there were only two officially recognized *madrassas* in Central Asia: Mir-i Arab in Bukhara, which was reopened in 1946, and Barakhan Madrasa in 1956<sup>208</sup>. The second one was closed later. In 1971 the Bukhari Institute in Tashkent as a Higher Islamic Studies was opened. These were the sole legal institutions for religious education in the entire region, making the opportunities for legally studying religion extremely limited, as private religious education was prohibited.<sup>209</sup> In this regard, Martha Brill Olcott emphasizes that many religious figures took part in unregistered student teaching. The existence

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<sup>205</sup> Madrimov, Bahrom (2018) '*Uzbek musiqa tarixi*' (History of Uzbek Music) 'Barkamol fayz media', Toshkent

<sup>206</sup> DestinAsian (2024, March 7) Charukesi Ramadurai '*Reviving Traditional Uzbek Handicrafts*' <https://destinasian.com/editorial/reviving-traditional-uzbek-handicrafts>

<sup>207</sup> Hall, Stuart (1990), '*Cultural Identity and Diaspora.*' In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*', edited by Jonathan Rutherford, 222-237. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 225

<sup>208</sup> Thibault, Hélène. (2015) '*The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies*', *Eurostudia* 10(1/ (11-31); p 16.

<sup>209</sup> IBID

of these secret religious studies the cells, or *hujra*, was an open secret, winked at by the KGB, and this very statement was highlighted by Helen Thioubut as well.<sup>210</sup> The Soviet Government never stopped its policy based on atheistic ideology by its propaganda tools. Although in the Soviet Constitution which was made public in 1936, in Article 52 it was mentioned that "USSR citizens are guaranteed freedom of conscience – the right to practice any religion or none at all, to engage in religious activities, or to promote atheism. The USSR separates church from State, and schools from church".<sup>211</sup> In this regard, Alexander Benningsen used a new term explaining this notion, which was 'Parallel Islam', and it was first introduced in 1968.<sup>212</sup>

Alisher Ilkhamov, in his article, states the following about this type of school: 'Unofficial home-based religious schools appeared in the Soviet period. Tutors in these schools represented the so-called parallel Islam'.<sup>213</sup> Along with the term 'parallel Islam,' another term, 'underground Islam,' started being used.<sup>214</sup>

Martha Olcott, while investigating the role of Islamic leaders or *ulema* in the region, states a very interesting fact about Khrushov's religious policy who replaced Stalin:

Khrushchev's foreign policies brought opportunities for those tied to SADUM to study in the seminaries of the Middle East, and some even were able to make a pilgrimage. The Soviet students and clerics who went to study abroad were viewed as "authentic" by their coreligionists abroad and were not seen as having been compromised by their potential or alleged association with the organs of state security.<sup>215</sup>

According to scholar Galina Yemelyanova, it was done in the context of the USSR's Foreign policy concepts, since from the late 1940s through the 1950s, the USSR backed liberation movements in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, providing significant support to help them develop a socialist way of life. This involvement led to the establishment of a Soviet military

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<sup>210</sup>Olcott Brill, M. (2007) *'Roots Of Radical Islam In Central Asia,'* Carnegie Papers. Carnegie Endowment For International Peace n.77. Washington and Moscow: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Thibault, H el ene. (2015) *'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies'*, Eurostudia 10(1/ (11-31); p 16.

<sup>211</sup> Sartori, Paolo (2024) *'A Soviet Sultanate: Islam in Socialist Uzbekistan (1943-1991)'* Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, p. 267 (285)

<sup>212</sup> Thibault, H el ene. (2015) *'The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies'*, Eurostudia 10(1/ (11-31); p 16.

<sup>213</sup> Merip (December 2001) Ilkhamov, Alisher *'Uzbek Islamism'* <https://merip.org/2002/12/uzbek-islamism/>

<sup>214</sup> The term "underground Islam" was introduced by the Iranian sociologist Asef Bayat. Bayat used this term to describe the informal, grassroots Islamic practices and networks that developed outside the purview of official religious institutions and state control.; Khalid, Adeeb. (2014) *'Islam after communism: religion and politics in Central Asia'*, University of California Press, Berkeley, (Ch.6 Islam and opposition)

<sup>215</sup> Olcott, Brill M. (2007) *'Roots of Radical islam in Central Asia'*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, p.7 (9)

presence in Egypt by 1955 and the installation of pro-Soviet regimes in Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and South Yemen during the 1960s. Will Myer refers to Wheeler and notes that the USSR tried to show Muslims of the USSR as models to be followed.<sup>216</sup> The same ideas are supported by Khalid as well. The Soviet State, to show the outside Muslim world 'modern' and 'more progressive' Soviet Muslims, used to select mostly Central Asian Muslim students or religious intellectuals and send them to some Arabic countries according to the State's foreign exchange program, which started in the 1960s. These students got access to the Islamic reproduction materials that made some of them change their views by comparing and analyzing.<sup>217</sup>

Accordingly, Muslims gained a period of relief from repression.

Adeeb Khalid, while describing the role of official and unofficial *ulema*, states that sanctioned religious authorities, known as the *ulema*, failed to achieve the exclusive control over Islamic education that the Soviet government desired. Though the Soviet State made big efforts to localize Islam and adjust it as a form of custom or tradition<sup>218</sup>, still some groups struggle to keep it alive as a religion. Unofficial *ulema*, who operated independently and without official endorsement, greatly outnumbered them. These unofficial figures not only conducted religious ceremonies and led prayers but also, starting from the 1960s, secretly provided teachings to chosen students and this created a dynamic unofficial intellectual environment.<sup>219</sup>

Paolo Sartori, in his 'A Soviet Sultanate: Islam in Socialist Uzbekistan (1943-1991)', states that '...in Moscow many knew that the war against religion had been already lost'.<sup>220</sup> He makes this remark while discussing Vladimir Kuroyedov's (the head of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (CARC)) 'explanation' of the amendments to the Article 52 of the Soviet Constitution. On April 7 1978, there was a huge meeting organized in Samarkand where the amendment to the Constitution was discussed. The author notes that Vladimir Kuroyedov sent an 'explanation' letter that says that 'the state perceived the need to protect itself and the integrity of the Communist project from the assault of 'religious extremists.'<sup>221</sup> Besides, there Kuroyedov

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<sup>216</sup> Will Myer (2002) *Islam and Colonialism: Western Perspectives on Soviet Asia*, RoutledgeCurzon, London & New York, p. 18.

<sup>217</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2003) *A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan*, Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, International Journal of Middle East Studies. p. 583 (11)

<sup>218</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2003) *A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan*, Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, International Journal of Middle East Studies p. 581-582 (10-11)

<sup>219</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2003) *A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan*, Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, International Journal of Middle East Studies. p. 581 (10)

<sup>220</sup> Sartori, Paolo (2024) *A Soviet Sultanate: Islam in Socialist Uzbekistan (1943-1991)* Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, p. 267 (285)

<sup>221</sup> IBID

stated that religion could only be taught privately, within the confines of the family, as something outdated. Moreover, he added that the legislation on cults does not prevent children from attending church (mosque) with their parents and participating in worship services. Therefore, the law does not ban teaching religion to children, provided the rules are followed. However, he also noted that organizing and systematically conducting religious instruction for minors was unacceptable and subject to legal action.<sup>222</sup>

However, the amendment made to Article 52 of the Soviet Constitution in 1977, during Brezhnev's era, was significant. There was an addition to the above-mentioned statement that called for 'the prohibition of inciting enmity or hatred based on religious beliefs.'<sup>223</sup> Accordingly, the author states that inciting enmity or hatred based on religious beliefs and systemized organization of education was grounds for punishment, and therefore, being careful was required.<sup>224</sup>

Accordingly, this explains that those hidden *hujras* were education cells 'tolerated' to some extent.

So, the resistance to the Soviet policy in the field of Islamic issues in the Central Asian region is related to the activity of the unofficial *ulema* there. 'Unofficial *ulema*' who were they? We can bring just a few examples of them, mostly from the Ferghana and Tashkent regions, since the information about the founders and teachers of the *hujra* system was limited or hidden to avoid problems. We would start with the main pillars of the system and then look through data about other actors – *ulemas*. In this regard, we refer to Martha Olcott and Diyora Ziyayeva's article, 'Islam in Uzbekistan: Religious Education and State Ideology', as our primary source for detailed information about several founders of *hujras*. Olcott is an author of several other research projects and a scholar who investigated IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) very closely and was able to interview many *ulema* and 'witnesses' as well.<sup>225</sup>

We start with Eshan Babakhan himself, the descendent of Yassawi, with a strong *ulema* tradition heritage. His name was already mentioned above as a first chief of the SADUM. Though that organization served the Soviet Government, still its chief succeeded in re-open several mosques in the regions which were closed earlier and started conducting *jamaat* prayers again. Eshan Babakhan had a very good reputation and hundreds of students. He was able to

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<sup>222</sup> IBID

<sup>223</sup> IBID

<sup>224</sup> IBID

<sup>225</sup> Olcott, Brill M. (2007) '*Roots of Radical islam in Central Asia*', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington

fulfill even *Hajj* in 1945 – during Stalin's era, and could bring some literature from his trip, which was taught in existing addresses as well. The efforts of Eshan Babakhan, who was the head of SADUM, did not interfere much in the informal educational process, although he was required to be loyal to the State and control Islam in the region.

The next name is Mevlevi Hindistani. He was an imam and *ulema* representative, a great scholar of the region, and was among the main founders of the ‘unofficial’ *hujra* system in the Ferghana region. He also was a translator and specialist on archive materials. Mevlevi Hindistani was the nickname of Muhammad Rustamov, who was born in 1892 in Kokand and studied in Bukhara, later in the cities of Balkh and Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan. Then, following the recommendations of his teachers, he traveled to India and studied for another eight years at the "Usmaniya" *madrasa* in Ajmir. He got the nickname Hindustani at that time. Muhammadjon Rustamov returned to the country in 1929 and started teaching. He got very popular and had many students. However, as was expected very soon in 1932, he was imprisoned for one year as a ‘class enemy’. When Hindustani returned from prison in 1933, he had to change his place of residence often to avoid conspiracies. In total, he was arrested three times and lived around eight years in Russian cold regions.<sup>226</sup> One of the great services of the scholar, which is still appreciated among the Muslims of Central Asia, is that he established *hujra* culture and preserved religious education during the times when religion was strictly prohibited. It is remembered that Hindustani and another great scholar of the valley, Abduhakim Qari, who was almost the same age as him, organized secret rooms in the houses of residents for young people who wanted to learn Islamic science.<sup>227</sup> Hindustani is an author of the book "Bayan al-Furqan fi biyattil Quran" - a spiritual translation of the Holy Quran. Moreover, scholar wrote comments on several religious books like Imam Bukhari's collection of hadiths "Al-jami' as-sahih", Burkhaniddin Marginani's "Hidaya", Imam Azam's "Fiqhi Akbar", Abdurrahman Jami's "Sharhi Mulla", Muhammad Fazlul-Imam Khairyabadi's "Mirqatul Mantiq". When he was arrested and sent on exile he the World War II starts and soon the scholar was sent to participate in this war in 1942, he was injured there in 1944 and was sent to Sverdlovsk, Russia. In 1946 he returned back to his hometown, however, soon was allocated to Dushanbe city to work at the branch of Religious Committee by Eshan Babakhan. In 1949, the scholar was imprisoned for twenty-five years on the charge of being ‘against the existing political system’. This time he was sent to one of the labor camps in Kazakhstan, without any living conditions. The scholar

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<sup>226</sup> Ozodlik radiosi (2012, Apr. 18) ‘O‘zbek imomlari’ <https://www.ozodlik.org/a/24551851.html>

<sup>227</sup> Ozodlik radiosi (2012, Apr. 18) ‘O‘zbek imomlari’ <https://www.ozodlik.org/a/24551851.html>

did not just accept the punishment and he wrote endless petitions and applications to Moscow. As a result, all scholarly and other activities of the scholar were investigated and he was released after four years and three months. He returned from this exile and started working as a translator in the manuscripts department of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan. In this department, the teacher spent two years translating books from Arabic into Persian and Uzbek languages. In particular, during these years, he translated Zamakhshari's several works into Persian. Hindustani continued teaching officially and unofficially till his death in 1989<sup>228</sup>.

Another scholar is Alikhan Tura Shakirhojaoglu Soguni, who was born in 1885 near Osh when this city belonged to Andijan province. He is the author of the books 'Tarihi Muhammadi' and 'The Sorrow of Turkistan'. He studied in Madina when he was a child and later in MirArab *madrasa* in Bukhara. During Russian Empire he was persecuted by the secret police for opposing the tsar's administration's policy of employing the local population. Moreover, after the brutal suppression of the uprising in 1916, he became a political emigrant and went to Kashgar (China), then to East Turkestan (Gulja) – since these territories were a part of Kokand khanate for more than a century. He was arrested by the Chinese authorities in 1937 and sentenced to life imprisonment for promoting the ideas of freedom among the masses. In 1941, he was released as a result of a judicial review. On November 12, 1944, the Republic of East Turkestan was proclaimed, and Alikhan Tura was elected as the chairman of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. He initiated the creation of a national army and was appointed its commander. However, in 1946, Alikhan Tura, taken from the city of Gulja under pressure of Soviet spies had to move to Tashkent and lived there until his death in 1976. He is an author of the several books and translations. His 'Tarihi Muhammadi'<sup>229</sup> was published unofficially several times, and the scholar himself was very active in teaching and spreading Islam in the region.

To present this extensive information concisely, we have utilized a table format. (Table 2.)

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<sup>228</sup> Ziyoz.uz (2016, Feb. 02) 'Domla Hindistoniy' <https://www.ziyouz.com/portal-haqida/xarita/o-zbek-ziyolilari/domla-hindistoniy-1892-1889>

<sup>229</sup> Ziyoz.uz (2013, Oct. 28) 'Alixonto'ra Sog'uniiy' <https://n.ziyouz.com/portal-haqida/xarita/uzbek-sheriyati/zamonaviy-o-zbek-she-riyati/alixonto-ra-sog-uniiy-1885-1936>

<b>№</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Year of <i>hujra</i> functioning</b>	<b>Information about founder</b>
1	Nodirhon-domla from, established an important <i>hujra</i> that.	Tashkent	Existed from 1962 through the mid-1970s	In 1928–1932 was hiding in a remote part of Syr Darya, working in a car repair shop. He was invited to join SADUM in 1943, and he worked there until he died in 1976
2	Khazrat Baba Muhammad	Surhandarya	After 1953 upto 1968	Studied in Bukhara before the revolution. He was in contact with Hindustani. For a short time after World War II, served as imam of Surkhandarya’s only legally sanctioned mosque in Termez. Died in 1968
3	Qozi-domulla (Abdurashid-domulla)	Dushanbe	Started in 1956, and continued until 1985	Was born and grew up in the city of Ferghana. He died in 1985, at the age of 96, and is buried in Dushanbe. Studied in Bukhara and returned to Ferghana after the Russian Revolution. In 1954, with the support of Hindustani, he moved to the outskirts of Dushanbe. In 1956 he was named Qadi, the senior representative of SADUM, in the Republic of Tajikistan. Later served as imam in a small mosque on the outskirts of Dushanbe
4	Mahdum Bobo-vi Andaqi (Abd ar-Rahmanjon Bobo)	Samarkand		He studied in Samarqand and Bukhara; he fled and spent the late 1920s and early 1930s in Hissar returned during World War II. Mahdum Bobo-vi was a Sufi, and in addition to more traditional Hanafi religious instruction, he taught his pupils Sufi poetry as well as the ritual bases of internal or silent <i>ziqr</i> ( <i>dtikr-i batin</i> ), which he practiced
5	Salim-hojji Khujandi	Bekabad	1954- beginning of 1980’s	Born in the 1890s, died in 1983, in Bekabad he took up residence in 1931, four years after fleeing Bukhara to avoid arrest. Ishan Babakhan in 1948 appointed Salim-hojji as the imam of Bekabad’s only mosque. Salim-hojji maintained close ties with Hindustani
6	Shaykh Abd al-Vahid Turkistani also known as Eshon Bobo	Bukhara		(died in 1940 or 1941), was the founder of the largest Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiya brotherhood in contemporary Central Asia.
7	Qori Abd Allah	Bukhara		Died in 1976, Eshon Bobo’s successor, lived with his teacher for 33 years

8	Eshon Abdurahmonjon	Dushanbe	Till the 1980's	He was born in the Kalajinav settlement near Dushanbe, and he died there in 1984 at the age of 99. He studied in the Ko'kaldosh madrassa in Bukhara, where he established a lifelong relationship with Muhammadjan Hindustani
9	Khaja Ahmadjon Makhdum Khanafi - Naqshbandi Mujaddidi	Surkhandarya	According to the authors, his hujra was functioning even in 2008	Was born in 1939, Received his first religious education from his father, Shoh-Murod Mukhdum, and then studied with a number of prominent Sufis as well as with MullaHindustani.
10	Ghulom-ota Normat	Namangan	In 2008 still existed	Was one of the best-known of these sheiks. He was born in 1916 and still lives in his native town of Kuyi Girvan, near Namangan. (info of 2008)
11	Dowud-khon	Namangan	In 2008 still existed	He was born in 1929, In 1983 he opened a hujra whose curriculum includes lectures on the proper reading of the Quran.
12	Abduhakim-qari Abdulvosiy o'gli also known as Hakimjon qori Vosiev	Ferghana valley	Started in 1955, and 1957-59 closed it since he got training. Reopened after 1959	a native of Marghilan city and considered by many to be the "father" of political Islam in Uzbekistan. Was born in the 1890's In 1955, he started a hujra but, perceiving the limitations of his education, went to study at Hindustani's hujra in Dushanbe from 1957 to 1959, where he paid special attention to increasing his Arabic skills.
13	Rahmatulla-alloma	Ferghana valley, Andijan city.	Established a hujra in 1978, where Abduhvaliqori Mirzaev served as his assistant	Died in 1981 in a car accident, and was one of Abduhakim qori's best-known students; Rahmatulla-alloma also studied with Hindustani. Students were taught Arabic, the Quran, hadiths, and the basics of fiqh. The curriculum stressed that Muslims were to be bound by Sharia principles. The most trusted students were allowed to study politics, the status of Islam in the world, and the religious history of local khanates. Textbooks on the history of Islam, brought to the hujra by the Arab students, gradually became a part of the curriculum.
14	Abduvali qori Mirzayev	Andijan	1981-1995 until disappeared from Tashkent airport	Continued Rahmatulla-alloma's work in the hujra, expanding the curriculum to include the history of the caliphate and in general becoming the major voice in the re-Islamization movement during the 1980s and early 1990s.

15	Ismail Sattiev	Namangan		In 1930- 1942 he was in hiding in Kyrgyzstan. Died in 1976
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Table 2.<sup>230</sup>

So, based on the above we can state that, the State, at least SADUM was aware of the activity of official and unofficial *ulema* tradition and *hujra* education system; that has been a source to keep Islam alive in the region and let Islam resist against Communistic approach and despite the strict control. In this regard, the role of traditional heritage keepers – *ulema* was crucial, who were influenced by urban religious culture.

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<sup>230</sup> Olcott, Martha Brill & Ziyayeva, Diyora (2008) *Islam in Uzbekistan: Religious Education and State Ideology*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. p. 7-12 (11-16)

## CHAPTER IV

### CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY OF SOVIET POLICY IN POST-SOVIET UZBEKISTAN

This chapter will explore the continuity of Soviet policies following the collapse of the USSR and the subsequent independence of Uzbekistan. It will examine the specifics of Islam Karimov's Soviet-style politics and their repercussions. Additionally, the chapter will provide a brief overview of recent changes in Uzbek society, highlighting current societal moods and trends.

Soviet policies aimed at modernizing and secularizing Central Asian societies had a lasting impact on culture, education, and social norms. While traditional cultural practices persisted, Soviet education and industrialization significantly altered societal structures and values. Moreover, the promotion of a secular identity by Soviet authorities has influenced the region's religious issues, contributing to tensions between secular governments and Islamic revival movements. Even after the collapse of the USSR, the legacy of Soviet politics in Central Asia has had a profound and lasting impact on the region's socio-political landscape. The region's leaders grapple with balancing post-Soviet identity, geopolitical interests, and domestic stability in a complex and changing global environment. The applied politics regarding religious issues were considered very sensitive in the post-communist region, where religion was a challenge for a long time. *Ulema* tradition which existed in *hujras* became obvious starting from the perestroika years: informal ulema started teaching Islam without hiding,<sup>231</sup> And hundreds of *hujra* students in Uzbekistan started openly practicing Islam. According to Adeeb Khalid, in the regions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the revival of Islam is manifested in new recognition of the cultural achievements of the Islamic era in Transoxiana and the glorification of prominent figures of the Islamic tradition as national heroes. This reverence extends to Islamic figures, poets, and rulers of the Muslim past, who are revered as significant personalities.<sup>232</sup> Helen Thiabuit notes that there has been continuity between the Soviet and Post Soviet periods in the region; she brings citation as an example from Luehrmann on post-Soviet

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<sup>231</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2014) '*Islam after communism: religion and politics in Central Asia*', University of California Press, Berkeley, p.118

<sup>232</sup> IBID p.119

Russia: "... religious education in rural Russia proposes to see the secular (Soviet) and post-secular periods not as eras opposed to each other but as "sites of engagement that alternate and overlap in the lives of both societies and individuals."<sup>233</sup>.

This notion is reflected in the experiences of societies and individuals of the whole ex-USSR. She highlights this by saying that the very continuity still exists in Central Asian society. The place of religion in people's life at both the political and social levels continues to "be greatly subordinated to the authorities and state apparatus according with the Soviet practices."<sup>234</sup>. This implies that religion remains heavily subject to control by the authorities and the state apparatus, tending to remember the practices established during the Soviet era.

#### 4.1. Uzbekistan during Karimov (1989-2016)

Andrea Schmitz mentions the case of Uzbekistan, arguing that the "securitization" policy of Islam—viewing religion as a security threat—stems from the social turmoil that started in the final decade of the Soviet era. These upheavals posed challenges to the post-communist leadership under President Islam Karimov (1991–2016) following the Soviet Union's collapse.<sup>235</sup> Alisher Ilkhamov states that after gaining independence in 1991, Uzbekistan attempted to restore religious freedom by officially condemning the ideology and practice of atheism.<sup>236</sup> Generally speaking, with the collapse of the USSR, the Muslims demanding the free application of Islamic principles began to struggle in the country. This process affected the formation of groups of Intellectuals, some of which are still the main actors of the struggle that has been continuing inside of the society up to date. The State's responses to these challenges have influenced Uzbekistan's contemporary religious policy reforms. The role of the military organizations is decisive in this regard, which also could be considered as a continuation of the Soviet policy.

If we pay attention to the circumstances of the collapse of the USSR, Uzbek activists were among the first inside of the Union who wanted to achieve independence and build a new state

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<sup>233</sup> Luehrmann, S. (2011). *Secularism-Soviet Style. Teaching Atheism and Religion in a Volga Republic*. Bloomington (IN): Indiana University Press.p.199

<sup>234</sup> Thibault, Hélène. (2015) *The Soviet Secularization Project in Central Asia: Accommodation and Institutional Legacies*, Eurostudia 10(1/ (11–31)); p 16.

<sup>235</sup> Schmitz, Andrea (2023) *Religious Policy in Uzbekistan. Between Liberalisation, State Ideology and Islamisation* German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin.p.6(9)

<sup>236</sup> Merip (December 2001) Ikramov, Alisher *'Uzbek Islamism'* <https://merip.org/2002/12/uzbek-islamism/>

and society. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of June of 1990, 'The Declaration of Independent State' was accepted in the National Parliament (Oliy Majlis) of Uzbek Soviet Republic. Along with that, during this time in 1990, there was already an officially registered political party, 'Erk', which was a supporter of independence and in opposition to the existing Government. There was another organization named 'Birlik' as well which was formed as a people's movement in 1988 to get the status of State language to the Uzbek language. They succeeded in their efforts regarding the State language status, however, despite tough strivings, this movement could not get official registration as a party and was under pressure from the official Government.

Islam Karimov became the first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan in 1989 and was elected president of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in 1990. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, he was elected president of independent Uzbekistan. In 1995 a national referendum extended his presidency to 2000, when he was reelected to another five-year term. In 2002, another national referendum extended his presidency to 2007. Although the Uzbek constitution prohibits presidents from serving more than two terms in office, Karimov was elected to a third term in 2007. Karimov won another term in 2015 amid similar concerns regarding the fairness of elections.<sup>237</sup> As the president of a newly independent state Islam Karimov allowed to happen to some fruitful and necessary reforms. He paid great attention to reforming the country's military system and the national army.<sup>238</sup> He collaborated with activists on the transition from Cyrillic to Latin. In addition, he implemented many educational reforms based on Western models. Islam Karimov also invested in the development of sports and culture, arguing that nothing could advance a state as quickly as achievements in these areas. Moreover, he introduced several economic and industrial reforms, moving beyond Uzbekistan's prior specialization during Soviet times in cotton production, and that led to the development of agrarian and other sectors.<sup>239</sup> Under Karimov the periods of history when Uzbekistan was a part of the Russian Empire and the USSR started to be viewed with critics though anti-Russian rhetoric was absent at the state level. Additionally, 'the Basmachi movement active in the 1920s as fighters against the Soviet system, was redefined as a "national liberation movement"'.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Islam Karimov". Encyclopedia Britannica, 26 Jan. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Islam-Karimov>. Accessed 21 February 2024.

<sup>238</sup> Karimov, Islam (1998) 'По пути безопасности и стабильного развития', Т 6, Узбекистон <https://islomkarimov.uz/source/photogallery/%D0%9E%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0%BA%D0%B8/%D0%9A%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B3%D0%B8%20%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81/6-tom-rus.pdf>

<sup>239</sup> Ruziyev, Kobul 'Uzbekistan's Development Experiment: An Assessment of Karimov's Economic Legacy' <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09668136.2021.1919602>

Regarding Islamic issues, in the beginning, he acted under the impact of circumstances and motivation of activists with a patriotic mood. He tried to emphasize that he grates Islamic revival and respects the Muslim society, but very soon things have changed. Ferghana Valley, which covers historical cities like Namangan, Andijan, Kokand, Margilan, and Ferghana in the territory of Uzbekistan, has a reputation as a conservative Muslim city due to its heavy interest in Islamic values. There were hundreds of Islamic scholars many with a *hujra* background, since the region was the heart of the *hujra* education system. The events that occurred in this valley during the early years of Karimov's presidency played a crucial role in shaping the country's policies toward Islam. While analyzing the reasons for the conflict between Karimov and some Islamic groups which happened in the first year of the Independence of Uzbekistan, Adeeb Khalid states that Islam Karimov ignored the expectations of some groups representing religious people to meet during his visit to Ferghana Valley and came back to the capital. Of this attitude, he provoked a group or a party called Adolat (Justice)<sup>240</sup>, to organize a protest meeting which demanded Karimov to return. It turned into really very serious events, so Karimov had to return and meet the representatives of that Adolat organization, which demanded him in a very rude way to announce Uzbekistan as an Islamic State based on Sharia rules.<sup>241</sup> It was impossible to handle the situation at once. Islam Karimov after maximum efforts could finally postpone the problem after negotiations by promising to let the Oliy Majlis (parliament) discuss the matter.<sup>242</sup> This incident made him apply Soviet-style secular politics later on. He immediately ordered to suppress Islamists as he returned to Tashkent having stated that "fundamentalism falsely represents Islam, for the masses as a universal tool for solving all social, economic, political and international problems."<sup>243</sup> He succeeded in insisting Legislative Assembly of Uzbekistan adopt a new law on "Public Associations", prohibiting all political

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<sup>240</sup> Olcott, B. Martha (2007) *'Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia'*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, p.18 (20) Washington. The author describes it as: 'Adolat (Justice) and Islam Adolati (Islamic Justice), the Islamic paramilitary groups active in Namangan and to a lesser extent in Andijan'; Saud, Adam (2015) *'Death of Islam Karimov and the Future of Islamism in Central Asia: Case Study of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan'*. Central Asia Journal No. 77, p.48 (5) The author mentions 'Adolat' as a party referring to Rashid, Ahmad (2002), Jihad: Op. Cit, p.139.

<sup>241</sup> Khalid, Adeeb. (2014) *'Islam after communism: religion and politics in Central Asia'*, University of California Press, Berkeley, (Ch.6 Islam and opposition) p.140

<sup>242</sup> Jahonnoma (Apr.23, 2024) *'Negtiations of Karimov with Adolat representatives in 1991'*  
<https://web.telegram.org/k/#1007633875>

<sup>243</sup> Saud, Adam.(2015) *'Death of Islam Karimov and the Future of Islamism in Central Asia: Case Study of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan'*, Central Asia Journal No. 77(winter),p.48

parties based on religion. Moreover, he imprisoned many Islamic leaders.<sup>244</sup> The first decades of Independence Karimov spent concentrating on the struggle with ‘Islamic terrorism’. Later, Karimov himself describes his memories of that incident, saying: “I went to Namangan and met face to face with those who had lost their minds...they insisted on proclaiming the Islamic State. I still remember those bearded persons, attracting people by raising these matters. I still remember their (insulting) voices.”<sup>245</sup>

As mentioned, in Ferhana Valley there were hundreds of Islamic scholars many with *hujra* backgrounds, among them, there were Abduvali Mirzayev and Obid Nazarov who had a significant role in Karimov’s struggle against ‘Islamic terrorism’. According to Martha Olcott and other sources, Abduvali Mirzayev was born in 1950 in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan. He received his Islamic education in the *hujra* and gained a good reputation for his knowledge among local people. He spoke fluent Arabic, was a hafiz, and was elected imam of the Central Mosque in Andijan. He had a very large number of students in the region. Abduvali Mirzayev was therefore a “dangerous” figure for Islam Karimov. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1996, Abduvali Mirzayev disappeared from Tashkent Airport when he was flying to Moscow to attend the Conference.<sup>246</sup> Since then, all attempts to find him failed. Authoritarians deny their involvement in this incident. This issue later had consequences.

One of the former opposition leaders Jahangir Muhammad, who had to leave the country under pressure from Islam Karimov and was granted political asylum in the USA, thinks that in 1998s some of the students of missing imam Abduvali Mirzayev, who believed that he was kidnapped by Government’s order, wanted to organize protests against Government to release their leader. Some of these students were arrested by State Security Services, and they decided to use this incident in their struggle against Islam.<sup>247</sup> The Government did not announce this accident and after February 16<sup>th</sup>. 1999, which was a tragic day due to bomb blasts in Tashkent pretended as if it was not aware of it and this was an attempt to assassinate the president. The official government of Uzbekistan blamed Islamists, although no Islamic group accepted this

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<sup>244</sup> Saud, Adam.(2015) ‘*Death of Islam Karimov and the Future of Islamism in Central Asia: Case Study of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*’, Central Asia Journal No. 77(winter),p.49

<sup>245</sup> Karimov, Islam (1998) ‘*Speech to the Uzbek legislature on 1st May 1998*. “Freedom to Profess Faith must be on Lawful Guards”’, URL: [www.president.uz](http://www.president.uz)

<sup>246</sup> Nusrat yo’li: (2018,Oct.22) ‘*Olimlarni himoya qilaylik*’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjhqnEKgAbU> (Abid Nazarov describes the circumstances how Abduvali Mirzayev was kidnapped started from 46min.)

<sup>247</sup> Jahonnoma : (2008,Mar.12) Jahongir Muhammad: ‘*Karimovning 100 kuni*’, <https://jahonnoma.com/2008/03/12/1-25/>

accusation.<sup>248</sup> After this incident, the government started openly restricting the application of Islamic values. Many mosques which opened during ‘perestroika’ were closed again, beards for men and wearing veils for women started being restricted in each organization including education organizations.

The same year with the order of Islam Karimov Islamic University was opened in Tashkent and the number of existing two higher education institutions increased to one more.<sup>249</sup>

In the summer of 1999, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan crossed the borders of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan from the Afghanistan side. Several Kyrgyz security officials, three Japanese geologists, four American climbers, and the mayor of Kyrgyzstan were held hostage by the members of IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan). The incident was solved after negotiations. This increased the pressure on all Islamic leaders of Uzbekistan.

Although it was not proved that Obidkhan Nazarov, the imam of the Hasti Imam, ‘Tillasheikh’ and ‘Tokhtaboy’ mosques in Tashkent had some relations with IMU still was under pressure. Obidkhan Nazarov comes from the Namangan region, with a *hujra* background, and has two higher education degrees as well. Obidkhan Nazarov was born in 1958 in Namangan and from 1980 to 1984 he studied at the Tashkent Higher Islamic Institute. In 1985-1990 worked as deputy imam of the central mosque of Tashkent "Tillasheikh", in 1990-1996 he was elected as imam-khatib of the "Tokhtaboy" mosque in Tashkent. Between 1992 and 1998, Obidkhan Nazarov hosted the religious program of Radio Liberty, introducing listeners to the interpretation of the Holy Quran. Since 1996, he has been persecuted by Karimov's government. His speech on ‘*zulm*’ and ‘*zalims*’ in 1997 in his mosque reached the authoritarians who very soon demanded to give a denial speech to his previous speech and never repeat such things.<sup>250</sup> Obidkhan Nazarov rejected their demand and in September 1997 was arrested. Immediately hundreds of his followers came to the Prosecutors General's Office where the imam was taken. The Prosecutors General's Office was located on the same street as the American Embassy, and Embassy people wanted to know the reason for that demonstration. This made Obidkhan Nazarov to be released soon. However, persecution of the imam continued. He had to hide inside the country from 1998 to 2000, then he moved to Kazakhstan and lived there from 2000

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<sup>248</sup> Saud, Adam.(2015) ‘*Death of Islam Karimov and the Future of Islamism in Central Asia: Case Study of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*’, Central Asia Journal No. 77(winter),p 51

<sup>249</sup> <https://lex.uz/docs/213560>

<sup>250</sup> Doda dadi: (2012, Feb.25) ‘*Shayh Obid qoriga suiqaq qilinishiga sababchi bo'lgan ma'ruza*’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0pSbXxeVT0> (starting from 58 minute openly addresses to authoritarians)

to 2006. Many of his relatives, students, and friends were either imprisoned or kidnapped. On May 24 of 2004, his elder son was kidnapped and till now remains missing. In 2006, the imam decided to ask for protection from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Obidkhan Nazarov was granted political asylum in Sweden. In 2007, he established the Voice of Islam website (<https://www.islomovozi.com/?p=4633>) and continued his scientific activities in the field of Islamic studies. On February 22, 2012, a killer named Yuri Zhukovsky tried to kill the imam. However, he failed, and the Imam returned after several months of coma. Yuri Zhukovsky was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2016. After the death of Islam Karimov, representatives of the current government offered Obidkhan Nazarov to return to Uzbekistan, but the imam did not accept.<sup>251</sup>

The personality of Sheyh Muhammad Sadik Muhammad Yusuf (1952-2015) is among the important ones in Uzbek Islamic life. He was mufti of the Religious Department of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (1989-1993), he graduated from the Tashkent Islamic Institute named after Imam Bukhari in 1975. He worked for the magazine “Muslims of the Soviet East” and later joined the Dawa Islamiya University in Tripoli (Libya), from which he graduated in 1980 with honors. Having returned to his homeland, he began working in the external relations department of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan and was a teacher at the Islamic Institute after Imam Bukhari in Tashkent (from which he graduated) till 1986 when he became a rector of the same Institute. After the collapse of the USSR, he worked in the international organization “League of the Islamic World” with headquarters in Mecca, and then at the Islamic University in Libya.<sup>252</sup>

Author several books dedicated to Islamic issues, interpretation of the Quran, etc. Muhammad Sadik’s activity covers the last decades of the USSR and Post Soviet period in Uzbekistan. He was a respected member of several organizations like: Founding Assembly of the Association of the Islamic World in Makkah; World Sufism Association; General Secretariat of the World Islamic Nations; World Dava Association; World Council of Muslim Scholars Association; World Islamic Association in Islamabad; World Association of Mosques; The Royal Academy of Islamic Thought in Jordan.

His hundreds of books and manuals on Islamic problems and Islam itself are actively used still inside and outside of the country.

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<sup>251</sup> Personal info about Obidkhan Nazarov is taken from his official website

<https://www.islomovozi.com/?p=4633>

<sup>252</sup>Islamnews: (2015, Mar.10) ‘В Узбекистане умер видный ученый и богослов’ <https://islamnews.ru/news-453471.html>

Muhammad Sadik became under repression during Karimov's era and had to leave Uzbekistan, however after several decades he was allowed to return back but never occupied any official position, and he was busy with teaching and writing about religious matters until he died in 2015.

Meanwhile in Uzbekistan, in 2004 another explosion occurred in Tashkent, which killed six people. This time, the Islamic Jihad Union stated that this was their response to 'the anti-Islamic regime of Karimov'.<sup>253</sup>

In 2005, Andijan bloody events took place, which killed thousands of civilians. According to the opposition, this event was a political game planned by authoritarians to expel US military forces from Uzbekistan who were on an Afghanistan mission after the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, 2001. The base was located at one square mile in southeastern Uzbekistan, near the border with Tajikistan. The US military occupied the base from 2001-2005.<sup>254</sup> After the Andijan events the base was closed and Uzbek-USA relations worsened since the Uzbek government blamed the US in organizing a military coup in the State. On May 12 a group of Muslim people organized demonstrations demanding Government justice for imprisoned Muslims also the freedom to apply Islamic practices in their lives. Andijan events are known as the mass shooting of protesters in the city of Andijan on May 12-14, 2005. The Government in the face of former president Islam Karimov decided to punish rebellions. However, the unofficial or former opposition has a different interpretation of this event. Former opposition leader Jahangir Muhammad, author of several books about the regime of Islam Karimov, explains this event as Putin's plan to return Uzbekistan from US influence. The ex-politician notes that on Duma's Council, the FSB in charge read out a report that the US is planning the revolt and changes in the Government apparatus. Later Karimov receives a phone call from the Kremlin confirming the speech of FSB. Karimov gets very scared and decides to find a way to get rid of US military bases and their impact on the region. During this event, according to some official sources, 187 people were shot dead and according to unofficial sources around 2000 were killed. This tragic event still was not investigated properly, and victims are still considered guilty.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>253</sup>Saud, Adam.(2015) '*Death of Islam Karimov and the Future of Islamism in Central Asia: Case Study of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*', Central Asia Journal No. 77(winter),p.52

<sup>254</sup> US Department of veterans Affairs: (n.d) 'Karshi Khanabad (K-2) Air Base'

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/karshi-khanabad.asp#:~:text=The%20base%20was%20one%20square,near%20the%20border%20of%20Tajikistan.&text=The%20U.S.%20military%20occupied%20the,of%20the%20Uzbek%20Air%20Force>

<sup>255</sup> OzodNazar: (2022,Mar.13) '*Mahalla raising tanlanma saylovi va Andijon fojiasi "mualliflari"*' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNBrN3Qg0gk> (starting from 23:12 minut)

According to Adeb Khalid the Uzbek government asserted that the clash was a firefight between "terrorists" and government troops, he also notes that in contrast, other reports described the incident as a massacre, with estimates of the much different death toll, encompassing women, children, and the elderly<sup>256</sup>.

At the Andijan event, there was a report from a hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe's one-hundred-ninth Congress first session on June 29, 2005, which was ignored by Karimov's government.<sup>257</sup> The hearing starts with a speech by Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Sam Brownback, who states that Karimov still applies the continuity of Soviet policy, his statement is as follows:

For many years, I've been hoping for gradual democratization in Uzbekistan. Nearly 15 years now after the collapse of the USSR, Uzbekistan's political system under President Karimov today still retains many of the Soviet characteristics. Neither political nor economic reforms have taken place despite repeated calls for President Karimov to begin this process, which I have extended and asked President Karimov to do, as well.<sup>258</sup>

The statements of a few witnesses of the Andijan event also took place in that hearing. One of them was Galina Bukharbaeva, who stated the following:

I am Galima Bukharbaeva, a journalist from Uzbekistan. I have worked as a country director of the Uzbekistan Project for IWPR in Uzbekistan since 2000. I was in Bobur Square in Andijon among thousands of Andijon citizens, when, at 5:20 p.m. local time on May 13th, the merciless authorities of Uzbekistan opened fire on their people. Before the attack, the government didn't warn unarmed people to leave the square. Thousands of people were unarmed, and they were not forced by rebels to stay in the place. Everybody we spoke to came to the square by his own will, either only to look or to protest. It wasn't an Islamic uprising. I didn't hear any "Allahu Akbar" outcries or any demands to build an Islamic state. People demanded justice, human rights, economic, and social, and political reforms. And the monument of Bobur, which was in the center of the square—it was full of people. The monument itself became a tribune for all speakers. These demonstrations and some of the speeches were continued from the moment I arrived at the square at noon and until 5 o'clock when the fire was opened. And the people didn't have even political demands, and they didn't call for the resignation of President Karimov. I didn't see any foreign fighters or mujahideen from Chechnya or Afghanistan.<sup>259</sup>

The same and similar statements were given by other eyewitnesses as well in the same report.<sup>260</sup> Adeb Khalid develops his ideas on the Andijan events saying that Islam Karimov found the Andijan uprising as an effort by 'extremists and fanatics' to topple the 'constitutional order'

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<sup>256</sup> Khalid, Adeep (2014) *Islam After Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia Account*, , University of California Press, Berkeley, (Conclusion 'Andijan and Beyond') p.192

<sup>257</sup> (2007) *The Uzbekistan Crisis: Assessing the impact and the next steps 'a report from hearing before the commission on security and cooperation in Europe one hundred ninth congress first session June 29, 2005.* <https://www.csce.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/The-Uzbekistan-Crisis-Assessing-the-Impact-and-Next-Steps.pdf>

<sup>258</sup> IBID p. 1 (5)

<sup>259</sup> IBID p. 4(8)

<sup>260</sup> IBID p.8(12)and p.19(23)

starting in Andijan and potentially spreading nationwide, to create a caliphate governed by Sharia law. Karimov believed this operation was meticulously planned and included involvement from foreign actors (namely al-Qaeda).<sup>261</sup>

On the above-mentioned issues, Andrea Schmitz notes the following:

Various groups emerged seeking to give Islam more weight in politics and society and advocating that state policy should be guided by Islamic principles. Some of these groups called for the establishment of an Islamic state; they formed vigilante groups to enforce Islamic legal norms and increasingly confronted the State with their demands.<sup>262</sup>

Therefore, it is essential to thoroughly investigate the policies of Islam Karimov's era to reach well-founded conclusions.

Scholars admit that Islam Karimov, as a person and politician who grew up under the Soviet regime, acted in the same way as many Soviet authoritarian leaders. Nuska Botoiarova highlights her approach regarding this issue in her thesis and states the following:

In Uzbekistan, for instance, the government is fearful of all kinds of opposition, not only those groups that use Islam as a political tool. Uzbek President Islam Karimov, has retained his position from the Soviet past, and his policies are primarily based on the old-style authoritarianism, which is justified, however, as a vital instrument for maintaining 'stability'. Given the Islamophobic character of the ruling authoritarian elite, inherited from the Soviet atheist ideology, any kind of political Islam is often labeled as 'fundamentalist'. It is largely in this sense that fundamentalism in Central Asia should be regarded differently from its counterpart in the Middle East.<sup>263</sup>

In this regard, Andrea Schmitz admits:

The post-communist rulers, represented by Islam Karimov, who had been elected president of the independent Uzbek state in December 1991, reacted to the challenge by disbanding the Islamist groups and arresting their leaders. Some of the activists managed to escape abroad, mainly to Afghanistan and Tajikistan, from where they continued the fight against the regime in Uzbekistan.<sup>264</sup>

Botoiarova evaluating her above-mentioned approach suggests that in Central Asia, Islam has evolved into a practice mainly focused on cultural, educational, and specific religious activities that reflect local traditions. She refers to Iranian researcher Ghonchen Tazmini, in highlighting the idea that the moderate character of Islam in this region is likely to ensure that it does not

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<sup>261</sup> Khalid, Adeep (2014) *Islam After Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia Account*, , University of California Press, Berkeley, (Conclusion 'Andijan and Beyond') p.193

<sup>262</sup> Schmitz, Andrea (2023) *Religious Policy in Uzbekistan Between Liberalisation, State Ideology and Islamisation* ' German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin. p.8

<sup>263</sup> Botoiarova, Nuska (2005) *Islamic Fundamentalism in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan: Real or Imagined Threat*, MA Thesis, The Graduate School of Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, p.16 (27)

<sup>264</sup> Schmitz, Andrea (2023) *Religious Policy in Uzbekistan Between Liberalisation, State Ideology and Islamisation*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin

become a significant political force in the future<sup>265</sup>. Further Botoiarova gives her conclusive ideas noting that: “The concluding argument is that even if Islam is to be radicalized, it would not be because of outside influence, it would be the result of anger and despair that will continue to grow if existing orders continue applying old-fashioned authoritative and repressive measures to the people”<sup>266</sup>

Helen Thiabuit analyzing ‘Religious revival in Tajikistan’ covers moments related to the entire Central Asia, she admits that Martha Brill Olcott’s 1994 evaluation, which noted that in Central Asia the relationship between Islam and the State was as strained as it had been during Soviet times, remains pertinent in 2013. We continue to see, she says, echoing Soviet-era practices, a significant subjugation of religious institutions to the control of authorities and state mechanisms.<sup>267</sup> She also emphasizes:

...Central Asian Republics, because of their joint history and similar socio-economic situation, should face similar issues. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan appear particularly suited to the establishment of a comparative study program. However, in Uzbekistan, the situation is somehow distorted due to the ruthlessness of its political system and it has become very difficult to conduct research there.”<sup>268</sup>

Craig Murray – the British ambassador to Uzbekistan from 2002 to 2004, who described Karimov’s policy in his ‘Murder in Samarkand’ (2006). ‘Murder in Samarkand’ is both a memoir and an insider's account offering a critical viewpoint of international diplomacy and human rights practices during a turbulent period in Central Asia. The author describes Jaslyk prison<sup>269</sup> in this memoir, he provides a detailed account of the notorious Uzbek prison, known for its harsh conditions and the torture of inmates. Murray's experiences and observations as the British ambassador to Uzbekistan highlight the human rights abuses occurring in facilities like Jaslyk and the broader context of the Uzbek government's oppressive tactics.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Tazmini, Ghonchen (2001) “*The Islamic Revival in Central Asia: a Potent Force or a Misconception?*” Central Asian Survey, Vol. 20, No. 1, (March) p. 82.; Botoiarova, Nuska (2005) ‘*Islamic Fundamentalism in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan: Real or Imagined Threat*’, MA Thesis, The Graduate School of Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, p.19 (30)

<sup>266</sup>IBID p.19 (30)

<sup>267</sup> Thibault, Hélène (2014) ‘*Religious Revival in Tajikistan: The Soviet Legacy Revisited*’, School of Political Studies Faculty of Social Sciences University of Ottawa, Canada, p. 144; Brill Olcott, Martha (1994) “*Central Asia’s Islamic Awakening*”. Current History 93 (582); 150-154.p.154

<sup>268</sup> IBID p.183

<sup>269</sup> Prison insider: (2019,Dec.18) ‘*Uzbekistan: Jaslyk-Uzbekistan’s infamous prison*’ / A prison camp called Jaslyk opened in the desert in western Uzbekistan in 1999 (by order of Islam Karimov). Even by the standards of the Uzbek prison system, it would become notorious for torture and human rights abuses, including reports of a prisoner being boiled alive.

<https://www.prison-insider.com/en/articles/ouzbekistan-jaslyk-uzbekistan-s-infamous-prison>

<sup>270</sup>Murray, Craig (2006) ‘*Murder in Samarkand*’, Mainstream Publishing, Edinburg and London

Accordingly, Islam Karimov's politics regarding Islam and Muslims which was shown in strict control and activity limitation could be considered as the continuation of the Soviet approach. The report of International Organizations like Human Rights Watch of 2015, just one year before his death, proves this issue:

Uzbekistan maintained its appalling human rights record in 2015. A decade after government forces massacred hundreds of largely peaceful protesters in the city of Andijan, the Uzbek government continues to deny justice to the victims. In March, authoritarian President Islam Karimov's 26-year rule was extended by another five years in elections international observers found lacked any meaningful choice and violated Uzbekistan's constitution. The government denies citizens the freedoms of association, expression, and religion, using the country's pervasive security services to maintain rigid control over the population. Thousands of people are imprisoned on politically motivated charges, torture is endemic, and authorities regularly harass human rights activists, opposition members, and journalists. Muslims and Christians who practice their religion outside strict state controls are persecuted.<sup>271</sup>

During Karimov's era, a new generation of activists began to emerge within Uzbek society. These activists, primarily intellectuals, advocated for several significant changes, including the incorporation of Islamic principles into the school curriculum, the reopening of closed mosques, the lifting of bans on the headscarf and beard, and the allowance of Friday prayers for working personnel. They argued that these changes were necessary in a society where approximately 88% of the population identify as Hanafi Muslims. Starting from 2014, they started to be called the 'neo-jadids' – a new interpretation of Jadidism. Sardor Salim expressed his views on the suppression of Islam in an article published in the online newspaper 'Vatandosh'. This article, described below, clearly reflects the reaction of the local intelligentsia to Karimov's Soviet-style policies. To sum up, Karimov and his Government system could not completely overcome Soviet-style authoritarian politics, though there were attempts to change some rules.

Karimov's era in Uzbekistan, overall, was marked by authoritarian governance, some economic development initiatives, and a cautious approach to international relations. The government continued suppressions against Muslims. Islam-related restrictions made thousands of people leave the country. Attacks on Islam continued till the death of Karimov in 2016. His reign shaped the political landscape of Uzbekistan and set the stage for subsequent events in the country.

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<https://www.docdroid.net/kqj5yPi/murder-in-samarkand-a-british-ambassadors-controversial-defiance-of-tyranny-in-the-war-on-terror-craig-murray-pdf#page=40>

<sup>271</sup> Human Rights Watch (2016) 'Uzbekistan events of 2015' <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/uzbekistan>

## 4.2 Neo-Jadidism and New Uzbekistan

The term ‘Neo-jadid’ draws inspiration from the Jadid movement of the early 20th century in Turkistan, which advocated for educational reforms and modernization within a Pan-Turkic and Pan-Islamic framework. In contrast to their early 20th-century predecessors, the neo-jades in Uzbekistan are focused on advocating for reforms within the context of the modern State. They seek to challenge and transform Soviet-era policies and push for reforms in various sectors, particularly in education. Their primary goal is to cultivate a new generation that embodies Islamic values within a democratic framework.<sup>272</sup> The features and general aspects of this mood are explained in the online article named “What is neo-jadid’s profession: what we need?”<sup>273</sup>

The author (Sardor Salim) says the following:

If we have some resources and a chance to coordinate efforts, I would like the Neo-jadids to deal with three issues: Neo-jadids should revive religion, promote republicanism, and engage in non-formal educational initiatives. 1) Revival of religion: By revitalizing religion, I mean realizing the true essence of Islam and reforming our perceptions of Islam. 2) Republicanism: Republicanism is a political philosophy, according to which political and personal freedom, freedom can be achieved only in a community of people who share the same destiny and are weak on their own. The philosophy of the Lilliputians determined to restrain Gulliver. 3) Informal education initiatives. Why informal? Because formal educational institutions do not provide the secrets and theories of free living in a free society. That is why we need a lot of projects that spread modern socio-political education and enlightenment, traditions of superstition. Unofficial doesn't necessarily mean against the State, it just means education and enlightenment that free people can't get anywhere else on the topics they want.<sup>274</sup>

The paragraph above describes the mood of progressive young intelligentsia in Uzbekistan, which was a reaction to the Soviet-style policy of Islam Karimov, but later developed as a socio-political approach to enlighten Uzbek society since the death of Islam Karimov some significant changes took place in the country. The second elected president of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyayev, did several reforms as he started his reign in 2016. Uzbekistan saw notable changes in its approach to religious liberty, as reflected in reports from international organizations that stated that Uzbekistan took steps to improve religious freedom. With his order, thousands of imprisoned Muslims were released, and for a few years, the ban on scarves and beards was lifted. People started visiting Friday prayers freely. Arabic language and Quran teaching courses became available in almost all parts of the country. Requirements for opening mosques became much easier compared to previous times. Azan was allowed to be sung loudly. In February

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<sup>272</sup> Online newspaper ‘Vatandosh’ #33/ (2014, Jan.16) Sardor Salim ‘Who are Neo-Jadids’  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-EThy1cPQA&list=PLiMclxhz2Aymsqok2KCuYuGhLIWtDtWl>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwPMDEgZs8A>

<sup>273</sup> NeoJadid telegram web: (2023, July 26).Salim, Sardor : ‘NeoJadidlar: Kim va maslagi nima?’ Chizgilar. Retrieved July 30, 2023, from <https://telegra.ph/NeoJadidlar-kim-va-maslagi-nima-Chizgilar-07-26>

<sup>274</sup> The citation is translated from Uzbek into English by the author of the thesis

2017, the Government announced a new accepted decree “on organizing the activities of the Center for Islamic Culture in Uzbekistan under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan”<sup>275</sup>. The government initiated reforms aimed at reducing state control over religious activities, including the registration process for religious organizations and the reopening of some mosques and religious schools that had been previously closed. Many legal reforms took place as well - Uzbekistan introduced revisions to the country's laws on religion were made to facilitate the registration of religious groups, simplify procedures for building places of worship, and lessen restrictions on religious attire and practices. The Mirziyoyev administration engaged in dialogue with religious communities, including Muslims, Christians, and others. This dialogue aimed to foster greater understanding and cooperation between the government and religious groups, leading to increased tolerance and acceptance of religious diversity. Uzbekistan's efforts to improve religious freedom were acknowledged by international organizations. Reports from entities such as the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) noted positive developments in Uzbekistan's approach to religious liberty. In general, the first several years of the Mirziyoyev era in Uzbekistan witnessed significant strides toward improving religious freedom, as acknowledged by international organizations. One of the significant deeds was closing the worst prison in Uzbekistan. In August 2019, Shavkat Mirziyoyev declared that the nation’s deepest, darkest black hole would finally be closed. The penitentiary was built on the grounds of an old chemical plant in 1999, at the time of the late President Islam Karimov, it was designed to accommodate 1,100 people. Since it was opened, Jaslyk has become more than a prison. It has served as an embodiment of cruelty and brutality. Inmates have included people convicted on terrorism charges and other serious crimes. Opposition figures, rights activists, and devoted Muslims have also been locked up in Jaslyk<sup>276</sup>. There was a huge development at the beginning of Mirziyoyev’s era, although challenges persist, and continued efforts are needed to ensure the full protection of religious freedom for all citizens.

Uzbek-Canadian sociologist scholar, who actively shares her approaches regarding social issues in Uzbek society Dr. Dilsora Komil Fozilova, mentions Uzbek ‘Neo-jadidism’ by stressing the importance of education in a Muslim society, moreover she suggests that the new political elite

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<sup>275</sup>Norma.uz: (2017, August 15) *‘Islom madaniyati markazi qanday faoliyat qilishi’*

[https://www.norma.uz/qonunchilikda\\_yangi\\_islam\\_madaniyati\\_markazi\\_kanday\\_faoliyat\\_kulyisht](https://www.norma.uz/qonunchilikda_yangi_islam_madaniyati_markazi_kanday_faoliyat_kulyisht)

<sup>276</sup> Eurasianet: (2013, Sep.19) *‘Uzbekistan’s hellish prison’* <https://eurasianet.org/uzbekistans-hellish-prison-closes-gates-for-now>

or intelligentsia should look through Jadidistic experience and apply the necessary notions into today's society's development.<sup>277</sup> She states that the term 'Neo-jadidism' is crucial since this new approach should not repeat the 'mistakes' of Jadids likewise 'Neo-marxistic' approach tries to replace 'Marxism' by improving their view in a new environment. Besides, Neo jadids are different from Jadids by emphasizing not just educational reforms but bringing reforms to the society's 'analytic or thinking process.'<sup>278</sup>

During the program dedicated to 'Neo jadidism' on Fikrat TV titled 'What happened to Neo-jadidism?' several representatives of local intelligentsia discussed the prospectives of this notion.<sup>279</sup> Dr. Bahram Irzayev – a senior Jadidist scholar highlights that if 'Jadidism' emerged against Colonialism and its policy, 'Neo-jadidism' emerged against Neo-colonialism, despite the harsh policy of Soviets during seventy years to destroy the heritage of Jadids. Scholar also emphasizes that Neo jadidism in Uzbek society is seen among young politicians, and literature representatives like poets who try to destroy those frames made by the Soviets, some people even study abroad with such thinking.<sup>280</sup>

Political reporter and political scholar Hamid Sodik to the question of what he thinks about 'neo-jadidism' answers:

...there could be static and dynamic analysis of this notion. Static analysis of the current matter says that it is normal that each society faces certain problems and while seeking solutions to the problem certain layers of the intelligentsia get together and unite. Jadidism emerged in such circumstances when colonial policy, illiteracy was there... so intelligentsia got united and a dynamic process was started. ..Now, we already have a state and many things for what Jadids struggled already achieved and this means there is a cover based on their experiences. Accordingly, neo-jadids see that cover but they also feel that there is a need for reforms under that cover, Neo-jadids are at a starting point dynamically to solve the problem...Neojadidism is trying to define the problems in connection with reality. Moreover, we cannot compare the problems faced by Jadids with the problems Neo-Jadids are facing today. Our problems have political context and political pressure. I wish to overcome challenges – political pressure, to introduce a system for balancing political actors and establish a systematic ethic.<sup>281</sup>

Following Neo-jadids of Uzbekistan, the same term was used by Michael Kemper a bit later in 2018-19, in the discourse of Russian Islam in modern times. The author in the part 'Neo-jadidism' of his article 'Religious political technology: Damir Mukhetdinov's 'Russian Islam', analyses the approach of Damir Mukhetdinov - the executive secretary of the International

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<sup>277</sup> Sociological lens //Dr. Dilsora Fozilova (October 10,2022) '*Jadidism va Neojadidism haqida*' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJRNfMsZeDc&t=2640s> starting from 43.min

<sup>278</sup> IBID (starting from 44:24.min)

<sup>279</sup> Azon.tv archive.Fikrat (October, 2022) '*Neojadidismga nima bo'ldi?*' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnH2OiQA-zU&t=500s>

<sup>280</sup> IBID (starting from 5:08 min)

<sup>281</sup> IBID (starting from 27:20 min)

Muslim Forum, first deputy chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation. Kemper compares Ismail Gasprinski and Mukhetdinov's approaches saying:

'Like Mukhetdinov today, Gasprinskii found that the Russians know very little about the Muslim subjects of the empire and that the authorities have shown little interest in enlightening Russia's Muslims... Gasprinskii carefully argued that this backwardness had in principle nothing to do with Islam, which he portrayed as the religion of progress. Also, Mukhetdinov emphasizes the rational character of Islam, and he suggests that the entrenched Islamic establishments in Russia's regions form an obstacle for Muslims to reach their full potential.<sup>282</sup>

Mukhitdinov's approach which is seen in his articles defines that he wants to emphasize Muslims' position in Russia in a new context. He uses the term 'neo modernism' and significant points of Russian policy where it is not paid proper attention to the increasing number of Muslim layers of the Russian population and Islam.<sup>283</sup>

Though this notion is highlighted in the context of Islamic issues in Russia still the existence of the same mood is significant.

Nowadays, Uzbek Neo-jadidism works via social media platforms to educate people about the principles of civil society, aiming to help ordinary citizens understand national interests and their rights<sup>284</sup>. They are engaged in the study and development of ideas inspired by Jadidism and the Jadids, who emphasized national interests.

Andrea Schmitz argues that since 2016, reforms have significantly increased religious freedom for Uzbek citizens. Islam, practiced by the majority, has gained greater visibility in public life. This change is due to the removal of previous restrictions on religious practices and a cultural policy that highlights Islam as a key element of national identity. As a result of this liberalization, Muslim civil society organizations have been able to expand their charitable

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<sup>282</sup> Kemper, Michael (2019) *Religious political technology: Damir Mukhetdinov's 'Russian Islam'*, Religion, State & Society, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 214–233 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2019.1571331> Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group. p.222 -223

<sup>283</sup> Мухитдинов, Дамир (2022), «Ислам в современном мире». Том 18. № 4, с.50-51(8-9); Muslim forum info (December 11,2015) *Российское мусульманство: социокультурная реальность и концепт* <http://muslim-forum.info/analytic/rossiyskoe-musulmanstvo-sotsiokulturnaya-realnost-i-kontsept/>

<sup>284</sup> There are few examples: Муслимов, Жамшид (2024) «Миллат» Vatan oynomasi, 2-сон 88-93с.; Demokrat.uz (2024, January 11) *'Bugunning Jadidlari kimlar'* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kol\\_VhzRIVQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kol_VhzRIVQ); Fikrat (2024, July 24) *'Urush falsafasi: bugun urushlar qanday kechmoqda?'* <https://www.youtube.com/live/Ew2GxJ7odKc>; Fikrat (2024 July 19) *'Vatandoshlik dasturi'* <https://www.youtube.com/live/P8N4h5fgO60>; Neojadids telegram channel (2024, August 03) K.Jalilov: *'Zamonaviy dunyoda tanqidiy fikrlashning yo'qligi katta muammolarga olib kelishi mumkin. Nafaqat tanqidiy fikrlash ko'nikmasi yo'q shaxs uchun, balki jamiyat uchun ham'* <https://web.telegram.org/k/#@Neojadids>;

activities, often filling gaps left by state welfare services.<sup>285</sup> Since the interest in Islam and Islamic traditions increased significantly inside Uzbek society, it became obvious that the existing few madrasas and mosques<sup>286</sup> are not enough for the local Muslims, who are the majority of the almost 38 million of the total population. Moreover, existing Islamic online channels or platforms and literature also became in demand among the population. *Azon.uz* was one of the Internet platforms that was opened in 2018 to enlighten people by organizing discussions with different scholars. This online platform became popular among people for Islamic matters being discussed<sup>287</sup> along with other historical and political issues. Soon, many other online platforms were announced as well. The majority of them still function while *Azon.uz* was closed down for its 'religiousness' in 2023.<sup>288</sup> Soon, the platform changed its name to Azan Global and continues to function with its office abroad<sup>289</sup>.

Schmitz notes on this notion:

The great demand for religious instruction is matched by a growing number of people who feel called to such instruction and who drive the demand through their presence on the internet and social media. This creates an internal religious world in which secular principles are challenged, illiberal beliefs are negotiated and illegal material is shared.<sup>290</sup>

However, she does not clarify the conditions to be legal since the government also silent in this regard.

The development of digital platforms and social media, quick data exchange is an excellent tool to enlighten people and at the same time a challenge for societies. If during the Soviet Union,

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<sup>285</sup> Schmitz, Andrea (2023) *'Religious Policy in Uzbekistan Between Liberalisation, State Ideology and Islamisation'*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin p. 29(31)

<sup>286</sup> State Committee for Religious issues: (2023 June 05) *'How to contact religious organizations?'* There are, in total, three higher and 10 secondary specialized Islamic educational institutions registered with the state <http://old.muslim.uz/index.php/yangiliklar-2016/uzbekistan/item/36086-diniy-ta-lim-muassasalari-bilan-qanday-bog-lanish-mumkin>

<sup>287</sup> *Azon.uz*, the first private online educational TV channel in Uzbekistan, currently has almost 400,000 subscribers and around 35 million views since starting in 2019/ Eurasianet: (2021,July13) *'Perspectives | Uzbekistan's Islamic revival opens door to divorce by mistake'* <https://eurasianet.org/perspectives-uzbekistans-islamic-revival-opens-door-to-divorce-by-mistake> ; Kun.uz (February 14,2019) *'Mubashir Ahmad: Azon TV Keng Ommaning Diniy Ehtiyojlarini Qondirishni Maqsad Qilgan'* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmscIyOO0f8>

<sup>288</sup> Ozodnazar (Ozodlik Radiosi) (2023, Aug.07) *'Azon.uz yopildi; kreditni to'lovmagan 300ming migrant'* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqmXkbJV3q0> (starting from 5th till 17 min)

<sup>289</sup> <https://azon.global/>

<sup>290</sup> Schmitz, Andrea (2023) *'Religious Policy in Uzbekistan Between Liberalisation, State Ideology and Islamisation'*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin p. 30(32)

its anti-religion policy was challenged by the *ulema* tradition, unofficial *ulema*, and *hujra* system in main cities of the country, now activists are using digital platforms to educate people. It also should be admitted that the development of internet facilities caused religious revival to become popular not only in Uzbek society but among Russian Federation’s Muslim communities like Tatars and Caucasian people as well. However, much like the *hujra* system, it is challenging to discern the exact nature of the information being shared through internet sources.

The State is trying to control the impact of internet on the society by prohibiting access to some sources. There is a list of not allowed websites and other internet sources. The list consists of seven pages and is updated regularly:<sup>291</sup>

Table #3

Number of the Restricted sources	Name of the Platform where the source is
511 sources	Telegram
156 sources	Facebook (Meta)
109 sources	Youtube
152 sources	Instagram
27 sources	Odnoklasniki
42 sources	Tiktok
13 sources	Web sites
20 sources	Other sources (books, magazines, etc.)

In total 1030 sources according to that document, which is not final.

Recently, President Mirziyoyev announced the development of a new secular concept for the State, citing concerns over the influence of social media on individuals who prioritize religious rules over the Constitution and laws of the Republic<sup>292</sup>. The Uzbek Parliament has passed a law introducing administrative penalties for involving children in unlawful religious education. The

<sup>291</sup>Platforma.uz: (2024,Mar.05) ‘*Taqiqlangan saytlar ro’yxati yangilandi*’ <https://web.telegram.org/k/#@platformauzb>

(March 5, 2024 The updated list of Global network sources found to be influenced by religious extremist, terrorist and fanatical ideas by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan and import, preparation, storage, distribution of these sources and contents (materials) are prohibited from being displayed in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan)

<sup>292</sup> Global tahlil uz: (2024, May 22) ‘*Dunyoviy davlat konsepsiyasini ishlab chiqyapmiz*’ [Video] <https://web.telegram.org/k/#@Globaltahliluz>

matter is that official religious education is permitted in the country only for adults over eighteen. This has once again raised concerns among activists about the potential consequences<sup>293</sup>.

On this problem local intelligentsia, including Neo-jadids, think that one must have a fundamental grasp of Islam and its principles not to be among ‘radicals’; mere prohibition is not a viable solution but freedom in Islamic education from school age can resolve the issue.<sup>294</sup> Should be admitted that the new channel Neo Jadid International started functioning which was built by Kazakh young activists, that calls for the Unity of Turkic nations according to Ismail Gaspirinski’s principles.<sup>295</sup>

In the last quarter of 2023, the State also started actively referring to Jadidism and Jadids heritage, claiming that Jadids wanted to build a Secular and Modern state and provide education reforms<sup>296</sup>. Earlier during celebrations of Uzbekistan’s thirty-first year of independence the song of repressed jadid activist Abdulhamid Cholpon ‘The anthem of Turkistan’ or ‘Go’zal Turkistan’ was performed officially for the first time.

Accordingly, elements of liberalization and the concept of national values have become apparent in Uzbek society. While the adoption of Soviet-style policies by Karimov shaped contemporary Islamic perspectives and fostered a resistance mentality among local intellectuals, the advent of globalization and the liberal policies introduced by Mirziyoyev upon his emergence in Uzbek political life have led to significant changes across various domains, including those previously mentioned. However, some reforms are still needed. The anti-Soviet resistance that emerged during Karimov’s era in the face of Neo-jadidism has evolved into a socio-political mood aimed at enlightening society and preparing it for a more developed civic engagement among the populace.

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<sup>293</sup> NeoJadid telegram web: (2024, June 27) ‘Urg’uni to’g’ri beraylik’ <https://web.telegram.org/k/#@Neojadids> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7we7AlYmD8>

<sup>294</sup> [Azon.tv: \(2021, June 21\) Mubashir Ahmad ‘Biz nega diniy ta’lim xohlavapmiz?’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AB_myC0jaC4) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AB\\_myC0jaC4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AB_myC0jaC4)

<sup>295</sup> <https://kz.youtubers.me/nejadid-international/youtuber-stats/en>

<sup>296</sup> Kun.uz: (2023, Mar.08) Kamoliddin Rabbimov ‘Jadidlarni nega o’rganishimiz kerak?’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WprDhDUj8U>

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, we can state that cities represent the accumulation and coordination of coercion and trust networks, which represent the coordination of commitment. The city is defined by unique characteristics that shape its culture, encompassing various institutions such as those related to religion, justice, and education. Cities also serve as hubs of innovation and creativity, where diverse ideas and cultures intersect, fostering an environment of continuous growth and adaptation. This framework not only highlights the distinctiveness of urban life but also symbolizes protection for its residents and the heritage embedded within the city. The urban culture with its 3000 years of history made some parts of Central Asia attractive to many nations. The same aspect made the region resistant to any kind of oppression. To be located in the area where Persian and Chinese civilization intersect also being on the Great Silk Road made the cities of Central Asia pivot ones for centuries. However, the most developed period of the region is very much connected with Islam and its heritage. The combination of Islam and urban culture created a tradition that is kept by the local population as national values and resistance tools against different challenges. Soviet ideology was one of those challenges. In Soviet times, the region was divided into nationalistic states and current Uzbekistan could keep almost all important cities of the region that served a crucial role in religious and cultural resistance against atheistic Soviet policy. One of the consequences of the Soviet period could be specific to its secular politics. Secularism in Uzbek society includes the suppression of religious practices and the promotion of a pan-Soviet identity that changed cultural practices.

The Soviet period is also significant with the emergence of SADUM (Central Asian Committee for Spiritual Issues), the Soviet era and Soviet secularization tried to destroy Islamic principles, but when realized its failure decided to control it in the region. Religion was severely limited. However, urban culture and Islamic notions could stay against that process. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially with the policies of glasnost and perestroika under Mikhail Gorbachev, there was a loosening of restrictions and control on religious practice. *Ulema* tradition which existed in *hujras* became obvious during the perestroika years and this time it was marked as a 'religious revival process' in the entire region.

The beginning of a new era characterized by greater recognition of individual rights and freedoms. However, even after the collapse of the USSR, Uzbekistan like other Central Asian states could not release itself completely from the Soviet system due to political and social conditions. The region's leaders grapple with the challenges of balancing post-Soviet identity,

geopolitical interests, and domestic stability in a complex and evolving global landscape. The applied politics regarding religious issues are considered very sensitive in the post-communist region.

The announcement of the emergence of the Neo-Jadidistic mood, in 2014, which sees Islamic ethics and the application of principles of Republicanism as compulsory elements in building civil society was a reaction to Karimov's Soviet-style policy. They consider that one has a right to religious education, mere prohibition is not a viable solution, though there was no positive response to this. However, the second elected president of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, did several reforms as he started his reign in 2016. Since then, reforms have significantly increased religious freedom for Uzbek citizens. Islam, practiced by the majority, has gained greater visibility in public life. As a result of this liberalization, Muslim civil society organizations have been able to expand their charitable activities, often filling gaps left by state welfare services. Besides, the integration into Global society and the digital era has opened a new page for Muslims in the entire post-Soviet region. Muslims got access to many sources that were prohibited or access to them minimalized to a very low. However, much like the hujra system, it is challenging to discern the exact nature of the information being shared through these sources, so the Government keeps restrictions on internet sources. On this problem, local intelligentsia, including Neo-jadids, think that one must have a fundamental grasp of Islam and its principles not to be among 'radicals'. The prohibition is not a viable solution but freedom in education from school age can resolve the issue. The matter is that official religious education is permitted in the country only for adults over eighteen. Though the concepts of national values have become apparent in Uzbek society, where Islam has a very high place, this also be admitted that the terms 'secular' and 'modern state' are still employed by the government and certain groups within society, often equated with an 'atheistic state'. Recently, the Uzbek Parliament has passed a law introducing administrative penalties for involving children in unlawful religious education, while official ones are very limited. This has once again raised concerns among activists about the potential consequences. We consider that the prevailing sentiment of urban religiosity will undoubtedly keep the impact on the shape of Uzbek society's development.



## Map of Turkestan and Alash Autonomies<sup>299</sup>



<sup>299</sup> <https://simple.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ApproximatebordersAlashAutonomy.png>

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**Nosirova Mokhirakhon**

**Medeniyetler alıřmaları Yksek Lisansı**

**Tez Danıřmanı: Do.Vahdettin IŐIK**

**Eyll 2024, 125 Sayfa**

**SOVYET TARZI SEKLERLEŐMEYE KARŐI KLTREL DİRENTE  
KENT DİNDARLIĐININ ROL: ZBEKİSTAN RNEĐİ**

**zet**

Komnizm ve Sovyet tarzı seklerleŐme, Orta Asya blgesinde İslam inancı ve İslami deĐerlerle savaŐtı. SSCB'nin kŐ, İslam'ın Sovyet 'sekler' ideolojisini dengelemesine ve 'geri dnmesine' izin vermiŐ olsa da, Sovyet politikalarının devamında ifade edilen baskı nedeniyle blge yine de gerek zgrlĐe ulaŐamamıŐtır. Sovyet ve Sovyet sonrası zbekistan'da İslam dini zerindeki baskı durumu, toplum iinde direniŐ duygularının ortaya ıkmasına yol atı. Bazı yerel aydınların gl dini iradesi, tarihsel olarak karmaŐık olan bu srete hayati bir rol oynamıŐtır. Tezde ulema, gayri resmi ulema, Cedidler ve yeni ortaya ıkan Neo Cedidler devlet politikasına karŐı direniŐ ve muhalefetteki rol tartıŐılacaktır. Bu alıŐma, Őehir kavramının direniŐ sreci zerinde nemli bir etkisi olduĐunu savunmaktadır. zbekistan'ın, Sovyet iŐgalinden nce Orta Asya'daki neredeyse tm devletlerin tarihi baŐkentlerini kapsayan ve en byk medreselere, ktphanelere ve ulema geleneklerine sahip konumu, belirli bir İslami miras oluŐturmuŐtur. Bu Őehirlerin yzyıllarda İslami okulların merkezi olması, yerel halk arasında bu mirasın korunmasına ynelik gl bir sorumluluk anlayıŐının geliŐmesine yol amıŐtır. Bu, son yzyıllarda İslam adına birkaç savaŐ yrtlmesinin nedeni oldu. zbekistan nfusu en yakın tarihte bile, Sovyetler iinde ve sonrasında, İslam'a olan baĐlılıĐını korumuŐtur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** İslam, Ceditler, KGB (Sovyetler İstihbarat TeŐkilatı) Sovyet tarzı seklerleŐme, zbekistan

## BÖLÜM I:

### GİRİŞ

Sovyetler Birliği resmi olarak ateist bir devletti ve Marksizm-Leninizm'i devlet ideolojisi olarak destekliyordu. Sovyet hükümeti, İslam da dahil olmak üzere dini inançları, gücüne ve yaymaya çalıştığı ideolojiye potansiyel bir tehdit olarak algıladı. Bir din olarak İslam her zaman bu ateist dünya görüşüne meydan okumuştur. Sovyetler Birliği içinde Orta Asya ve Kafkasya gibi önemli Müslüman nüfusun yaşadığı bölgelerde, daha fazla özerklik veya bağımsızlığı savunan hareketler vardı ve İslam genellikle bu faaliyetler için birleştirici bir faktör olarak hizmet etti ve Sovyet yetkililerinin devlete karşı muhalefeti harekete geçirme potansiyelinden korkmasına neden oldu. Bazı Müslüman şahsiyetler, baskıcı veya İslami ilkelere aykırı olduğunu düşündükleri Sovyet yönetimine ve politikalarına karşı çıktı. Bu muhalefet kendini siyasi aktivizm, direniş ve hatta silahlı isyan şeklinde gösterebiliyor ve Sovyet yetkililerinin endişelerini daha da artırıyordu. Sovyetler Birliği ayrıca Müslüman nüfusu üzerinde, özellikle İslam dünyasından veya Batı'dan gelen dış etkilerden de korkuyordu. Yabancı güçlerin dini duyguları Sovyet gücünü zayıflatmak ya da Sovyet etki alanı içindeki çıkarlarını ilerletmek için kullanabileceğinden korkuyordu. İslam, Sovyet rejiminin laik sistemine ve Marksist-Leninist yönelimine ters düşen kültürel ve ideolojik bir sistemdi. Sovyet yetkililer, dini ve etnik farklılıkları küçümseyerek ve bunları potansiyel bölünme kaynakları olarak görerek homojen bir Sovyet kimliğini teşvik etmeye çalıştı.

İslam tarihine göre, Yesrib şehrinin adı bile Peygamber Muhammed (sav) tarafından bu şehre hicret ettikten sonra Medine olarak değiştirilmiştir. Böyle bir ismin seçilmesi konusunda bazı spekülasyonlar vardır, aşağıda birkaç neden sunulmaktadır; Arapça'dan tercüme edilen "Medine" kelimesi 'şehir' anlamına gelir, Peygamber Muhammed (s.a.v.) Yesrib'i Medine olarak yeniden adlandırarak, etrafında oluşan İslam toplumunun (ümme) şehri olarak önemini belirtmiştir. Dahası, Yesrib'in Medine olarak yeniden adlandırılması, bölgedeki çeşitli kabileleri ve toplulukları İslam bayrağı altında birleştirmeye yönelik daha geniş bir çabanın parçasıydı ve kabile bağlılığından ziyade ortak dini inançlara ve ilkelere dayalı yeni bir toplumun yaratılmasını simgeliyordu. Yesrib'in Medine olarak yeniden adlandırılması, büyüyen bir İslam toplumunun merkezi ve ilk İslam devletinin kurulması ve Peygamber

Muhammed'in (s.a.v.) mescidi de dahil olmak üzere erken İslam tarihindeki birçok önemli olayın yeri olarak rolünü vurgulamıştır. Bu, İslam tarihinde önemli bir andı ve Peygamber Muhammed'in (s.a.v.) hayatında yeni bir bölümün başlangıcını ve İslam'ın ayrı ve uyumlu bir topluluk olarak ortaya çıkışını simgeliyordu. İslam bir kent dinidir ve ulema geleneği ve dini eğitime erişim sayesinde kentlerde istikrarlıdır. Dahası, kent dindarlığı kültürel değerleri koruyabilir ve gelecek nesillere aktarabilir. İbn Haldun'un düşünce ve yaklaşımlarını konu alan kitabın yazarı Fuad Baali, İbn Haldun'a atıfta bulunarak Haldun'un Mukaddime'de şehirlerin doğası hakkında yazdığını ve İslami değerler ile şehir kültürü arasında bir etkileşim olduğunu vurguladığını belirtiyor. İbn Haldun şehirleri, İslami ilkelerin gelişebileceği ve toplumların sosyal, ahlaki ve entelektüel hayatını şekillendirerek Müslüman toplumların canlılığına ve sürdürülebilirliğine katkıda bulunabileceği alanlar olarak görmüştür. İbn Haldun, İslami eğitim ve bilimin kent merkezlerinde, özellikle de ilahiyat, hukuk ve felsefe alanlarındaki rolünü kabul etmiştir. Bilgi arayışını ve entelektüel keşfi İslam medeniyetinin merkezi olarak görmüş ve şehirlerin kültürel zenginliğine katkıda bulunmuştur. Ayrıca İbn Haldun, İslam hukukunun (şeriat) ticareti düzenleme, anlaşmazlıkları çözme ve adaleti sağlamadaki rolü de dahil olmak üzere kentsel yaşamın yönetimindeki önemini tartışmıştır. Bireysel hakları korumak ve sosyal düzeni muhafaza etmek için İslami ilkelere dayalı adil bir hukuk sisteminin önemini vurgulamıştır. Bununla birlikte, İslami değerlere bağlılığın altını çizmiş, kentsel toplumlardaki kültürel ifadelerin çeşitliliğini de kabul etmiştir. İslami ilkelerle çelişmediği sürece yerel adetlerin, geleneklerin ve sanatsal çabaların etkisini kabul etmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, kent dindarlığının belirli bir gen havuzunun pek çok zorluğa karşı direnç göstermesine katkıda bulunabileceği konusunda hemfikiriz.

Fransız oryantalist bilim adamı Ernest Renan'a (1823-1892) göre İslam, tanımı gereği aklın ve düşünce özgürlüğünün düşmanıydı. Müslüman bir ortamda anlamlı bir çalışma yürütmenin imkânsız olduğuna inanıyordu. Ernest Renan bu düşünceyle, İbn Rüşd (1126-1198) üzerine yaptığı araştırmalarda İbn Rüşd'ü, sürekli zulüm korkusu içinde yaşayan ve faaliyetleri İslam'a karşı direniş olarak görülebilecek Avrupa kökenli yalnız ve dinsiz bir özgür düşünür olarak nitelendirmiştir. Dolayısıyla Renan'ın İbn Rüşd ve İslam'a bakışı, Oryantalist yaklaşımı tarafından güçlü bir şekilde renklendirilmiştir.

Dahası, birçok Hristiyan teolog ve akademisyeni motive etmiştir. Ancak Renan, İslam'ın kentsel bir din olduğunu belirtmiş, cami, sinagog ve kilisenin temelde kentsel çevrelere bağlı olduğunu ve İslam'ın öncelikle kentleri merkez alan bir din olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Kent ve kent kültürü kavramları, medeniyetin nitelikleri olarak uzun zamandır tarihsel ve sosyolojik çalışmalarda tanınmakta ve vurgulanmaktadır. Kent merkezleri geleneksel olarak kültürel, ekonomik ve siyasi faaliyetlerin merkezi olmuş ve medeniyetlerin gelişiminde önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Mezopotamya, Mısır, İndus Vadisi ve Çin gibi eski uygarlıklar kentsel alanların etrafında toplanmıştır. Babil, Teb, Mohenjo-Daro ve Anyang gibi şehirler yalnızca siyasi ve ekonomik merkezler değil, aynı zamanda kültür, bilim ve teknolojinin de geliştiği yerlerdi. Bu şehirler ticareti kolaylaştırdı, idari kontrolü mümkün kıldı ve kültürel ve entelektüel alışveriş için bir alan sağladı. Sosyolog Lewis Mumford 'Tarihte Şehir' adlı eserinde şehirlerin medeniyetin doğal evleri olduğunu vurgular. Şehirlerin insanları bir araya getirerek insan yaratıcılığının, yeniliğin ve sosyal organizasyonun geliştiği ortamlar yarattığını savunur. Kentler ekonomik büyümenin motoru olmuştur. Kentsel alanlar mal, işgücü ve sermaye için pazar sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca Jane Jacobs, şehirlerin farklı insanların ve fikirlerin yoğun etkileşimi yoluyla ekonomik yenilik ve kalkınmayı nasıl yönlendirdiğini tartışmaktadır.

Bu referanslar, şehirlerin ve şehir kültürünün tarih boyunca ve modern çağda medeniyetleri şekillendirmede ve sürdürmede oynadığı temel rolün altını çizmektedir. Bundan esinlenerek, İslami ekolün ünlü merkezi olan bölgelerden birinde kentsel dindarlığın rolünü keşfetmeye çalıştık. Bize göre, Orta Asya Özbekistan'ındaki kentsel dini kültür, ateizme dayalı komünist ideolojiye direnebildi ve Özbek toplumunda umut verici duyguları şekillendirmeye devam ediyor.

Özbekistan, dört Orta Asya ülkesiyle sınır komşusu olması ve Afganistan'la da sınır paylaşması nedeniyle stratejik konumu itibariyle jeopolitik açıdan büyük önem taşımakta, bu da onu bölgesel güvenlik dinamikleri, özellikle de terörle mücadele çabaları ve bölgedeki istikrar açısından kilit bir oyuncu haline getirmektedir. Özbekistan bölgesel güvenlik açısından önemlidir. Siyasi ve sosyal istikrarı komşu ülkeleri ve bölgesel dinamikleri, özellikle de terörizm, aşırıçılık ve organize suç gibi güvenlik sorunlarını etkileyebilir. SSCB'nin çöküşünden sonra, Afganistan'da Sovyetler Birliği'ne karşı savaşmak için İslam'ı bir ideoloji olarak kullanan ABD hükümeti de dahil olmak üzere tüm Batı dünyası, Orta Asya'nın 'yanlış tür İslam'ın

kurbanı olabileceğinden korktu. Dahası, zengin kaynaklara sahip bölgenin bazı isyancı gruplara gerekli desteği sağlayacağından korkuyorlardı. Özbekistan'ın konumu onu bölgesel bağlantılar ve Avrupa, Asya ve Orta Doğu arasındaki ticaret yolları için hayati bir merkez haline getirmektedir. Ayrıca bölgede en fazla Müslüman nüfusa sahip ülkedir. Ayrıca Özbekistan'ın önemli doğal gaz ve petrol rezervlerine sahip olması, enerji kaynaklarının bölgesel enerji güvenliğine katkıda bulunması ve küresel enerji piyasaları için önemli olması nedeniyle onu Orta Asya enerji manzarasında önemli bir oyuncu haline getirmektedir. Özbekistan'ın dünyanın en büyük beşinci uranyum tedarikçisi olduğu biliniyor. Ülkenin altın madenciliği sektörü ekonomisinde önemli bir rol oynamakta ve küresel altın piyasasında önemli bir oyuncu olmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır. Dünyanın ilk on altın üreticisi listesinde yer almaktadır. Özbekistan'ın içinden geçen Amuderya ve Sırderya nehirleri bölgenin en önemli su kaynaklarıdır. Bu nehirlerin kontrolü ve su yönetimi Özbekistan için önemli faktörlerdir.

SSCB'nin dağılmasından sonra dünyada iki beklenti vardı, birincisi yukarıda da belirtildiği gibi Batı dünyasının korkusu ya da endişesiydi, İslami yönelimli ülkeler ise bölgenin çok kısa bir süre içinde kendilerine katılacağı umudunu taşıyordu. Öyle ki, eski Sovyet coğrafyasının en büyük Müslüman nüfusuna sahip olan Özbekistan, ilgi ve söylem konusu olmuştur. Tarihsel perspektiften bakıldığında, muhafazakâr dini geçmişiyle bölge bir yandan endişelere, diğer yandan da temelsiz olmayan umutlara yol açtı. Ne Moğol istilasını ne de acımasız Stalinist baskılar bu bölgenin İslami değerlere bağlılık özelliğini ortadan kaldıramadı. Bu bağlamda şehirler ve şehir kültürü hayati bir rol oynamıştır. Bölge bağımsızlığını kazandıkça, çoğunluğu Tacikistan ve Özbekistan'da bulunan Orta Asya'nın yerleşik nüfusu İslami değerlere daha fazla özgürlük talep etmeye başladı. Sovyet rejiminin SSCB'nin dağılmasıyla ortadan kalkmadığını, bazı biçimsel değişikliklerle devam ettiğini ve etmekte olduğunu vurgulamak gerekir. Bu, kültürel ve dini baskıya karşı hala bir mücadele olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Mevcut araştırmalar Sovyet ve Sovyet sonrası dönemler arasındaki süreklilikleri vurgulamaktadır. Sovyet sonrası Rusya'nın jeo-politik etkisinin altını çizerek Özbekistan'daki dini ve seküler alanlar arasındaki mücadeleyi tartışmaktadır. Tez, devlet politikasının bu alandaki zorlayıcı yaklaşımının başarısızlığını göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Ayrıca tez, Sovyet tarzı sekülerleşmenin özelliklerini ve yerel dini ve entelektüel aktivistlerin direniş ruh halini tanımlamaktadır. Sorunu anlamak için, ilgili tarihsel konular bu doğrultuda analiz edilmiştir.

Tez aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına cevap vermeyi amaçlamaktadır: “Neden İslami değerler diğerlerine kıyasla kent kültürüne sahip insanlar için en önemli değerler olarak görülüyor?”; ”Özbekistan toplumunun kentsel geçmişinin Sovyet ve Sovyet sonrası laik politikaya karşı direnişi üzerinde bir etkisi var mı? Bu soruların cevaplarının yanı sıra, tarihin önemli dönemeçlerinde belirli şahsiyetlerin rolünü de ele almaya çalışacağız. Ayrıca, belirli ideolojilerin yıkılmasına etki eden bilgi veri alışverişinin önemini vurgulayacağız.

## **BÖLÜM II:**

### **KENT KÜLTÜRÜ HAKKINDA. SOVYET ÖNCESİ ÖZBEK TOPLUMU**

Bu bölümde kent kültürünün özelliklerini tarihsel gelişimlerle birlikte incelemeyi amaçlıyoruz. Ek olarak, Özbek toplumuyla ilgili tarihsel gerçekleri kentsel dindarlığa odaklanarak, İslam'ın kimliklerini şekillendirmedeki rolünü vurgulayarak sunacağız.

Bu bölümde, tarihsel gelişmelerle ilgili olarak kent kültürünün özelliklerini keşfetmeyi amaçlıyoruz. Ayrıca, kent dindarlığına odaklanarak Özbek toplumu hakkındaki tarihi gerçekleri sunacağız ve İslam'ın kimliklerini şekillendirmedeki rolünü vurgulayacağız.

Genel olarak, kent kültürünün çeşitlilik üzerinde geliştiğini, farklı geçmişlerden gelen insanları bir araya getirdiğini ve dinamik bir fikir ve gelenek alışverişini teşvik ettiğini söyleyebiliriz. Kentin temel özellikleri arasında genellikle canlı bir sanat ortamı, çeşitli eğlence seçenekleri ve tarihi mimari ile mirasın bir karışımı yer alır. Kent kültürü, hızlı tempolu yaşam tarzı ve yerel etkinlikler ve mahalleler aracılığıyla güçlü bir topluluk duygusu ile işaretlenmiştir. Ancak bunlar uzun tarihsel aşamalardan geçmiştir.

Kentlerin temel özelliklerinin tanımı, kentlerin sermaye birikimini temsil ettiğini, bağlılığın koordinasyonunu temsil eden zorlama ve güven ağlarının birikimini ve koordinasyonunu temsil ettiğini göstermektedir. Şehir, din, adalet ve eğitimle ilgili olanlar gibi çeşitli kurumları kapsayan kültürünü şekillendiren benzersiz özelliklerle tanımlanır. Şehirler aynı zamanda farklı fikir ve kültürlerin kesiştiği, sürekli büyüme ve adaptasyon ortamını teşvik eden yenilik ve yaratıcılık merkezleri olarak da hizmet

vermektedir. Bu çerçeve sadece kentsel yaşamın farklılığını vurgulamakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda kent sakinlerinin ve kentin içinde barındırdığı mirasın korunmasını da simgeler.

Bu kavrama İslami bir perspektiften bakacak olursak, İbn Haldun'un 'umran' kavramından yola çıkan yaklaşımını getirebiliriz. İbn Haldun, Mukaddime adlı eserinde şehirlerin doğası hakkında yazdığını ve İslami değerler ile şehir kültürü arasında bir etkileşim olduğunu vurguladığını belirtmektedir. İbn Haldun şehirleri, İslami ilkelerin gelişebileceği ve toplumların sosyal, ahlaki ve entelektüel hayatını şekillendirerek Müslüman toplumların canlılığına ve sürdürülebilirliğine katkıda bulunabileceği alanlar olarak görmüştür. İbn Haldun, İslami eğitim ve bilimin kent merkezlerinde, özellikle de ilahiyat, hukuk ve felsefe alanlarındaki rolünü kabul etmiştir. Bilgi arayışını ve entelektüel keşfi İslam medeniyetinin merkezi olarak görmüş ve şehirlerin kültürel zenginliğine katkıda bulunmuştur.

### **Özbek Kimliği Hakkında. Kent Kültürü: Özbek Toplumunda Ticaret, İlim ve Kültürel Miras**

Günümüz Özbekistan sakinleri, Orta Asya'da şehirler kuran, yaklaşık 3000 yıllık geçmişi olan ve yüzyıllar boyunca Soğdlular, Baktriyalılar, Harezmliler, Margianlılar veya daha sonra sadece 'Türkler' olarak adlandırılan yerleşik halkın torunlarıdır.

Çin'i dünyanın bilinen diğer bölgelerine bağlayan büyük İpek Yolu buradan geçiyordu ve bu kavram bölgenin ekonomik ve siyasi gelişimi üzerinde de önemli bir etkiye sahipti. Yerel folklorda yerel halkın Pers işgalcilerle karşı karşıya geldiğini kanıtlayan farklı efsaneler olsa da, bölge belirli bir süre için M.Ö. 6. yüzyılda Orta Asya'ya hakim olan Pers Ahameniş hanedanının etkisi altındaydı. İki yüzyıl sonra Büyük İskender onların egemenliğine son vermiş ve askerleri tarafından getirilen Helen kültürü, bölgedeki Greko-Baktriya krallığının varlığı sırasında mevcut yerel geleneklerle asimile edilmiştir. Böylece, tüm bölge Pers, Helen ve Türk hanedanlarının kontrolünden geçmiş ve tüm bu unsurlar bölgenin gelişim tarihi ve kültürü üzerinde derin bir etkiye sahip olmuştur.

Turan veya Türkistan, çoğunlukla yerleşik ve göçebe olan Farsça ve Türkçe konuşan uluslara ev sahipliği yapmıştır. Göçebe kabilelerin dini Tengricilik, kentlilerin dini ise

çoğunlukla Zerdüştlüktü. Türk dili, yüzlerce Türk kabilesi için birleştirici bir özellikti. Eski Türk (Proto-Türk) dilleri 6. yüzyıldan 13. yüzyıla kadar Sibiryaya ve Orta Asya'nın bazı bölgelerinde konuşulmuştur. 8. yüzyılda bölge Araplar tarafından fethedildi ve bu noktadan itibaren bölge Arap halifeliğinin bir parçası haline geldi. İslam'ın bölgeye girişi, Arap laikliği ile birlikte mevcut başka bir inancın yerini başarıyla almıştır. İslam'ın gelişiyle birlikte bölge Hanefi İslam'ın kültür merkezlerinden biri haline gelmiştir. İmam Buhari, Ebu İsa Tirmizi, İmam Maturudi, Mahmud ez-Zemahşeri, Burhaneddin Margilani, Hoca Ahmed Yesevi, Bahauddin Nakşibendi gibi pek çok İslam alimine ev sahipliği yapan bölgede 8. ve 14. yüzyıllar arasında pek çok eğitim kurumu kurulmuştur. Ancak Moğol istilası (1227-1229) müreffeh yaşamı yok etmiş ve bölgeyi derinden etkilemiştir. Sadece bir buçuk yüzyıl sonra Timur merkezi bir İmparatorluk kurabildiğinde ve Orta Asya şehirlerini yeniden dini çalışmalar ve bilim için cazip bir merkez haline getirdiğinde bölge Moğol öncesi statüsünü kazanabildi. Bilim adamlarını, şairleri ve sanatçıları aktif bir şekilde himaye ederek onları Semerkant ve Herat gibi şehirlerdeki sarayına çekti. Onlara mali destek sağlayarak çalışmalarına odaklanmalarına ve bilginin gelişimine katkıda bulunmalarına olanak tanıdı. Orta Asya'daki şehirler onun zamanında İpek Yolu üzerinde önemli düğüm noktaları haline geldi ve dünyanın farklı yerlerinden tüccarları, âlimleri ve gezginleri kendine çekti. Timur'un geniş imparatorluğu Avrasya genelinde ticareti ve kültürel alışverişi teşvik etti. Bu mal ve fikir alışverişi, bu şehirlerin entelektüel ve kültürel hayatını zenginleştirdi.

Timur, muhteşem camiler, türbeler ve saraylar inşa ettirerek İslam mimarisini ve sanatını himaye etmeyi severdi. Bu mimari harikalar sadece dini ve kültürel merkezler olarak hizmet etmekle kalmamış, aynı zamanda Timur'un imparatorluğunun gücünü ve ihtişamını da sembolize etmiştir. Timur Müslüman bir hükümdar olmasına rağmen, farklı din ve kültürlerden insanlara karşı hoşgörüsüyle tanınıyordu. Farklı yaşam alanlarından gelen bilginleri ve zanaatkârları ağırlayarak kültürel alışveriş ve işbirliği ortamını teşvik etmiştir. Timur, başkentlerinde çok sayıda medrese ve kütüphane inşa edilmesini emretti. Bu kurumlar, İslam dünyasının farklı yerlerinden gelen âlimlerin çalışmak ve fikir alışverişinde bulunmak için toplandıkları öğrenim merkezleri haline geldi. En ünlü örneklerden biri Semerkant'taki Bibi-Hanım camisi ve medresesidir. Timur'un yönetimi sırasında Orta Asya, Türk etkisinin ve Pers kontrolüne karşı direnişin merkezi olarak ortaya çıktı. Başkenti Semerkant, Timur'un imparatorluğunun

dört bir yanından zanaatkârları getirmesiyle mimari ihtişamıyla ünlendi. Ayrıca saray dilini Farsçadan Çağatay Türkçesine kaydırды. Timur, Maverâünnehir'deki Moğol kültürünün Türk ve diğer bölgesel kültürler tarafından özümsemiğini gözlemleyen Olaf Caroe'nin de belirttiği gibi, Moğol ve Türk medeniyetlerinin kaynaşmasına örnek teşkil etmiştir. Timur'un hükümdarlığı, göçebe Türklerin İslami geleneklerle giderek daha fazla bütünleşmesine, Türk ve İslam kültürlerinin harmanlanmasına tanıklık etmiştir. Caroe, Timur'un Türk kültürünü İslami normlara uyarlamadaki ve Türk siyasi geleneklerini İslami düşünce ile geliştirmedeki rolünü vurgulamıştır. Timur, kendi yönetimi altında gelişen Sufi Nakşibendi tarikatının bir takipçisiydi. Genel olarak Timur'un politikaları ve himayesi, kendisinin ve soyundan gelenlerin 14. ve 15. yüzyıllardaki hükümdarlığı sırasında Orta Asya şehirlerinin cazip bilim ve İslam kültürü merkezlerine dönüşmesinde belirleyici bir rol oynamıştır.

Bir yüzyıl sonra Timurlu hanedanının yerini, Cengiz Han'ın hanedanından gelen bir başka Türk ailesi olan Şiybaniler veya Özbek Hanları aldı. Farklı medeniyetlerin istilası ve etkisi altında kalması, Orta Asya'nın asıl sakinleriyle ilgili birçok söylemin nedeni oldu. Bu süreçte Özbek Han'ın adı önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Özbek Han, Cengiz Han'ın soyundan geliyordu ve 1312-1342 yılları arasında Altın Orda'yı yönetti. Tam adı Sultan Gıyasiddin Muhammed Özbek Han olan Özbek Han, İslamiyet'i kabul etmiş ve onun çabalarıyla Altın Orda Müslüman bir devlet haline gelmiştir. Özbek Han, dindar bir Müslüman olmasının yanı sıra yetenekli bir general ve reformcu idi. Özbek Han, Cengizli prensi Toghrilcha'nın oğlu, Şiyban ise Jochi'nin beşinci oğlu ve Cengiz Han'ın torunuydu; Toghrilcha ve Şiyban kuzendi. Şiyban'ın soyundan gelenler de Özbek olarak adlandırıldı. Özbek Han'ın ve Altın Orda'nın diğer liderlerinin kişiliği Sovyet döneminde pek popüler değildi, çünkü Rus topraklarının Altın Orda'nın egemenliği altında olduğunu kabul etmek, bu tarihi gerçeği fazla vurgulamak istemeyen 'büyük ağabey' için imaj bozucu bir kavramdı.

Özbek Han döneminden başlayarak Özbekler, İslam'ın nizamları ve kültürü sayesinde başarılı bir yönetimin anahtarı olduğunu fark ettiler. Rus tarihçi N. Veselovsky, Özbek Han hakkında şunları yazmıştır: “Bu, Orda'da disiplini sağlayan harika bir Han'dı... Onun yönetimi sırasında devlet en yüksek gelişme ve güç seviyesine ulaştı”. İslami kuralların her yönüyle sürdürülebilmesi için bir kent kültürüne ihtiyaç vardı. Çok zengin İslami mirasa sahip antik şehirlerin Özbek Han'ın torunlarını Orta Asya'nın şehrli bölgesine çektiğini varsayabiliriz. Özellikle de Emir Timur ve torunu

Uluğbek'in çabalarıyla önemli İslam merkezlerinden biri haline gelen Semerkant. Şiybaniler, gelişlerinden sonra önemlerini göstermek için devletlerinin başkentini Semerkant'tan Buhara'ya değiştirdiler, ancak yine de her iki şehir de İslami çalışmalar ve ulema mirası açısından önemini korudu. Herat ve Belh şehirlerini de fethetmeyi başaran Şiybani hanedanı, yaklaşık bir yüzyıl boyunca merkezi bir imparatorluğun yöneticileri olarak bölgeyi kontrol etmeyi başardı.

Bölgedeki çeşitli Türk devletleri arasında yerleşik yaşam tarzı ve şehir merkezlerinin baskınlığı, İslami değerlere güçlü bir bağlılıkla birleştiğinde, çağdaş Özbeklerin komşularına kıyasla ayırt edici özellikleridir. Kent kültürü, öncelikle tüccar ve zanaatkârlardan oluşan ve pek çok bireyin eğitilmiş olduğu bir nüfusu teşvik etmiştir. Yüzyıllar boyunca Orta Asya'da eğitim, fıkıh, kelam ve akaid gibi dini çalışmaların yanı sıra matematik, dilbilim, astronomi, tıp, fizik, felsefe, geometri, tarih ve coğrafya gibi çok çeşitli bilimsel alanları da kapsadı. Burada Beruni, İbn Sina, Harezmi, Ahmed Fergani vb. örneklerden bahsedilebilir. Memun Akademisi 10. yüzyılda Abbasiler döneminde Harezmi bölgesinin başkenti Urgenç şehrinde kurulmuştur. Uzun süre bir bilim ve ilim merkezi olarak kalmasına rağmen, farklı yönetici hanedanlar altında kapatıldı ve yeniden açıldı. Buhara, İslam'ın Altın Çağı'nda Samanilerin başkenti olmuş ve çok daha sonra Şiybaniler döneminde tekrar başkent statüsünü kazanmıştır. Semerkant, Marokanda adıyla Soğdiana'nın başkenti ve bölgenin tüm yönetici hanedanlarının önemli bir şehriydi. Timur'un ve hanedanının başkenti oldu. Timur döneminde (1336-1405) Semerkant'a dünyanın dört bir yanından birçok âlim ve üstat getirilmiş, birçok kütüphane inşa edilmiş ve binlerce kitap yazılmış, incelenmiş ve tercüme edilmiştir. Binlerce medrese inşa edildi ve komşu devletlerden insanlar bu medreselerde okumak için gelirlerdi. Timur Süfilere düşküdü, hayranlığından dolayı bölgenin farklı yerlerinde birkaç medrese kompleksi inşa ettiği biliniyor, ancak Semerkant onun favorisiydi. Şiybaniler ünlü Mir-Arap medrese kompleksini inşa ettiler ve binlerce İslam alimine de sponsor oldular. Tüm bu kavramlar, güçlü bir şekilde İslami değerler üzerine inşa edilen kültürün oluşumunu etkiledi. Bildiğimiz gibi Abbasiler döneminde tercüme hareketinin dönüm noktası Bağdat'ın İslami ilimlerin merkezi haline getirilerek bir şehir olarak kurulmasıdır. Halife el-Mansur tarafından M.S. 762 yılında Abbasi Halifeliğinin başkenti olarak kurulan Bağdat, bu harekette çok önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Bağdat'ın Halifeliğin başkenti olarak kurulması ve Bilgelik Evi gibi kurumların oluşturulması, çeviri hareketinin

güçlenmesine yardımcı olmuş ve Bağdat'ı entelektüel bir alışveriş merkezi haline getirmiştir. Bu durum, çeşitli alanlarda çok sayıda eserin tercüme edilmesini kolaylaştırarak Abbasiler döneminde İslam biliminin gelişmesine katkıda bulunmuştur. Bölgedeki ünlü İslami okul, kurucusu Ebû Mansûr Muhammed el-Mâtürîdî'nin (ölümü 944) adını taşıyan Müslüman ortodoks bir ilahiyat okulu olan Mâtürîdiyye idi ve hâlâ da öyledir. Özbeklerin meşhur olduğu tarikat veya tasavvufi yaklaşım Nakşibendiye'dir. Nakşibendi Sufi Tarikatı, İslam'da sessiz meditasyonun, Allah'ı anmanın ve Peygamber Muhammed'in Sünnetini (geleneklerini) takip etmenin önemini vurgulayan manevi bir yoldur. Nakşibendi tarikatı, bireysel ruhsal gelişim ve öz disipline verdiği önemle bilinir. Şeyh Bahauddin Nakşibendi (Hoca Muhammed bin Muhammed el-Buhari 1317-1389) tarafından kurulmuştur. İslam dünyasında, Özbek öğrencilerin İslam mirasını ve Müslüman ilim geleneğini korumaya devam edeceklerine dair güçlü bir inanç olduğunu varsayıyoruz ki bu da İslam topraklarında açılan Özbek dergâhları veya Özbek tekkelerinde görülebilir.

Kent kültürü ve İslam, Özbek kimliğinin gelişimini şekillendirmede çok önemli ve derin bir rol oynadı. Bu iki güç arasındaki etkileşim, yalnızca Özbekistan'ın sosyal ve kültürel dokusunu etkilemekle kalmamış, aynı zamanda ulusal kimliğinin zaman içinde korunmasına ve gelişmesine de katkıda bulunmuştur. Kent merkezleri tarihsel olarak entelektüel, kültürel ve dini alışveriş merkezleri olmuş ve İslami geleneklerin yerel geleneklerle birleşebileceği dinamik bir ortamı teşvik etmiştir. Bu, hem kentsel hem de İslami unsurları Özbek kimliğinin özüne derinlemesine yerleştiren, etkilerini hem önemli hem de kalıcı kılan benzersiz bir sentezle sonuçlandı.

XVI. yüzyılda bölgeyi ekonomik açıdan etkileyen coğrafi keşifler nedeniyle Büyük İpek Yolu önemini kaybetmiştir. Üstelik devam eden savaşların hem ekonomik hem de sosyal sektörleri etkileyen önemli sonuçları oldu. Bunun sonucunda eğitim sistemi de önemli aksaklıklar yaşadı. Öğretmenlerin, bilimsel altyapıya sahip bilim adamlarının eksikliği, çok sınırlı bilimsel ve bilimsel alışveriş, yolsuzluk ve kayırmacılık birçok önemli alanda düzensizliğe neden oldu. Medreselerde sadece İslami ilimler öğretilmeye başlandı ve yavaş yavaş bilim ve İslami olmayan eğitim yerel eğitim sisteminden tamamen çıktı. Bölgenin kaosa ve krize sürüklenmesi, yeni ruh hali ile tarihinde yeni bir sayfa açtı. 18. yüzyılda, daha önce büyük bir imparatorluğun bulunduğu bölgede üç Türk devleti ortaya çıktı. Orta Asya iç savaş ve çatışmalardan etkilenirken, bu dönemde Batı Dünyası önemli değişimler yaşıyordu.

Başlıca devrimlerden biri Büyük Britanya'da 1760 yılında Sanayi Devrimi olarak anılan, Avrupa kıtasında sanayileşmenin ve icatların popülerleşmesine yol açan bir olay gerçekleşti. Daha sonra 1830-1848 Fransız Devrimi ile birlikte köklü bir değişim dalgası yaşanmaya başladı. Hükümetler, modernleşme ve sanayileşme arzusuyla odak noktalarını zenginliklerini artırmaya ve ekonomilerini genişletmeye kaydıldılar. Bu dönemde yenilikçi teknolojilerin ve reformların uygulanmasının yanı sıra yeni siyasi ve ekonomik ideolojilerin benimsendiği görüldü. Devrim yalnızca sosyal ve politik ayaklanmaları ateşlemekle kalmadı, aynı zamanda devletlerin yeni icatlar, endüstriyel gelişmeler ve sermaye birikimini hedefleyen daha yapılandırılmış politikalar yoluyla ekonomik büyümeye giderek daha fazla öncelik verdiği dönüştürücü bir dönemin başlangıcına da işaret etti. Ancak Batı'da bu yaşanırken Orta Asya bölgesi feodal sistemin derin etkisi altında kaldı ve nüfusu siyasi düzensizlik yaşamaya devam etti. Bu durum İngiliz Hükümeti'nin yanı sıra bölgenin kuzey komşusu olan ve bölgeyi kolonileştirmeyi başaran Rusya İmparatorluğu'nu da cezbetti. Rus kralı İvan Grozni'den başlayarak Türk boylarının yaşadığı bölgeleri işgal etmeye Rusların ilgisi vardı. 1552'de Kazan Hanlığı'nı, 1556'da Aştarhan (Astrahan) Hanlığı'nı, 1581-1590 yılları arasında da Sibirya Hanlığı'nı başarıyla fethetti. Daha Sibirya'yı işgal etmeden önce Özbek toprakları olarak popüler olan Türkistan hakkında veri toplamaya başladı. Antony Jenkins'i elçi olarak Buhara'ya gönderdi ve 1558-59 yılları arasında orada kaldı. Rusya Hükümeti XVII. yüzyılda Buhara ve Hive Hanlıklarına bölgedeki ekonomik ve askeri durumu öğrenmek amacıyla toplam dokuz kez elçi göndermiştir. Bu politika I. Petro döneminde 'Doğu'yu Fethedin' logosuyla devam etmiş ve 1715 - 1724 yılları arasında bölgeye üç askeri casus grubu gönderilmiştir. Rusya için önceki girişimlerin tümü başarısız oldu. Onlarca yıl sonra, askerlerini yerleştirdikleri 46 büyük ve 96 küçük askeri kale ve tahkimat inşa ettiler. 1840'a gelindiğinde kuzeydoğu ve orta Kazak topraklarının çoğu zaten Rus İmparatorluğu tarafından kontrol ediliyordu. Ruslar, 1852-1895 yılları arasında Özbek hanlıklarını işgal etmeye yönelik sömürge savaşlarını planladılar. Yerel halkın sert ve kanlı çatışmalarına rağmen, Orta Asya topraklarının tamamı Rusya İmparatorluğu'nun bir parçası haline geldi ve üç Türk devleti de Rus himayesine dönüştü. 1867'de Ruslar, başkenti Taşkent'te olmak üzere, öncelikle Kokand Hanlığı topraklarında Türkistan Genel Hükümeti'ni kurdular. Bununla birlikte, Kokand Hanları 1876 yılına kadar Rusya'nın denetimi altında yönetimlerini sürdürdüler. Aynı durum, hâlihazırda devletlerinin önemli topraklarını

kaybetmiş ancak Rus İmparatorluğu'nun tebaası olarak kalan Hive ve Buhara hükümdarları için de geçerliydi. Sömürgeciler bu iki koruyucu devlet yöneticisinin tahtlarında kalmasına izin verdi.

Adeeb Halid, Rus İmparatorluğu'nun bölgeyi yalnızca elli yıl yönetebildiğini, bazı bölgelerde bu sayının daha da az olduğunu belirtiyor. Yerel halk, ekonomik ve askeri geri kalmışlık nedeniyle çok zor olmasına rağmen özgürlük mücadelesini sürdürmekten hiç durmadı.

### **Cedidîlik: İstiklal Mücadelesinde Cedidlerin Rolü**

Cedidcilik bir hareket olarak 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında İsmail Gasprinski tarafından kurulmuş ve İmparatorluğun her yerindeki Müslüman toplumlar arasında yayılmıştır. Gasprinski'nin Cedid hareketinin oluşumuyla birlikte ortaya çıkmasının iki nedeni vardır; birincisi dünyadaki, özellikle Avrupa'daki ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki değişimlerin yansıması, ikincisi ise Rus İmparatorluğu içindeki siyasi ve sosyal durumdur.

1884 yılında Gaspirinski, Kırım'da Usûl-i Cedid Mektebi'ni (yeni usullere dayanan okul) açtı ve 'Cedidlik' kelimesi resmen kullanılmaya başlandı. Gasspirinski, 1885 yılında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki sosyal ve siyasi değişimleri yakından izlemek için bir kez daha İstanbul'a gitti. Bu gezi onu bir kez daha çok etkilemiş ve Türklerin kalkınmasını tamamlayıp birliğini sağladıktan sonra İslam dünyasına öncülük etmesi gerektiğine olan inancını güçlendirmiştir. Ona göre adil yönetime sahip herkesin eşit olduğu bir toplumsal yapı düzenlenmeli ve uygulanmalıdır. Ayrıca eğitime, becerilere, dine ve bilime çok önem verilmeli ve dikkat edilmelidir. Bu nedenle İslam'da var olan ilerlemeyi teşvik eden anlayış üzerinde durulmalıdır.

Gasspirinski'nin Türkistan'daki takipçileri de cehalet ve adaletsizlikle mücadelelerinde onun getirdiği tüm ilkeleri uygulamaya devam ettiler. Bölgenin tüm sosyal, siyasi ve ekonomik sorunlarına çözüm getirebilecek kesin kaynak olan İslami ve milli değerlere dayalı eğitim reformları istiyorlardı. Yerel aydınlar İsmail Gaspirinski'nin cesur davranış ve eylemlerinden etkilendiler. Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov, İsmail Gasspirinski'nin çalışmalarını Türkistan'da uyguladı. 1893 yılında İsmail Gaspirinski'nin önderliğinde Semerkant'ta ilk "Usuli Cedid" okulu açıldı ve sadece birkaç ay faaliyet gösterdi, daha sonra 1901'de Munavvarqori Taşkent'te bir sonraki

"Usuli Cedid" okulunu açtı. Türkistan'da yetişen reformculardan biri olan Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov, Gasprinski'nin tüm ders kitapları, eğitim kılavuzları, sanatsal ve gazetecilik eserlerini yakından tanıyor ve onun siyasi görüşlerinden etkileniyordu. Ayrıca Türkistan'daki modern okullar için ders kitapları hazırlamış ve modern öğretmenlerden oluşan bir nesil yetiştirmiştir.

Özbek Cedidleri'ne örnek olarak ünlü şair ve yazarların isimleri ve coşku ve mücadeleleri uğruna şehit olan binlerce aydının isimlerini verebiliriz. Bunlar pedagoji alanında yenilikçi yöntemlerin yazarı, fikirleri hala rağbet gören Abdulla Avlani, romanında tarihi-siyasi ve sosyal çevreyi çok gerçekçi bir şekilde anlatabilen Özbek roman yazarlığı okulunun kurucusu Abdulla Kadiri, ilk Özbek profesörü Fitrat hem de Çolpan, Usmon Nasır gibi Müslüman entelektüellerdir. Türkistan Cedidleri, Hükümetle ilişki içinde olan muhafazakar dini otoritelere karşı mücadele etmek zorunda kaldı. Ayrıca Cedidler Rus sömürgecilerine karşı da durmak zorundaydı. Bölgedeki ekonomik ve sosyo-politik koşullar nedeniyle tam bağımsızlığı düşünmek imkansız olduğundan, Sovyet devriminden önce Cedidler siyasi özerkliğe ulaşmaya çalıştı. Bu yüzden de bu şekilde mücadele ettiler, ancak Türkistan ve Alaş özerk devletlerinin yıkılmasından sonra Cedid çizgisinde kalanlar vizyon değiştirip Sovyet ideolojisinin desteğiyle bağımsızlığa ulaşmaya çalıştılar, ancak kısa süre sonra bu durum onları hayal kırıklığına uğrattı. ideoloji ve rejimi onları ve planlarını yok etti. Cedidler karşısında yerel aydınlar geleceği sosyo-politik alanlarda kalkınma ve reformlarda gördü. Özerk bölgelerin veya devletlerin oluşumu gerçek bağımsızlığa ulaşmanın ilk adımıydı. Ancak Türkistan'ın sivil Müslüman nüfusunun siyasi hayata katılması için çok az fırsat olduğu için bunu gerçekleştirmek bile çok zordu. Türkistan ve Alaş özerk devletlerinin oluşması, yerel aydınların siyasi iradesinin ne kadar güçlü olduğunu bize gösteriyor. Bu, yeni kurulan Sovyet otoritesine bu devletlerle baş etmenin zor olacağını sinyalini verdi.

30 Ocak 1918'den itibaren Türkistan Bölgesi Halk Komiserleri Konseyi silahlı Türkistan Bolşevikleriyle birlikte askeri operasyonlarına başladı. Ermeni Daşnaksutyun partisi üyeleri bu şiddetli saldırıya katıldı ve on bir kademe piyade, süvari ve topçu Kokand'a gönderildi. Bolşevik silahlı kuvvetlerini desteği ile şehir üç gün boyunca amansız topçu bombardımanına maruz kaldı. Bolşevikler Türkistan hükümetini acımasızca mağlup ettiler. Sivil Müslümanlara yönelik soygunlar ve cinayetler sadece Hokand'da değil çevre bölgelerde de devam etti. Şubat 1918'in

sonuna gelindiğinde elli binden fazla bölge sakini hayatını kaybetmişti ve yalnızca 72 gün boyunca faaliyette olan Türkistan özerkliği fiilen ortadan kaldırılmıştı. Bazı üyeler kaçmayı başarırken, çatışma daha sonra yerel olarak 'Korbaşi hareketi' olarak anılan ve Rus tarihçiler tarafından 'Basmacı hareketi' olarak tanınan partizan savaşına dönüştü ve 1930'lara kadar devam etti. Bir diğer Orta Asya özerk devleti olan Alaş Orda da 1919 baharında kaldırılmıştır. Bazı Ceditîler Sovyetler döneminde bile mücadelelerini sürdürmeye çalıştılar. Ancak yerel aydınların Sovyet-ateist ideolojisinin gelişmesinin önünde her zaman engel olarak görüldükleri nedeniyle bu mücadele de uzun süremedi.

### **BÖLÜM III.**

## **SOVYET DÖNEMİ: SOVYET TARZI SEKÜLERLEŞMENİN ORTAYA ÇIKIŞI KENTSEL DİNCİLİK'İN KÜLTÜREL DİRENİŞTEKİ ROLÜ**

Bir önceki bölümde Orta Asya Özbeklerinin kimliğinin şekillenmesinde kent kültürünün rolünü araştırmıştık. Bir sonraki bölümde bu fikirleri Sovyet tarzı politikalar bağlamında inceleyerek geliştireceğiz. Ayrıca kentsel din kültüründen etkilenen geleneksel miras koruyucularının rolünü vurgulamayı da amaçladık.

Bir ideolojinin, diğer fikirlerin zorla bastırılarak devletin ve toplumun sosyal ve politik yönlerine uygulanması kaosa ve trajik sonuçlara yol açar. SSCB (Sovyet Sosyal Cumhuriyetleri Birleşmesi), rasyonel sosyalizmin babaları Marx ve Engels'in derin etkisi altında kalan Vladimir Lenin'in ilke ve görüşlerine göre inşa edilmiş, üstelik en laik ve gelişmiş toplumun simgesi haline gelmiştir. Sosyal Komünizme göre devletin temel ilkesi kişinin gelişmesine ve mutluluğuna engel olan dini, sınıf ayrımını ve rekabeti toplumdaki silmekti.

Komünizme dayalı laiklik deneysel bir süreçti ve var olmanın ve gelişmenin tek doğru yöntemi olduğunu 'kanıtlama' zorunluluğu her zaman vardı. Her yeni nesilde Sovyet materyalist ideolojisinin yeniden üretilmesinden ve yayılmasından birçok ideolog sorumluydu. Vasili Bartold, Evgenii Bertels gibi oryantalistlerle başlayıp, Sovyet ideolojisinin daha uzun süre ayakta kalması için devlete büyük hizmetlerde bulunan

Kurochkin Pavel, Skazkin Sergei vb. isimlerle devam ediyor. Bu tür ideologlar her zaman komünist vatandaşlar arasında dini canlanmadan korkmuşlardır. Sovyet Devleti yetkilileri, yüksek düzeyde sosyal ve ekonomik kalkınmanın materyalist ve ateist ideolojiye dayalı eğitimle birleşmesi halinde, 'Allah'tan korkan' bir toplumun 'Allahsız' bir topluma dönüşeceğine inanıyorlardı. Ancak bu konudaki başarısızlık nedeniyle Sovyet otoritesi Büyük Katerina'nın stratejisini uygulamaya karar verir. Bu strateji 'kontrol için işbirliği yapmak' idi.

İkinci Dünya Savaşı, Sovyetler Birliği halkının çok zor günler yaşamasına neden oldu. Devam eden ve sert baskılar nedeniyle halkın çoğunluğunun devlete karşı sempatisi çok azdı. O yıllarda devletin vatandaşlarının orduya destek vermesine ve hükümetle dayanışma içinde olmasına ihtiyaç duyduğunu görüyoruz. Bize göre Stalin'in bir çıkış yolu bulması gerekiyordu ve bu, ülkenin ruhani liderleriyle uzlaşmayı kabul etmekten ibaretti. Komünist ideoloji uğrunda ölmeye yetmiyordu, bu yüzden maneviyat kavramına ihtiyaç vardı.

1943'te Stalin, ülkede sosyolojik bir krizin önlenmesi ve savaş sırasında vatandaşların birliğinin sağlanması için Sovyetler Birliği'nin dört bölgesinde dini konularda merkezler kurulması emrini verdi. Büyük Katherine'in İslam'ı devlet dinlerinden biri olarak kabul etmesi ve 18. yüzyılda Ufa'da bir Müslüman dini meclisi kurmuştu. Stalin'in bu kararı Kraliçe Katherine'in politikasının bir taklidi olarak yapıldı.

Bu merkezler şunlardı: 1) Ufa şehrinde Avrupa Rusya'nın Dini İdaresi. 2) Buinaksk şehrinde Kafkasya'nın Dini İdaresi. 3) Bakü'de Transkafkasya Manevi Yönetimi ve 4) Taşkent'te Orta Asya Müslümanları Manevi Misyonu – SADUM.

Bu merkezlerin insanların manevi ve dini ihtiyaçlarına yönelik sorunları çözmesi gerekiyordu. Gelecekte bu merkezlerin bünyesinde din eğitimi veren bazı İslami okullar açılacaktır. Bu faktör, Sovyet komünist hükümetinin toplumu tamamen dinsiz hale getiremediğini ve bu konuda başarısız olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır. Ancak din, propagandayı silah olarak kullanan Devlet ideologlarının ve yönetiminin sıkı kontrolü altındaydı. Böylece Sovyet Devleti, vatandaşları için bir davranış ve ahlak kuralları belirler ve bu kuralların propaganda ve eğitim yoluyla, çoğunlukla da zorla topluma asimilasyonunu kontrol ederdi.

Martha Brill Olcott, birçok dini figürün kayıtsız öğrenci öğretiminde rol aldığını vurguluyor. Bu gizli dini çalışmaların (hücreler) varlığı KGB tarafından göz ardı edilen açık bir sırdı ve bu açıklama Helen Thioubut tarafından da vurgulanıyor. Devlet,

en azından SADUM, resmi ve gayri resmi ulema geleneğinin ve hucre eğitim sisteminin faaliyetlerinden haberdardı; bu da İslam'ın bölgede yaşatılmasına, komünist yaklaşıma ve sıkı denetime rağmen İslam'ın direnmesine kaynak olmuştur. Bu bağlamda, kentsel din kültüründen etkilenen geleneksel miras koruyucuları – ulemanın rolü çok önemliydi.

## BÖLÜM IV

### SOVYET SONRASI ÖZBEKİSTAN'DA SOVYET POLİTİKASININ SÜREKLİLİK VE SÜREKSİZLİĞİ

Bu bölümde SSCB'nin çöküşü ve ardından Özbekistan'ın bağımsızlığı döneminde Sovyet politikalarının sürekliliği incelenecektir. İslam Kerimov'un Sovyet tarzı siyasetinin ayrıntıları ve yansımaları görülecek. Bu bölüm, Özbek toplumundaki son değişikliklere ilişkin kısa bir genel bakış sunacak ve mevcut toplumsal ruh hallerini ve eğilimleri vurgulayacaktır.

Sovyet yetkililerinin laik kimliği teşvik etmesi bölgenin dini meselelerini etkileyerek laik hükümetler ile İslami uyanış hareketleri arasındaki gerilime katkıda bulundu. SSCB'nin çöküşünden sonra bile Orta Asya'daki Sovyet siyasetinin mirası, bölgenin sosyo-politik manzarası üzerinde derin ve kalıcı bir etki yarattı. Bölgenin liderleri, karmaşık ve değişen küresel ortamda Sovyet sonrası kimlik, jeopolitik çıkarlar ve iç istikrarı dengelemenin zorluklarıyla boğuşuyor. Dinin uzun süre bir meydan okuma olarak görüldüğü komünizm sonrası bölgede, dini konulara uygulanan politikalar oldukça hassas görülüyordu. Hucrelerde var olan ulema geleneği perestrojka yıllarından itibaren belirginleşti: Gayri resmi ulema İslam'ı saklanmadan öğretmeye başladı ve Özbekistan'da yüzlerce Hucre öğrencisi açıkça İslam'ı uygulamaya başladı. Adeeb Halid'e göre, Özbekistan ve Tacikistan bölgelerinde İslam'ın yeniden canlanması, Maveraünnehir'deki İslami dönemin kültürel başarılarının yeniden tanınması ve İslami geleneğin önde gelen şahsiyetlerinin ulusal kahramanlar olarak yüceltilmesiyle kendini gösteriyor.

Ancak SSCB'nin çöküşünden sonra bile Özbekistan, diğer Orta Asya devletleri gibi siyasi ve sosyal koşullar nedeniyle kendisini Sovyet sisteminden tamamen kurtaramadı. Bölgenin liderleri, karmaşık ve gelişen küresel ortamda Sovyet sonrası kimlik, jeopolitik çıkarlar ve iç istikrarı dengelemenin zorluklarıyla boğuşuyor. Komünizm sonrası bölgede dini konulara uygulanan politikalar oldukça hassas kabul ediliyor.

2014 yılında İslami ahlakı ve Cumhuriyetçilik ilkelerinin uygulanmasını sivil toplumun inşasında zorunlu unsurlar olarak gören Neo-Cedidci ruh halinin ortaya çıktığının duyurulması, Kerimov'un Sovyet tarzı politikasına bir tepkiydi. Neo-Cedidci aydınlar kişinin din eğitimi alma hakkı olduğunu ve bu konuda sadece yasaklamanın geçerli bir çözüm olmadığını düşünüyorlar.

Özbekistan'ın ikinci seçilmiş cumhurbaşkanı Shavkat Mirziyoyev, 2016 yılında göreve başlarken birçok reform gerçekleştirdi. O tarihten bu yana yapılan reformlar, Özbek vatandaşlarının dini özgürlüğünü önemli ölçüde artırdı. Çoğunluk tarafından uygulanan İslam, kamusal yaşamda daha fazla görünürlük kazandı. Bu liberalleşmenin bir sonucu olarak Müslüman sivil toplum kuruluşları, çoğunlukla devletin sosyal yardım hizmetlerinin bıraktığı boşlukları doldurarak hayırseverlik faaliyetlerini genişletmeyi başardılar.

Ayrıca küresel toplum ve dijital çağa uyum, Sovyet sonrası bölgenin tamamında Müslümanlar için yeni bir sayfa açtı. Müslümanlar yasaklanan veya çok düşük seviyelere indirilen birçok kaynağa erişim imkânına kavuştu. Ancak hujra sistemine benzer şekilde, bu kaynaklar aracılığıyla paylaşılan bilgilerin kesin doğasını ayırt etmek zordur, bu nedenle Hükümet internet kaynaklarına kısıtlamalar getirmektedir. Bu sorunla ilgili olarak Neo-Cedidciler de dahil olmak üzere yerel aydınlar, kişinin 'radikaller' arasında yer almaması için İslam'ı ve ilkelerini temelden kavraması gerektiğini düşünüyor. Onlara göre, yasaklama geçerli bir çözüm değil, ancak okul çağından itibaren eğitime özgürlük getirilmesi çözümdür. Mesele şu ki, ülkede resmi din eğitimine yalnızca on sekiz yaş üstü yetişkinler için izin veriliyor. Her ne kadar İslam'ın çok yüksek bir yere sahip olduğu Özbek toplumunda ulusal değerler kavramı belirginleşmiş olsa da, 'laik' ve 'modern devlet' kavramlarının hâlâ hükümet ve toplumdaki bazı gruplar tarafından 'ateist bir devlet' ile sıklıkla eşit olarak kullanıldığı da itiraf edilmelidir.

Geçtiğimiz günlerde Özbek Parlamentosu, çocukların yasa dışı din eğitimine dahil edilmesine yönelik idari cezalar getiren bir yasayı kabul etti, ancak resmi cezalar oldukça sınırlı. Bu durum aktivistler arasında olası sonuçlara ilişkin endişeleri bir kez daha artırdı.

Bu konuda biz kentsel dindarlığın hakim duygusunun şüphesiz Özbek toplumunun gelişiminin şekli üzerindeki etkisini sürdüreceğini düşünüyoruz.