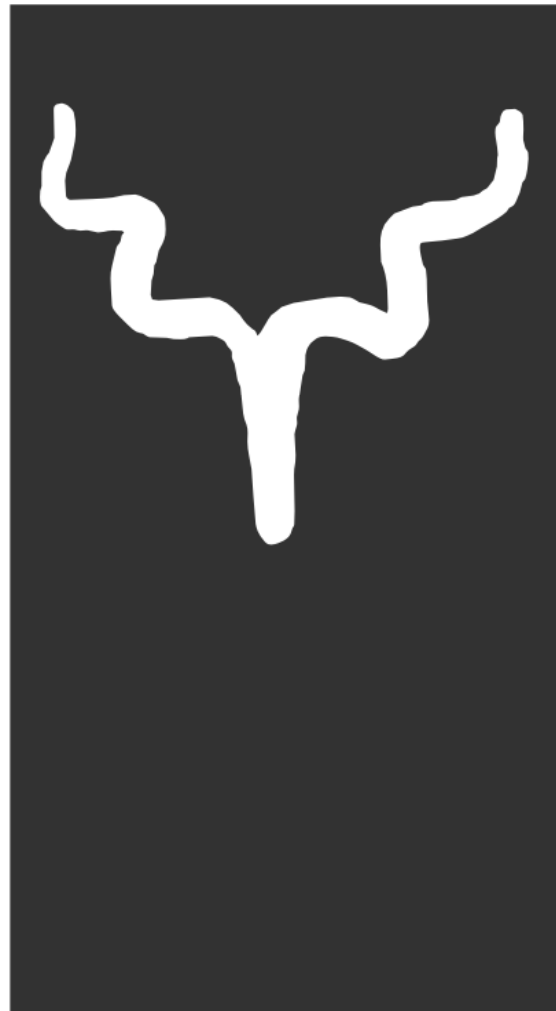


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Perspectives

Can We Apply Postcolonial Theory to Central Eurasia?¹

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Each volume of CESR contains a contribution by the current or immediate past president of CESS. This essay is the contribution of the 2007-2008 president.

“Is the post in postcolonial the post in post-Soviet?” asked a specialist on African and African-American literature in a 2001 article in *Publications of the Modern Languages Association* (Chioni Moore 2001: 111). A later volume of the same journal contained a debate on the question of “Are we postcolonial? Post-Soviet space” (Chernetsky et al. 2006). Scholars of postcolonialism, largely in the discipline of literature, have begun to remedy the “geopolitical exclusion” of Soviet and post-Soviet space from their theorizing (Chioni Moore 2001: 117), and rightly so. Postcolonialism is concerned with “forces of oppression and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world: the politics of anticolonialism and neocolonialism, race, gender, nationalism, class and ethnicities define its terrain” (Young 2001: 11). This is a broad range of issues, to be sure, but no less relevant to Central Eurasia than to anywhere else in the world.

As for scholars of Central Eurasia, with a few exceptions (such as Bhavna Dave and Deniz Kandiyoti), we have been reticent to grapple with postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory translates fairly easily across regions in the discipline of literature, but for historians and social scientists, several barriers exist that make it intellectually arduous to apply postcolonial theory to the countries we study. The most easily surmountable barrier is the lack of training that many area studies specialists receive in social theory. Many of us are daunted by the postmodern style and sensibility that dominates most writing on postcolonial theory,

or find it difficult to translate the analysis of literary critics into useful social science concepts.

More serious challenges are posed by the comparative analysis we have to do in order to translate arguments about African or South Asian postcolonialism to the Central Eurasian context. Given the historical particularities of the Soviet case, are *any* of the assumptions underlying postcolonial theory valid for the part of world that we study? In this essay, I will explore some answers to this question and point to some tentative suggestions about the ways that postcolonial theory can help us to understand better the societies that we study. The literature I review here is far from comprehensive. In fact, I have limited my sources in order to suggest a few particularly useful or accessible places where scholars of Central Eurasia might enter the conversation about postcolonialism.

What Kind of Empire Was the Soviet Union?

The first challenge of building a comparative theory of postcolonialism for Central Eurasia is that we are still developing our analysis of the Soviet Union as an empire. In order to answer the question of whether and how Central Eurasia is *postcolonial*, first we need to understand more completely the ways that it was colonial.

Postcolonial theory tends to cast history in terms of a dialectic: the contradictions inherent in colonialism produced the conditions that allowed for the eventual destruction of colonialism (Bhabha 1994). As scholars such as Benedict Anderson (1991) and Partha Chatterjee (1993) have argued, colonial powers justified their rule by highlighting the progressive, modernizing role they played in the societies they colonized. But this discourse contained a contradiction between its modern, universalistic ideology and the cultural differences that it used to

¹ I want to thank the members of the Central Asia and Caucasus Working Group at Harvard University, and especially John Schoeberlein, for their comments on a draft of this piece.

justify the domination of the colonizer over the colonized. The empire's efforts at modernization produced a nationalist elite that was then able to turn the universalizing discourse of rights against the colonizer.

Chatterjee asserts that colonial nationalism is first a cultural movement based on the defense of local sovereignty over an inner or spiritual domain. In the West, the public and private spheres were united

within a single political domain [that was] entirely consistent with its universalist discourse. In colonial society, the political domain was under alien control and the colonized excluded from its decisive zones by a rule of colonial difference (1993: 75).

To open up the private realm to the rules that governed the political realm would have been to completely surrender autonomy. But since this new private sphere constituted by nationalists would be marked by cultural difference, the subjectivity constructed in this realm was premised not on universality but on difference.

The colonial society is thus split into two domains: the material/outside "where Europe has proven [sic] its superiority and the East has succumbed" (Chatterjee 1993: 6), and the spiritual/inner domain, which bears the essential cultural identity and which colonized elites felt was in fact superior to that of the West. The most significant project of the anticolonial elite was then to build a modern national culture within this domain that was not Western. In short,

What was necessary was to cultivate the material techniques of modern Western civilization while retaining and strengthening the distinctive spiritual essence of the national culture. This completed the formulation of the nationalist project, and as an ideological justification for the selective appropriation of Western modernity, it continues to hold sway to this day (p. 120).

To what extent does this story fit the case of Soviet Central Eurasia? To be sure, we recognize certain parallels: the importance of Soviet modernity and notions of progress, the hierarchy of cultural difference that emphasized Russian (and more generally, European) superiority, and the creation of national elites. In fact, there is an emerging consensus in our field about what kind of empire the Soviet Union was. For example, in a

recent *Slavic Review* issue devoted to understanding questions of Soviet empire in comparative perspective, Adrienne Edgar shows that Soviet policies on modernizing Central Asian Muslim populations in the 1920s and 30s were not so different from the similar civilizing policies of the British and French: the authorities' condemnation of the subjugation of women in the colonies is the particular example Edgar examines (Edgar 2006). The difference, Edgar argues, was that the Soviet state alone implemented its policies with the intent of effecting real social changes, intervening in realms of law and family life that other imperial powers dared not touch. This invasion of what Chatterjee would call the inner realm was more similar to the modernization campaigns of neighboring nation-states such as Iran and Turkey than it was to European imperialist policies (2006: 269). However, the resistance to these interventions in Iran and Turkey was milder than it was in Central Asia, where the perception during the 1920s and 30s was that

Soviet rule was "fundamentally alien." The important point here is not that Soviet rule of Central Asia was *objectively* more "foreign" than the Turkish and Iranian leaders' rule over their respective peripheries ... it was the popular impression of Moscow's foreignness that mattered (p. 269).

Edgar concludes that whereas modernization in Iran and Turkey during this period was often perceived as the independent nation's best defense against European imperialism, the backlash against modernization in early Soviet Central Asia more closely resembled that of the colonized populations of the Arab world, which saw modernization as Europeanization and therefore was resisted by anticolonial movements.

In short, the Soviet Union was like an empire in that it crafted political domination over a geographically diverse territory and it imposed a hierarchical culture (with Moscow at its center) over its ethnically diverse citizens. But the Soviet Union was unlike other European empires in a number of ways, the most significant of which was its emphasis on the modernization and political mobilization of the periphery. In this, the Soviet state was much more aggressive than other colonial powers in its attack on the inner, spiritual realm that Central Asians sought to defend. As Bhavna Dave puts it in her excellent discussion of these issues, it is important to see the Soviet Union as a "hybrid entity, combining elements of a centralized empire and a high modernist state"

that was perceived differently in different time periods and in different parts of Central Eurasia (2007: 15).

The emerging consensus about the Soviet Union as an empire tends to employ the approach of Mark Beissinger, who sees empire not as an ideal type or model, but as “a Wittgensteinian ‘family resemblance’ whose meanings and referents have altered significantly over time” (Beissinger 2006: 203).² The perception of Moscow as an “alien” power no doubt decreased over time, but due to a dearth of historical research on the post-Stalin period, we don’t know exactly how rapidly or extensively this happened. We can, however, assess the extent to which contemporary Central Eurasians perceive the Soviet experience as colonial, and what Soviet policies and practices get that label attached to them.

This approach suggests that we see postcolonialism as a contextually situated discourse generated by the responses (both resistant and collaborative) of formerly colonized peoples to the institutional legacies of and ongoing relationship with the colonizer. But the examination of this kind of locally produced discourse leads to the second question we must address: how dependent is postcolonial theory on the presence of an indigenous independence movement and an indigenous critique that emerges in response to living under colonialism?

When is Postcolonialism?

Here I want to raise the questions of whether Central Eurasia has *already* experienced its postcolonial moment (after the end of the Tsarist empire) and is somehow post-postcolonial (a concept that has yet to be theorized), or, conversely, whether it is still premature to speak of Central Eurasia as *postcolonial*. Both of these questions are motivated by a comparison to other modern colonial societies where independence was achieved only after a long struggle by an anticolonialist movement. Given that independence was forced on the Soviet Central Asian republics in 1991 (just a few years after nationalist elites began to openly express a critique of Soviet power),

² Wittgenstein uses the phrase “family resemblance” to describe phenomena that “have no one thing in common which make us use the same word for all, but . . . they are related to one another in many different ways” (as quoted in Beissinger 2006: 294).

Central Eurasian societies may be in an ambiguous situation that is not yet postcolonial.

The first question, about the anticolonial struggles of the early 20th century, is beyond the scope of this essay, but it would be interesting to explore the intersections between pre-Soviet anticolonial discourses, the Soviet anticolonialist discourse developed by Lenin, and contemporary anti-Soviet discourses. In this essay I will just address the question of whether Central Eurasia may not yet be postcolonial by briefly examining two places we find anticolonial discourse developing during the late Soviet era: in the work of Central Asian authors such as Chingiz Aitmatov, and in the rise of national sovereignty movements during the period of Glasnost. Compared to countries where colonialism was accompanied by the development of a robust anticolonial discourse and where decolonization was achieved in part through the efforts of a movement for national independence, Central Eurasian societies face challenges that may either put them on a different postcolonial trajectory from other cases or at minimum will result in a slower process of decolonization.

During the late Brezhnev era an anticolonial critique of Soviet policies was being articulated, albeit subtly, in the public sphere. To take just the most famous example, Chingiz Aitmatov’s novel, *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* [*I dol’she veka dlitsia den*] (1983), was published in 1980 before the era of glasnost but well into the height of Soviet power. One of the main themes in the story is the loss of culture, most dramatically illustrated by the legend of the *mankurt*. The *mankurt* in this legend is a young Kazakh man who has been captured and enslaved by enemies. In order to ensure the man’s complete subjugation, his captors find a way to take away his memory; he no longer knows who he is or where he is from. The climax of the story comes when he kills his own mother, having forgotten who she really was. For Aitmatov, who was a modernized member of the Kyrgyz national elite, the primary critique of Soviet colonialism was its cultural dominance. The implication in Aitmatov’s work is that the Soviet state wanted Central Asians to forget who they were in order to subjugate them, so it was the task of the cultural elite to do what they could to preserve those memories, that culture that came down to them from the past. This is not to say his critique was one-dimensional; Aitmatov also warned his readers about states that pursued totalitarian power and of the environmental dangers that were the result of an unthinking march towards progress.

These themes of culture and the environment were also at the heart of the social movements that arose during Glasnost. Cultural movements (such as Birlik and the Islamic Renaissance Party in Uzbekistan) focused on challenging what Chatterjee would call the Soviet/Russian penetration of the inner realm of Central Eurasian cultural life. Most of these organizations were at first primarily concerned with issues of language, but their concerns met up with those of the environmental movements (such as the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement in Kazakhstan and the Committee to Save the Aral Sea in Uzbekistan) in their critique of Soviet colonialist economic policies, namely the radiation poisoning associated with nuclear testing and the consequences of cotton monoculture. These movements were short-lived, their agendas were often co-opted after independence by the former Communist Party elites of their respective countries, and they never developed the kinds of critiques or the forms of social mobilization that made anticolonial movements elsewhere a force to be reckoned with. The “colonial elite” was handed power, promptly took over the as yet amorphous discourse of the “anticolonial elite,” and set about trying to make sure that the critique evolved no further.

Thus Central Eurasia finds itself in a different place in the trajectory of postcolonialisms than South Asian or African nations were immediately after independence (though certain parallels with sub-Saharan postcolonial authoritarianism are striking; see Mbembe 1992). Is this different trajectory just a matter of time and sequence, or is it evidence of a more thorough kind of colonization? One of the projects of postcolonial theory is the breaking down of binaries (East/West, civilized/ native, etc.) in order to create a counter-discourse about modernity that resonates with local understandings. As Bhavna Dave argues, in time we would expect that the decolonization process will include a critique of Soviet cognitive frames, especially that of nationality. For now, however, the new Kazakh historiography remains what Chatterjee terms a “derivative discourse”: it is nationalist and primordial, firmly rooted in the categories and assumptions of Soviet historiography (2007: 20-4). I have also argued that postcoloniality in Central Asia is marked by critiques of Russian cultural domination that largely reproduce Soviet hierarchies of knowledge and values (Adams 2005). If we take the dialectical approach common in postcolonial theory, the

continuity between the kinds of critiques developed during the Soviet period and the critiques of today indicate that Central Eurasian elites are still generating a derivative, rather than a postcolonial, discourse.

But we have to be cautious not to fall into a teleology: is the ongoing engagement with Soviet discourse an effect of the “underdevelopment” of anticolonial critique? Or is it a result of the ambiguous coloniality of the Soviet state, of the extent to which Soviet domination was *not* perceived as “alien?” Central Eurasians are, perhaps more than most “postcolonial” people, ambivalent about their relationship to Russia and the Soviet state. In fact, based on Bessinger’s “I-know-it-when-I-see-it” definition of colonialism, it sometimes seems that Central Eurasians only invoke the label of colonialism strategically, to stigmatize a particular practice or attitude, rather than as a critique of a particular form of domination.

This ambivalence shines through in a conversation Dave (who is of Indian heritage) had with a Kazakh interlocutor. When Dave talked about how Indian nationalist elites used their English education to develop their critique of the English, her interlocutor responded, “Look, you [as an Indian] were fortunate in being colonized [by the British], but see who colonized us!” Dave goes on to say

What he conveyed most eloquently was not a disapproval of colonial domination per se, but a feeling of disappointment by the failure of the Soviet state to fully deliver its promised goals. The agency and responsibility for the ultimate failure to deliver modernity and progress was attributed to the empire (2007: 2).

Here, in comparing postcolonialisms we run into not just the uniquely hybrid nature of the Soviet state but also the historical fact that most Central Eurasian states became independent in an era of globalization. The paradoxical attraction/repulsion between colonizer and colonized (that Bhabha [1994] calls “ambivalence”), and the equally tense expectation/fear of assimilation to the colonizer’s culture (“mimicry”) are disrupted in the case of the post-Soviet world, where “post-colonial desire from Riga to Almaty fixates not on the fallen master Russia but on the glittering Euramerican MTV-and-Coca-Cola beast that broke it” (Chioni Moore 2001: 118). If we are looking for indigenous critique in Central Eurasia, we are less likely to find postcolonial critiques of Soviet “forms of knowledge-politics”

(Young 2001: 64) than we are to find critiques of contemporary regimes that are grounded in global discourses of democratization, rights, and markets. In turn, other indigenous actors have formed their own critique of globalization, which they sometimes cast as *neocolonialism*. Western discourses about civil society and secularism serve as targets against which Central Eurasian regimes and traditionalist movements are formulating critiques that support their own dominance over the public sphere because in some way these critiques resonate with the population. Thus campaigns to promote, for example, Uzbekistan's "national variant of civil society" draw on Soviet discourses about Uzbek national traditions (e.g., the *mahalla* [neighborhood]) and a contemporary critique of the presumed universality of Western forms of civil society.

The Material Conditions of Socialism

In the material realm as well as in the cultural and political realms, it is challenging to sort out what in contemporary Central Eurasia is an effect of "postcoloniality" versus an effect of "globalization." It is not at all clear how we should translate to Soviet socialism postcolonial theory's assumptions about markets and capital and its arguments about the economic foundations of colonialism. There is a growing body of scholarship that applies Marxist theory to the transition from socialism, but the materialist underpinnings of postcolonial theory are more subtle to tease out, and are intertwined with the more Foucaultian approaches highlighted above. This is an extremely complex issue that I did not want to neglect to mention, but I am afraid I can only scratch the surface here.

Deniz Kandiyoti (2002) provides us with a starting point in her review of the literature on postcolonialism and the Middle East. Part of the problem I have identified — of the relative ease of applying cultural and political but not economic theories of colonialism to Central Eurasia — is reflected in Kandiyoti's observation that even outside of Central Eurasia, different disciplinary concerns are not well-integrated into a single body of theory. Scholarship on the postcoloniality of the Middle East tends to fall either into culturalist or political economy camps, to the detriment of both groups. She points out that the uniquely modernizing, developmental empire of the Soviet Union allows us a valuable opportunity to bridge the gap between postcolonial theory (largely

derived from the humanities) and theories of political economy by using a comparative framework that also takes account of "struggles over resources, legitimacy, and meaning" (2002: 295).

Kandiyoti concludes by suggesting topics of research that would bring together various strands of postcolonial theory and offer fruitful empirical comparisons between the Middle East and Central Eurasia: patterns of stratification and elite formation (namely the internalization of Western and Russian models); the role of Islam in culture and politics, especially the current impact of transnational influences; and most importantly for my point here, the historical and institutional context of the production of oil and cotton, and the integration of these commodities into world markets (2002: 294-5). By focusing on resources, rather than on particular elements of Marxist theory, perhaps we can find a way to weave together the culturalist and materialist strands of theorizing about postcolonialism in Central Eurasia.

Conclusion: Should We Apply Postcolonial Theory to Central Eurasia?

The answer is yes, but we must go deeper and do more with it than we have done so far. Those of us studying contemporary culture, politics, economics, and international relations should go beyond merely borrowing descriptive terms and pointing out parallels to actually employing postcolonial theory in our analysis and using our cases to critique and refine the theory. Postcolonial theory gives us a valuable lens to turn on the societies we study, and its value lies as much in exposing Central Eurasia's postcoloniality as it does in highlighting Central Eurasia's differences from other postcolonial societies. Furthermore, study of the societies of Central Eurasia can help to refine postcolonial theory by exposing it to a broader range of imperial projects, especially those that are not based on capitalism as a historical mode of domination. Ideally, scholars will combine interpretive insights gleaned from paying attention to how the concept of empire is used discursively in Central Eurasia with mid-range theorizing about particular features of postcolonialism based on comparisons with societies outside the post-Soviet world. Whether we decide to ground our research in postcolonial theory or some other body of theory, we as a group will benefit from a deeper engagement with theory. Not only does it make good analytical sense to develop our theoretical toolkits, it is also

good for the field to bring our work out of the margins and into the lively center of academic debate.

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Research Reports

REPORT ON RESEARCH FINDINGS

Education and Ethnic Minorities in Central Asia: A Comparative Analysis¹

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The education sector in post-Soviet Central Asia is particularly interesting because governments have to cope with the legacy of both a multiethnic population and a multilingual education system. In Soviet times, language was considered a key criterion in differentiating ethnic groups and reinforcing their collective consciousness. Most citizens were consequently guaranteed an education in their native language.² The dissolution of the USSR had a strong impact on education in multicultural Central Asia. Each independent state focused on the legitimization of its newly gained sovereignty by promoting its titular nation and disregarding other ethnic groups, which were reduced to the status of minorities.

This research report addresses the issue of ethnic minorities in the education sector in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These neighboring states were chosen for their comparability since they were parts of the same political entity until 1991 and have diverse experiences since then. The paper focuses on indigenous minorities who were present prior to the

Russian colonization, namely those known today as Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks, who were suddenly cut off from their kin-state after the establishment of international borders between the Central Asian states in the early 1990s.³ My assumption here is that ethnic minorities, which used to have a legally equal status under the Soviet regime, are now subject to differentiated treatment in the education sector. I propose to check this assumption at three different levels:

1. From a state policy perspective, I investigate the treatment of ethnic minorities in terms of languages of education, production and supply of textbooks, and the initial training and continuing education of school teachers;
2. From an ethnic community approach, I examine the discourse that activists and minority leaders use to frame the education sector as they seek to mobilize the community;
3. From a grassroots, or individual perspective, I seek to understand whether parents adhere to either state policy or community leaders' discourse, or whether they develop their own assessment of the education issue and adopt alternative decisions.

This paper addresses part of the research for my PhD dissertation in the field of political sociology. In this research I explore the process of ethnic mobilization in post-Soviet Central Asia in various sectors, such as counting and categorization (census), language practices, cultural and religious identity,

¹ A first draft of this paper was presented at the 8th Annual Conference of the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS), October 18-21 2007, in Seattle, under the title "Education Language Policies and Minorities' Strategies in Central Asia: A Comparative Approach of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan."

² In 1991 primary and secondary education was conducted in seven languages in Uzbekistan (79% in Uzbek, 8% in Russian, 5% in Tajik, 4% in Kazakh, 2% in Karakalpak and less than 1% each in Turkmen and Kyrgyz), in six languages in Tajikistan (67% in Tajik, 24% in Uzbek, 7% in Russian, 1% in Kyrgyz and less than 1% each in Turkmen and Kazakh) and in four languages in Kyrgyzstan (61% in Kyrgyz, 26% in Russian, 12% in Uzbek and less than 1% in Tajik) (USSR 1991).

³ According to the 1989 Soviet census, ethnic Uzbeks comprised 23.5% of the total population of Tajikistan and 12.9% of Kyrgyzstan. There were also Tajik minorities in Uzbekistan (4.7%) and in Kyrgyzstan (0.8%) and Kyrgyz minorities in Uzbekistan (0.9%) and in Tajikistan (1.3%) (USSR 1991-1993).

political and economic life, and education. This research report is based on published materials on education and language policies, and on field research undertaken from October 2006 to May 2007 in the three target countries,⁴ where I conducted interviews with state officials, local authorities, community leaders, school directors, teachers, and parents.

State Education Policies: Instrument to Mold New National Identities

After the first years of transition in the early 1990s, during which the school system remained unchanged, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan started to develop their own education policies: new curricula were drafted, textbooks and pedagogical materials were revised, teachers' training and recycling modules were adapted. The effectiveness of these reforms depended on support from the Ministries of Education. Lack of funding compelled the states to set priorities among the different subjects and instruction languages. With regard to subjects, such as history, geography and national literature, which were considered as the most sensitive ones, the old-fashioned Soviet ideology was quickly replaced by nationalist content. As for languages, the Ministry of Education focused primarily on state language schools attended by the majority of the titular ethnic group. Consequently, minority language schools faced quick deterioration of their teaching conditions, since Soviet programs, still in use, were not compatible with the new curricula and textbooks were outdated and in bad shape.

This general picture does not render the specificities in each state. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as the authorities could not cope both in financial and logistical terms with the needs of the minority language education, school directors were authorized to adopt alternative solutions in the most liberal way. For instance, the Ministries of Education agreed to delegate directly to schools the management of the so-called school fund [*shkol'nyi fond*], a legacy from the Soviet period consisting of a monthly cash contribution from parents to cover education expenses. Directors from the Uzbek minority language schools of both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan proposed to use the school funds to purchase and import from Uzbekistan textbooks in

the Uzbek language (Mamaraimov 2007). This "privatization" of book supplies through school funds permitted the schools to control the distribution of education material and to address parents grievances.

Unlike its neighbors, Uzbekistan adopted a tougher line and strictly banned the illegal importation of books in order to avoid any external influence on its ongoing nation-building process. Minority language schools could not receive support from abroad. It would be relevant to assume that the negligence of Tashkent towards its minority language schools, along with its authoritarian control over imported publications, were part of a deliberate policy to promote the state language among minorities and facilitate the "Uzbekization" of minority language schools. The statistics from the Uzbek Ministry of Education also reveal that the number of minority language schools has decreased by 256 schools — from 2,335 in 1998 (UNESCO 2000: 2) to 2,079 in 2005 (Uzbekistan Government 2005a: 52). In 2005, the share of students educated in a minority language school was 11% while minorities represented 21% of the country's total population. (Uzbekistan Government 2005b: 8). If the decrease of the Russian language schools can be explained by the emigration of the Russian-speaking minorities, this is not the case for indigenous minorities, whose share in the country's population has remained the same. The sharp reduction in the number of minority schools, in particular in the Tajik language (50 fewer since 1998) illustrates this process of Uzbekization.

Another specificity in Uzbekistan was the decision adopted in 1995 to shift Uzbek language from the Cyrillic to Latin script. This change had two consequences in the education sector. First, at the statewide level, the Uzbek Ministry of Education had to manage two scripts — Latin for the Uzbek language schools and Cyrillic for Russian and other minority language schools. Second, at the regional level, a linguistic frontier arose between the Uzbeks from Uzbekistan, shifting to the Latin script, and the Uzbek minorities abroad, who had no option but to keep on using the Cyrillic script. Their host countries would not approve such a change for political and financial reasons.

How States Changed Their Approach Towards Minority Language Schools

After giving priority to state language schools, the Uzbek Ministry of Education addressed the issue of education in minority languages, to avoid the outbreak of resentment and grievances among

⁴ This research was funded by the French Ministry of Education and Research and the French Institute for Central Asian Studies (IFEAC) in Tashkent.

parents. Instilling its national ideology and perpetuating the Soviet approach, the Uzbek authorities viewed the language of education as an instrument to provide a common content — the Soviet ideology then, the unity of the nation now. A presidential decree emphasized the need to harmonize national education standards and to develop new textbooks and teaching materials for all schools, with special attention to minority language schools.⁵ As a result, hundreds of new textbook titles were published in 2006, and 90% of them were in the minority languages — 92 titles in Turkmen, 72 in Kyrgyz, 70 in Tajik, and 70 in Kazakh. The availability of new textbooks conforming to the national curricula sharply increased in all schools, reaching an impressive average figure of 92.1% of needs coverage (Uzbekistan Government 2006: 11-12). To foster common civic values, the Ministry of Education did not develop specific teaching materials for the minority language schools, but rather kept a common content by translating the original Uzbek textbooks into the country's six minority languages of education. This harmonized process aimed to ensure that minorities would ultimately develop a civic national consciousness regardless of their language and ethnic belonging.

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan developed the same approach, but with significant delay. First, they produced new textbooks on history, geography, and national literature and outlawed the importation of textbooks in these sensitive subjects. Second, they started to translate materials into the minority languages. However, the achievement remained limited until international donors intensified their support of the education sector.⁶ Kyrgyzstan received a grant from the Asian Development Bank, scheduled from 2006 to 2011, to produce complete sets of textbooks on the same pattern as in Uzbekistan: original textbooks drafted in the state language and translated into minority languages.⁷

What is significant here is the way both the state authorities and international donors continue to address the issue of minority education in ethnic terms. The former continue to design education in the Soviet mold, and the latter use the discourse on minority rights to justify their grants. Surprisingly, both approaches agree on the solution: ethnic minorities should continue to be educated in their mother tongue, regardless of changes in the society.

Individual Strategies vs. Collective Framing

Beside the development of state education policies, ethnic activists and minority leaders endeavored to mobilize their communities in a collective request for education rights. In Uzbekistan the state did not leave much space for such a mobilization, but in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan these ethnic claims became a significant phenomenon. The parallel requests from Kyrgyz in Tajikistan and Tajiks in Kyrgyzstan provide an example. In 1992 the Tajiks of Kyrgyzstan, 42,636 people in total (Kyrgyz Government 2001a: 70), founded the Association of Tajiks in the southern province of Batken, where most of them reside. Similarly, in 1995 the Kyrgyz minority of Tajikistan, a reported 65,515 people (Tajikistan Government 2003: 4), established the Society of Kyrgyz. In both cases, minority leaders addressed the issue of education as a frame⁸ to mobilize their respective communities. These claims contributed to the signing of a bilateral agreement between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the sector of education. The agreement provided for mutual supply of textbooks and training of teachers, and facilitated access of minority students to the universities of their kin-state.⁹

Meanwhile, some parents started to develop a new understanding of their rights to education and tried to abandon the frames predefined either by the Soviet legacy, which has been used by the states in their nation-building process, or by the Western human rights approach, which has been used by activists and international donors to develop the

⁵ Presidential decree no. 3431 on State National School Education Development Program for 2004-2009.

⁶ The 9/11 turning point in world politics focused new attention on Central Asia, as Western countries were seeking local support for military operations in Afghanistan.

⁷ Author's interview with Timur Oruskulov, Education Project Manager, Asian Development Bank office, Bishkek, May 4, 2007.

⁸ Frames are "organized experiences and guided actions" to voice the grievances of the population (Snow, et al. 1986: 464). Dmitry Gorenburg argues that "framing processes [play] a crucial role in popularizing the appeal of nationalist movements" (Gorenburg 2003: 12). For an insightful analysis of Uzbek ethnic framing in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, see Fumagalli 2007.

⁹ Author's interview with Muhammad Melikov, Head of the Tajik Ministry of Education, Department of International Relations, Dushanbe, November 13, 2006.

education rights of ethnic minorities. This individual dissent takes place in the municipality of Üch-Qorghon (Kyrgyzstan), where a majority of Tajiks (58%) live along with Kyrgyz (21%) and Uzbeks (17%) (Kyrgyz Government 2001b: 127). In Üch-Qorghon, education data does not match with the ethnic distribution. Despite the majority of Tajiks within the municipality's population, Tajik is the language of instruction for less than one in ten students, while 55% are educated in Uzbek, 19% in Kyrgyz and 17% in Russian. Among the municipality's 11 schools, there are three exclusively Uzbek language schools, two Kyrgyz, two Uzbek-Kyrgyz, two Uzbek-Tajik, one Uzbek-Russian, and one Uzbek-Russian-Tajik, but no exclusively Tajik language school.¹⁰ Despite the efforts of the Association of Tajiks to orient parents to Tajik language education,¹¹ Uzbek schools keep attracting the majority of the students.

This example shows that parents' preferences diverge from the goals of the established education system, which is embodied in the agreement between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that intends to support their respective kin-minority. Parents also oppose the Association's active ethnic framing. As a result, most Tajik parents decide to educate their children in what they consider to be the region's most widely spoken and therefore profitable language, namely Uzbek. Apparently, the proximity of dynamic Uzbek towns across the border continues to play an attractive role for the population of Üch-Qorghon in their cultural and economic lives. Kyrgyzstan's Tajiks developed a deliberate strategy towards the Uzbek language in the sense that they manage to distinguish clearly between the private sphere, where the Tajik identity prevails at home in language and cultural practices, and the public sphere, where other language proficiencies, mainly Uzbek but also Russian and Kyrgyz, are fostered to contribute actively to the multiethnic and multilingual society in which they live. This language strategy has neither an ethnic motivation nor a grounding in civic consciousness. Rather, it addresses the issue of education in a broader regional framework where the opportune choice of the Uzbek language

¹⁰ Author's interview with Merinsa Ayjigitova, Head of the Batken province education department, Batken, October 25, 2006.

¹¹ Author's interview with Abduaziz Pulatov, Deputy Head of the *Association of Tajiks*, Üch-Qorghon, December 16, 2006.

prevails over the Tajik ethnic origin and the assumed civic acceptance of the Kyrgyz state language.

Conclusion

This paper shows that the issue of education of ethnic minorities is complex and can be examined from different perspectives. At the state level, the education policies of the three target countries appear to be similar, albeit at different implementation stages due to lack of funds and/or capacity. At the ethnic community level, aside from Uzbekistan, activists play a major role in framing the issue of education to mobilize their respective minority groups. These frames resonate unevenly among the population, as they are challenged by parents' alternative strategies. This individual level of analysis proves to be the most enlightening, in the sense that parents' choices appear to be very flexible, shifting from a basis in ethnic identity to civic consciousness, either by compulsion or by choice.

By opposing the state policies and activists' mobilizing speeches to the actual strategies developed by parents, the paper shows that stakeholders compete in the way they address the issue of education and work out solutions. Government officials make no effort to consider the schooling practices of ethnic minorities and to include them in their policies. On the flip side, minority leaders do not pay attention to alternative strategies developed by their community members. Both the Ministries of Education and the leaders stick to their Soviet-rooted understanding of the right to education in the mother tongue.

A remarkable initiative that is worth mentioning in these concluding remarks is the efforts made by the Kyrgyz government to promote multilingual education (Kyrgyz Government 2005: 17-18). This teaching method considers the mother tongue as the primary means of education, but it also increases the teaching volume of the state language, which becomes a second instruction language. The method promotes bilingualism in the most tolerant way and could therefore constitute a compromise solution for the education of ethnic minorities: it helps preserve their identity, and at the same time, it promotes knowledge of the state language. Such a pattern would work towards a better integration of ethnic minorities into society.

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Report on Research Conditions

Adventures of a Foreign Historian in Kazakhstan

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I spent just over a year, from late October 2006 to early November 2007, in Kazakhstan conducting research for my dissertation.¹ My year was a wonderful one, and I write this research report in the hope that other foreign scholars will also decide to take on the challenge of stepping outside the traditional research hubs. By and large, the Kazakh archives are open, accessible and welcoming yet, surprisingly, under-utilized by foreign scholars.

My dissertation, a narrative account of the Kazakh famine of the 1930s, aims to illuminate an event that has long languished outside traditional accounts of the Soviet period. The famine, which raged from 1931-1933, led to the death of roughly 1.5 million of the republic's inhabitants, yet the events and decisions that led to the disaster remain remarkably unexamined. Over forty percent of the republic's inhabitants forever altered their permanent place of residence during the massive flight that accompanied the famine. Hundreds of thousands of nomadic Kazakhs were forcibly settled, largely severing the linkage between Kazakh identity and nomadism. And while Kazakh identities prior to the famine were largely regional and clan-based, the tremendous geographic dislocation of the period forced the rethinking of what it meant to be Kazakh on an unprecedented scale. Through my research, I hope both to reveal the causes of this terrible disaster, an area still subject to considerable debate by local historians, as well as analyze the tragedy's tremendous effect on the republic's future development.

Although the Moscow archives contain rich records on the topic,² I made the choice to devote the majority of my research time to the Kazakh archives and libraries, as well as begin my research in Kazakhstan. This selection proved to be a happy one: While many Soviet-era documents are duplicates — available both in Moscow and the

regions — I generally gained much better access to files in Almaty than colleagues who had researched the problem in Moscow. Extended in-country time also allowed me to work comprehensively with secondary materials on the famine — many of which, unfortunately, remain difficult to locate outside of Kazakhstan — and network with the large group of local scholars who work on the issue. Invaluable too were the endless casual conversations about the famine I had with taxi cab drivers and friends, who offered anecdotes, advice and pleased surprise that an American had arrived to research Kazakh history and, particularly, an event so close to many of their own hearts.

In Almaty, I worked in three major archives: the Presidential (Party) Archives [*Arkhiv Prezidenta respubliki Kazakhstan*], the Central State Archives [*Tsentrāl'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv respubliki Kazakhstan*] and the Almaty Provincial Archives [*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Almatinskoi oblasti*] archives. While most major state organizations have moved to the new capital Astana, thankfully, there seem to be no imminent plans to move the archival holdings. Armed with the necessary letter of introduction in Russian from a local organization, I easily gained access to all three repositories. Archival policies varied widely among the three, with the Presidential Archives being the strictest. Computers and photocopies are not permitted. My research notebook was checked and reviewed upon completion and only then could I finally take it home. Though my reviewers never found any of my notes unacceptable, the process did mean that my research proceeded more slowly, as I couldn't review my research progress at home.

The warmth and good cheer of the archivists at the Presidential Archives more than made up for many of these restrictions, though. Day after day, as I worked there alone, they brought me warm sweaters to keep me from "catching cold" in the dank microfilm room, produced useful books (there is a small, but excellent library in the complex), offered up archival references and conversed with me about whether Americans really thought that Kazakhstan

¹ Funds from both a Fulbright Student Grant and the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University supported my study.

² I plan to spend two months in Moscow this summer researching.

was like “Borat.” Also worthy of note is that many collections at the Presidential Archives — such as the Worker’s and Peasant’s Inspectorate Commission (Rabkrin) for my period — have recently been or are in the process of being declassified. The KGB archives, also located in Almaty, are officially closed, although a handful of local scholars have been granted access in recent years.

At both the Almaty Provincial Archives and the Central State Archives, photocopies and computers are permitted, but with varying restrictions and expenses. While researching, I generally found it easiest to stick to my paper notebook. Use of computers is only slowly taking root in Kazakh reading rooms and libraries and those who bring them may be struck with unusual demands. Officials at the rare book room at the Kazakh National Library [*Natsional'naia biblioteka respubliki Kazakhstan*], for instance, suggested that I contribute to a portion of their electricity bill to compensate for the power my laptop would use. In both the Central State Archives and the Almaty archives, I was permitted to order five files per day, in contrast to the more generous allotment of twenty per day by the Presidential Archives. Short-term visitors, however, may be able to negotiate larger daily orders with the archive directors. Over the duration of my year stay in Kazakhstan, the Central State Archives went through a seemingly never-ending renovation, yet for most of this period, the archive director kindly allowed me, as well as a few other researchers who had come from abroad, to continue working as they literally hammered, painted, and rebuilt the walls around us.

The unfortunate theme of renovations continues with regard to the libraries in Almaty. (Future researchers, take note: there is little left to renovate; you are in luck!). The National Library in Almaty, which has the richest library holdings in Kazakhstan, closed in May 2007 yet is scheduled to reopen at any moment. (Unfortunately, as I discovered, the newly built National Library in Astana [*Natsional'naia akademicheskaiia biblioteka respubliki Kazakhstan*] remains little more than a state of the art building without much of a collection.) The Central Scientific Library [*Tsentral'naia nauchnaia biblioteka*] in Almaty is also still undergoing renovation. Portions of the building have reopened for researchers, yet conditions are very cramped and some collections — books printed prior to 1945 that are not

classified as “rare,” for example — remain closed. It is worth noting that the collections of the two libraries are very different. While the National Library’s holdings are much deeper, the Central Scientific Library’s collection invariably includes works, whether rare books or more recent secondary accounts, that the National Library does not have. Photocopies are allowed in both libraries. Additionally, at an off-site facility, dissertations in the National Library can be scanned onto a disc for a fee, while the Central Scientific Library permits researchers to take home some books for the night for a modest fee.

Bookstores in and around Almaty also provided many unexpected finds. Many recently published books do not make it into the National Library and Central Scientific Library’s collections and, when they do, it is often as the result of a gift by the author. Daik Press, located in the Central Scientific Library building, *Dom izdatel'stv*, and Sanat Press all sold books that I did not find elsewhere.

I took one research excursion outside of Almaty to the archives in the city of Semey (known formally as *Tsentr dokumentatsii noveishei istorii Vostochno-Kazakhstanskoi oblasti*). Here, I was greeted warmly by the archive director and archivists, despite the cold weather and lack of hot water or heat. It was mid-October and neither had been turned on for the winter (although further south in Almaty “winter” had already been long declared). However, I found a treasure trove of materials — including minutes of meetings that remain classified in both Moscow and Almaty — that more than made up for these small discomforts. Archivists in Semey, often in collaboration with their Russian colleagues, regularly publish document collections, including recent works devoted to the famine. Yet many works published in the regions are not collected outside the region, let alone outside Kazakhstan. I never saw these studies produced in Semey, invaluable to my own research, in any of the Almaty libraries or bookstores. Though I did not get a chance to visit other regional archives, I imagine that the publishing situation there is similar.

The possibilities for collaboration with colleagues in Kazakhstan are very rich. Over the course of my stay, several local historians were extraordinarily kind to me and I would like to thank, in particular, Talas Omarbekov of KazGU [*Kazakhskii natsional'nyi universitet imeni al-Farabi*], Mukhash Tatimov of the Central Asian University [*Tsentral'nyi aziatskii universitet*], Seibit Shildebai of the Kazakh Technical University

[*Kazakhskii natsional'nyi tekhnicheskii universitet imeni K. I. Satpaeva*], and Zhuldızbek Abılkhozhin of KIMEP [*Kazakhstanskii institut menedzhmenta, ekonomiki i prognozirovaniia*]. All were particularly gracious with their time and proffered archival citations, sources, collegial conversation, and, on occasion, local delicacies, including *qazi* [horse sausage]. Requirements for higher education in Kazakhstan are rapidly changing and in response to these changes, as well as long-held curiosity, historians are eager to enter into dialogue with Western colleagues. Under the new requirements, scholars must publish some articles abroad (usually considered as outside of the former Soviet Union) to advance to full professor status. Likewise, all dissertation committees — Kazakhstan is converting from the *doktorant* system to the PhD — must now contain at least one Western scholar. Local scholars are scrambling to meet these new requirements, particularly as many of them have had little or no opportunities to network with their foreign colleagues and no monies have been provided to fund the supervision of Kazakh PhDs by Western scholars.

While the vast majority of my research materials were in Russian, I found a small but invaluable portion of materials — newspapers, petitions and secondary works — in Kazakh. Invariably, Kazakh-language secondary works were better researched and offered an entirely different perspective than those published in Russian. One notable example is an attempt on the part of the think tank *Alash* to publish multi-volume histories in Kazakh of each Kazakh tribe. Part of the final volume for each tribe delineates how the tribe responded to the famine of the 1930s. Russian-language secondary materials on the famine, by contrast, suggest that the disaster hit all sectors of Kazakh society equally. History graduate students at top history departments such as KazGU are increasingly publishing exclusively in Kazakh while some library catalogs, such as the Abai Library [*Biblioteka imeni Abaia*] in Semey, have been reorganized in Kazakh rather than in Russian. In short, the research environment for Russian-speakers is changing and a working knowledge of Kazakh is becoming increasingly important.

Conferences and Lecture Series

Reconstructing the House of Culture

Halle/Saale, Germany, September 13-14, 2007

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The Max-Planck-Institut für Ethnologische Forschung (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology [MPI]) in Halle/Saale, Germany, organized a workshop entitled “Reconstructing the House of Culture” on September 13th and 14th, 2007. The main organizer of this workshop, Joachim Otto Habeck along with his co-organizers Brian Donahoe, Virginie Vaté, István Sántha, Agnieszka Halemba, and Kirill Istomin, invited eight anthropologists and historians from several universities and institutes of Europe, Asia, and the United States to present their findings and works in progress on Soviet and post-Soviet Houses of Culture [*dom kul'tury* (DK)]. Bruce Grant (New York University, Anthropology) set the vibrant agenda of the workshop with his stimulating keynote speech following introductory comments by MPI director Chris Hann and by Habeck.

During the first day of the workshop, researchers and scholars presented findings from the Asian regions of the former Soviet Union. Galina Diachkova (Museum Center in Anadyr, Russia) and Virginie Vaté (MPI) presented a paper entitled “From Collective Enthusiasm to Individual Self-Realization: History and Life Experiences of the House of Culture of Anadyr in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Context.” Anadyr, capital of Chukotka in the northeastern extreme of Siberia, is one of the few towns in Russia that boasts a completely new House of Culture, which opened in May 2005. They suggested that this institution is far from being considered an anachronistic “remnant” of the Soviet period by either the local government or by citizens. Linking both historical and anthropological approaches, their work aimed to show that the House of Culture of Anadyr serves as a central indicator of how Soviet and post-Soviet changes in this region are understood and transformed into action. From the socialist propaganda of the past to the expression of market economy values today, the activities of the House

of Culture in its different forms over time reflect changes in the dominant political and economic ideologies. The paper also analyzed how notions of the “collective” and the “individual” are articulated in the activities of the House of Culture, and how these may have changed over time. Diachkova and Vaté further examined the ways in which political conditions have affected the form and content of the activities organized in the House of Culture of Anadyr, and how these activities reflect the interests of diverse groups within society.

István Sántha (MPI; Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest) and Tatiana Safonova (Center for Independent Sociological Research, St. Petersburg) showed a video of their work on patterns of behavior in the public space of Kurumkan, Eastern Buryatia. Their presentation, entitled “*Pokazukha* in the House of Culture — the Pattern of Behavior in Kurumkan of Eastern Buryatia,” analyzed strategies, options, and skills of the representatives of local culture in the public sphere. They showed that the main pattern of behavior in the house of culture in the district is *pokazukha*. (In Russian this word means showing off a put-on “reality,” which is a strategy to manipulate the impressions and opinions of outsiders.) They described the Kurumkan district as an economically depressed and undeveloped place, where people live on small-scale poaching and on a limited number of state positions, such as doctors, teachers, and representatives of the local culture. State organizations and projects such as the house of culture, house of elders, nature reserve, and new school construction still exhibit the Soviet social structure. The authors argued, however, that these projects no longer aim to or succeed at uniting people or spreading solidarity. The only occasions when the authors observed people getting together were during the days of inspection, when state commissions were sent to the region to inspect and audit the work of local organizations. For these occasions people congregated in an attempt to conduct *pokazukha*, to

give the illusion of genuinely functioning houses of culture without problems or flaws. The people involved were afraid that these “islands of state presence” and sources of stability and money would be closed if they were evaluated on the basis of actual effectiveness of their work. The researchers further argued that pokazukha affected private interactions the same way as it did the public demonstrations of functionality. The authors witnessed traces of pokazukha in ordinary family life, during communal shamanic rituals, during public festivals, and so forth. They argued that everything that required a degree of social integration showed up in the form of pokazukha: as something serious, indispensable, but illusive.

Brian Donahoe (MPI) addressed the concept of “cultural workers” in Tyva in a paper entitled “In the Face of Adversity, Shagonar’s Culture Workers Bear the Torch of Culture.” Donahoe argued that the current situation of the House of Culture in Shagonar (Ulug-Khem district, Republic of Tyva) can only be understood in the context of the town’s recent history. Starting in the late 1970s, Shagonar and several neighboring villages were evacuated and destroyed to make room for the reservoir behind the Saiano-Shushenskoe dam. In order to quell resistance to the project, the government embarked on a massive propaganda campaign promising a booming modern port city on the shores of a beautiful reservoir. But the rebuilding Shagonar was interrupted by the collapse of the USSR, and the current landscape of Shagonar — abandoned construction sites and formerly well-tended wheat fields overrun by wild cannabis — is a testament to those thwarted ambitions. The other important historical event that has left its mark on Shagonar and its House of Culture was a series of violent confrontations between Tyvans and Russians in the early 1990s. As a result of these conflicts, many non-Tyvans left Shagonar, changing the ethnic make up of the town and straining relations between the Tyvan and non-Tyvan populations. At present, the House of Culture is perceived as an institution for Tyvans only, staffed entirely by Tyvans, with many of the events centering around Tyvan folk arts (dance, song) and conducted in the Tyvan language, which effectively excludes non-Tyvans. Today, in this economically depressed town in one of the poorest of Russia’s administrative units, the House of Culture is indispensable. It is the central meeting place for a wide variety of social functions and the sole venue for public entertainment. Yet it

struggles to survive, a task made all the more difficult by federal-level administrative restructuring that places more of the financial burden for supporting institutions such as the House of Culture on local administrations. Under these circumstances, culture workers scramble to fund the House of Culture and its activities by renting out its facilities for private functions, soliciting sponsorship for events, and fixing relatively high ticket prices for events. Donahoe suggested that this represents a shift in the image of the House of Culture, from a symbol of socialist community and cultural “enlightenment” to something approaching a private enterprise. This shift, however, has not extinguished the ideals and commitment of Shagonar’s culture workers, who persevere in the name of culture and community.

Agnieszka Halemba (MPI; Leipzig University) presented her fieldwork on “House of Culture within Structures of Power — the Case of Kosh Agach, Republic of Altai.” Halemba reflected on the ways in which the House of Culture operates, is managed and perceived by inhabitants of the district center of Kosh Agach region. She analyzed its operations vis-à-vis two other institutions that fulfill roles that in many other regions are ascribed to the DK. The Center for Children’s Creative Activity [*Tsentr detskogo tvorchestva* (TsDT)] and Center for National Cultures [*Tsentr natsional'nykh kul'tur* (TsNK)] are concerned with particular and fairly strictly prescribed activities that are defined in terms of “children’s development” and “national identity,” respectively. At the same time the DK in Kosh Agach is defined in terms of “culture,” but, as the term itself suggests, has become an “empty space” that can be filled with activities depending on the needs of local power holders. Halemba showed how the educational and ideological functions, which should theoretically be fulfilled by the DK (according to official documents and declarations of the DK employees as well as opinions of DK users) have been separated and transferred to other organizations — an educational function to the TsDT and an ideological one to the TsNK. The separation of those functions allowed the local administration to exercise much stricter control over the ideological dimension — the TsNK has moved fully under the supervision of the local holder of political power. The DK on the other hand has become an empty but strictly formalized space, in which educational and ideological events are performed but neither created nor generated. Halemba argued that this model of the DK as a void has been possible also because of the (too) strict, explicit, and public institutionalization of the notion of culture.

The final presenter of the day, Joachim Otto Habeck (MPI), addressed the functional aspects of Houses of Culture in his paper “Community Coherence and Self-Representation: On Functional Aspects of Houses of Culture (in the City and Region of Novosibirsk)” Habeck suggested that the Houses of Culture (DKs) fulfill multiple functions that can be analyzed at the level of the individual, the community, and the society at large. He described some functions on the community level. Among these are the DK’s role in the maintenance of community coherence and its role in the public presentation of the community’s image. He provided two examples: the DK Tochmashevets in a low-income suburb of Novosibirsk and the DK of Kolyvan, a small town on the outskirts of Novosibirsk. Tochmashevets is a small DK without a large stage for artistic performances. It mainly serves as a venue for meetings of a large variety of clubs and associations [*kluby po interesam*], including bikers and gardeners, and closely cooperates with the citizens’ council [*territorial'noe obshchestvennoe samoupravlenie*] of that part of the suburb in which it is located. Tochmashevets can be described as a neighborhood center. Many of the regular visitors have a marked interest in recreating and maintaining the social networks that broke down when the big factories of the suburb had to lay off large numbers of workers.

In addition, Tochmashevets is the DK which, by order of the city council, is to provide the permanent base for the ethnically-defined cultural organizations [*natsional'no-kul'turnye avtonomii*] of Novosibirsk. In this sense, it works toward community coherence not only of the suburb but also of diaspora groups in the city. A quite different case is the DK of Kolyvan, where music, dance and theater occupy much more time and space than “non-artistic” activities. Social networks in Kolyvan have remained quite intact throughout the transformation period, and Habeck argues that they do not depend on the DK. The activities of DK employees and visitors are more oriented towards artistic expression for an audience both within and outside the community. The DK contributes to the upholding of the community’s image as a place with a rich cultural heritage, a symbol of the community as a whole. “Tochmashevets” cannot be such a symbol, nor can any other DK of Novosibirsk, which can only represent certain facets of the city’s image. Besides highlighting the most important functional differences between urban and rural houses of culture, Habeck also

discussed how DKs in the city employ different strategies and serve different purposes, with the aim to carry out a general analysis of functional aspects.

The second day of the workshop was mostly reserved for research presentations by visiting scholars from outside of MPI. Alexander D. King (Department of Anthropology, University of Aberdeen) described the activities of the Koryak House of Culture (locally referred to as the ODK [*Okruzhnoi dom kul'tury*]) in Palana, Kamchatka, and outlined a mostly implicit theory of culture behind its role as a place for all kinds of artists and creative people to work, perform, learn, and teach the arts. King described his physical and social location in Palana, where he lived and worked with local ‘culturites’ [*kul'turovtsy*]. His apartment was on the ground floor of the Mengo House, a building originally built for the professional dance troupe of that name. It included small apartments for the dancers as well as rehearsal, office, and storage spaces. The east end of the building was under control of the Koryak District [*okrug*] Department [*otdelenie*] of Culture and managed by Mengo, although few dancers actually lived there anymore. Everyone in Palana knew that ethnographers study the ‘locals’ and ‘local culture’ [*mestnaia kul'tura/mestnyi fol'klor*], and thus it made sense that he would be affiliated with the Okrug Department of Culture. As might be expected, indigenous Kamchatkan cultures held a prominent position in the ODK in Palana, but they were not privileged beyond the status of local prominence. King was struck by the clear lack of nationalist ideology at work in ODK music, dance, and theater performances and a rather Herderian cultural relativity: each folk [*natsional'nost'*] had a distinctive culture, but they weren’t necessarily graded in a hierarchical scale of civilization. Societies could be more or less civilized and certainly persons could be, and persons could have more or less “culture”. King argued that cultures, however, were implicitly understood as loose sets of patterns — styles of dancing, sewing, singing — which could be learned and enacted in a variety of venues. The creative individual was one who could bend given shapes into new forms. This creativity most often took two forms: a conservative approach working within a single culture, or an integrational approach combining two or more styles into a collage. Thus, at the root of artistic creativity in Palana was the understanding that culture is a set of symbols, and the culturite is an expert who combines technical competence with skills in the manipulation and innovative combination of symbols or metaphors.

Ethnicity and identity have been key aspects of understanding the politics and meaning of the use of indigenous culture in houses of culture in other parts of Russia, but in Palana King found them much less important than the appreciation of art for art's sake.

Ali F. İğmen (Department of History, California State University, Long Beach) talked about how Kyrgyz populations forged a Soviet community in the houses of culture of 1920s and 1930s. İğmen suggested that members of the houses of culture in Kyrgyzstan were active participants in the production of a cultural revolution. During the 1920s and 1930s Kyrgyz ways of being and knowing began to change. The houses of culture helped the state and the people fashion a contemporary Kyrgyz community within Soviet standards of that era. They contributed to the state's policies of cultural revolution through limited power relations with the Party. Even those who were administrators of *ails* [Kyrgyz mountain settlements] could only assert power as far as the Party allowed them. Nonetheless, cultural institutions such as houses of culture played an important role in eliciting participation from ail populations. The main contribution of ail leaders in clubs manifested itself in complaints about conditions on the ground and collaboration with regional offices. Ail leaders repeatedly appealed to regional administrators to respond to their ails' needs. İğmen's work examined the earliest steps in the creation of houses of culture: Red Yurts, Red Teahouses, and Workers' Clubs. It is based on an analysis of the correspondence between ail administrators in various ails and cities, province [*oblast'*] offices in republic capitals, and the central offices in Bishkek and Almaty. This correspondence, which includes manuals, declarations, and reports, shows that while attempting to fulfill official requirements, ail administrators constantly communicated to regional administrators that their localities had specific needs. Written records indicate that ail officials did not simply implement the directives and policies of the regional administrators. On the contrary, they expressed their needs and grievances, and made specific requests. Club administrators and members manipulated the Soviet system within the limits the system allowed them, attempting to negotiate with the state about how Kyrgyz cultural community should be defined. During the 1920s and 1930s, titular nationalities received most of the official attention and the

resources from Moscow. İğmen argued that Kyrgyz cadres, like all leading nationalities of each republic, gradually gained access to higher positions. The static definition of ethnically-based nationalities gave Kyrgyz cadres mobility. Towards the end of the 1930s, they learned to use their ail connections and their knowledge of Soviet political behavior to move up in the system. They struggled to define, perform, and enforce Kyrgyzness within this new system. In the process, a new, contested, and volatile meaning of Kyrgyzness began to emerge.

The second half of the workshop included papers on the western regions of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Aivita Putnina (Department of Sociology, University of Latvia, Riga) put forward rural women's cultural projects in Latvia as a representation of the transformations of civil society. Her paper "Transformations of the House of Culture in Civil Society: A Case of Rural Women's Culture Projects in Latvia" described women's organizations that submitted a total of 157 culture- and community-oriented projects to a project competition organized by a private company and a women's journal. Putnina's paper described the transformation of the function of houses of culture since the Soviet period. Activities falling within the scope of houses of culture are shaped by central-governmental culture policies, preferences of local governments, and civil society projects. She argued that women tried to restore their cultural community through writing projects and justifying their activities, thus negotiating between state-promoted official culture and the activities considered "culture" by women themselves.

Finally, Nadezhda D. Savova (Department of Anthropology, Princeton University) presented a paper on the intangible aspects and value of the creative capital and heritage politics of Bulgarian cultural communities called *chitalishte*. In her paper entitled "Intangible Houses: Community Creative Capital and Heritage Politics in Bulgaria and Cuba," Savova suggested that the concept of "house of culture" has been widely understood as a communist tool for propaganda through the arts. She argued, however, that the houses of culture built in Bulgaria under socialism came on the foundation of the *chitalishte*, a nation-wide network of community cultural centers and libraries that Bulgarian civil society had initiated in the 1850s, even as countries like Cuba adopted the house of culture project directly from the Soviet model (in the 1970s). Currently the system of such spaces remains perhaps most active in Bulgaria compared to all of the former socialist countries. Savova's paper also explored the

social functions of community arts, in particular traditional music and dance (*trova* bands in Cuba and “folklore” song and dance ensembles in Bulgaria) through the concept of “community creative capital.” She traced the relationship of this form of capital generated through folklore to the politics of “intangible heritage” developed by the respective ministries of culture and UNESCO’s

conventions, and suggested that the latter are being negotiated at the community level in discourses on creativity, development, and quality of life.

This one-of-a-kind event proved to be more than a workshop, challenging both the presenters and the audience to think about the lasting legacy of the houses of culture.

Russia and Islam in the Archives of Eurasia: An International Workshop

New York City, N.Y., USA, December 1, 2007

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The Harriman Institute for Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European Studies at Columbia University sponsored this international workshop to discuss the value of using archival materials to study the relationship between Russia and the Islamic world. The event was organized in connection with a research project titled “Russia and Islam: Religion, the State and Modernity during and after the Age of Empire,” directed by Mark Mazower (Columbia University).¹ It was attended by interested members of the public, undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and scholars based in Canada, Georgia, Russia, Turkey, and the United States.

Richard Wortman (Columbia University) chaired the morning session, “Russian-Muslim Relations in the Archives of Russia and Georgia,” introducing the speakers as “pioneers” in using archival materials to study relations between the Russian government and Muslims in the Caucasus and Central Asia in the imperial period. Dmitrii Arapov (Moscow State University) presented a paper in Russian titled “Islam in the State Archives of the Russian Empire, 1721-1917,” based on research conducted in the Russian State Military-Historical Archive, the State Archive of the

Russian Federation, the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Empire (all in Moscow), and the Russian State Historical Archive (St. Petersburg). Arapov’s presentation focused on the activities of Muslim populations as reflected in materials generated or obtained by six central Tsarist institutions: the Cabinet of His Imperial Majesty; His Imperial Majesty’s Own Chancery, particularly its Third Department; the Council of Ministers; and the Ministries of Internal Affairs, War, and Foreign Affairs. For Arapov, these materials represent “the most significant information concerning Islam within the Russian Empire in the years between 1721 and 1917.” He cautioned against using them uncritically, however, pointing to problems of authenticity, authorship, and objectivity. Commenting on the latter, Arapov noted the presence of Eurocentric stereotypes in his sources, specifically the tendency of Russian officials to equate Islam with fanaticism. According to Arapov, the documents reflect the government’s two ways of thinking about Russia’s Muslim populations. The “minimalist” or “pragmatic” program allowed for a degree of religious toleration, the existence of an officially-sanctioned Islamic religious establishment, permission to observe Islamic rites in the army, and the teaching of Islamic law to Muslim students in schools and universities. In contrast, the “maximalist” or “utopian” program aimed to integrate Muslims into a unified imperial system that would privilege the teaching of Russian language over that of Islamic law. According to Arapov, circumstances ultimately forced both the Tsarist and Soviet regimes to adopt a pragmatic approach toward their Muslim populations. In

¹ Focusing on Russia’s historical relationship with its southern Muslim neighbors, this project aims to rethink the relationship between religion and modernity by highlighting the role played by ideas, religious institutions, and state policies in the transformation and modernization of Russia in the Tsarist and Soviet eras. For information about the project and related upcoming events, see <http://russia-islam.harrimaninstitute.org>.

conclusion, Arapov noted that while Russia's central archives contain an enormous amount of information concerning Islam and its adherents in the Russian Empire, it is scattered among the archives and often difficult to locate due to the way the groups of records [*fondy*] have been organized.

George Sanikidze (Institute of Oriental Studies, Georgian Academy of Sciences) presented a paper titled "Orthodoxy versus Islam: Russian Imperial Policy towards Georgia's Muslims during the 19th Century," based on research conducted in the Central Archive of the Ajarian Autonomous Republic (Batumi), the Central Historical Archive of Georgia (Tbilisi), and the National Library of Georgia (Tbilisi). According to Sanikidze, the Batumi archive is particularly valuable for the study of *muhajirstvo* (Russian)/*muharjiroba* (Georgian), the emigration of the Muslim population of Ajaria to the Ottoman Empire after the Russian incorporation of the region by under the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. The archive in Tbilisi contains ample information on the Muslim populations of Tbilisi province [*gubernia*]: for example, materials concerning relations between Tbilisi's Sunni and Shi'a communities, and between Muslims and Armenians; the educational and cultural activities of its Muslim populations; and the memoirs of Mate Albutashvili, an Eastern Orthodox priest of Kist origin, describing attempts by Russian imperial officials to convert Muslim and pagan Kists to Orthodox Christianity. In the National Library of Georgia one can find materials relating to the activities of the Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus, studies of Caucasian highlanders, the general census of the Russian Empire, and articles published in contemporary periodicals in Georgian, Russian, Persian, and Azeri. Sanikidze argued that Russian policy toward the region in the late imperial period was always evolving and highly dependent on circumstances. Initially, and largely for strategic reasons, the Russian government attempted to change the demographic balance in Georgia's border regions by encouraging the conversion or emigration of Muslims and the immigration of Christians. This policy was soon abandoned in favor of one of religious toleration that aimed to win the loyalty of Georgia's Muslims by building mosques and opening madrasas and to regulate their affairs by integrating Muslim religious elites into imperial bureaucratic structures.

In "Islamic Responses to Imperial/Soviet Modernization of Local Muslim Communities in Private and State Archives from the Caucasus," Vladimir Bobrovnikov (Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences) discussed sources available to researchers interested in such questions as: What were indigenous perceptions of Tsarist and Soviet rule? To what extent and in what ways did Russia's new Muslim subjects participate in the "military native administration" (*voenno-narodnoe upravlenie*) of the region from 1860 to 1917? How did their ways of life, worldviews and languages change as a result of massive resettlements, urbanization and Russification in the 20th century? Like Arapov, Bobrovnikov offered a typology of sources: first, written sources of different types (for example, Arabic-language maps of the region, lists of *waqfs*, protocols of village assemblies in Daghestan, Muslim correspondence, documents, legislation, historical notes, chronicles and Islamic poetry in Arabic) housed in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Daghestan (Makhachkala) and the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Makhachkala); second, oral histories of the so-called "Caucasus war" and its heroes and oral traditions reflecting the cultural memory of Tsarist and Soviet rule; and third, material culture. Unlike Arapov, Bobrovnikov focused on "original Muslim narrative and judicial sources" written in Arabic and Caucasian languages, which are of "special importance for a true understanding of the relationship between power and knowledge among the local Muslim elites." He noted two problems in using these sources: first, that of translation, that is, the challenge of rendering Muslim and local ideas and institutions into Russian, and Tsarist and Soviet notions and institutions into the languages of the Caucasus; and second, the challenge of distinguishing between real and imagined pasts, between history and cultural memory. Bobrovnikov explained that in writing about Islamic discourses of empire in the North Caucasus, it is important to study Islam's sacred texts in conjunction with the perceptions and practices of its adherents as reflected in their oral histories and material culture.

In the discussion period, Alexander Babyonyshev (Harvard University) asked Arapov why a 1924 decree on the education of Muslim children excluded those in Chechnya, Daghestan, and Turkistan. Arapov explained that in light of the strength of Islamic culture and the relative weakness of Soviet power in these places, the Soviet government lacked the resources to implement its

policies there. In response to a question by Eileen Kane (Columbia University), Bobrovnikov elaborated on the use of Arabic in Daghestan as the “main language of cultural exchange” from the 1860s until World War II. Prompted by James Meyer (Columbia University), Sanikidze commented briefly on the richness of the Ottoman Turkish and Persian materials housed in the Institute of Manuscripts in Tbilisi.

Christine Philliou (Columbia University) chaired the afternoon session, “Islam and Orthodoxy in the Archives and Libraries of Turkey and Central Asia.” The presentation by Michael Khodarkovsky (Loyola University, Chicago) asked “How Useful Are the Ottoman Archives to a Historian of Russia?” Khodarkovsky shared his experience of working in the Ottoman archives (Başbakanlık Arşivi) and speculated on what could be in store for those interested in exploring them. On a visit to Istanbul in 1983 to conduct research on Russian-Kalmyk relations, Khodarkovsky found the situation in the Ottoman archives “extremely primitive, in terms of both their physical condition and catalogues,” compared with that of the Public Records Office in London. Still, he explained that documents in Ottoman repositories provided an important perspective on the activities of Kalmyks, one at odds with that reflected in Russian documents. Such alternative perspectives helped him “deconstruct” a number of myths concerning Russian-Kalmyk relations, in particular the Soviet narrative of the “voluntary incorporation” of the Kalmyks into the Russian Empire. He speculated that Ottoman archives will not offer much in terms of the ways Ottomans perceived Russian society and how it functioned. In contrast, they contain a great deal of information on Ottoman borderlands, especially Muslim groups in the Black Sea and Caucasus regions, and on the immigration of Circassians from the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Finally, Khodarkovsky suggested there might be a significant amount of information on Russia in the Topkapı Palace Archive (Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi). Summing up, Khodarkovsky cautioned historians of Russia against expecting a significant return on their investment in learning Ottoman to conduct research on Russia in Turkey’s archives. On the other hand, he considers knowledge of Ottoman history to be “invaluable” for understanding Russian history in comparative perspective.

Responding to Khodarkovsky’s presentation, James Meyer helpfully pointed to the Başbakanlık Arşivi website where one can find the titles of recently published guides to archival materials relating to Muslim populations in the Russian Empire (in Kazan, Azerbaijan, Crimea, and Turkistan).² In addition, Meyer recommended the Foreign Ministry archives, also located at the Başbakanlık Arşivi, which contain valuable information, much of it in French, on Ottoman-Russian relations and on Russian subjects living in the Ottoman Empire.

During her presentation, “Looking for a Russian Needle in an Ottoman Haystack,” Virginia Aksan (McMaster University) observed that most scholars new to the study of the Ottoman Empire are struck by the apparent silence of the Ottoman sources on foreign policy and international relations, especially in the period before 1850, and especially regarding Russia. Her remarks addressed why that might be so and attempted to fill the silence with examples from her own experience with Ottoman narrative and archival materials. Aksan attributed the relative organizational chaos of the Ottoman archives (like Khodarkovsky, Aksan focused in her comments on the Başbakanlık Arşivi) to three phenomena: first, lack of any early organizing principle; second, organization around “supposed topics”; and third, lack of funding. As for attempts to find information pertaining to Russia and Islam, Aksan observed that to study a subject like pre-1850 Ottoman warfare, “it takes you some time to find anything in the archives, much less Russia.” Similarly, “Islam has been missing in the study of the Ottoman Empire.” Now that access to archives is improving, digitization of many Ottoman manuscripts is a reality, and knowledge of both Russian and Ottoman Turkish among students and scholars is increasingly common, Aksan sees new opportunities to study the relationship between the Russian and Ottoman Empires and the place of Islam and its adherents in both.

Adeeb Khalid began his presentation, “Searching for Muslim Voices in Post-Soviet Archives,” by noting that the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union both possessed large Muslim populations, and by posing several questions about them: What can the archives of the post-Soviet space reveal about the past of those Muslim populations? What kinds of Muslim voices can we find in their

² The URL of the archive's website is: <http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/source.cms4/index.asp?wslt=devletarsivleri.gov.tr.ce>.

records? What kinds of questions can we ask and what strategies do we need to employ in order to understand these records? Khalid stressed that archives in Central Asia today were all products of the Soviet state, its archival and bureaucratic practices. Because the archives are themselves products of specific times and circumstances, Khalid urged researchers to apply a “great deal of skepticism and caution in using what we find in these archives.” Khalid noted the existence of three sets of archives in the states of Central Asia: the archives of the Tsarist state institutions, of the Communist Party, and of Soviet-era security organs. What kinds of Muslim voices can we find in their records? For the most part, Muslims appear in two roles in these records: either as supplicants or as objects of suspicion. Khalid argued against interpreting Muslim petitions to state organs as in any way reflecting “the voice of the people.” Furthermore, Khalid said that the sources that treat Muslims as objects of suspicion represent the concerns and views not of Muslims but of the state. In the Soviet period, Muslims continued to appear in the records as supplicants and suspects, but some now also appeared as actors in the organs of power as the authors of other kinds of documents. Khalid pointed to an unusually valuable cache of documents in the state archives of Uzbekistan: namely, the records generated by the People’s Republic of Bukhara that lasted from 1920 to 1924. According to Khalid, the political language of that state came out of a vocabulary of Muslim modernism and late Ottoman-era debates. In

conclusion, Khalid argued that the internal documentation of the People’s Republic of Bukhara reflected a Muslim discourse largely absent in correspondence with Communist party interlocutors, where “speaking Bolshevik” was the norm. He explained that he treats informational summaries produced by the Communist Party and secret police organs (*svodki*) “with a great deal of skepticism, primarily as catalogues of the fears and anxieties of the regime that commissioned them, rather than as a reflection of any actually existing reality.” The archives are very rich, “but ultimately they are the warehouses of the documentary production of the state.” While Muslim voices can be found in them they are almost always refracted through concerns of the state. They need to be read in conjunction with documents produced outside the orbit of the state.

Jane Burbank (New York University) and others took issue with Khalid’s treatment of documents produced by Muslims interacting with the Tsarist and Soviet states, specifically, his claim that “what you find in the archives is what the state was thinking.” Burbank’s point was that documents now housed in state archives, whether produced by the state or by Muslims interacting with it, can often reveal much about what non-state actors were doing and thinking, and that there is no need to privilege one Muslim voice over another. Khalid replied by stressing again the need to take into account how documents produced by Muslims were translated into Russian and found their way into state archives, or in his words “the multiple layers of literary production” that such documents embody.

Central Asian Studies: History, Politics and Society

Tsukuba, Japan, December 14-16, 2007

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An international conference devoted to Central Asian studies was convened at the University of Tsukuba in Tsukuba, Japan on December 14-16, 2007. The conference was jointly organized by four universities in Japan and Europe: the University of Tsukuba, Stockholm University, the University of Tokyo, and the University of Cambridge. The conference’s main organizers were Timur Dadabaev (University of Tsukuba), Siddharth Saxena (University of Cambridge), Birgit Schlyter (University of Stockholm), and Hisao Komatsu

(University of Tokyo). Its focus was broad and interdisciplinary, addressing both empirical research and theoretical issues in Central Asian research writ large. The organization of the conference was somewhat innovative, eschewing narrow thematic categorizations of the panels in favor of a broader approach in order to facilitate and encourage discussion. In this regard the organizers decided not to publish the proceedings of the conference in favor of a more informal and hopefully dynamic outcome.

The participants in the meeting from outside of Japan were reminded of Japan's increasing importance as a locus of serious scholarship on Central Asia. The University of Tsukuba had recently inaugurated an ambitious Central Asian Area Studies Program. In addition, Professor Hisao Komatsu's keynote address focused on the history of Central Asian studies in Japan. He traced the history of Central Asian scholarship in Japan and its relationship to broader fields, such as Oriental studies that emerged in Japan early in the 20th century, Slavic studies that emerged in the 1950s, and Islamic studies that developed in the 1970s. Central Asian studies in Japan developed at the intersection of these three broad fields. Its first advances were in the area of Xinjiang studies. However, as Professor Komatsu demonstrated, Japanese scholars, particularly historians, have produced many important studies of Central Asian proper, the Caucasus, and the Volga-Ural region.

Following the introductory speeches and the keynote address, the conference itself was divided into five panels. The first of these panels was titled "Politics: Transformation and Challenges," and it focused primarily on empirical issues in Central Asian politics. Among the most outstanding papers presented here was by Stephane Dudoignon (Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris), in which he encouraged a re-evaluation of the typologies of religious authority in Tajikistan, and in Central Asia in general, during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Dudoignon questioned common sociological categorizations of religious authority as applied to Central Asia. In this panel the political scientist Michael Friedholm (University of Stockholm) addressed Russia's role in international relations with Central Asia. Professor Friedholm paid particular attention to the significance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and how it functioned in the foreign policies of Russia, China, and the Central Asian republics.

The following panel addressed the study of Central Asian history. Here Tomohiko Uyama (Hokkaido University) questioned the viability of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism in understanding the relationship between Tsarist administrators and Central Asian intellectuals in the later imperial period. Suchandana Chatterjee (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Calcutta) offered a welcome discussion of sources covering the first years of the Bukharan

People's Republic (1920-1924). Specifically she examined two eyewitness accounts by Faizullah Khojaev and the Indian revolutionary M. N. Roy. Cloé Drieu (New Sorbonne University, Paris) discussed early works of Uzbek cinema produced in the 1920s and 1930s and how they presented alternating, and at times competing, depictions of social progress and change in Uzbekistan. Guljanat Kurmangalieva-Ercilasun (Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University) summarized the results of oral history fieldwork among the older generation of Kyrgyzstanis. She demonstrated a significant survival of nostalgia for the Soviet Union and Soviet leaders among this generation. Siddharth Saxena (University of Cambridge) examined coexistence and cosmopolitanism in the case of the various communities inhabiting Bukhara. He made important points about the how separate and exclusive communities nevertheless interacted in the realms of ritual and ceremony. Finally, Bakhtiyor Babadjanov (Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan) presented a critical survey of some of the scholarship addressing what he has termed "the post-Soviet re-Islamization" of Central Asia. Professor Babadjanov decried what he viewed as incomplete studies of this phenomenon that were based on too narrow a selection of sources and failed to take into account the full range of available sources.

The third group of papers concerned language policy in Central Asia and its implications. Among the presenters Birgit Schlyter (Stockholm University) discussed in broad terms the changing dynamic of language policy in Uzbekistan since independence, and in particular the unpredictability of language development in the face of shifting public opinion, as well as political vacillation in the realm of language policy. Rano Turaeva (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology) provided an overview of her fieldwork in Uzbek dialectology, specifically the intersection between Khorezmian identity and the Khorezm dialect of Uzbek. Eric Schluessel (Indiana University, Bloomington) presented a paper addressing language planning and elite formation in Xinjiang. He examined in broad terms Chinese language policy in Xinjiang, primarily among Uighurs, from the Qing era down to the present. He argued that while Chinese language policies before 2004 had led to the formation of rather restricted elites in Xinjiang, a new policy implemented in that year may result in a more standardized educational system in that region.

The fourth panel addressed the sustainability of local institutions and networks. In a particularly

thought-provoking paper Nicholas de Pedro (Observatory of European Foreign Policy, Barcelona) encouraged a re-evaluation of security issues as they are understood for Central Asia. He argued for the consideration of a new security paradigm, beyond the conventional focus on political, military, and energy security. Stephen Fennell (University of Cambridge) presented one of the most informative papers at the conference, which he devoted to the topic of historical biodiversity in Uzbekistan and the gradual erosion of plant and animal species in that country. Fennell used as a point of departure the catalogs of species that naturalists compiled for Central Asia in the 19th century, revealing a rapidly diminishing biodiversity in Uzbekistan. Fennell attributed this decline to several complex factors, including human population growth and deforestation. He also surveyed institutional reactions to this disturbing trend. The anthropologist Sergei Abashin (Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Moscow) examined “avlod” descent groups within a Tajik community, using as a case study a long-term inheritance dispute among a related group of Tajiks to illustrate “avlod” dynamics among the Tajiks in the village of Turgunboy. Finally, Takeshi

Kimura (University of Tsukuba) provided a very useful overview of the principle of sustainability in the fields of social and natural sciences and its potential applicability to the Central Asian case.

The last panel addressed Central Asia and international relations, with a particular emphasis on the outcomes of integrationist initiatives among the Central Asian republics. Timur Dadabaev’s presentation focused on theoretical issues, namely the functionalist paradigm and international cooperation schemes in Central Asia. Perhaps one of the most pointed presentations came from Nur Omarov (Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, Bishkek). Professor Omarov depicted past integration schemes for Central Asia as failures. He described three phases in this process: the preparatory phase, from 1990 to 1993; a period of “ineffective realization,” from 1992 to 2005; and a period of “disintegration,” from 2005 to the present. Prajakti Kalra (Cambridge University) discussed Uzbek-Saudi relations, with a special emphasis on the role of the Uzbek diaspora in Saudi Arabia. She emphasized the high level of integration of Saudi Uzbeks in Saudi society, particularly in government and business circles.

Relations Between Turkey and Central Asia: Expectations and Foresights

Ankara, Turkey, February 6, 2008

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On February 6, 2008, a conference entitled “Relations between Turkey and Central Asian Countries: Expectations and Foresights” was held at the Ambassadors Hotel, Ankara, Turkey. The conference was organized by the Global Strategy Institute (<http://www.globalstrateji.org>), a think-tank in Turkey established in 2003. Although the main research areas of the Institute are the Turkmen of Iraq and the Middle East in general, it also has research units on Turkistan, Russia, the Balkans and Europe, and the Far East.

The conference was divided into three sessions. In the first session, political and economic relations between Turkey and Central Asia were discussed. The second session analyzed energy and security relations, while the third focused on the Turkish perspective on Central Asia. The

conference aimed to provide a ground for discussion about issues such as enhancing bilateral relations further from a regional perspective, failures and successes of Turkish-Central Asian relations, and future expectations.

The President of the Global Strategy Institute, Mr. Ercüment Okçu, opened the conference with his keynote speech, which highlighted the necessity of establishing effective and enduring relations between Turkey and Central Asian states. According to Okçu, neither the high expectations and hopes that came to the forefront shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union nor shared sociopolitical, historical, linguistic, and religious characteristics have been sufficient to provide significant common ground between the two sides.

The first session of the conference entitled “Political and Economic Relations” began with a presentation by Orazdyrdy Yagmurov, a well-known writer from Turkmenistan. Yagmurov argued that today the most important point that must be considered in Turkish-Turkmen relations is the “social-psychological aspect.” According to Yagmurov, the Soviet past prevented the two sides from establishing real and sincere dialogue, and as such, in the aftermath of the Cold War, despite their common religious, linguistic, and ethnic characteristics, neither Turkmen nor Turkish people are able to overcome the prejudices and misconceptions and create a common and precise psychological “attitude.” Yagmurov argued that emphasizing famous historical and cultural figures, such as Atatürk and Rumi, would serve to overcome this shortcoming.

Prof. Dr. Orhan Kavuncu, the General Secretary of the Turkish Clubs Association, focused on the political relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey and pointed out that there have been contradictions in Turkey’s attitude towards Uzbekistan. According to Kavuncu, Turkey must go beyond the limits of Western understanding regarding Uzbekistan, namely, the big concern with the failure to protect human rights without taking into account the peculiarities of the regime in Uzbekistan. Kavuncu suggested that Turkey had to develop a more direct and comprehensive approach towards Uzbekistan. Ali Külebi, the co-president of the Turkish National Security Strategies Research Center, shared a similar view on Uzbekistan; he claimed that Turkey’s approach to Uzbekistan is misguided, which makes bilateral relations and cooperation harder to maintain.

Another presentation in this session was made by Gulzat Akparalieva, who is a member of the Turkish-Kyrgyz Business Association. The presentation primarily focused on the economic development of Kyrgyzstan. Akparalieva argued that Kyrgyzstan’s transition economy needed Turkish investment and industrial technology. According to Akparalieva, Kyrgyz-Turkish relations had the potential to provide political and economic benefits for both sides. For that to happen, however, Turkey, being more developed and advanced in the economic and technological sense, must play a pioneering role. Prof. Dr. Baurjan Isabekov from Kazakhstan’s Khoja Ahmed Yasawi University emphasized in his presentation

that Kazakhstan and Turkey are two regional powers that have common interests in developing economic and political relations. His presentation outlined the importance of regional cooperation, focusing specifically on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, the Southern Railway and the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA). Issabekov also pointed out that Turkish professionals must be aware of Kazakhstan’s positive attitude towards Turkey. Issabekov further indicated that Turkey must increase its efforts toward European Union membership, which would make Central Asia a neighbor to one of the world’s most developed economies.

The second session of the conference was entitled “Security and Energy Relations.” The first speaker was Devran Orazgyljov, a PhD candidate at Dokuz Eylül University in Turkey and an energy expert from Turkmenistan. Orazgyljov pointed out that Turkey’s regional outlook on the issue of energy security was shared by Turkmenistan, which recently experienced a transition of power to a new leadership. He also argued that the new political cadre in Turkmenistan believes energy projects like the Nabucco gas pipeline are important and actively supports further developments for enhanced regional cooperation. Still, Orazgyljov argued, the Turkish and European sides must take immediate action towards resolving Trans-Caspian issues so that further regional cooperation becomes possible, which could also help Turkish-Turkmen relations to develop.

Dosym Satpayev, the President of the Risk Assessment Group Kazakhstan, presented a more skeptical picture of Turkey’s role in Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. He argued that Turkey needs to define a more country-specific approach rather than a regional one. Satpayev identified Turkey’s role as connected to and limited by the foreign policy of the United States in the region, while the Central Asian countries are now beginning to follow a more multilateral and pragmatic foreign policy. According to Satpayev, this trend could result in a decrease in the role that the United States and therefore Turkey plays in Central Asia.

The last session was devoted to Turkish perspectives on Central Asia. The first speaker of this session was Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pınar Akçalı from the Middle East Technical University (Ankara) who focused on Turkish-Central Asian relations from the perspective of Eurasianism in Turkey. Akçalı first emphasized the historical barriers that hindered relations between the two sides during the Soviet era. In the post-Soviet era, however, when Turkey began

to face several problems coming from within the Atlantic world (mainly the United States and the European Union) Eurasianism emerged as a viable, realistic foreign policy option that has been taken into consideration more and more. She emphasized that according to its supporters, this approach has the potential to become an alternative for Turkey. Akçalı also argued that Turkish-Central Asian relations had their specific problems, and the other regional powers, Russia being the most influential, must not be avoided or excluded from analysis in developing a more realistic attitude on the part of Turkey.

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Aydın from the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodities Exchanges University of Economics and Technology (Ankara) argued that Turkey's approach towards Central Asia, which was bound to fail in the end, can be characterized by both negligence and agitation. According to Aydın, the main reasons for failure were basically misguided planning and policy-making, as well as lack of resources such as funds, skilled labor, infrastructure, and experts. Nevertheless, today Turkey has a limited place and role in Central Asian politics, made possible by increased communication between the two sides. Aydın also suggested that Turkey had specific foreign policy problems that prevented effective involvement with the region, such as negotiations for membership in the European Union and problems in the Middle East, including instability in Iraq and the Cyprus problem.

The last speaker of this session was Dr. Hakan Fidan, the ex-president of the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA) and the current Deputy Undersecretary for the Prime Minister. After giving an overview of Turkey's relations with Central Asia, Fidan argued that Turkey's capabilities are limited in comparison to other regional powers such as Russia and China. According to him, although Turkey's relations with the West can be identified as "interest-oriented" for both sides, relations with Central Asia are centered around the idea of "mission" emerging out of a sense of "responsibility" on Turkey's part. Despite that, Turkey failed to maintain sound relations with the Central Asian republics. This could be even more problematic, considering the factor of a now recovered and revived Russia, which might compel the republics in the region to reorient their foreign policy preferences towards Russia and away from Turkey even more.

By bringing several people from a variety of different countries and professions, the panel provided a lively atmosphere of discussion and exchange of insightful analysis on the part of both the panelists and the participants. Focusing on two main axes, failures and suggestions, the panel characterized the current condition of Turkey's relations with Central Asia and made suggestions for improving them. The concern with the reasons for past failures and with future expectations was more observable on the Turkish side. Nevertheless, the panelists made important comments in certain crucial areas such as economic cooperation, cultural issues, political relations, and strategic policy options.

Global Migration: New Dynamics, Strategies, and Visions in the EU and Its Neighborhood

Ankara, Turkey, February 29 - March 1, 2008

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From February 29 to March 1, 2008 an international conference entitled "Global Migration: New Dynamics, Strategies and Visions in the EU and Its Neighborhood" was held at the Cultural and Convention Center of the Middle East Technical University (METU). This two day international conference was organized by the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA) as

part of the final dissemination activities of a European Union 6th Framework Program (FP6) project entitled, "Global Migration from the Eastern Mediterranean and Eurasia: Security and Human Rights Challenges to Europe (GLOMIG)." The GLOMIG Project was one of the first two social sciences projects that Turkey acquired as a coordinator in FP6 projects. As part of this project, four other international workshops

were previously held in different parts of Europe. Those workshops were: 1) “Global Migration and European Union’s Policy Interventions” at Nijmegen University, the Netherlands, held October 20-21, 2006 and organized by the Nijmegen Center for Border Research; 2) “Migration to EU: Challenges, Rights, and Opportunities” at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom, held February 22-23, 2007 and organized by the South East European Studies Department; 3) “Perspectives of the Neighborhood Countries on Migration: Economic, Cultural and Political Dimensions” at the Middle East Technical University, Turkey, held January 18-19, 2008 and organized by KORA, and 4) “Migration Policies: Prospects for Institutional Co-operation and Dialogue” at the Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research, Germany, held February 15-16, 2008 and organized by this institute.

The purpose of this conference was twofold. On the one hand, it aimed to provide a venue for discussing the new qualitative and quantitative dimensions of migration and its policy implications; on the other hand, it aimed to provide a platform for discussion about the possibility of developing a strategic and integrated approach with a wider level of participation. In addition to these aims, the conference had the overall purpose of disseminating information on the twenty-four months of activities that has been carried out under the GLOMIG project.

During the two-day conference, seven sessions were held and 28 papers were presented, each with a special focus on the issue of global migration. The presenters came from different countries of the post-Soviet zone, Europe, and Africa, although participants from Central Asia and other former Soviet republics constituted a majority. These participants brought their regional experiences and enriched the discussions. All of the papers were interdisciplinary in nature, focusing on interethnic problems, state-society relations, and economic aspects of migration.

The conference was opened with speeches by Prof. Dr. Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, the GLOMIG Coordinator and KORA Chair, and Prof. Dr. Ahmet Acar, the Vice-Rector of METU. The opening remarks were followed by a presentation by Dr. Aykan Erdemir from the Sociology Department of METU on the “adventure” that the KORA team and their partner institutions had experienced during the twenty-four month period.

Erdemir announced that the GLOMIG project would continue to be sustained as a newly-established research center at METU, the Center for Global Migration Studies.

The first session of the conference focused on recent theoretical discussions in the field of global migration with a special emphasis on how theory and policy interact with each other in order to shape approaches to cope with security threats and human rights challenges. Professor Behrooz Morvaridi from the University of Bradford (UK) presented a paper titled “Forced Migrants, Containment and Human Rights Issues” in which he discussed how the discourse on national and global security had been reconstructed through the use of issues of forced migrants and the commitment of states to protect their rights. According to Morvaridi, this reconstruction of discourse was accompanied in host countries by an institutional denial of the basic human rights of migrants. Morvaridi further argued that this denial was represented in the shift in the refugee discourse from “burden sharing” to “threats to the security of states,” which was also reflected in a policy change to one of containment and the “non-entrée regime.”

The paper by Professor Giovanna Campani from the University of Florence (Italy), titled “Migration Inside the European Union after the Enlargement: What Consequences for the European Democracy?” was another important work discussing the intermingling of theory and practice in policy making. Campani argued that the issues of migration, construction of a European democracy, and security were strictly connected to each other. As such, the construction of the European Union took place on the basis of the distinction between “Europe” and the “others,” that is, the migrants. She claimed that the process of enlargement — especially the recent entry of Romania and Bulgaria — blurred the borders between the “Europeans” and the “others,” and that the migratory flows from the East, being at the core of the security debate, have been influential in policy-making processes.

Another important session gave special emphasis to migration trends in the post-Soviet space. The paper by Matteo Fumagalli from the Central European University (Budapest) entitled “Post-Soviet Migration Trends and Migratory Frameworks: Kazakhstan as a Land of Out-Migration and a Destination Country” was one such paper. Fumagalli argued that as both a source and a destination country, Kazakhstan offers an important vantage point on the evolution of migration trends and policies in the post-

Soviet context as well as in comparative analysis. According to Fumagalli, regulating migration has enabled the Kazakh authorities to achieve demographic security in the early post-independence period.

The presentation of Elena Sadovskaia, an expert from the Research Council on CIS States Migration Studies, the Center for Migration Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, was titled “Contemporary Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan: Trends, Challenges, Perspectives.” According to Sadovskaia, although in recent years economic and trade relations between Central Asia — especially Kazakhstan — and China have become an area of interest for scholars, issues of demography and migration processes between the two sides have not been sufficiently studied. Sadovskaia provided an analysis of the causes, risks, and opportunities associated with Chinese migration to Kazakhstan.

As previously mentioned, there was a particular concentration of participants from Central Asia at the conference. This can be seen as an indication of the changing nature of discussions in the post-Soviet space from the analysis of severe political and economic problems related to transition to the association of such problems with global challenges such as migration, labor movements, terrorism, and security. The presentation by Gulnara Mendikulova, Director of the Center of Diaspora Studies, the World Association of the Kazakhs (Almaty) entitled “Migration between Central Asia and the European Union: Problems and Perspectives” was a good example of this shifting focus in the post-Soviet space. Mendikulova argued that Central Asia can be considered a destination, source, and transit region in global migration. According to her, the transit of illegal migrants coming from Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Sri Lanka, and Iran should be perceived as a source of threat both by the regional states and by the European Union.

Mihail Peleah, a research assistant from the United Nations Development Program’s Bratislava Regional Center made another interesting contribution to the interdisciplinary nature of the conference with his paper titled “The Impact of Migration on Families — What Happens with Gender Roles? Evidence from Moldova.” In his paper Peleah argued that the fact that women constitute the biggest proportion of migrants from Moldova has had a tremendous impact on the changing gender roles in the country. Emigration of

women, especially mothers, might lead to the disappearance of certain traditional family roles performed by these women.

In her presentation “Migration and Return Migration in Central Asia,” Sayora Atadjanova from the National University of Uzbekistan focused on migration patterns from the CIS countries and suggested that these were the consequence of “objective historical and economic reasons.” According to Atadjanova, these resulted in the emergence of two specific destinations for migrants: the “near-abroad” and “distant regions” Out-migration was not the only form of migration in the region: one also needs to look at the return migration trends in Central Asia when analyzing the issue of global migration and its impact on the region.

Gulnara Kuzibaeva, Associate Professor from the National University of Uzbekistan, emphasized one of the most dangerous forms of migration in her paper, “Migration for Sex Work: Case of Uzbekistan.” In her presentation Kuzibaeva argued that migration to Europe for sex work was a new phenomenon for Uzbekistan. She suggests that when migrating, Uzbek women did not necessarily have the intention of getting involved in the sex industry. According to Kuzibaeva, the majority of women were trafficked and coerced into the sex industry, although some voluntarily migrated for sex work. She suggested that working in the sex industry outside of one’s own country has become an attractive economic strategy for some Uzbek women, who create their own survival mechanisms and forge new identities and new spaces by trespassing across social, cultural, and state borders.

Azer Kerim Allahveranov, Executive Director of FANGOM (forum of Azeri NGOs on migration) in Baku, presented a paper entitled “Human Trafficking in Azerbaijan: History of Struggle and the Current Situation.” Allahveranov provided an analysis of the issue of human trafficking in Azerbaijan, which he argued could be considered both a source and transit country of trafficking. He argued that in order to combat trafficking in this country, there has to be coordination of activities at the national, regional, and international level, through the strengthening of cooperation between national governments and international organizations.

The paper of Professor Mariam Edilova and Lecturer Gulzat Zhetibaeva from the International Atatürk-Alatoo University (Bishkek) was entitled “Labor Migration from Kyrgyzstan to Russia and Kazakhstan: Human Rights and Security Challenges.”

The presenters argued that for the Kyrgyz people, migration could be considered part of their nomadic life styles, which continued to exist during the Soviet era as part of their economic life. In those times, it was only external migration that was strictly controlled by the Soviet government. However, according to Edilova and Zhetibaeva, external labor migration has become a phenomenon of the post-Soviet space. Likewise, in her presentation “Migratory Processes of Europeans of Central Asia: An Example of Germans of

Uzbekistan,” Dilaram Inayatova from Tashkent State University provided an analysis of the dynamics of post-Soviet migration trends between the region and the European Union.

As a final note it should be mentioned that the proceedings of all of the papers presented at the conference will be published by KORA. Detailed information on the GLOMIG Project and the proceedings can be found at KORA’s website, <http://www.kora.metu.edu.tr>.

Russia and the Ottoman Empire: Transregional and Comparative Approaches: Graduate Student Workshop

Columbia University, New York City, N.Y., USA, April 5, 2008

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The Harriman Institute for Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European Studies at Columbia University sponsored this workshop to discuss graduate student research reflecting transregional and comparative approaches to studying the Russian and Ottoman empires. Student presentations were limited to 10-12 minutes, as their papers had been distributed in advance to facilitate discussion. The workshop was part of a research project titled “Russia and Islam: Religion, the State and Modernity during and after the Age of Empire,” directed by Mark Mazower (Columbia University), and was attended by graduate students from several countries studying in the United States and United Kingdom and scholars working in the greater New York area.¹

Michael Reynolds (Princeton University) chaired the morning session, “Overlapping Boundaries: The Caucasus as a Site of Competition and Cohabitation,” which featured papers by Irma Kreiten (University of Southampton), Halit D. Akarca (Princeton University) and Leslie Sargent (University of California, Santa Barbara). Kreiten’s paper, “War and State in the Northeastern Black Sea Region: The Impact of the Russian-Ottoman Rivalry on Processes of Political Modernization (19th Century),” focused on attempts by the

Russian and Ottoman empires to project power into “Circassia,” that is, roughly the territory located between the Kuban River and the Black Sea. In seeking to trace the process by which the state as a model of sociopolitical organization gained hegemony in the region, Kreiten emphasized that hers was a story with three actors: the Russian state, the Ottoman state, and indigenous groups. She explained that the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829 introduced “the principle of territoriality,” which aimed to fix Circassia’s political boundaries. In this way, the historic Russian-Ottoman antagonism was transformed into joint action to achieve control over the land and its population. After 1829 all sides began to participate in the “same game of state politics,” and indigenous leaders found it increasingly difficult to play off one imperial rival against the other as they had traditionally done. Consequently, local society was transformed in the direction of centralization and hierarchization, resulting in the creation of “the Circassian proto-state.” During the Crimean War, the Russian government adopted a policy of “land without population” that turned Circassians into “victims of colonial cleansing,” as they were expelled to the Ottoman Empire under the “legal fiction” of religious pilgrimage. The forced migrations, Kreiten boldly claimed, contributed to “the transformation of premodern empires into bureaucratic nation-states.”

Akarca’s paper, “Continuity or Contingency: Russian Interest in Eastern Anatolia/Western

¹ For more information about the project, see <http://russia-islam.harrimaninstitute.org>.

Armenia,” focused on Russian administrative policy and practice in the occupied Ottoman territories during World War I. It sought to explain the dynamics of a military occupation undertaken by “an imperial-minded state” without a predetermined plan to administer the occupied regions. In contrast to the view that Armenian and Muslim national identities were beginning to crystallize in the period immediately prior to Russia’s occupation of Ottoman territories during World War I, Akarca argued that the period saw “the disappearance of Ottoman imperial legitimacy and the predominance of Russian imperial legitimacy.” In support of the argument, Akarca pointed to Muslim reaction to the occupation, which was “more or less peaceful.” Tsarist military officers were charged with overall responsibility for administering the occupied territories, while administration at the municipal and rural levels was left in the hands of indigenous leaders. This semi-autonomous form of control, Akarca explained, was the dominant form of Tsarist colonial rule. Russia’s wartime plans to colonize the region — i.e., plans to settle Russian subjects in the occupied territories and to exploit the region’s resources — were hampered by bureaucratic lethargy, the exigencies of war, and “the detrimental effects of the 1917 Russian revolutions.”

The topic of Sargent’s paper was thoroughly reflected in its title, “Armenian and Azeri ‘Muslim’ Subjects of the Russian Empire: Perceptions of Preferential Treatment, Discrimination, and a ‘Zero Sum’ Game in the Transformation of ‘Political Community’ in the South Caucasus.” In her presentation, Sargent observed that the history of Armenians and Azerbaijanis has for the most part been written as the story of the Armenian and Azerbaijani nations. In such narratives, the two communities are treated either in isolation from each other or as ancient enemies. She observed that given the absence of Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian statehood in the imperial period, it makes little sense to approach the history of the South Caucasus region through the lens of nation-states. Instead, she argued for treating the region as a coherent unit of analysis and for approaching the history of the region’s peoples as part of the “same story.” In this story, Armenians and Azerbaijanis are found to have influenced each other in myriad ways; it is not difficult, she claimed, to find evidence of shared cultural practices. She expressed the desire to trace the contours of a “south Caucasian culture” in the 19th century, and

to examine how this culture was transformed and found expression in national forms as a result of Russian colonial rule.

Commenting on the papers, Reynolds noted the prominence of two themes: 1) violence (its causes, instrumental uses, and consequences), and 2) transformation of local and imperial societies as a result of imperial rivalries. Peter Holquist (University of Pennsylvania) observed a tension between the views of Kreiten and Akarca regarding Russia’s policy in the Caucasus, the former stressing its modernizing and nationalizing tendencies, the latter its imperial quality. Jane Burbank (New York University) asked the panelists to explain what in Russian governance was “new” in the late imperial period, and urged caution in applying the term “modern” to Russian policy and practice in the period.

The first afternoon session, “Russia and the Ottoman Empire: Comparative Approaches,” was moderated by Jane Burbank and featured papers by Nikolay A. Antov (University of Chicago), Darin Stephanov (University of California, Los Angeles), and Mustafa Tuna (Princeton University). In presenting his paper, “The Muscovite and Ottoman Principalities — Territorial Expansion, Political Consolidation, and Strategies of Dynastic Legitimization in Comparative Perspective (14th-16th Centuries),” Antov explained that three factors had attracted him to the topic: 1) the importance of the interaction between Muscovy/Russia and the Ottoman state in the history of eastern Europe since the 17th century; 2) the striking temporal parallelism of the processes of expansion and political consolidation in the Muscovite and Ottoman cases; and 3) the fact that there has been too little communication across fields between Russianists and Ottomanists. Antov argued that geographic location played a greater role in facilitating expansion and consolidation in the Ottoman than in the Muscovite case; that both ruling houses successfully surmounted similar challenges concerning succession and political fragmentation; and that in the two cases the “Mongol impact was probably of equal importance but of a very different nature.”

In presenting his paper, “(In)visibility and the Shaping of a Monarchic Persona in the Late Ottoman and Russian Empires,” Stephanov noted that historians have tended to study the Russian and Ottoman empires at war with each other, even though “war is the exception and not the rule, and the rule is peaceful coexistence and diplomatic interaction.”

More needs to be done to explore this side of Russian-Ottoman relations, he urged. Echoing Antov's presentation, Stephanov pointed to similarities in events and their consequences in the Ottoman and Russian empires in the 19th century. For example, he compared the destruction of the Janissaries in 1826 to the destruction of the Decembrists in 1825, and the dethronement of Sultan Abdulaziz in 1876 to the assassination of Emperor Alexander II in 1881, observing that in both cases dynastic weakness was followed by a period of reaction and "the high point of autocracy." In addition, both empires attempted far-reaching reforms at roughly the same time.

Tuna's paper, "Fifth Column or Imperial Paranoia: Confrontation between Russian Muslim Intellectuals and the Russian Imperial Administration in the Late Russian Empire," examined a "new phase" in Tsarist attempts to administer non-Christians in the Volga-Urals region. Beginning in the 1870s, he argued, Russification, Europeanization, and civilization became shorthand for Tsarist policies aimed at creating a more homogenous empire and at making Muslims and others "look more like Russians." In 1872, for example, the imperial inspector for Muslim schools in the region created the Kazan Tatar Teachers' School, where the "traditional" medrese education was "squeezed and shortened" in favor of courses taught in "regular" Russian imperial schools. The goal of this policy was to "modernize" Russia's Muslims in order to be able to employ them in administering the empire. An unintended consequence of the policy was confrontation between imperial officials and Russia's "modern" Muslim subjects over a variety of issues.

In the subsequent discussion, Burbank asked participants to consider to what extent "Russians and Ottomans shared a deeper ancestry in Eurasian, Turkic, and Mongol practices." Did Muscovy's princes learn statecraft from their Mongol overlords, as Donald Ostrowski and others have argued? Stephanov was asked: To whom did the tsars and the sultans make their demonstrative gestures? Burbank noted that Tuna's paper showed there were "huge" differences of opinion among Muslim intellectuals and Tsarist administrators regarding state policies, and that most administrators at the highest level "didn't have a clue about the population they were trying to deal with."

Ryan Gingeras (Long Island University) moderated the final session, "Transregional Approaches: The Ottoman Empire, Russia, and the USSR." Andrew Roberts (Georgetown University) presented a paper titled "Population Movements and the Spread of Disease across the Ottoman-Russian Frontier, 1768-1830s." Echoing Stephanov, he noted that Russian and Ottoman historiography has been dominated by notions of conflict, and expressed an interest in pursuing an alternative "narrative of exchange," including commercial exchange, population movements, the spread of disease, and other transnational issues. Drawing on the work of Charles King, he took as his starting point the Black Sea as a unit of analysis and as a facilitator of exchange and interaction rather than as a barrier. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the northwestern Black Sea region was a "dynamic frontier world traversed by merchants, soldiers, pilgrims, deserters, spies, seasonal workers, and nomads" that was subject to significant in- and out-migration and defined by "confused allegiances." The paper focused on Bulgarian population movements and Russian border management in the period.

The essay by Lale Can (New York University), "Beyond the Porte: Informal Diplomacy between Istanbul and Bukhara under Abdülhamid II," was placed in the context of a larger project that explores Ottoman diplomacy involving prominent figures from Central Asia as well as the experiences of "ordinary people and their interactions with the Ottoman state as petitioners, patrons, pilgrims, recipients of social welfare, and witnesses to the *ad hoc* foreign policy pursued toward Central Asia in the 19th century." Her work aims to re-examine the politics of pan-Islamism, Ottoman support for the Emirate of Kashgar, and the travel of Central Asian pilgrims to Istanbul and Mecca from the perspective of non-elite and non-state actors. The paper demonstrated that Ottoman links to Central Asia were maintained through commerce, Sufi networks, and sporadic, "very fraught and very tense" diplomatic relations with the Central Asian khanates.

Lisa Yountchi (Northwestern University) is preparing a dissertation tentatively titled "The Soviet Novel in Central Asia: Literature and Identity in Tajikistan." In presenting her paper, "The Politics of Historiography: Russian, Soviet, and Tajik Scholars Studying Central Asia," she explained how historical writing on Central Asia reflects political attitudes toward Central Asia at a particular time, and constitutes "a story about how Russia understands

Central Asia, and how this affects how Tajiks understand themselves and their role in Central Asia.” In the imperial period, historians took Islam seriously, while in the Soviet period, the place of Islam in Central Asian society was downplayed. Contemporary Tajik writers celebrate the politics of the Soviet author Bobodzhan Gafurovich

Gafurov, who created a national narrative for Tajik history.

Tying all three papers together, Gingeras noted, was the notion of the “mundane,” an explicit interest in the history of the everyday actions of ordinary people. Other participants suggested that Soviet nation-building projects had their roots in the imperial period.

Educational Resources and Developments

Culturally Relevant Extensive Reading in Tajikistan

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Tajikistan is a multicultural and multilingual Central Asian nation that has recently undergone remarkable changes in terms of its economic status and its system of education. After its independence in 1991 and the civil war from 1992-1997, Tajikistan faced economic ruin that had devastating effects on education (Niyozov 2002). As a result, the dominant style of teaching revolves around teacher-centered instruction and the use of dated, Soviet-themed texts (Niyozov 2002).

Though the present situation seems bleak, there are many students and teachers who are inventive and open to new methodologies, particularly in English language education. Further, Tajiks and other ethnic groups in Tajikistan (including Russians and Uzbeks) have a rich literary history and a strong appreciation for reading as an invaluable source of information. Thus, students and teachers are often open to innovative reading programs such as the use of extensive reading.

Research has shown that long-term extensive reading — defined as “independent reading of a large quantity of material for information or pleasure” (Renandya et al. 1999, Introduction) — has a powerful impact on students’ reading development (Cipielewski and Stanovich 1992; Guthrie et al. 1999). This is particularly true when students read culturally relevant texts or texts that learners can relate to on a personal level. The rationale for providing these texts stems from culturally responsive instruction through which “teaching approaches build upon the strengths that students bring from their home cultures, instead of ignoring these strengths or requiring that students learn through approaches that conflict with their cultural values” (Au 2001). Further, according to Elley (1991), exposure to meaningful texts prompts learners to acquire stronger language skills while developing positive attitudes towards reading.

Extensive reading has also been shown to facilitate language growth in relation to the development of vocabulary knowledge, grammatical knowledge, writing skills, listening comprehension, and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) performance (Elley 1991; Gradman and Hanania 1991). Though studies such as Elley’s have provided insight into the reading attitudes of children, there are still relatively few studies that examine the reading attitudes of adult language learners (Smith 1991). This study suggests that, for adult English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) learners, exposure to culturally relevant texts in extensive reading classes contributes both to positive reading attitudes and an increase in reading habits.

Extensive reading is now being introduced in a variety of ways in some higher education institutions in Tajikistan. Though there is a crucial shortage of materials, teachers have found ways to share texts and make the most of a limited number of books by exchanging texts between schools and classes and creating a system for students to share texts with partners between sessions. Participating teachers and facilitators have also exposed students to a new method of reading and interacting with texts, which focuses more on meaning and less on analyzing the structural aspects of the texts. Despite challenges in terms of locating materials and adapting to a new style of reading instruction, students have responded positively to this format of reading and discussing English novels in literature courses as well as in reading clubs. Thus, teachers and students in Dushanbe, Tajikistan were eager to participate in a project that incorporated extensive reading into their curricula.

For this study, the researcher/facilitator organized extensive reading classes in EFL programs in two Dushanbe schools: the World Language Institute and the Private Language School (the names of the actual schools have been changed to protect the anonymity of participants). This was a collaborative

project for which data were collected by a foreign researcher/facilitator, Lori Fredricks, a local school director/instructor, Valentina Sobko, and an additional local teacher who served as an observer. The eleven students (ten Tajiks and one Russian, six at the institute and five at the private school) were adults between the ages of twenty-one and fifty who were considered upper-intermediate learners. The purpose of the study was to explore whether extensive reading affects Tajik students' reading habits and attitudes toward reading and whether there are benefits to using extensive reading with learners of English in Tajikistan. It examined three questions: What challenges could students in Tajikistan face when reading authentic English novels in an extensive reading course/group? How might an extensive reading program affect Tajikistani EFL learners' reading habits? How might using extensive reading with Tajikistani EFL students affect the students' attitudes towards reading in relation to English texts? In addition, the researcher aimed to understand the students' motives for selecting or refusing the offered texts and whether cultural relevance affected their choices.

To facilitate the extensive reading approach, the researcher/facilitator offered students authentic novels (non-adapted novels written for native speakers) that could have cultural relevance for Tajik students, as well as texts from less similar cultures. Selected texts included Suzanne Fisher-Staples' *Shabanu* (2003), a novel about a nomadic family in Cholistan, an area in Pakistan, and *Life in the Villages*, an excerpt from *A Woman of Egypt* (2002) about Jehan Sadat's visit to a remote Egyptian village. The Muslim characters and cultural themes in these texts resemble various facets of Tajik culture. For instance, *Shabanu* explores transitions for Muslim girls as they grow up and prepare to become wives and their parents' roles in selecting a husband. *Life in the Villages* describes the strong social and cultural distinctions between women and men who live in villages versus cities. These topics became major points of discussion as students felt that they relate to their everyday lives.

The instructor/facilitator created an interactive environment for discussing the texts. Students often led the discussions themselves and there were frequent debates about the characters, storylines, and authors. In addition, the instructor tried to guide the students in making connections to the texts. These connections generally fall into

three categories: text-self connections (when students notice a personal connection to the story), text-text connections (when students compare texts, which often takes the form of comparing storylines or similar characters across texts), and text-world connections (when the storyline has some relevance to events in the world, such as political connections or cross-cultural examples). The connections become clearer and more frequent as students read additional novels and grow accustomed to the interactive format.

Results

The researcher and local instructors collected feedback from students over an eight-week period in several ways: through two reflection sheets in which students wrote about their impressions of the texts, two teacher observations in which local instructors observed and took notes about the class sessions, and interviews in which local instructors asked the students about their reading habits and opinions of the texts. The researcher also collected "connector role sheets" from students as part of their participation in the sessions. This activity required students to note and later discuss connections to other texts they had read, their own lives and experiences, and/or the world in general. It provides another level of insight into students' interactions with the readings.

Local teachers at the two schools conducted interviews around the third week of the sessions. In the interviews, students expressed how they felt about reading in general, reading in English, their reading habits, reading and their learning of English, and the types of materials they read. Ten of the eleven students reported that they enjoy reading, commonly because they felt they obtain access to knowledge and information and gain a sense of pride or happiness when they comprehend what they read. Students, especially those in the private school group, articulated an extremely analytical understanding of how reading benefits their English acquisition. One student, for example, stated, "It helps enlarge vocabulary. I pay attention to sentence structure and expressions. I pay attention to tense forms and spelling." Six students explicitly stated that reading helps their speaking skills as they acquire vocabulary and grammatical skills incidentally and consciously, and all felt that reading in English is valuable for improving their acquisition of English.

Though these students appeared eager to read in English, some were more avid readers in Russian. For instance, one participant mentioned that she read in Russian every night but that *Shabanu* was the first

English novel she had completed. In his final reflection, the participant who reported not enjoying reading similarly stated that *Shabanu* was the only English novel he had read. These students may have formerly read less in English because, in Tajikistan, English texts are generally expensive and hard to find. Thus, English readers' choices are sometimes quite limited.

The local teacher at the World Language Institute conducted formal observations of the extensive reading course after several informal observations meant to familiarize her with the approach. These were particularly useful because the local instructor could notice aspects of the discussions that may either complement or contrast with the foreign researcher's perceptions, adding another important point of comparison to the study. For example, in post-observation discussions at the World Language Institute, the observer felt that the extensive reading discussion approach was a good way to encourage students to speak more in English. She was particularly surprised to see some of them articulate their ideas so fully and eagerly as opposed to waiting to being called on to do so. However, she still favored a more structured, teacher-led approach, which would control students' participation more so that they would participate "completely equally." She also mentioned being surprised at the proficiency of the students.

Similarly, at the Private Language School, the observer seemed surprised by the extensive reading discussion format and was concerned that, unlike the common instructional style in Tajikistan, the facilitator did not work on explicit error correction. After reading her notes, the researcher talked to her in more detail about the nature of the discussions and explained that, in this approach, communicating meaning and opinions was more important than noting errors, which could inhibit students from participating. However, the facilitator agreed to assist students with grammar issues after the reading discussions, which served as a bridge between the two philosophies.

In her second observation, the teacher from the private school noted that the students were interested in the text because of the opinions that they shared. She added that in the lively conversation, no one student seemed to dominate the discussion but that "students talk all the time." She also reported that students responded well to the activities, which were a series of problems and

questions posed by the facilitator/researcher, and that the facilitator gave students "the sense of ownership of the process of learning" in response to open-ended questions that had no single or finite answer.

Participants' first reflections were to reading *Shabanu*. Initial responses in both groups were that the novel was easy to read and that it related strongly to their culture. The students from the institute class wrote most lengthily about the cultural connections. Comments included that the novel was "very close to our lifestyle ... from the point of the Muslim religion." Another participant similarly wrote, "Their lifestyle and culture are close to ours." Students were also excited about what they found to be a compelling storyline. One male student stated that it was the nicest book he had ever read and that he "was touched very much by the courage of Shabanu." Another remarked, "The more we read, the more excited we become." The male students' initial impressions are important to note as their perspectives changed significantly at the end of the term.

The private school students also felt that the novel was both easy to read and culturally authentic, at least from the point of view of some common traditions and religious ideals. For example, one female student wrote, "This is true life." Interestingly, however, the male Russian student wrote that what he enjoyed least is that the author is not from the culture herself and, as a result, some of her insights may be false interpretations. This is surprising given his Tajik classmates' points that they find the book to be culturally authentic in terms of what they relate to (common practices). It is possible that he was referring to the other traditional aspects of the story, including the depiction of the nomadic lifestyle.

In responding to the connections questions, eight students wrote about text-self connections. Five students (two male and three female) explained that they felt as though they had a lot in common with the character Shabanu, especially regarding her personality. For instance, the Russian male student shared the experience of dealing with challenging moral choices. A Tajik male student referred to his father selling his horse, which was never returned (echoing the situation of Shabanu's father selling her camel). The connection to Islamic practices and traditional values also surfaced in students' connector role sheets. For example, students commented on the character, Shabanu's, first experience with fasting: "When I took my fast for the first time, I felt dizzy and sleepy like Shabanu did."

Text-world connections mentioned by one student detailed the problems of everyday life in Tajikistan (poverty, the lack of water, lawlessness in the isolated regions), which resemble those of Pakistan. Thus, these initial reflections illustrated that the students, both male and female, found multiple similarities with their own lives in terms of daily challenges and the specific familial and social situations of the main character. In their connector role sheet responses, students mainly commented on the theme of caring for the dead described in *Shabanu*. Two students wrote, “Feeding people when there is a death is life in our culture [in Central Asia]” and “In the Muslim religion, it’s important to give drops of water into a dead person’s mouth, if not, its spirit won’t be calm.” This theme also emerged in the text-self connections. One student mentioned remembering the death of someone close to him and that he made this connection when reading about the funeral ceremony, particularly “washing the body and covering it with the white material.”

In students’ final reflections, the key theme was students’ connection to an Islamic way of life, which was mentioned in several but not all of the readings. The representation of Islamic customs and an Islamic worldview had an effect on which texts students selected as well as their connections and reactions to the texts. This theme may have also increased students’ overall motivation to read. For instance, a male student in the private school group mentioned that *Shabanu* was the first novel he had ever completed.

Of the eleven participants, seven reported a positive change in their reading habits by the end of the sessions. Three of the seven mentioned that in-class discussions affected their change in habits and each of the three described these discussions as “interesting.” However, two male students in the World Language Institute class reported that they did not enjoy the texts. This was surprising because they had described their interest in the topics of the texts and enthusiasm for the stories in detail in their initial reflections. In addition, these two students attended all of the class sessions and participated eagerly in the discussions. Upon reading about these two students’ connections and talking with them informally, it became clear that their opinions are, at least in part, the result of our class discussions and the nature of the group. As the institute group was mostly female (four females and two males), the discussions mainly revolved around the female students’ feelings about the role

of women in the stories and in their lives. Two of the female students often commented that they felt that the women in the stories were suppressed and one student related this to her personal experiences in not being able to choose a spouse. These opinions, which were more openly expressed at the end of the term, seemed to make the male participants uncomfortable.

Discussion

During the course of the study, it became apparent that the relevance of a given text is contingent upon many factors. For example, though both male and female students related to *Shabanu* in various ways, the female participants often chose to discuss women’s issues more deeply. When sharing their views, they mentioned sensitive topics such as arranged marriages for which parents of the potential bride may determine who and when she will marry. More than one female student shared negative experiences and feelings on this topic and, as a result, the male students sometimes became uncomfortable and perhaps felt targeted. Thus, the topic of gender and women’s issues in particular became a central theme for the institute group.

Further, as texts were chosen through a voting method, the female participants (who outnumbered the males) generally selected novels and stories that revolved around this common theme. They were especially drawn to texts that explored the challenges women face in traditional societies. However, these choices and the accompanying discussions of somewhat challenging topics polarized the group towards the end of the term. Facing these issues in a largely student-led format can be quite challenging. Facilitators must try to maintain a balance between fostering student autonomy, through promoting participants’ choices, and respecting the interests of those who are outvoted. In this case, the facilitator discussed the topics and the rapport of the group with the male students outside of class. In the final session, the facilitator also addressed this concern with the group, noting the potential pressure minority members may face and that each participant’s voice should be considered valid and respected.

Though she attempted to reserve her views as much as possible, the facilitator realized that students were likely influenced by her background and social status. Among other aspects, her role as a female may have biased her towards expressing enthusiasm for the female-driven novels and stories and inhibited the male students from fully expressing their opinions. Thus, the facilitators of extensive reading programs

should acknowledge their influence as model readers, particularly in traditionally teacher-centered settings, where the facilitator's views may considerably affect students' perceptions.

Finally, the themes that emerged in the study all fell under the broader theme of a connection to Islam and to the lifestyles of traditional cultures in which Islam was practiced. The most widely discussed points were those that resemble the participants' lifestyles and worldviews in relation to Islam. There are numerous implications for this finding. First, facilitators and teachers may personally face difficulties in using texts that refer to religious views. Teachers in Tajikistan have long been prevented from discussing religion as part of the Soviet atheistic curriculum and may feel that this topic is still taboo or that their school administration would disapprove. In addition, foreign EFL instructors who are less familiar with Islam, or with the forms of Islam practiced in Central Asia, may feel reticent to offer these stories.

However, the participants in this study chose to read these texts and discuss the points that related most to their daily lives. Doing so not only prompted increased participation in session discussions, but also led to an increase in reading habits. Interestingly, readers in a given group often chose a text prior to my sharing summaries because they had received recommendations from their friends. In addition, during and after the study and the spring term, many other students heard about the texts from their peers who had attended the reading courses. These students, who were from different courses and departments at the institute, came to the English language resource center to check out texts throughout the summer and beyond.

Conclusion

Though texts that students deem culturally relevant may contain topics previously unexplored in EFL class settings, their inclusion in a course or club may facilitate rich discussions and increase students' motivation to read. Some facilitators may feel inhibited about offering students culturally relevant materials. However, the benefits of including these materials reflect the level of student choice necessary for a true extensive reading approach which holds students' preferences as a key priority. In particular, facilitators can acknowledge that using such materials serves to raise topics and questions for discussion but not

necessarily to resolve them. This type of critical analysis can be a significant learning experience for both facilitators and students. Local facilitators, like their foreign counterparts, can offer cross-cultural discussions about the issues that emerge in discussions and can engage in a process of reflection about their own social roles as well as those of the characters in the texts.

This is not to say that the process is free of challenges. As the findings of this study have shown, unexpected issues may surface. Predicting which specific factors may be challenging or sensitive is difficult or even impossible for facilitators. As a result, a successful extensive reading program is one in which the instructor is open and reflective about her or his own background and biases as well as those of the students. In addition, the facilitator must create and maintain an environment of respect in which students feel able to openly communicate their opinions. Though the participatory, culturally relevant approach involves flexibility and relinquishing a certain degree of teacher control, the benefits are arguably wide-ranging.

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