

Role of History in the Creation of National Identities in Central Asia:

Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan Case Studies.

Introduction

“To create unified and distinctive nations and impart a sense of common destiny to their members, nation-builders unearth, appropriate and exploit the ethnosymbolic resources at their disposal (e.g. customs, toponyms and ethnonyms, heroes, myths, state iconography).”
Annette Bohr, *The Central Asian States as Nationalizing Regimes*ⁱ
“The first rule which we have to follow is that of national character: every people has, or must have, a character; if it lacks one, we must start by endowing it with one.”ⁱⁱ
Jean Jacques Rousseau

In his Theological Political Treatise Baruch Spinoza wrote that when reading Scriptures one should not blindly follow the texts but always remember the hidden reefs s/he might encounter in the texts, one of those being demands of the time period and goals of a ruling regime. He gives this advice so that readers get into the core of the subject/matter discussed and not get misled by false assumptions and statements. This is a quite reasonable guideline since no interpretation of facts or events could be called objective: historians, like all human beings, are subject to different influences – emotions, common values/beliefs, demands of the regimes, etc. When reading Spinoza one might infer that political regimes were using Scriptures in order to manipulate public opinion.

Interestingly, one might follow this logic when reading history textbooks that are recommended to students by the educational ministries of post-Soviet Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. While offering their interpretation of the respective states’ histories, authors make an emphasis on certain historical events and portray them as more significant than others for contemporary nation-building. This leads one to inquire into the logic of such an interpretation and challenge it on the grounds of objectivity.

I decided to undertake this inquiry for several reasons. Having been born and brought up in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, I have witnessed many transformations in the public attitude towards Tamerlane – the medieval conqueror who chose my hometown to be the capital of his fourteenth century empire. If during Soviet times his personality did not attract much public attention, with the collapse of the USSR this has drastically changed. In some five years after the collapse of

USSR, independent Uzbekistan celebrated the 660th birthday of Tamerlane. Known for his brutal conquests, Tamerlane suddenly became the Uzbek national hero. Uzbek History textbooks, newspaper articles, and speeches by the President of Uzbekistan have started depicting Tamerlane as a wise leader, creator of a centralized state, and as an enlightened ruler and protector of the arts and sciences. According to Shirin Akiner, “today many Uzbeks regard him [Tamerlane] as the spiritual founder of their nation.”ⁱⁱⁱ Indeed the change in attitude was drastic and radical: being once characterized as a brutal nomad, Tamerlane is now praised and idealized.

Uzbekistan is not the only post-Soviet regime, which is engaged in the process of re-writing its history. The Government of Kyrgyzstan has launched the same campaign. In 1995 the Kyrgyz people celebrated the 1000th Anniversary of the epic Manas and in 2003 the 2200th Anniversary of Kyrgyz Statehood^{iv}. There would be nothing wrong with the two celebrations were there no political underpinning of the two events. Similar to Tamerlane, the mythical Manas has been given much academic and public attention. One of the reasons was his consolidation of the dispersed Kyrgyz tribes and their subsequent united opposition to foreign conquerors. In the contemporary context the myth has certain political implications – in the face of strong neighbors Kyrgyzstan, with its regional (North-South) and tribal divisions, is rather weak and needs an idea that could consolidate its society. Yet, it is worth mentioning that with the state being dominated by its Northern political elites, the role and fate of the South is predetermined. To put it simply, consolidation should enable contemporary political elites to get rid of internal opposition and retain their power.

There is no need to argue that historians were involved into the celebrations “unearthing the facts” that prove the two dates. Observation of the processes made me think of the nature and purpose of the decisions and policies, and the logic Spinoza employed in his Theologico-Political Treatise (as mentioned above) contributed to my decision to choose a topic for a senior thesis. I feel it necessary to mention that while taking the class on Spinoza I was thinking of writing a paper on Spinoza’s critique of the modern Uzbek history textbooks. Not being able to do so, I was still thinking of the topic, and re-reading Spinoza in the summer of 2003 made me realize I found a topic for my senior thesis. Putting it simply, I realized that the work produced could in some way serve as a guideline to understanding the modern interpretation of the two states’ histories, as well as of the contemporary Central Asian politics.

Spinoza's advice can be applied to the reading of the (new) histories of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and used to test several assumptions with the help of the existing nationalism theories. The Central Asian regimes deliberately re-write the histories of their states in order to manipulate public opinion, and pursue the goal to create new national identities. While doing so the two states are planning to consolidate and solidify the ethnic identities of the titular ethnicities of the states, to make an attempt to overcome regionalism, and, which is most important, to retain power and legitimize themselves.

On the assumption that the educational system helps the state to control its citizens^v, this analysis studies, analyzes, and compares how texts on Tamerlane (and the Timurid Empire), Manas, and on the 2200th Anniversary of Kyrgyz Statehood published in the high school history books contribute to the achievement of the set goals. Since secondary education is compulsory in the former Soviet Union, and school curriculum and reading materials are assigned and approved by the state^{vi}, the regimes, it is argued, use educational institutions as a channel to spread national ideologies and to create national identities in the respective countries.

This essay consists of three sections. The first addresses theories of nationalism and their perception of history. Of the three existent – *primordialism*, *modernism*, and *ethnosymbolism* – I would make use of the first two owing to their very connection to the topic of inquiry. The proper use of history and its (mis)use by historians for political purposes are also covered in this part of the thesis. In the second section I outline the hypothesis on the use of history by political regimes of the post-Soviet Central Asia. As was mentioned above, I assume that while appealing to history the Uzbek and Kyrgyz political regimes are pursuing their particular goals, one of which is regime legitimization. Division into the *official logic of the myth* and the *hidden agenda* parts is intended to help the reader grasp the idea of the thesis topic. The third chapter is dealing with the cases – analysis of history textbooks recommended (read: *required* or *imposed*) by the educational ministries of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan for use in high school. In addition to the listed material the chapter covers analysis of events, such as celebrations, political statements, and official documents (upon availability) related to the topic. This part of the thesis also covers analytical materials on history, nationalism, and nation building on post-Soviet area published by Western and Central Asian scholars. In the third section a number of conclusions are drawn.

I. Nationalism, Nation-Building, and the Role of History: Theoretical Framework

Before going into theoretical details, it is necessary to mention that in spite of the fact that different theories of nationalism offer different explanations for national identity building and for the role of history in this process I would make use of only two of them – *primordialism* and *modernism*. This could be explained by two reasons:

1. Nationalism theories, as well as trends within them, are broad and diverse, and there are some disagreements between their contributors on the nature and origin of nations and nationalisms. While some tend to believe that nations have long existed before their transformation into modern (nation-) states, others argue that nations are rather recent constructs that emerged owing to different circumstances and causes.
2. To explain the processes taking place in Central Asia one can use the discourse held between *primordialism* and *modernism*. The fact that both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan state officials and intellectuals alike claim that the two states have long histories, cultures, and traditions points at the implicit use of primordialist theory. Yet, the critique of it could be found in the theory of *modernism*, which basically says that nations are rather recent constructs in the history of humankind.

Primordialism is a school, which argues that nations have always been there, and that their historical existence could be traced in their respective histories, cultures, and traditions.

“By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the ‘givens’ ... of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them given-ness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one’s kinsman, one’s neighbor, one’s fellow believer, *ipso facto*; as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common

interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself.”^{vii}

According to Ozkirimli, *primordialism* is “an ‘umbrella’ term used to describe scholars who hold that that nationality is a ‘natural’ part of human beings, as natural as speech, sight or smell, and that nations have existed since time immemorial.”^{viii} He also argues that *primordialism* could be divided into several trends, yet this internal division is based on the factors attributed to as the most important for both the existence and continuity of a nation.

Hence, some of *primordialism* followers and contributors (the naturalist approach) claim that nations have always existed and people acquire their national identities upon their birth. In other words, they assert that national identities are predetermined and not subject to change. Smith gives following description of this approach: “Organic nationalism holds that the world consists of natural nations, and has always done so; that nations are the bedrock of history and the chief actors in the historical drama; that nations and their characters are organisms that can be easily ascertained by their cultural differentiae; that the members of nations may, and frequently have, lost their national self-consciousness along with their independence; and that the duty of nationalists is to restore that self-consciousness and independence to the ‘reawakened’ organic nation.”^{ix}

Others (the sociobiological approach) argue that what matters are kin and a blood relationship. Accordingly, a nation is nothing more than an extended kinship community, connected first by its sociobiological relationships and only then by history, culture, and traditions practiced and adhered to by the members of a community. “Broadly speaking, it claims that ethnic groups and nations should be seen as forms of extended kin groups, and that both nations and ethnic groups, along with ‘races’, must be ultimately derived from individual genetic reproductive drives. For Pierre van den Berghe, the main exponent of a sociobiological approach to ethnicity and nationalism, the modernity of nations is purely formal, a matter of supplementing underlying structures of ‘inclusive fitness’ with political forms. As he puts it, ‘the very concept of the nation is an extension of kin selection’, and so nations are to be treated as descent groups in the same manner as ethnic groups.”^x

Yet another trend within *primordialism* (the culturalist approach) tends to promote the idea that a nation is based on individual feelings and perceptions, such as belief in the existence of a cohesive community, loyalty to it and its members, promotion of traditions and culture, etc.

For Ozkirimli, “cultural primordialism in a Geertzian way ... may be defined as an approach which focuses on the webs of meaning spun by the individuals themselves.”^{xi} Walker Connor, another representative of this approach believes that public perceptions play one of the important roles for the formation of nations. He argues that, “...what ultimately matters is not *what is* but *what people believe is*. ... When one avers he is Chinese, he is identifying himself not with the Chinese people and culture of today, but with the Chinese people and their activities throughout time.”^{xii}

The last and, in a way, the mildest primordialist approach is perennialism. Some scholars depict it as a less radical version of the naturalist approach. However, the significance of perennialism requires a separate discussion. One of the features that distinguish perennialism from other primordialist approaches, naturalism in particular, is that it does not accept the idea of nation as a given concept. Rather, it sees it as a modern version of historical ethnic community. To describe the approach, Ozkirimli quotes Smith as saying, that “modern nations are the lineal descendants of their medieval counterparts.” Further he adds, that “According to this view, we might come across nations in the Middle Ages, even in the antiquity.”^{xiii} Another important feature of perennialism is that it sees nations as living organisms, which throughout their history can experience natural periods of raise and decline. Despite its negative connotation the latter is not detrimental and “cannot destroy the national ‘essence’. All that is necessary is to ‘rekindle the fires of nationalism’, to reawaken the nation.”^{xiv}

In contrast to *primordialists*, *modernists* argue that nations are modern constructs, their history could be traced back to the early XIX century, and their existence could be explained by such factors as erosion of monarchial societies and concurrent industrialization, anti-colonialism, clash of traditionalism with *modernism*, democratization, and quest for power and its benefits. “According to this approach, nations and nationalism appeared in the last two centuries, in the wake of the French Revolution, and they are the outcomes of industrial revolution, capitalism, the emergence of the modern state, urbanization and secularism (A.Smith 1994:377; 1995:29).”^{xv} Modernists disagree with primordialist claim that that history, culture, and traditions of a nation point at its long existence. Rather, they argue that these are inventions, constructs employed by particular elements of societies with the aim to reach specific goals, one of those being preservation of power and legitimization of regimes in the eyes of the *nationally* consolidated society. However, similar to *primordialism*, *modernism* could be divided into several trends

along the lines of factual preference. According to Ozkirimli, these trends could be identified as economic, political, and socio/cultural.

The followers of the first trend argue that economic outcomes, such as uneven development and extraction of resources from peripheries for the sake of the center's development contribute to division of societies along regional lines, nationalism, and subsequent raise of secessionist movements. Yet, it is worth noticing that the latter two are started by those most affected by the outcomes of development – political and economic elites but not the masses. “Nationalism arises in threatened and underdeveloped ‘peripheral’ societies whose intelligentsias ‘invite the people into history’ and then use and modernize their vernacular cultures. In this way they are able to mobilize the masses around the developmental goals of a local bourgeoisie.”^{xvi}

Another trend within *modernism* argues that nations and nationalism originate and come into being owing to political factors. They believe that political elites employ national sentiments and ideologies in order to retain power, as well as the concomitant benefits. According to Calhoun *modernists* “stress that this ‘invention’ [nation] is often a self-conscious and manipulative project carried out by elites who seek to secure their power by mobilizing followers on the basis of nationalist ideology. There is obviously much truth to the proposition that nationalist leaders often manipulate the sentiments and identities of their followers. It is also clear that nations are not eternal beings present as such from the beginning of time.”^{xvii} Likewise, Hobsbawm “argues that the nation was one of the many traditions ‘invented’ by political elites in order to legitimize their power in a century of revolution and democratization.”^{xviii}

The followers of the socio/cultural approach believe that nations are formed either around culture shared by major part of a community or, in case of majority inexistence, invented according the lines of multi-ethnic society. Gellner argues, that “nationalism is *not* the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, though that is how it does indeed present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state. It uses some of the pre-existent cultures, generally transforming them in the process, but it cannot possibly use them all.”^{xix} Another famous representative of this modernist approach, Benedict Anderson, argues that modern nations (and nationalism) owe their existence to ‘print capitalism’, owing to which the idea of the nation has been disseminated to the large public. For him a nation is an ‘imagined

community’, which came into being owing to decline of “the religious community and the dynastic realm” that “began in the seventeenth century.”^{xxx}

As becomes obvious at the focal point of the debate between the two nationalism schools lays the idea of the origins of contemporary nation-states. While *primordialists* see nations as historical entities, *modernists* perceive them as rather recent creations. To support their claim the former appeal not only to historical facts but also to kin and blood relationships, commonality of culture and traditions, and to public perceptions of the idea of nation. In contrast, *modernists* refer to the forces and outcomes of industrialization, quest for political power, invention of myths and traditions, and to the particular significance of ‘print capitalism’ that propagates the idea of nation. Accordingly, the two nationalism schools have their own ideas of the way nations and national identities are formed, as well as on the goal of these projects. Given the fact that that the two nationalism theories appeal to history while making and justifying their claims on the age of modern nations, it is important to define the goal and purpose of history as well as of historical writing. History can be regarded as a social science and historical understanding is vital to the understanding of nation-building.

The Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary gives several definitions for the term *history*. Omitting its medical definition, as well as the one referring to systematic events, offered by the dictionary it is necessary to point at the following meanings of the term:

“*History*: 1: tale, story; 2: a chronological record of significant events (as affecting a nation or institution) often including an explanation of their causes; 3: a branch of knowledge that records and explains past events; 4 (a): events that form the subject matter of history, (b): events of the past.”^{xxxi}

In other words, the very notion of *history* is centered on recording and explaining those past events that might or have certain level of significance for the community of people or an institution. “To history,’ he [Leopold von Ranke] wrote in the preface to one of his works, ‘has been assigned the office of judging the past, of instructing the present for the benefit of future ages. To such high offices this work does not aspire: it wants only to show what actually happened.”^{xxxii} Consequently, the role of an *historian* could be defined as that of a person whose duty is to make *historical* data available to the public. It is worth to notice that when interpreting the facts *historians* are expected to be as close to the data and stay as objective as possible. Their

duty, in the more precise translation of Ranke's words, is to depict *history* the way "it essentially was."^{xxiii}

The question of objectivity arose from the fact that historical interpretation is subject to many processes and variables that affect it thus diverting the interpretation from the historical "truth" and shaping our understanding of the past events. As was mentioned above, Spinoza warned that Scriptures contain certain reefs that underlie interpretation of their texts. In particular, he mentioned theologians misinterpreting historical data to justify their actions and findings, prophets relying on their own imagination when interpreting miracles and ascribing them to the works of God, and old Hebrew language being subject to substantial change with the pace of time. All the examples undoubtedly point at the fact that any interpretation of historical events cannot avoid certain levels of subjectivity. There are many more of those reefs and historians themselves have pointed at them in their works. Croce, for example, argued that "practical requirements which underlie every historical judgment give to all history the character of 'contemporary history', because, however remote in time events thus recounted may seem to be, the history in reality refers to present needs and present situations wherein those events vibrate."^{xxiv} In other words, any historical inquiry is shaped by the processes of the modernity historian lives in.

Omitting such variables as data misunderstanding, lack of contestable data, and linguistic changes, it is necessary to concentrate attention on the one that bears more significance for the current research. There is no need to argue that one of the most widely spread variables that has been shaping historical interpretation was and still is the quest for power concurred with the pursuit for legitimization with the political elites. Le Goff notes on this point, saying that "history involves a rearrangement of the past which is subject to the social, ideological, and political structures in which historians live and work. It is also true that history has been and still is, in some places, subject to conscious manipulation on the part of political regimes that oppose truth. Nationalism and prejudices of all kinds have an impact on the way history is written..."^{xxv} Following the practices of Spinoza's theologians and prophets, contemporary policymakers appeal to historical data, often re-interpreting it with the help of historians themselves, while justifying their actions and pursuing particular goals. As a result, historical data is often distorted, re-invented, or omitted.

Since people often refer to history when tracing their national identity and defining relation to the state, interpretation of historical data acquires certain level of significance and becomes politicized. There is no doubt that historical facts in general and their interpretation in particular have certain impact on both present and future of society. It has become common for people to look back to history when either trying to understand the modernity or when attempting to predict the future. According to Evans, “the purpose of history,” in the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789, “was seen not in providing examples for some abstract philosophical doctrine or principle, but simply in finding out about the past as something to cherish and preserve, and the only proper foundation for a true understanding and appreciation of institutions of state and society in present.”^{xxvi} This approach to historical data is still popular today. Public figures, politicians among them, often appeal to supposed historical facts when justifying their policies. However, one of the most common appeals to history is being made when the issue of public communities’ existence is at stake.

It is to avoid this kind of traps and results that historians, writing on the methods of historical interpretation, urge their fellows to stay as neutral and objective as possible. According to Le Goff, Fustel de Coulanges argued that “the historian has no other ambition than to see the facts clearly and understand them correctly... His only special ability consists in drawing from the documents everything that they contain and in not adding anything to them that they do not contain.”^{xxvii} Following the advice by Carr, Arnold, Le Goff, and Evans –to note only a few – both historian and his/her public should inquire into the nature of facts and events and their interpretation, question them, and test against those that were and are being omitted or neglected on the grounds of irrelevance. “The duty of the historian to respect his facts is not exhausted by the obligation to see that his facts are accurate. He must seek to bring into the picture all known or knowable facts relevant, in one sense or another, to the theme on which he is engaged and to the interpretation proposed.”^{xxviii} With the aim of historical study being preservation of public memory of the past, historians are expected to fulfill their duty without selectivity. Otherwise, our memory of the past as well as perception of the present becomes biased, subjective, distorted, and not precise^{xxix}.

II Assumptions

The aim of the thesis is to test the hypothesis on the role of history in the national identity formation processes that are taking place in the post-Soviet Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. More precisely, I test several assumptions on the two cases with the help of existing theories of nationalism: primordialism and modernism in particular. The two Central Asian regimes are currently being involved in national identity (re-)construction projects, and to achieve their goals they re-write histories of their respective states. While arguing that they are “re-discovering” the past for the sake of the people and the state, regimes are pursuing different, hidden agendas.

National identity formation projects have two types of outcomes – positive and negative ones. Civic nationalism – i.e. public identification based on civic attachment to or identification with the state and consolidation of society around the ideas of political participation and democratic development – could be perceived as positive outcome. To the contrary, ethnic nationalism – i.e. identification along the ethnic lines, such as language, culture, and tradition, with the certain *ethnies*’ embedded and predetermined roles in social life and policymaking process – is to be perceived as negative outcome of the identity formation projects^{xxx}. This not only serves certain political interests but also divides any given society along its ethnic lines and presupposes ethnic conflicts. Alongside, identity based on historical loyalty to power elites enhances access to power with certain groups within society and entrenches authoritarianism. As Shirin Akiner noticed Central Asian “states are not mono-ethnic units, but complex, plural societies, with large immigrant populations. The privileging of the heritage of one group over and above that of the others inevitably gives rise to resentment and fears of ethnocratic domination. In a time of acute social and economic stress, such as exists today, this readily leads to ethnic polarization and marginalization.”^{xxxi} It is the study of *national* history (or rather history as re-written, re-told, and imposed upon populace by political regimes) that constructs this sort of outcomes.

So, in Uzbekistan one can notice that the study of the Timurid empire has been introduced at all levels of public education and cultural life. It would not be wrong to assume that intensive study of this specific historical period has become a national policy of the Uzbek Government. As Neil Melvin notes, “one of the most notable elements of the reinvention of the past has been the program by the Uzbekistani authorities to foster a cult around the figure of

Amir Timur” who “has emerged as the central icon of campaign to rewrite national history and as a part of the broader movement toward an Uzbek ‘cultural renaissance’.”^{xxxii} It is with the help of the Uzbek Government, which tries to reject the Soviet past and re-invent the history of the state that Tamerlane has become an Uzbek national hero. Indeed, one can notice that since the mid-1990’s his personality has been idealized and received much attention from the state and state-controlled academia. For example, one Uzbek History professor answering the question “why Tamerlane is being praised and idealized in Uzbekistan?” replied that “Tamerlane was a wise ruler, and there is nothing wrong if we learn how to govern the state from him.”^{xxxiii}

Certainly there would be nothing wrong with the intention to study the past unless there was no hidden agenda behind the study of the conqueror. That the state is currently constructing Uzbek national identity could be proven by the fact that Tamerlane is believed to be an Uzbek. Whatever his deeds were, this is the most preposterous point about Tamerlane. “If somebody wants to understand who the Uzbeks are,’ Karimov said in words immortalized on the Tashkent museum walls, ‘if somebody wants to comprehend all the power, might, justice and unlimited abilities of the Uzbek people, their contribution to the global development, their belief in the future, he should recall the image of Amir Temur [Tamerlane].”^{xxxiv} Having chosen the old practice of indoctrination by means of educational institutions, Karimov’s regime is selling the myth to its people. “Re-discovering” the history of Uzbekistan, the regime at the same time challenges Soviet historiography, and discredits and undermines Soviet period in the history of Uzbekistan.

To better understand the logic of this project one needs to check existing theories of nationalism, one of those would be the “*constructed primordiality*” theory. Cornell and Hartman (1997) argue that identities are nothing less than artificial concepts that are asserted or assigned upon the public. “‘Peoplehood,’ ‘common origin,’ and ‘blood ties,’ whether asserted or assigned, form in most cultures a uniquely powerful set of interpersonal bonds, but their power is not inherent. It lies in the significance human beings attach to them, a significance that is variable and contingent and altogether a human creation.”^{xxxv} This idea, when developed, should enable one to conclude that identity construction projects lie under the cover of the “cultural renaissance” initiatives launched by Central Asian regimes.

Further I am giving a categorization of the myths that are being imposed on the people of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan respectively. This, I hope, would enable me to apply theories of

nationalism to the projects of historical “re-discovery” launched by the Uzbek and Kyrgyz states. A division into the two categories – *official logic of the myth* and *hidden agenda* – should help me find support for the belief that the respective Central Asian regimes are currently engaged in processes of national identity construction.

Official logic of the Tamerlane myth

1. Tamerlane should be treated as a great historical leader of the Uzbek nation. Although Tamerlane never belonged to an ethnic group known as “Uzbeks”, he nevertheless lived and is buried on the territory of modern Uzbekistan. This might be sufficient to link him to the modern titular nation of Uzbekistan.
2. He was a wise ruler, protector of the arts and sciences, who cared about his people and his state. The fact that he has been known as a brutal conqueror could be either depicted as a Soviet ideological construct or portrayed as the requirement of his time period.
3. The centralized state under his wise rule should serve as a model for modern Uzbekistan. His authoritarianism could be described as a necessity or demand of both time period and size of his empire. The same could be said of President Karimov’s rule.

Hidden agenda

1. By omitting critique of Tamerlane’s brutal campaigns and authoritarian rule, the state spurs people to glorify Tamerlane and draw comparisons between his medieval empire and modern Uzbekistan. According to Gerrit W. Gong, “remembering and forgetting issues give countries national identity.”^{xxxvi} Hence, there is a populist slogan – the Future of Uzbekistan is a Great State.
2. There are 3 ideas behind the promotion of this parallel:
 - i) Comparison of Islam Karimov to Tamerlane. The latter is believed to be a great leader, who created a great empire, who glorifies the region, and who had his capital in Samarkand. All that is being imposed on the people by the state propaganda machine makes the public to construct parallels between the two rulers. The former – Karimov – is from Samarkand, he glorifies Uzbekistan (in his books and speeches), and sounds as trying to unite the people of Uzbekistan. Whatever his policies are, similar to those of Tamerlane they are demands of the time.^{xxxvii}

- ii) Comparison between the Timurid Empire and Uzbekistan leads one to conclude that the final goal is the creation of “the great Uzbek state”. With not much information available on the economies, social life, and politics of CIS and the rest of the world, Uzbeks believe their state is already one of the greatest if not in the world then definitely in the region and possibly within the CIS.
- iii) Like in the rest of Central Asia, the Uzbek people are subject to regionalism. Like in Kyrgyzstan, the Uzbek people divide themselves according to the area of their residence: Samarkand-Jizzakh, Tashkent, Bukhara, Ferghana valley, etc. The call for a greater Uzbekistan might be seen as an attempt to undermine this division, at least among the youth. However, the very fact that Tamerlane had his capital in Samarkand and that most seats in the Uzbek Government are occupied by Samarkandi’s contradicts and undermines the idea of unification, hence might result in tensions.

Alike to the Uzbek, the Kyrgyz regime also re-writes Kyrgyz history in order to construct national identity. While doing so it also makes use of the myths: Manas – a mythical Kyrgyz hero, and the idea of Kyrgyz statehood. Manipulation of the data enables the Government of Kyrgyzstan to claim that Manas was a real rather than a mythical figure, and that tribes that lived on the territory of the modern Kyrgyzstan in the third – second centuries B.C. were already called “Kyrgyz”.

According to the official Kyrgyz myth, the state has its roots not in the 1920’s but in the second century B.C. Official claims to the existence of a Kyrgyz *proto-nation* ignores Soviet national delimitation policies of 1920’s, and dismisses the idea that tribes mentioned in the “Chinese sources” might have either no or very little connection with the modern Kyrgyz ethnic group. Moreover, to successfully sell the myth the Government not only manipulates the data but also appeals to the authority of the United Nations (mainly referring to the UN GA resolution on the celebration of the 2200th Anniversary of the Kyrgyz Statehood^{xxxviii}) and Russian and Kyrgyz academicians (historians) who acknowledge the fact of the “anniversary”. Indeed, it is the appeal to the latter that makes the public, including academicians, to consume and glorify the myth. This has become the policy of the state and is aimed to create a Kyrgyz *national* identity. One might assume that the project is aimed to overcome the regional division into North and South, and unite the Kyrgyz population under the banner of common historical roots. Celebrations

dedicated to the epic hero Manas might also be seen as an appeal to national consolidation. Promoting his image the Government seems trying to eradicate existing regional and clan divisions among representatives of the titular nationality. Despite the fact that Manas is a mythical figure, construction of the Manas *Gumbez* (mausoleum) presumably makes one believe he was a real figure. However, this might affect the rise of nationalist sentiment and conflict within the society in a long-term perspective.

Official logic of the Manas/"Kyrgyz Statehood" myths

1. Kyrgyz people have a millennia long history and this fact could be proven by the "Chinese sources" and United Nations resolution on the Year of Kyrgyz Statehood. This makes Kyrgyz nation to be one of the eldest nations of Central Asia.
2. It is during President Akaev's term that the facts of the 2200-years history of Kyrgyz statehood and existence of Manas epic became widely known and got wide academic support and "international recognition."^{xxxix} Celebration of the Anniversaries, conferences, and publications should further advertise Kyrgyzstan on the international arena. The Academically proven and internationally recognized dates mean that the history of Kyrgyzstan is important not only for its citizens but for the world as well.
3. Although each of Central Asian states has epics similar to Manas, the "2200th Anniversary of the Kyrgyz Statehood" signifies and stands for the greatness of the Kyrgyz state. None of the neighboring countries has such a long history. Hence, Kyrgyz people should not only be proud of themselves, but also work to promote the "greatness" of their state.

Hidden agenda

1. The fact that the idea of the "Kyrgyz statehood" history has been acknowledged during President Akaev's term should theoretically promote him in the eyes of the ethnic Kyrgyz people. Furthermore, while the "Kyrgyzstan is our common home" slogan legitimizes the current regime in the eyes of non-Kyrgyz population of the state, myth of Kyrgyz statehood should bring legitimization with the titular group, especially in the Southern regions.

2. One of the main ideas – to create an ideology (national identity) based on the myth of *proto nation*. Since Kyrgyz history and culture might be seen as dim and not well studied, as compared to the Uzbek one, the state invents myths to promote it as national idea which ideally should unite its public.
3. Consolidation of the state around the idea of common history has dual goal – elimination of the aforementioned divisions and consolidation of power in the hands of contemporary elites. In other words, Northern clans try to maintain their access to power and remain unchallenged.

III. *Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan Case Studies*

Historical overview

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, governments of the Newly Independent States launched processes of nation building in their respective territories. In relation to this, it is important to notice that Central Asian states got their independence *owing to Soviet Union collapse* but not *in the result of their struggle for independence*. As Undeland and Platt argue, “Four out of five leaders in Central Asia essentially endorsed the putsch launched by the Communist Party’s old guard in August 1991. These leaders declared independence only when the collapse of the Soviet Union was a foregone conclusion.”^{xl} The importance of this event is in the fact that no internal nationalist movement precipitated emergence of modern Central Asian states. Rather, these states once again emerged as a result of actions by the external forces, particularly policies implemented by Moscow in the 1980’s.

The first stage of the *new* national identity formation process was marked by the “new” political structures creation. With the collapse of the state, political authority has been automatically transferred from Moscow to the republics, hence rather strong political structures were needed to manage respective independent communities. Although inclusive in form the process turned out to be exclusive in essence. In addition, given the fact that it would have been practically impossible to introduce radical changes into the substance of political structures without jeopardizing their power, Central Asian regimes changed the cover but not the essence. For example, the Communist Party was either formally dissolved as in the case of Uzbekistan^{xli}, or marginalized and diminished in membership and power as in the case of Kyrgyzstan.^{xlii} The

Political vacuum was filled by the so-called “democratic” parties and movements, whose top members were ex-Communist Party officials^{xliii}.

Yet another and more tangible outcome of the collapse of the Soviet Union was that representatives of titular nations got more access to the power structures owing to both the *official nationalisms*^{xliv} of the newly emerged regimes and the outflow of the former non-indigenous party elite from the region. If during the Soviet era the indigenous people of Central Asia were subject to the Moscow-run policy of “affirmative action,”^{xlv} with the collapse of the state there was no need for the continuation of the policy. After the adoption of the Official Language laws^{xlvi}, knowledge of titular languages (that were not spoken by non-titular nationalities) entered eligibility criteria for employment, especially in the public sector. No need to argue this contributed to the promotion of titular nations at the expense of non-indigenous ethnic groups. “With the advent of independence, the process of the concentration of power in the hands of the titular nations gained even greater momentum as positions of authority in government and state administration, law enforcement agencies and banking and court systems moved over to members of the titular nations.”^{xlvii} Bohr refers to this process as *nationalization by stealth*^{xlviii}. The term refers to the idea that Gorbachev’s *perestroika* brought the Soviet policy of *korenizatsia* (nativization) to the seemingly logical end, i.e. finally titular nationalities were able to occupy *en masse* social, economic and power structures within their states. However, this process took a path different from the one planned by Moscow. Even if there was a competition between the representatives of different ethnic groups over access to power, Language laws, as described above, substantially diminished ability of non-Central Asian nationals to compete. This contributed to the process of their outflow from the region.

With the process of nationalization in political structures being set in motion, Central Asian governments faced the dilemma of filling out the ideological gap that left after the official abolition of the Communist ideology. This could be described as the next stage of the nation-building process. “With the lifting of Moscow’s hegemony from Central Asia, former compulsory deference to Russia and Russians suddenly vanished. At the same time, the discrediting of the imposed Leninist-Marxist ideology created a momentary vacuum that allowed the cultural elites to speak their minds.”^{xlix} Presumably necessity to fill up the vacuum was guided by the facts that:

- Ideology helps to unite members of society into one more or less homogenous hence controllable group; and
- Ideology enables the ruling regime to legitimize itself by means of manipulation and indoctrination.

Indeed, ideology could be perceived as a binder of society and its lack can pose a threat to the cohesiveness between the various groups and individuals residing in a community. Akiner, for example, noticed that one of the challenges post-Soviet states faced after the demise of USSR was the concomitant collapse of the previously strong and binding Communist ideology: “At a stroke, the population was denuded of one entire strand of its identity: the beliefs, ideals and aspirations that had been associated with the Soviet system were discredited, the symbols rendered meaningless. Moreover, the validity of the modern national identities, as likewise of the boundaries of the national territorial units – artificial products of the National Delimitation – was open to question.”¹ Hence, ideological projects were aimed at consolidation of societies, re-formation of national identities or their updating to fit the new reality, and at legitimization of political regimes.

However it is worth noticing one peculiarity of these ideological projects. Despite their original goals, the new ideologies were to have national contexts so as to mark the departure from the Soviet past and to stress the issue of *national* independence. Not to get misled with the appeal to and the use of nationalism it is necessary to mention that in the hands of undemocratic state apparatus it became another tool to achieve particular goals. Glenn argued that “the national card is played in order to mobilize the masses to support a particular sectional interest within society, and it is not only written in a language readily understood but it is bolstered by the promise that the national interest i.e. the people’s general interest will be guaranteed in the creation of a state that stands above the narrow sectional interests existing within society.”^{li}

Responding to the fact that both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are multicultural societies, their leaders had chosen at the first sight nationally neutral ideologies. In other words, the official slogans of the regimes – *Future of Uzbekistan is a Great State* and *Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home* – were intended to embrace all cultural and ethnic groups of the respective societies, thus preventing emergence of chauvinism with the titular ethnic groups. One might notice that choosing these slogans as state ideologies the two Central Asian regimes have shown their preference for civic over ethnic nationalism. Granting citizenship to all the residents despite their

nationality and residential period, Central Asian governments stressed they are not following the Baltic line. Indeed, this might have been the fact and the leaders could have successfully spurred the raise of civic nationalism. However, when following Glenn's logic and inquiring into the nature of Central Asian policymaking, as well as when tracing the events that accompanied these ideological projects, s/he might realize that previously obvious neutrality has political pragmatism in its basis. The choices made and the policies they were followed by point at the fact that the two seemingly immaculate slogans are just some of the tools in the hands of Central Asian political regimes.

Education: enlightenment tool or propaganda machine?

As it is known from the course of history, political regimes tend to employ educational institutions in order to legitimize and promote existence of the newly emerged/created political entities. Public affiliation with them has been raised accordingly. Although there can be disagreements over this issue, it nevertheless constitutes a fact. When studying the origins of *mass public* education one can notice the correlation between the popularization of once nobility-confined practice, i.e. education, and emergence of modern nation-states. For nationalism scholars such as Hobsbawm and Anderson the link is obvious: the state uses education as a means to enhance and retain its control over the masses. Hobsbawm, for example, argues that "states would use the increasingly powerful machinery for communicating with their inhabitants, above all the primary schools, to spread the image and heritage of the 'nation' and to inculcate attachment to it and to attach to country and flag, often 'inventing traditions' or even nations for this purpose."^{lii} Accordingly, Anderson sees education as one of the parts of 'print capitalism', which disseminates the idea of the nation to all parts of a political entity thus embedding public affiliation with it. Indeed, education does serve as a device that connects the state with its public, otherwise how one could explain the fact that secondary education has received obligatory status.

One of the recent famous cases of educational institutions serving as a public indoctrination channel is that of the Soviet Union. The Communist regime has been known for its use of educational institutions in the process of state ideology propaganda. Having stretched in borders in the aftermath of 1917 Revolution the state faced the challenge of legitimization and acquisition of public loyalty to it. The only logical way out became indoctrination of population with the help of a mass-reaching education. Although educational institutions established

throughout its vast territory fulfilled their original goal and drastically diminished illiteracy level, their foremost duty has become dissemination of the state produced propaganda^{liii}. According to Galin, “addressing Communist Party XVI congress Stalin claimed that the only means to suppress resistance of the class enemies and to overcome existing difficulties it was necessary to launch *all-front* attack against capitalist elements and isolate opportunist elements in our own ranks...”^{liv} Obviously, educational institutions were part of the front. Instructing the masses of culturally and educationally “disadvantaged” republics of Central Asia the Soviet regime not only portrayed traditional rulers of the region as *class enemies* but also tried to raise public affiliation with and support of the “*progressive*” Communist regime. As the post-1991 events show these policies tactics has seen its rebirth despite the collapse of Soviet Union.

National Histories: Search for the Past or Creation of the Present?

When reading contemporary *national* history text-books and analyzing them with the help of nationalism theories one can notice the existence of *primordialism – modernism* discourse as well as an attempt to create and foster national identities. As was mentioned above, one of the significant features of historical texts lies with the idea of Soviet identity dismantling. Manipulation with the historical data, often accompanied by selectivity and bearing features of the appeal to *primordialism* enables the two regimes to embed their claims and pursue particular goals. If borrowing Carr’s words, “our picture [of Uzbek/Kyrgyz history] has been pre-selected and predetermined for us, not so much by accident as by people who were consciously or unconsciously imbued with a particular view and thought the facts which supported that view worth preserving.”^{lv} Indeed, stressing upon certain historical facts and omitting others the two respective regimes re-write their *national* histories, thus creating grounds for particular national identities (re-)formation.

Uzbekistan: Historicity and Tamerlane

The foreword to the History of Uzbekistan^{lvi}, for example, openly depicts the tsarist and Soviet past as a destructive and oppressive, leaving aside certain positive outcomes such as industrialization, educational progress, and national delimitation (mostly owing to which contemporary Central Asian states have come into existence). Moreover, it falsifies historical and political data when stating that with the tsarist and then Soviet expansion into the region the

“Uzbek people have lost their freedom and independence.”^{lvii} The mere inquiry into the pre-Soviet history of the region reveals that there were no *Uzbek people*, nor were they *free* and/or *independent*. Rather, the territory of modern Uzbekistan has been inhabited by people of various tribes and ethnicities, whose identity was centered on religion, region of descent, or a clan/tribe/khanate dynasty^{lviii}. Furthermore, the phenomenon of the *Uzbek people* as a unified concept came into being with the tsarist ethnographic inquiries and fostered itself owing to the Soviet national delimitation process. Akiner, for example argues, that “on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution Central Asian identities were beginning to be defined in opposition to Russian.”^{lix} Similar attitude to national identity formation in the pre-Soviet Central Asia is expressed by Ingeborg Baldauf (*Some Thoughts on the Making of the Uzbek Nation*), Muriel Atkin (*Religious, National, and Other Identities in Central Asia*), Olivier Roy (*The New Central Asia: the Creation of Nations*), Edward Allworth (*The Modern Uzbeks*), and Steven Sabol (*The Creation of Soviet Central Asia: the 1924 National Delimitation*). All of them argue, or rather point at historical fact that contemporary Central Asian nations did not exist since time immemorial but were formed and later entrenched to distinguish all the indigenous people from the Russian and European colonizers. However, this has been omitted for the sake of attributing historicity to the modern nation.

The same foreword part of the text-book mentions that it has become necessary “to explain inevitable and reasonable emergence of Uzbekistan – the state whose statehood experience is counted in millennia – on the world political arena,” to “recover the authentic historical picture that has been once harshly damaged by Soviet historical science,” and “to ‘humanize’ history while giving it proper academic and instructive meaning.”^{lx} I assume there is no need to argue that these necessities reflect the anti-Soviet rhetoric of the state. In other words, historians respond to both political realities and requirements of the ruling regime – the two reefs once mentioned by Spinoza. The wording of these lines points at the fact that Uzbek history is currently being re-written, and the purpose of this project could be described as ideological (re-) construction. This, in turn, parallels with Stalin’s “all-front attack against” ideological enemies of the newly emerged state. One could describe this process quoting Kedourie: “In societies suddenly exposed to the new learning and the new philosophies of the Enlightenment and of Romanticism, orthodox settled ways began to seem ridiculous and useless. The attack was powerful and left the old generation bewildered and speechless; or if it attempted to speak, it

merely gave voice to irritated admonition, obstinate opposition, or horror-stricken rejection, which only served to widen the rift and the distance between the fathers and the sons...^{»lxi}

Interestingly enough, while undertaking the attack against the Soviet legacy and practice the Uzbek regime does not hesitate to borrow the tactics of its ideological “enemy”, i.e. Soviet historiography. Also, despite such an anti-Russian rhetoric most of the contemporary Uzbek historians have been educated in Soviet educational institutions and most of the resources they use have been published before and during Soviet period. Roy describes this process saying, that in Central Asia “the Soviet perspective is preserved, but at the same time the role of the Russians is systemically re-evaluated negatively. The Russians are described as colonizers, but the history being used is that which they themselves wrote of the peoples that they colonized, changing only certain aspects.”^{»lxii}

Despite the fact that there was no such phenomenon as the *Uzbek people* and that one might disagree with the claims of *dehumanization* and *damage*, modern Uzbek historians nevertheless insist on their position. So, on the page seven of the same text-book it says, that “History itself is the witness of the self-sacrificing struggle for independence. ... Our people [supposedly referring to the Uzbeks] have experienced the yoke of Akhemenids [Persian dynasty of the fifth-fourth centuries B.C.], invasion of troops of Alexander the Great, oppression of Arabs, attacks by Genghis Khan and Batyi, and invasion of tsarist Russia. The same history remembers infamous drive of the conquerors [out of the region].”^{»lxiii} According to this claim Uzbek history should be counted in millennia, which is a nonsense. However, such an approach to history making could be explained by the fact that it serves and reflects the position of the modern Uzbek regime. Stephen Hegarty remarks on this point arguing, that “*for the most part, professional historians have supported the new regime, and the Uzbek press, excepting a brief interlude of genuine pluralism immediately after independence, has been a reliable mouthpiece for government propaganda.*”^{»lxiv} That modern Uzbek historians have been serving the present Uzbek regime, thus helping it foster the national identity, could also be noticed from the further reading of the abovementioned history text-book and analyzing events that accompanied history re-writing process.

One of the most striking claims made by the Uzbek historians and public officials is that regarding personality of Tamerlane. Once portrayed as a brutal conqueror, the fourteenth-century ruler has become a “centerpiece” and “founder” of the Uzbek nation. Attention paid to his

personality in modern Uzbekistan could only be compared to the attention Soviet people once paid to Lenin. When reading the aforementioned claims, one might realize that it was Tamerlane who was once *dehumanized* and whose reign was once *damaged* by the Soviet historians, and that it is his personality that needs to be *recovered*. According to Faizullaev and Juraev, “remembering him [Tamerlane] is very important for the creation of democratic state, which should get its honorable place in international community,” and for the “fulfillment of the *Future of Uzbekistan is a Great State* idea.”^{lxv}

The fact that his personality receives proper attention and is being remembered could be proven by: erection of his monuments; depiction of his portraits in public places; construction of Timurids museum; pompous celebration of his 660th anniversary; naming schools, streets, administrative districts, public organizations, state medal after him; academic events to honor and study his life, legacy, historical role and significance; enormous number of publications and speeches by academicians, public officials, and by the Uzbek President. Furthermore, since 1996 Tamerlane’s birthday has been annually celebrated in April. Reporting on the recent event, Jahon informational agency published an article *Honoring the Great Ancestor*^{lxvi}. According to the article, celebration of the 668th birthday was held on April 8, 2004, and both the Presidential State Councilor and the Deputy Prime Minister attended the event, first laying a wreath to the monument of the conqueror and later participating in the *Tamerlane is Our Pride and Honor* conference. When summarized this leads to the fact that Tamerlane has become an ideological symbol of Uzbekistan, his fourteenth century empire has turned out to be the “golden age” of the Uzbek nation, and his reign became a political model to be followed.

However, alike to the previously mentioned cases, historians once again select only those facts from the conqueror’s biography that meet present-day requirements. For example, the brutality that always accompanied his conquests is either being described as a requirement of the period or omitted. What rather being mentioned is his political genius, fairness, care of his people, support of science and culture, and idea of the great [Uzbek] state. In addition, one of his slogans – *In Justice is Power* – has been depicted on the billboards throughout the country. According to Hegarty, “Uzbek publicists portray Temur’s statecraft as inspiration for a broad range of contemporary policies from taxation and agricultural reform to the creation of a unified Central Asian market. Most significantly, the Uzbek government has relied on Temur’s example to provide a historical basis for what it perceives to be its greatest source of legitimacy: the

maintenance of peace and stability amid the bloody regional conflicts that accompanied the collapse of the Soviet rule. This theme is found in nearly every one of President Karimov's public statements...^{»lxvii}

That the *Uzbekness* of Tamerlane has been constructed by the modern political regime could be proven by the study of the secondary sources, such as Allworth's *The Modern Uzbeks* and Soucek's *A History of Inner Asia*. Both Allworth and Soucek argue that Tamerlane belonged to a Mongol *barlas* tribe, and that he never was an Uzbek. Soucek also points that Tamerlane came to power "through personal and tribe alliances in which he showed a mastery and endurance,"^{»lxviii} and that he constructed his relationship to Genghis Khan in order to legitimize his rule over the previously Genghisid realm. "There were various ways to do the latter: alliance through marriage or setting a puppet scion of the house of Genghis Khan on the throne and ruling in his name were the most frequent ones, and Timur [Tamerlane] had recourse to both."^{»lxix} The two authors also point at the fact that Tamerlane and his descendants actually fought with the Uzbek tribes, who at that time occupied territory in between the Syrdaria, Volga, and Irtysh rivers. According to Allworth "Uzbek participation against princes in Russia and against Timur's descendants in the Khwarazmian region [North-Western part of modern Uzbekistan] colored the Uzbeks' image in Russian as well as Timurid memory."^{»lxx} Furthermore, he mentions a Timurid historian Abdurrazaq Samarqandi as reporting that when Uzbek tribes invaded Khwarazm in mid-fifteenth century, "He [Timurid ruler, Shahrukh] ordered several amirs to that territory, and that eminent amirs, displaying the signs of courage and bravery, attacked the Uzbek people and state [*ulus*], destroying and scattering all these insolent ones."^{»lxxi} There is no doubt that the two authors have been trying to depict the history in a Rankean way – "the way it really was" – rather than inventing the facts. So, what we actually have is that Tamerlane and his descendants were exterminating the Uzbek tribes rather than uniting them into one nation, but for the sake of pursuing certain political goals these facts are basically omitted from the study of the period.

Another moment that requires attention is that the intense study of Timurid empire leaves Shaybanid dynasty – the one that actually brought tribes known as *Uzbeks* to the territory of modern Uzbekistan from the Kazakh steppes – aside. This makes one believe that somehow one dynasty has more historical significance for the modern Uzbeks rather than the other. One of the facts that might be pointing at the reason not to see Shaybanid dynasty as the origin of the modern Uzbek nation might be possible Kazak origins of the dynasty. The fact that it originates

in the territory to the north of modern Uzbekistan might make one believe that contemporary Uzbeks are descendants of medieval Kazakhs. When further elaborated this leads to indistinctiveness of the modern Uzbek nation as well as to the lack of its historicity. However, the claim on the *Uzbekness* of Tamerlane, *who was born not far from Samarkand*, helps to make modern Uzbek nation both ethnically distinct and historically prominent. Another reason to give preference to Tamerlane might be seen in his ability to create an empire by means of conquest and consolidation of the supposedly dispersed *Uzbek* tribes. Treating Timurid period as the *Golden Age* of the Uzbek nation allows the regime to both idealize Timurid dynasty and to expose modern policies in the lights of national reawakening. Borrowing Smith's words, one might compare the Uzbek nation to the "Sleeping Beauty who awaits a kiss to be revived" and the modern Uzbek regime to the "prince who will provide this 'magical' kiss."^{lxxii}

While analyzing one can notice traits of and appeal to *primordialism*, which justifies one's search for the past on the grounds of its importance for the creation of a nation. Indeed, Renan argued that a "nation is a soul, a spiritual principle" and that "only two things ... constitute this soul... One is in the past, the other is in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of remembrances; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage which all hold in common..."^{lxxiii} However, it is arguable that Renan referred to the artificially created past and that his logic could be applied to the type of 'nationalism' sponsored and practiced by the Uzbek government. Although appeal to the primordial roots of the Uzbek *nation* with its century-long struggle for independence has become a norm for those participating in the process of historical *recovery*, this has no factual basis. Rather, it contains constructivist features and is aimed at certain political goal, which Hobsbawm would describe as creation of public loyalty to an "ideological construct."^{lxxiv}

Idealization and symbolization of Tamerlane's personality and promotion of the idea of his political genius makes consumers of the state propaganda believe that to have a *great state* Uzbekistan needs a strong, Tamerlane-like leader. "The leader of the country had to be firm, to have political power, to use it carefully and wisely, and to have the political intuition to realize all wide-ranging and absolutely principal and tremendous political changes in the country."^{lxxv} In other words, the new Uzbek leader should follow policies and advices proposed by his fourteenth-century predecessor and be aimed at creation of the strong and *great state*. Accordingly, to meet the requirements a leader should also be able to consolidate his people, be

enlightened and respect his symbolic ancestor. When applied to reality one can see that the modern Uzbek incumbent could be perceived as the reflection of the state symbol, hence the whole history re-writing project is being aimed at legitimization of modern regime.

The parallel between the two political regimes is obvious. National independence and creation of the all-embracing ideology, as well as public denouncement of tribalism and clan politics reflect the idea of consolidation of the nation. Furthermore, symbolic notion of the *great state* has come into being owing to ideological project of the modern regime, which portrays it as a reflection of Tamerlane's will and is aimed at consolidation of society around it. The fact that the Uzbek President is striving to build a strong state could be found in his own rhetoric, as well as in the score of books he has produced. In his writings, the Uzbek President supposedly addresses such issues as economic development, state and regional security and stability, independence, educational progress, meaning of culture and traditions, etc^{lxxvi}. These have become spiritual guides for the Uzbek public officials and special educational courses on the reading of President's works^{lxxvii} have been introduced at various levels of Uzbek academia. As one might realize, addressing current issues in his writings, the modern incumbent depicts his enlightened nature and broad-minded personality.

The parallel drawn between the two personalities – the modern incumbent and the state symbol – has certain political implications. The idealization of Tamerlane and his rule results in the justification of his actions and establishes a precedent for authoritarianism rather than for democracy in modern Uzbekistan. When paralleled with the modern Uzbek leader this legitimizes and promotes his rule. Indeed, the strong leadership which seems to be required in the process of transition from the Soviet past to a “democratic” one justifies authoritarian policies on the grounds of their aiming at creation of the *great state*. for example, describing presidential rule Juraev and Faizullaev claim that historically the Eastern ruler “was required to possess such qualities as decisiveness and exactingness which did not prevent him of being merciful and be guided by the interests of peace and justice.”^{lxxviii} When combined with the intense study of the President Karimov works, the study of the Uzbek history entrenches public loyalty to the modern incumbent at least with the representatives of *national academia*^{lxxix}, who further disperse their knowledge to a wider public and promotes national identity creation project.

Kyrgyzstan: Statehood Anniversary and Epic Manas

Although having slightly different characteristics, the Kyrgyz national identity is also being formed with the help of historical forgery and abuse of the academic subject by the Kyrgyz political regime. To reach this conclusion one needs to inquire into the Kyrgyz history text-book and concur it with the critique of events dedicated to historical data – i.e. to undertake the process similar to that mentioned above.

The foreword to the text-book^{lxxx} does not contain the harsh critique of the Soviet regime, like the Uzbek text-book, yet it denounces Soviet historiography for misinterpretation of facts, their portrayal in the lights of Marxist class struggle, and for serving the political regime. Similar to the Uzbek case, it implies “dehumanization”, “damage”, and the necessity for “recovery”. The part of historiography clearly depicts problems of historical interpretation in the pre-independence period and points at the necessity for the “thorough study and re-vision of the texts produced in the XX century.”^{lxxxi} The noticeable mildness of the critique has certain implications. By distancing themselves from the harsh denunciation of Soviet politics contemporary Kyrgyz historians try to pose themselves as distanced from politics and not pursuing any political goals. Hence, the foreword implies that the offered interpretation of historical facts is a reliable and trustworthy source of information. However, textual analysis reveals certain traits of the politicization of history and the involvement of historians in the process of state building and national identity formation.

Similar to the Uzbek, Kyrgyz historians back up primordialist claims made by the Kyrgyz government. Moreover, serving as a “trustworthy” source of information they contribute to the ideological project launched by the state. So, the celebration of the “2200th Anniversary of the Kyrgyz Statehood” in 2003 – event directed at the rise of nationalist and patriotic feelings with the ethnic Kyrgyz – did not provoke any public critique with the historians. Rather, serving the regime they have been promoting this idea unearthing the “facts” that legitimize the claim for historicity. Claiming that tribes of *gegunis* and *wusunis* that inhabited territory of modern Kyrgyzstan in the third and second centuries B.C. should be treated as the ancestors of the modern Kyrgyz nation, historians depict Kyrgyz as the eldest nation of Central Asia^{lxxxii}. Although acknowledging the fact that it is difficult to prove continuity and the direct link between modern Kyrgyz people and their “ancestors”, historians nevertheless pay attention to the study of the two ancient tribes thus constructing the historicity of the modern nation.

To make their claim more “reliable” historians mention a hypothesis according to which the Kyrgyz language could be perceived as the oldest in Central Asia. In particular, the hypothesis claims that “already in that time [first half of the second millennia B.C.] the ancestors of modern Kyrgyz people spoke by then the already formed Kyrgyz language.”^{lxxxiii} There is no need to argue that such a claim could be used as precise explanation of primordialism. Indeed, if following the logic of historians, the Kyrgyz people can easily trace back their roots to the third – second centuries B.C. ignoring the processes of intermarriage, migrations, historical cataclysms, and disappearance of certain tribes – all those that have been shaping modern set up of Central Asia. Hence, the search for the past has implicit underlying goal of both constructing national history and providing legitimacy for the modern nation. Furthermore, the “historicity” of the nation combined with the “fact” of its millennia-long age certainly raises patriotic feelings with the ethnic Kyrgyz.

The same line is noticeable in the books of President Akaev^{lxxxiv}. When talking about statehood, he also claims that history of the Kyrgyz state could be traced back to the III century B.C. The source he unquestioningly refers to is “Historical notes” by a Chinese historian Syma Tzyan^{lxxxv}. “Profound researches of national scientists, who refer to the works of the ancient and modern historians, convincingly show that the cradles of Turkic and Kyrgyz Statehood go back to the epoch of Huns (third – first centuries B.C).”^{lxxxvi} To dismiss any possible critique of the nation’s continuity he argues that Syma Tzyan gave the “birth certificate” to the Kyrgyz nation, and that with this “certificate” the Kyrgyz nation existed for a millennium before it entered its Golden Age – the period known as the *Kyrgyz great statehood* or *Kyrgyzskoe velikoderzhavie* – in the tenth century A.D.^{lxxxvii} Moreover, to legitimize celebrations of the “2200th anniversary” and to suppress any further critique, Akaev, along with the supporters of the event, refer to the United Nations General Assembly resolution. Indeed, UN GA adopted its resolution on the celebration. However, the text does not mention the “2200” but supports celebrations dedicated to the Kyrgyz statehood. In other words, Kyrgyz historians and politicians have themselves *corrected* or even *reconstructed* the UN resolution.

Despite the fact that it has been proven that Kyrgyz tribes have for centuries resided in the Yenisei river valley (Siberia), and that *wusunis* and *gegunis* are often depicted as having European phenotype, i.e. tall height, white skin, and red hair, supporters of the myth on historicity nevertheless assert on their position. President Akaev, for example, though

acknowledging the fact on the abovementioned tribes' European phenotype, nevertheless goes into a discussion which leads him to point at an uninterrupted link between the modern and ancient Kyrgyz people^{lxxxviii}. When talking about Kyrgyz history Hansen points at the fact that to cover the lack of historical facts and data historians merely invent them^{lxxxix}.

To notice this trend it is necessary to look through history textbooks: ancient residents of modern Kyrgyzstan as well as the medieval residents of Siberia and Western China are believed to belong to one Kyrgyz nation. However, the claim, as well as the study of these tribes, does not explain both their relationship and the fact of their distanced residence. Hence, historians grab whatever fits their aim and agenda. It becomes obvious that to justify their cause, supporters of the myth on historicity operate with the lack of its critique. In other words, historical facts are taken as true unless officially proven to be wrong.

The *History of Kyrgyz and Kyrgyzstan* textbook^{xc}, for example, refers to the existence of evidence that supports claims for historicity, but authors fail to provide any direct quotes or name the sources that could prove the claim. On the page thirteen authors refer to the Kyrgyz people of medieval ages, but don't show how the *nation* formed, where, and which tribes constituted its base. Later on they make other missteps referring to Kyrgyz people. When referring to the *Kyrgyz domain* they fail to specify the notion of the term but nevertheless use it as an proof for the existence of Kyrgyz state in the third century B.C. In addition, they do not explain how it came into being, who formed it, and how did historians found out that it was *Kyrgyz*. In the context of Central Asia, with its melting pot nature it would be difficult to trace the origins of contemporary nations. Most often, people form their identity as a result of either loyalty to the leading tribe/clan or basing on the place of residence. However, with the case of Kyrgyz this is not clear at all. Myths and legends historians refer to complicate the situation. Reference to proto-nation, existence and origins of which are unclear, seems to be become common historical practice.

It is obvious that not offering their critique of the "Statehood" anniversary, Kyrgyz historians enable the regime to achieve its goal. One might even argue that critique would be perceived as both inappropriate and unpatriotic. It is worth mentioning that according to President Akaev's decree the Ministry of Education have had to introduce the deep study of Kyrgyz history at all levels of the Kyrgyz educational institutions^{xc1}. Hence, historians were required to promote the idea rather than to challenge it. Furthermore, it was required that Kyrgyz

schools held classes dedicated to the celebrations of the “anniversary”, and that discussion of the national continuity were based on President Akaev’s *Kyrgyzskaia gosudarstvennost’ i narodnyi epos Manas* (Kyrgyz statehood and national epic Manas) book^{xcii}. Similar to the Uzbek case one can definitely notice interference of politics into presumably independent educational process, and establishment of indoctrination precedent.

Another point that requires attention is the image of an epic Kyrgyz hero Manas. Although taken from an oral legend, Manas has acquired symbolic status for the Kyrgyz people. His relevance to the topic of this research could be described by the fact that being a construct, Manas has acquired real “personality,” character and historic meaning, and is being studied and celebrated by the Kyrgyz people. Significance of the epic poem is in the idea of consolidation of the dispersed Kyrgyz tribes with the subsequent creation of the great Kyrgyz state.

Although there could be nothing wrong with the study of national folklore, it would be proper to argue that his image is being used by modern Kyrgyz policymakers in the pursuit of their goals. The fact that the epic tells about consolidation of conflicting tribes into one nation, which subsequently was able to defend itself from the conquerors – Chinese and *qypchaqis* – implies that modern divisions within the Kyrgyz society should be eliminated. In other words, the Kyrgyz people should form a homogenous nation. Robert Lowe noted on this point, that “A national ideology benefits from great historical figures written as inspiring subjects of myths woven to assert the identity of a people, and to consolidate a sense of unity and pride. Most national heroes are independence fighters, strong rulers of a flourishing state or representatives of great cultural or intellectual tradition”^{xciii} However, the non-existence of a nationalism movement in Kyrgyzstan and absence of strong historical figures which could have served as a centerpiece for the national ideology and identity impelled the state to invent it. According to Lowe, state policy on the revival and promotion of the myth has a clear “intention that the epic tales will be considered ‘the Kyrgyz spiritual object’ and the pivotal component of the Kyrgyz peoples’ mentality.”^{xciv}

It is worth mentioning that the rhetoric of struggle for independence, national unity, resistance to foreign oppression, strong leadership, and historical continuity of the nation often accompany portrayal of Manas. All of these points have clear political implications. The “struggle for independence” brings about legitimacy to the newly created state. Although there is no recorded historical evidence that could prove the fact of the “struggle”, the study of the poem

makes one believe that Kyrgyz people – led by Manas and his sons – did fight for their independence. Hence, independence of Kyrgyz Republic could be seen as a realization of the long held dream. Consequently, President Akaev could be seen as a person who realized it and whose leadership (whatever form it takes) should be supported but not challenged. Furthermore, the idea of national unity when applied to the Kyrgyz reality makes one realize the existence of certain political underpinnings. Given the fact that Kyrgyz politics is subject to regional and tribe divisions^{xcv} and that it has been dominated by the Northern residents and representatives of certain ethnic tribes and clans, national unity might be perceived as an attempt to raise loyalty of the under-represented people and subvert any possible challenges to contemporary political elites. Hence, national consolidation is accompanied by the process of consolidation of power. According to Smith, “In order to consolidate their hold and homogenize the population into a compact nation, the ruling class seeks to assimilate ethnic minorities through an educational program of nationalism, backed by major institutions. To this end, they promote official, establishment ideas and images of the nation, to which everyone must conform and which preclude the rise of any other ideas, symbols or imagery.”^{xcvi}

It is worth mentioning that invoking the myth on the historicity modern regime appeals to the feelings of ethnic Kyrgyz thus making use of Walker Connor’s rhetoric and attempting to spur patriotism. Although celebrations of the “statehood anniversary” have strong nationalist background and attack the previously popularized slogan of *Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home*, the Kyrgyz regime nevertheless makes use of the two ideas. The former, as was stated above, is used as an appeal to ethnic Kyrgyz and the latter is an appeal to the non-Kyrgyz population of the state. Hence, using the both ideas the state tries to pose itself as representing all the ethnic groups and subsequently legitimize itself before them by raising their national consciousness and pride. However, no one would doubt that foremost it serves the interests of the titular nation otherwise it would not have depicted historical facts in *national* colors.

Conclusion

It is obvious that modern Central Asian regimes have been using history in order to both legitimize themselves and to create respective national identities for their people. Unearthing certain historical facts and omitting others, inventing symbols and traditions, and imposing them on their population by means of educational institutions political regimes aim to achieve their goals. This has become common practice for both nation-building and national identity creation projects. Calhoun argues that “nationalism has a complex relationship to history. On the one hand, nationalism commonly encourages the production of historical accounts of the nation... On the other hand, however, nationalists are prone to the production of Whig histories, favorable accounts of ‘how we came to be who we are’.”^{xcvii} Although one might claim that freedom of speech and professional academic ethics should serve as counterbalance to the official *national* histories it needs to be noticed that in Central Asia these either do not exist or state-controlled. Furthermore, one might even notice that independence and nationalism euphoria spurs scholars to produce the “Whig histories.”

Hence, participating in the “cultural renaissance” both historians and public officials make use of their access to publicity and contribute to the “official nationalism.” Despite the fact that their participation is often marked by fraud, it nevertheless enables them to achieve the set goals. As Anthony Smith put it, “the truth-content of the unearthed memories is less important culturally and politically than their abundance, variety and drama (their aesthetic qualities) or their example of loyalty, nobility and self-sacrifice (their moral qualities) that inspire emulation and bind present generations to the ‘glorious dead’.”^{xcviii} Re-writing the past contemporary Uzbek and Kyrgyz historians and public officials often depict their projects as an obligatory tribute to once intentionally forgotten or “dehumanized” historical figures and events. Invoking certain historical facts and figures regimes and subaltern historians appeal to public feelings and perceptions, and aim their projects at raising the level of national consciousness. Indeed, the myth of the “*Kyrgyz statehood*” does raise feelings of pride and honor of being a Kyrgyz, and the fact that it were the *Uzbek* people who defended their land from military incursions of Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, and tsarist Russia makes Uzbek people feel proud of their “ancestors” and of their nation. More than that, with their identity becoming based on loyalty to the state and its leader they perceive any critique as unpatriotic and improper.

However, despite the fact that the study of history does reveal certain unknown facts and events, its selective nature points at political underpinnings that underlie the project. All the

invented symbols, myths, dates, and traditions when spread with the help of the “print capitalism” are foremost aimed at legitimization of both the newly created national entities and their political regimes. *National* histories, when full of *national* figures and events depict newly emerged states as distinct political entities whose people were struggling for their independence for centuries. The *Golden Ages* and historical leaders contribute to the idea that modern states were once independent and both culturally and economically developed. In the lights of these developments modern leaders are being perceived as the followers of respective historical leaders and who supposedly aim to lead their people into the new Golden Age. But having chosen authoritarian leaders as the symbols for their states and as political models to follow modern incumbents, with the help of historians, legitimize their policies before the public. As a result we have perpetuation of authoritarianism. As President Karimov put it, “I agree that some of my actions seem authoritarian. But I can easily explain this: in historic periods, especially when a people attains statehood or in transition periods from one system to another, a strong executive power is indispensable. It is necessary to avoid confrontations and bloodshed.”^{xcix}

Appendix

Minutes from *(Re)-writing History of Central Asia panel*, HESP Roundtable for CARI participants. Bishkek, Oct 24-26, 2003.

Uzbek history professor, CARI fellow, Bukhara:

“The aim of the history as a subject is to find/reveal truth/true facts and the aim of the historian is to present that truth to the public...Unfortunately today it is journalists who write history textbooks, thus undermining the very essence of the discipline. They do follow the way Government officials lead them.”

Question:

What do you mean by truth? Truth as interpreted by the Government or truth as is presented by the history? If you don't have objective information present in the textbooks, then how do you teach your courses?

Professor:

As a historian I have to seek for the true facts as presented by history itself, but as a citizen of the state (Uzbekistan) and as a civil servant I have to follow the guidelines as presented by state officials. One of my former professors told me: “remember, when inside the school, you are civil servant employed by the government, and when you leave the building you are a private person.” Certainly I do realize the goal of history as a subject and I certainly try to follow it as much as I can, and as is possible. The fact that we don't have textbooks allows me to write my own texts and present them to my students. One example of revealing historical events is to tell students fables (tales) so that students might themselves think about and look to reveal the truth. But in general, I have to comply with the rules and program established by the Ministry of Education and my respective University.

Question:

What would you say about idealization of Tamerlane and Timurid Empire? As a historian you should realize that most of what is presented is exaggeration of facts. Moreover, observing this one might start looking for parallels between the regimes, current and historical: Karimov-

Tamerlane. Both are authoritarian rulers, aren't they? Do you have any objections? Do you know that Tamerlane had Mongol roots and that he has no ethnic connections with the Uzbeks. This being a fact how do you perceive the idea of him being called the "father of all Uzbeks?"

Professor:

Well, there are many positive facts about Tamerlane. One of them being that he was a wise ruler, and he certainly possessed personality. He created a great empire and there is nothing bad in it. The fact that he was able to create and rule it shows how wise he was. Now our state also aims to make Uzbekistan a great state, and there is nothing bad in it. Regarding parallels and Karimov in particular: our president is very smart and wise person. You could get this from his books and speeches (although some of them are written by somebody else and published under his name). It is not easy to govern the state, and it is great that we avoided conflicts, like one in Tajikistan.

I would not argue that Tamerlane's image is too idealized, though I would admit that some objectivity would be necessary when studying history of that period. However, it is difficult to avoid subjectivity because it is our state's policy to praise Tamerlane and his empire. For example, there is a new course introduced for the students of history department. This is being called Timurid Empire and its Relations with Foreign States...

Bibliography

Books:

1. Akaev, Askar, *Istoriia proshedshaya cherez moe serdtse: Razmyshleniia* (History That Went Through My Hard: Thoughts), Bishkek: Ilim, 2003

2. Akaev, Askar, *Kyrgyzskaya Gosudarstvennost' I Narodnyi Epos Manas* (Kyrgyz Statehood and Folk Epic Manas), Bishkek: Uchkun, 2002
3. Alimov, *Sahibkiron Amir Temur: metodicheskoe posobie*, (Amir Temur: Methodological Manual), Tashkent: Gosudarstvennaya Biblioteka imeni Navoi, 1995
4. Allworth, Edward A., *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present. A Cultural History*, Stanford University: Hoover Institution Press, 1990
5. Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, London, New York: Verso, 1991
6. Baruch Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise* from 2001 AUK Baruch Spinoza course reader
7. Brubaker, Rogers, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1996
8. Cornell, Stephen, Douglass Hartman, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, Pine Forge Press
9. Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997
10. E.H. Carr, *What is History?* New York: Penguin Books, 1961
11. Evans, Richard J. *In Defense of History*, London: Granta Books, 1997
12. Geertz, Clifford, *Primordial and Civic Ties* in Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994
13. Glenn, John *The Soviet Legacy in Central Asia* Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999
14. Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Nations and Nationalisms Since 1780*, Cambridge University Press, 1990
15. Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony D., eds., *Nationalism*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994
16. Juraev, Faizulla, Faizullaev, Tursunbai, *Istoriia Uzbekistana: period nazional'noi nezavisimosti. Uchebnik dlya uchashikhsia 11 klassov obshobrazovatelnykh shkol* (History of Uzbekistan: Period of National Independence. Textbook for the 11th grade students of secondary school), Tashkent: Sharq, 2002
17. Le Goff, Jacques, *History and Memory*, Rendall, Steven and Claman, Elizabeth (trans.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1992
18. Melvin, Neil J., *Uzbekistan: Transition from Authoritarianism on the Silk Road*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000

19. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate History, Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1998
20. Osmonov O.J., *Istoriia Kyrgyzstana: Osnovnye Vepi (s drevneyshih vremen do serediny XIX veka)*. Uchebnik dlya 10 klassa sredney shkoly. (History of Kyrgyzstan: Fundamental Landmarks from the ancient times to the nineteenth century. Textbook for the 10th grade students of secondary school) Bishkek: MOK Tekhnologiya, 2003
21. Ozkirimli, Umut *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, (Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000)
22. Ploskih V. (chief ed.), *Istoriia Kyrgyzov i Kyrgyzstana. Uchebnik dlya vuzov*, (History of the Kyrgyz and of Kyrgyzstan. Textbook for Higher Educational Institutions), Bishkek: Ilim, 2000
23. Roy, Oliver, *The New Central Asia: Creation of Nations*, London, New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2000
24. Segars, Andrew, *Nation Building in Turkey and Uzbekistan* in Tom Everett-Heath (ed.) *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition*, London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003
25. Smith, Anthony D., *Nationalism and Modernism*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998
26. Smith, Anthony D., *National Identity*, London, New York: Penguin Books, 1991
27. Smith, et al, *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities*, Cambridge University Press, 1998
28. Soucek, Svat, *A History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000
29. Undeland, Charles and Platt, Nicholas, *The Central Asian Republics: Fragments of Empire, Magnets of Wealth*, New York: The Asia Society, 1994

Articles:

1. Akiner, Shirin *Melting Pot, Salad Bowl – Cauldron? Manipulation and Mobilization of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Central Asia*, Ethnic and Racial Studies, volume 20 N 2, April 1997
2. Ali, Muhammad, *A Few Words about Amir Timur*, Central Asian Monitor, N 3, 1996
3. Atkin, Muriel *Religious, National, and Other Identities in Central Asia*, from Jo Ann Gross (ed.), *Muslims in Central Asia*, Duke, 1992

4. Baldauf, Ingeborg, *Some Thoughts on the Making of the Uzbek Nation*, Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique, XXXII (1) janvier-mars 1991
5. Carlisle, Donald S., *Islam Karimov and Uzbekistan: Back to the Future?* in Colton, Timothy and Tucker, Robert (eds.), *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership* Westview, 1995
6. Cavanaugh, Cassandra, *Historiography in Independent Uzbekistan: the Search for National Identity*, Central Asia Monitor, No. 1, 1994
7. Dukenbaev, Askat and Hansen, William, *Understanding Politics in Kyrgyzstan*, DEMSTAR Research Report N 16, September 2003
8. Dukenbaev, Askat, *Political liberalisation and the rise of nationalism: the case of Kyrgyzstan*, MSc dissertation (University of Edinburgh, Sept 2001)
9. Elebaeva, Ainura, *et al*, *The Shifting Identities and Loyalties in Kyrgyzstan: The Evidence From the Field*, Nationalities Papers, Vol. 28, No 2, 2000
10. Fierman, William, *Policy Toward Islam in Uzbekistan in the Gorbachev Era*, Nationalities Papers, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1994
11. Galin, M., *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo sredneaziatskikh sovetskikh respublik*, (Cultural build-up of Central Asian Republics), *Revoltyutsia i natsionalnosti, 1937*, N 7 available in Central Asian Politics and Society course reader Bishkek: AUK, 2001
12. Glitchlow, James, *Will Soviet Central Asia Become a Greater Uzbekistan?*
13. Gong, Gerrit W. *The Beginning of History: Remembering and Forgetting as Strategic Issues*, The Washington Quarterly, Spring 2001 issue
14. Hegarty, Stephen, *The Rehabilitation of Temur: Reconstructing National History in Contemporary Uzbekistan*, Central Asia Monitor, N 1, 1995
15. Jahon Informational Agency, *S Pochteniem k Velikomu Predku*, (Honoring the Great Ancestor), available at <http://jahon.mfa.uz/ARHIV/2004/04/10042004.htm>
16. Kirimli, Meryem, *Uzbekistan in the New World Order*, Central Asian Survey (1997), 16 (1), 53-64
17. Marchenko, *Tema uroka: 2003 god – god 2200-letiiia Kyrgyzskoi gosudarstvennosti*, (Class Topic: 2003 – Year of the 2200th Anniversary of Kyrgyz Statehood), KutBilim newspaper, August 2003
18. McMahon, Colin *The Rehabilitation of Tamerlane Serves Current Uzbek President Well*, Chicago Tribune (IL), 01/20/1999

19. Megoran, Nick, *Theorizing Gender, Ethnicity and the Nation-state in Central Asia*, Central Asian Survey (1999), 18 (1), 99-110
20. Phillips, Andrew and Paul James, *National Identity between Tradition and Reflexive Modernization: the Contradictions of Central Asia*, National Identities, Vol. 3, No.1, 2001
21. Soltan, Gamal A.G., *State Building, Modernization and Political Islam. The Search for Political Community(s) in the Middle East*, Center of International Relations and International Cooperation, also available on-line at <http://www.cidob.org/Castellano/Publicaciones/Afers/soltan.html>
22. Tishkov, Valeriy, *The Culture of Ethnic Violence: the Osh Conflict*, from Tishkov, Valeriy, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union*, London, Sage, 1999
23. Wasilewska, Ewa, *The Past and the Present: the Power of Heroic Epics and Oral Tradition – Manas 1000*, Central Asian Survey (1997), 16 (1), 81-95
24. Weisbrode, Kenneth, *Uzbekistan in the Shadow of Tamerlane*, World Policy Journal, Spring 1997

Web-sites:

1. Annotation to the first collection of works by I.A. Karimov: http://www.press-service.uz/eng/knigi_knigi_eng/knigi_eng3.htm
2. Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic: <http://eng.president.kg/president/yokstatehood/decree200>
3. Michigan State University: <http://www.msu.edu/user/hillrr/161lec16.htm>
4. United Nations: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/gaef3012.doc.htm>

ⁱ Bohr, Annette, *The Central Asian States as Nationalizing Regimes* from Smith, Graham et al, *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 144

ⁱⁱ Rousseau quoted in Smith, Anthony D., *National Identity*, London, New York: Penguin Books, 1991, p. 75

ⁱⁱⁱ Akiner, Shirin *Melting Pot, Salad Bowl – Cauldron? Manipulation and Mobilization of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Central Asia*, Ethnic and Racial Studies, volume 20 N 2, April 1997, p. 369

^{iv} Analysis of contemporary Kyrgyz politics by Hansen and Dukenbaev leads one to conclude that modern Kyrgyz historians invent national history by grabbing all the available material and compiling it for the sake of bringing facts into the history, making it valid. One might also go further to inquire whether Kyrgyz origins should be thought in Manas epic or in the “Chinese sources”. See Dukenbaev, Askat and Hansen, William, *Understanding*

Politics in Kyrgyzstan, DEMSTAR Research Report N 16, September 2003 also available at <http://www.demstar.dk/papers/UPKyrgyzstan.pdf>

^v For more details see Hobsbawm, Eric J., *Nations and Nationalisms Since 1780*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 80-101

^{vi} Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education in Uzbekistan and Ministry of Education and Culture in Kyrgyzstan.

^{vii} Geertz, Clifford, *Primordial and Civic Ties* from Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 31

^{viii} Ozkirimli, Umut *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000, p. 64

^{ix} Smith, Anthony D., *Nationalism and Modernism* London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 146

^x *Ibid*, p. 147

^{xi} Ozkirimli, *op. cit.*, p. 73

^{xii} Connor, Walker, *A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a ...* from Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony D., eds., *Nationalism*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 37

^{xiii} Ozkirimli, *op. cit.* p. 69

^{xiv} *Ibid*.

^{xv} Dukenbaev, Askat, *Political liberalisation and the rise of nationalism: the case of Kyrgyzstan*, MSc dissertation University of Edinburgh, Sept 2001, p. 11

^{xvi} Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony D., eds., *Nationalism*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 47

^{xvii} Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p.30

^{xviii} Quoted by Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony D., *op. cit.*, p.47

^{xix} Gellner, Ernest, *Nationalism and Modernization* from Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony, *op. cit.*, p. 63

^{xx} Ozkirimli, *op. cit.*, p. 145

^{xxi} Merriam-Webster's Collegiate History, Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1998), p.550

^{xxii} Evans, Richard J. *In Defense of History*, London: Granta Books, 1997, p. 17

^{xxiii} *Ibid*

^{xxiv} B. Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty*, 1941, p. 19 quoted in E.H. Carr, *What is History?* New York: Penguin Books, 1961, p. 21

^{xxv} Le Goff, Jacques, *History and Memory*, Rendall, Steven and Claman, Elizabeth (trans.), (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. xi-xii

^{xxvi} Evans, Richard J., *op. cit.*, p. 16

^{xxvii} Le Goff, *op. cit.*, p.180

^{xxviii} Carr, *op. cit.*, p.28

^{xxix} Defending history, Evans argued that "if political or moral aims become paramount in the writing of history, then scholarship suffers. Facts are mined to prove a case; evidence is twisted to suit a political purpose; inconvenient documents are ignored; sources deliberately misconstrued or misinterpreted. If historians are not engaged in the pursuit of truth, if the idea of objectivity is merely a concept designed to repress alternative points of view, then scholarly criteria become irrelevant in assessing the merits of a particular historical argument." Evans, Richard J., *op. cit.*, p. 219

^{xxx} Brief description and comparison of the two types of nationalism are available at the following web-site of Michigan State University: <http://www.msu.edu/user/hillrr/161lec16.htm> (Accessed on April 30, 04)

^{xxxi} Akiner, Shirin, *op. cit.*, p. 363

^{xxxii} Melvin, Neil J., *Uzbekistan: Transition from Authoritarianism on the Silk Road*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000, p. 46

^{xxxiii} Minutes of the interview with the Uzbek History professor and Central Asian Research Initiative grantee from Bukhara State University, held during HESP roundtable of the CARI program (Bishkek, October 24-26, 2003) are attached.

^{xxxiv} McMahon, Colin *The Rehabilitation of Tamerlane Serves Current Uzbek President Well*, Chicago Tribune (IL), 01/20/1999

^{xxxv} Cornell, Stephen, Douglass Hartman, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, Pine Forge Press, p. 89

^{xxxvi} Gong, Gerrit W. *The Beginning of History: Remembering and Forgetting as Strategic Issues*, The Washington Quarterly, Spring 2001 issue, also available on-line at <http://www.twq.com/01spring/gong.pdf>

^{xxxvii} In the same article McMahon quotes Karimov as saying: "I understand that some forces are anxious to present Karimov as a dictator... I agree that some of my actions seem authoritarian. But I can easily explain this: In historic

periods, especially when a people attains statehood or in transition periods from one system to another, a strong executive power is indispensable. It is necessary to avoid confrontations and bloodshed.”

^{xxxviii} Text of the resolution is available on-line at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/gaef3012.doc.htm>

^{xxxix} It seems that advocates of the “statehood” idea believe that UN resolution implies that the UN member-states, have recognized the fact the Kyrgyz state dates back to the second century B.C. I make this assumption basing on personal talk with the Kyrgyz participants of the HESP roundtable of the CARI program, Oct 24-26, 03.

Interestingly, most of those I spoke to were history professors.

^{xl} Undeland, Charles and Platt, Nicholas, *The Central Asian Republics: Fragments of Empire, Magnets of Wealth*, New York: The Asia Society, 1994, p. 5, also see Roy, Oliver, *The New Central Asia: Creation of Nations*, London, New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2000

^{xli} Although the party was officially dissolved, this was only on paper. What actually happened is that Communist Party changed its name for the National Democratic Party of Uzbekistan. NDPU, despite creation of several other quasi-parties, has retained its predecessor’s influence on, and position in state structures. See also Carlisle, Donald S., *Islam Karimov and Uzbekistan: Back to the Future?* from Colton, Timothy and Tucker, Robert (eds.), *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership*, Westview, 1995, p. 191

^{xlii} Roy, Olivier *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000, p. 130

^{xliii} For example Karimov became a leader of National Democratic Party of Uzbekistan.

^{xliv} See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1993, London, New York: Verso, 1991, ch. 6

^{xlv} See, for example, Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 18, 31

^{xlvi} i.e. elevation of titular languages to the level of official

^{xlvii} Bohr, Annette, *op. cit.* p. 143

^{xlviii} Ibid.

^{xlix} Allworth, Edward *History and group identity in Central Asia* from Graham Smith et al (eds), *Nation-building in the post-Soviet Borderlands: the Politics of National Identities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 84

^l Akiner, Shirin, *op. cit.*, p. 386

^{li} Glenn, John *The Soviet Legacy in Central Asia*, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999, p. 41

^{lii} Hobsbawm, Eric J., *Nations and nationalism since 1870*, p. 91

^{liii} To gain the incites of the *cultural revolution* and brief explanation of the illiteracy liquidation program in Central Asia see Galin, M., *Kul’turnoe stroitel’stvo sredneaziatskikh sovetskikh respublik*, Revoltyutsia i natsionalnosti, 1937, N 7 available in Central Asian Politics and Society course reader (Bishkek: AUK, 2001). Although written in Soviet propagandist style, the article presents useful data on the material support of educational projects, statistics and policies implemented in the region. It also allows one to inquire into the nature and role of ‘print capitalism’, of which the article is certainly being a part since its direct audience was Soviet public.

^{liv} Galin, M., *op. cit.*, p. 80

^{lv} Carr, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14

^{lvi} Juraev, Faizulla, Faizullaev, Tursunbai, *Istoriia Uzbekistana: period nazional’noi nezavisimosti. Uchebnik dlya uchashikhsia 11 klassov obshobrazovatelnykh shkol*, (History of Uzbekistan: Period of National Independence. Textbook for the 11th grade students of secondary school), Tashkent: Sharq, 2002

^{lvii} Ibid, p. 3

^{lviii} See for example Segars, Andrew, *Nation Building in Turkey and Uzbekistan* in Tom Everett-Heath (ed.) *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition*, London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003, and Baldauf, Ingeborg, *Some Thoughts on the Making of the Uzbek Nation*, Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique, XXXII (1) janvier-mars 1991, pp. 79-96 – copy of the article taken from my thesis supervisor Askat Dukenbaev.

^{lix} Akiner, *op. cit.*, p. 371

^{lx} Juraev, Faizulla, Faizullaev, Tursunbai, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5

^{lxi} Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony D., *op. cit.*, p. 54

^{lxii} Roy, Oliver, *op. cit.*, p. 165

^{lxiii} Juraev, Faizulla, Faizullaev, Tursunbai, *op. cit.*, pp. 7

^{lxiv} Hegarty, Stephen, *The Rehabilitation of Temur: Reconstructing National History in Contemporary Uzbekistan*, Central Asia Monitor, N 1, 1995, p. 29

^{lxv} Juraev, Faizulla, Faizullaev, Tursunbai, *op. cit.*, p. 166

-
- ^{lxvi} Jahon Informational Agency, *S Pochteniem k Velikomu Predku* (Honoring the Great Ancestor). The article is available on-line at <http://jahon.mfa.uz/ARHIV/2004/04/10042004.htm> (posted on April 1., 2004; accessed on May 1, 2004)
- ^{lxvii} Hegarty, *op. cit.*, p. 31
- ^{lxviii} Soucek, Svat, *A History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 124
- ^{lxix} *Ibid*, p. 125
- ^{lxx} Allworth, Edward A., *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present. A Cultural History*, Stanford University: Hoover Institution Press, 1990, p. 6
- ^{lxxi} *Ibid*.
- ^{lxxii} Anthony Smith quoted in Ozkirimli, *op. cit.*, p. 69
- ^{lxxiii} Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony D., *op. cit.*, p. 17
- ^{lxxiv} Hobsbawm, Eric J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1870, op. cit.*, p. 93
- ^{lxxv} Annotation to the first collection of works by I.A. Karimov *Uzbekistan: national independence, economy, policy, ideology*, from Annotations to the Collection of Works by the President of the Republic Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, available at http://www.press-service.uz/eng/knigi_knigi_eng/knigi_eng3.htm
- ^{lxxvi} His list of works include: *Uzbekistan: National Independence, Economy, Policy, Ideology; Our Aim is a Free and Prosperous Motherland; Motherland is a Sacred Land for Everybody; On the Way of Creation; To Think and to Work in a New Way - Dictates of the Present Time; On the Road of Security and Stable Development; We Will Build Our Future with Our Own Hands; Our High Goal is the Independence and Prosperity of Our Motherland, Freedom and Welfare of Our people; Each of Us Responsible – For the Prosperity of Our Motherland; It is Necessary to Fight for Security and Peace*. The list is taken from the Annotations to the Collection of Works by the President of the Republic Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, available at http://www.press-service.uz/eng/knigi_knigi_eng/knigi_eng3.htm
- ^{lxxvii} Know from personal experience in Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages (1996-2000)
- ^{lxxviii} Juraev, Faizulla, Faizullaev, Tursunbai, *op. cit.*, p.
- ^{lxxix} See for example *Alimov, Sahibkiron Amir Temur: Metodicheskoe Posobie*, (Amir Temur: Methodological Manual), Tashkent: Gosudarstvennaya Biblioteka imeni Navoi, 1995, and Ali, Muhammad, *A Few Words about Amir Timur*, Central Asian Monitor, N 3, 1996, p. 36. Both are interesting pieces of state propaganda. Bibliography of the former contains 13 publications of President Karimov. The former has no citations or references, and despite the fact that it was published by an international magazine, the work still follows the official rhetoric. In addition, both articles could serve as a source for critique of the Uzbek historiography.
- ^{lxxx} Ploskih V. (chief ed.), *Istoriia Kyrgyzov i Kyrgyzstana. Uchebnik dlya Vuzov*, (History of the Kyrgyz and of Kyrgyzstan. Textbook for Higher Educational Institutions), Bishkek: Ilim, 2000
- ^{lxxxi} *Ibid*, p. 21
- ^{lxxxii} Osmonov O.J., *Istoriia Kyrgyzstana: Osnovnye Vepi (s drevneyshih vremen do serediny XIX veka). Uchebnik dlya 10 klassa sredney shkoly*. (History of Kyrgyzstan: Fundamental Landmarks from the ancient times to the nineteenth century. Textbook for the 10th grade students of secondary school), Bishkek: MOK Tekhnologiya, 2003, p.39
- ^{lxxxiii} *Ibid*, p. 45
- ^{lxxxiv} Akaev, Askar, *Istoriia Proshedshaya Cherez Moe Serdtse: Razmyshleniia* (History That Went Through My Hard: Thoughts), Bishkek: Ilim, 2003 and *Kyrgyzskaya Gosudarstvennost' I Narodnyi Epos Manas* (Kyrgyz Statehood and Folk Epic Manas), Bishkek: Uchkun, 2002
- ^{lxxxv} The only historical “source” those writing about Kyrgyz history refer to justify claims on primordial ties of the modern Kyrgyz nation.
- ^{lxxxvi} Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic of August 1, 2002 № 200 On Holding the Year of Kyrgyz Statehood, also available at <http://eng.president.kg/president/yokstatehood/decree200>
- ^{lxxxvii} Akaev, *Istoriia proshedshaya cherez moe serdtse, op.cit.*, p. 22
- ^{lxxxviii} *Ibid*, pp. 32-37
- ^{lxxxix} Taken from personal discussion with William Hansen, who is the second reader of my thesis.
- ^{xc} Ploskih V. (chief ed.), *op. cit.*
- ^{xci} The aforementioned decree states the following: “To the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Kyrgyz Republic to take necessary measures on more deep study of history of formation and development of Kyrgyz Statehood in the higher educational institutions, school and others, providing it in study programs and tutorials. To develop in the growing generation the spirit of pride for glorious century-old history of their country and its freedom-loving nation.”, Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic of August 1, 2002 № 200, *op. cit.*

^{xcii} Marchenko, *Tema uroka: 2003 god – god 2200-letia Kyrgyzskoi gosudarstvennosti*, (Class Topic: 2003 – Year of the 2200th Anniversary of Kyrgyz Statehood), KutBilim newspaper, August 2003. According to the article these classes are to be held at all the levels of secondary, starting from elementary level. One might ask a proper question – why is there a need for elementary school children to discuss President Akaev’s works and what is the goal of the class? One of the answers could be indoctrination.

^{xciii} Lowe, Robert, *Nation Building and Identity in the Kyrgyz Republic* in Tom Everett-Heath (ed.), *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition*, London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003, p. 116

^{xciv} *Ibid*, p. 117

^{xcv} See for example Dukenbaev, Askat and Hansen, William, *op. cit.*

^{xcvi} Smith, Anthony D., *National Identity*, London, New York: Penguin Books, 1991, p.102

^{xcvii} Calhoun, Craig, *op. cit.*, p.51

^{xcviii} Smith, Anthony D., *National Identity, op. cit.*, p. 164

^{xcix} McMahon, Colin, *op. cit.*