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Luigi De Martino

TAJKISTAN AT A CROSSROAD: THE POLITICS OF DECENTRALIZATION

January 2004

SITUATION REPORT

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We would like to thank the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Political Division IV for its support and encouragement. We also would like to give special thanks to Dr. Parviz Moullajanov, Executive Director of the Public Committee for Democratic Processes in Dushanbe for his constant support and friendship.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of CIMERA.

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Foreword

Reflections from the Praxis

In mid-2000, two Tajik non-Governmental Organisations, the Tajik Centre for Citizenship Education (TCCE) and the Public Committee for Democratic Processes (PC) approached the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a project proposal. Active supporters of the Inter-Tajik Dialogue Process¹ created the TCCE in 1997 and the PC in 2000. As the official negotiations moved ahead and finally lead to a peace agreement in 1997, the TCCE and the members of the Inter-Tajik dialogue felt that it was not enough to support the Tajik peace process through unofficial diplomacy. The leaders of the organisations identified as a main new challenge the need to broaden support for peace by including wider circles of citizens and government officials into the process and to begin to address the root causes of the conflict. Since they considered that «regionalism» was one of the main causes of the conflict, they started to conduct a series of workshops on this topic in different regions of the country.

This concern was shared by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Political Division IV (Support to

Civilian Peace Operations) and in 2002 the Ministry supported the two Tajik organisations and CIMERA, a Swiss private organisation based in Geneva, in developing a project aimed at providing an informal platform for political discussion on the issue of centre-regions relations in Tajikistan. The present paper tries to retrace and assess some of the experiences within the framework of that project.

The project had foreseen to establish *three main interlinked discussion platforms*: Expert meetings in Dushanbe, «Public» Discussion Forums in Dushanbe and the regions and a Study Tour to Switzerland.

Starting from December 02, the project has started inviting on a regular basis up to 15 experts² within the Tajik administration, the legislative power and international organi-

sations who are currently dealing with such topics as intergovernmental relations and local governance. The meetings were chaired by a senior personality within the Presidential Administration or the Government.

Three meetings have been carried out during the period December 02 - March 03. After this date the preparations of the June 22 constitutional referendum have disrupted some of the project's activities including the expert meetings.

Parallel to the Expert meetings the project has launched several research activities on topics related to regionalism and local governance:

- A study on fiscal and budgetary relations conducted by Dr. Avezov at the Khujand State University
- A study on the legal and institutional frame of the relations between central government and regions conducted by Mr. Zafar Aliev, newly appointed Chairman of the Constitutional Court.
- A study on the perceptions of regionalism conducted by Dr. Saodat Olimova, of the Sharq Centre.

1 The Inter-Tajik Dialogue is a track-two negotiation process, which accompanied the official Tajik peace negotiations. Participants were mid-level leaders from the two sides; many of them now in high-level official functions. The process was initiated by the Kettering Foundation (USA, Dayton) and the Russian Strategic Research Center, Moscow, in the framework of the Dartmouth Conference.

2 Experts: those currently part of the different government / parliamentary initiatives aimed at reforming the present situation regulating levels of government and local self-governance.

- A study on the economic relations of Soghd Oblast conducted by Dr. Boymatov in Khudjand as a case study of the economic relations between centre and regions.
- A study on the political culture of Tajikistan conducted by Dr. of the French CNRS and Marc Bloch University in Strasbourg.

The role of these papers was two-fold: on one hand they would represent one of the elements for the preparation of the other project's initiatives and would also give important information for understanding what is the «margin of manoeuvre» for decentralisation in the country. On the other hand, the second paper would provide important insights on the perception that political and regional leaders have of the issue of regionalism in the country. During the course of the project we have decided to increase the number of research papers in order also to better consider the fiscal and economical as well as the political dimension.

After having reached a certain level of trust with our government partners, in February 2003 we decided that the conditions were given to open the discussions to a larger and more political public. Through the instrument of «Public³» Discussions Fo-

rum, the project should have addressed relevant topics through series of round tables first in Dushanbe and then in the regions. The implementation of the PDF has suffered delays from the original schedule (foreseen for February 03). The main responsible for the delay was the issue of finding the right «political» moment when to organize such meetings is a cumbersome process in Tajikistan. The preparations of the 22 June 03 constitutional referendum have once more caused problems for the implementation of the project. Many of the officials at all levels were unavailable for meetings and / or other activities not related to the referendum.

At the same period, other international organisations such as the UI were sending international experts to Tajikistan to work with the government WG on local governance in order to speed up the drafting of the new legislation.

Due to this situation and while discussing an eventual extension of the project, the donor requested not to start this line of activity until the referendum in June 03 and a decision had been taken on the future of the project. As the donor decided to

phase out the project by end of August 03, no forum has been carried out.

As for the last platform, the study tour to Switzerland, the project signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Institute for Federalism at the University of Fribourg (IF). IF would organize and implement the study tour for a Tajik delegation to Switzerland. The tour was originally scheduled for October 2002 but then postponed to April 03. Unfortunately, in March 03 the Tajik Government has decided a travel ban for all high-ranking officials until the completion of the June 03 referendum. As a consequence, the tour could not be implemented before the conclusion of the project in August 03.

This represented a major blow for the project since we were planning to use the occasion of the travel to Switzerland to:

- Enlarge the discussion started with the Experts Meetings to a more political group of interlocutors.
- Provide inputs to the ongoing discussion process on reform of the local governance legislation through learning the Swiss experience in dealing with centre-region-local government relations

³ The term «public» means «enlarged», the Forums were targeting a public that goes beyond the participants to the Expert Meetings but are not open to the general public. The idea was to reach specific relevant political and social personalities concerned by the project's themes.

Experiences and Lessons Learned

The fact that the project could operate «at full speed» only over a period of three to four months shows clearly that timing is essential in a short-term political initiative such as this one. In our case, timing was favourable since it could use the new opportunities created by the government willingness to discuss issues of «decentralisation». At the same time the holding of the referendum of June 03 has been a major source of disruption for the project⁴.

The time factor was in this situation important also from another perspective. Originally planned for 12 months⁵, the project could not absorb the «shock» of the disruption caused by the referendum. Given the fluidity of the environment, the need for establishing trustful relations with the government, political actors and other international organisations in order to discuss sensitive issues, a period of 18 to 24 months⁶ for project implementation would have been more appropriate.

In a context that lacked transparency, the project adopted an approach of a «pilot or learning initiative», trying to adapt to a changing situation. This approach has demanded from the local project partners, CIMERA and from the donor an important investment in terms of communication and flexibility.

In terms of strategy, the chosen approach (using the experts meetings as «entry point» to the central government) still seems to be adapted to the situation in Tajikistan though it contributed to create a (mis)-perception of the project being a technical assistance initiative and to frame the discussion from a technical-juridical perspective. At the same time the project should have tried earlier to reach more political personnel especially at the regional level.

In a context where decisions are taken by a centre in top-down and non-participatory way, reaching the right political personnel is fundamental. The project tried to multiply its chances by using three different platforms for discussions. In a situation where media⁷ seem to play a secondary role in forming the opinion of the elite, the project put the development of cooperation with media as a second priority.

4 Which also shows that when the groups in power are dealing with the consolidation of their position all the rest becomes of secondary importance.

5 Then extended to 15 months in order to allowing phasing out and completion of the ongoing activities such as research and publications.

6 At the time of project approval, the donor could legally commit resources for more than 12 months.

7 Though according to certain analysts, in the case of the press, the number of copies sold is not a good indicator of the public reached by a publication. Newspapers seem to be read (and discussed) in a group. More research would be needed in this sector.

The experts meetings have proved to be a valuable tool for increasing exchange of information and transparency in the domain of initiatives supporting local governance. On the other hand a longer input in terms of time and energy by at least one main actor (in this case was CIMERA) was needed in order to sustain these results. After only three meetings they could not be continued without external support.

The expert meetings could not play the role of forum for developing new ideas for reform. On one hand the margin for reform was very tight, and on the other the external expert inputs from other organisation such as the UI came after the meetings had stopped.

The two other platforms (PDF and study tour) could have played an interesting role in enlarging the debate to a more political public if the conditions would have allowed to continuing with their implementation. In general the four instruments of the project (PDF, study tour, expert meetings and research) have a lot of potential though they demand an important amount of internal coordination and risk to be affected by changes in the environment (as it happened in our case).

The results of three out of the four instruments depend on the availability of well-prepared and competent

moderators able to facilitate the discussion platforms in a local language.

The study tour is an interesting instrument to help breaking down barriers of mistrust and allowing the discussion to take place in an environment outside the usual constraints of (political) life. On the other hand, it can bring the expected results only if inserted in a longer-term process.

The project's instruments and experiences are relevant for similar work in Tajikistan or other countries with similar situation though the issue of the interest in reform from the actor's perspective is as always essential for the success of political initiatives. In our case, the interest of the central authorities seems to be more related to the possibility of accessing WB credit lines than to the recognition that another type of relation between centre and regions would be beneficial for the country.

Publishing the Research Results

At the end of almost 15 months work, we have decided to publish

the results of the research sponsored by the project⁸. Too often reports developed within the frame of internationally supported projects are not shared with a larger public.

The report of **Aliev** deals with the legal and institutional perspective of the relations between centre and regions, the papers by **Avezov** and **Boymatov** try to illustrate these relations from the budget /fiscal and economic perspective (using the case of the economic relations of Sughd Oblast).

The report by **Olimova** is a first-hand research that presents the perceptions of «regionalism» by established political and social leaders and by a group of university students. As for the article by **Dudoignon**, it constitutes the results of a four months work in Tajikistan looking at the logics of the Tajik political system as it has been working since the signature of the peace agreement between the Rahmonov government and the then United Tajik Opposition.

Moreover, we also have added to the present publication two papers

by **Freizer** and **Abdullaev** on the issue of local governance that we think are complementary to the project's research reports. In a last paper I will try to present my own analysis of some aspects of the Tajik political situation and of the perspectives for the future.

At the end of these few pages I would like to express my deepest thanks to all those who made this project possible and supported it. Special thanks go to Jean-Nicolas Bitter at the PDIV, to Parviz Moullojanov at the Public Committee for Democratic Processes in Dushanbe and at all his team, to Gulya Nazarova at the Tajik Centre for Citizenship Education, to Gisela Nauk at the UN Office for Peace-building in Dushanbe (UNTOP), to Arne Seifert and Stephane Dudoignon, to Cathrine Widrig at the Federalism Institute in Fribourg, to Andre Loersch at CIMERA and to the team of the in Dushanbe.

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⁸ A sister publication exists in Russian.

Current Local Government Policy Situation in Tajikistan

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The emergence of independent Tajikistan out of the USSR is one of the most painful state building attempts of modern Central Asian history. During last twelve years, this country has experienced bloody civil war, the UN-sponsored reconciliation, returning of opposition and Islamic fighters, and re-distribution of power. Born in crisis and chaos, the current Tajikistan's political system assimilated deep seated traditional political loyalties, Soviet standards and recent rational-legal requirements. Beyond the facade of Western patterned legal arrangements, in Tajikistan hides a remarkable blend of secular and traditional features that can poorly connect civil and political society, promote the perceived interests of individuals and different solidarity groups. Quasi-democratic rule is being built on a highly fragmented society with yet declared, but unabled protection of civil liberties. This foundation feeds growing violence, and corruption in society and government. The instability of political system has been worsening by a severe economic crisis that discredits the present regime. Non-inclusive character of the government, ab-

sence of free competition for leadership positions, cause disproportion in terms of distribution of power among regions. The control of the official central government is unstable. In result sub-national loyalties and foreign countries exert great influence.

This paper briefly evaluates the local government policy situation in Tajikistan. It argues that although current political system of Tajikistan prevents effective political mobilization and good governance, there is a poor ground for optimism. During last twelve years Tajiks gained far richer experience than other Central Asian nations. Hopefully, political learning to pay its crucial role in the strengthening of local self-government over time.

Traditional Institutions of Power and Civil Society

The basic unit of traditionally sedentary Tajik society and dominant institution of power was *avlod* - an ascent patriarchal extended family that sometimes can be developed into a clan based on partilineage. Further,

upwards, *avlod* would give its loyalty to region-based groupings, then to local ruler and/or monarch. For generations, this *avlod* system provided survival, autonomy, and adaptability to its members, serving traditionalism and sustainability of the society. Yet *avlod* loyalties had sometimes questioned ultimate ruler's power and authority, the representative government and the concept of popular sovereignty, are not among dominant features in Tajik political culture. In the Soviet era (1917-1991) the *avlod* system was considerably eroded, yet existed as a parallel - to a quasi-national government - system of power. Exactly this community-oriented identity and clan network determined political loyalty during the civil war in 1992-1993 and later.

The totality of political power and command over resources in Tajikistan belongs to a limited number of ruling elites who run governmental and legal institutions, as well as economy to serve their private interests. Current Tajik power structures are rooted in a regionally-balanced coalition between capital-based elites with the president on the top- who

controlled the state apparatus - and local power holders. This personified patron-client connection provided the illusion that links between local communities and the government existed. In fact, the civil society has always been disconnected from politics in Tajikistan, allowing political elites to use and corrupt traditional avlod/clan social structures and safety network. These kinds of alliances will inevitably lead to a type of nation building that is characterized by a weak and corruptive state without civil society, political parties, and free market.

Administrative Structure

The territory of Tajikistan is divided in a descending hierarchy into:

- *veloyats* (provinces or oblasts in Russian),
- *nohiyas* (districts or rayons in Russian),
- towns of republican significance,
- towns of provincial significance,
- towns of district significance,
- *settlements* (or *posioloks*, in Russian), and
- *qyshloqs* (villages)

Administratively Tajikistan is presently divided into four territorial regions

(a group of *nohiyas* and three *veloyats*):

1. **Nohiyas of Republican Control** (NRC) *Nohyiahoi Tobei Jumhuri* situated in central part of the country with Dushanbe as its center and including the Qarategin valley, and the Kofarnihon area and the Hisar valley. It has 13 *nohiyas* (districts), 4 towns of republican significance, 8 settlements and 91 rural *jamoats* (village centers). The NRC stretches over 28,000 square kilometers. As of January 2002 the total population of the NRC stood at 1,900,000 (with 174,700 urban population), including the capital Dushanbe (562,000). Unlike *veloyats*, the NRC is not united administratively. Each *nohiya* is directly subordinate to the Central government in Dushanbe. Four NRC municipalities are administrated separately by city administrations: Dushanbe, Vahdat (former Kofarnihon), Rogun and Tursunzoda.
2. **Sughd** (former Leninabad) **veloyat** with Khujand city as its center. Sughd covers the Zerafshan valley and western part of the Ferghana valley. Sughd, also known as Northern Tajikistan, is the most eco-

nomically advanced province in Tajikistan. Sughd's territory is 26,100 square kilometers, and the population in 1999 stood at 1,870,000 (including 531,100 urban dwellers), mainly Tajiks, with an Uzbek minority of around 30 percent. Sughd includes 14 *nohiyas*, 8 towns of provincial significance and 20 settlements. Surrounded by Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the province is separated from the rest of the country by the mountain ranges of Turkestan, Zarafshon and Hisor. The Trans-Tajik Railway Konibodom-Dushanbe runs through Uzbekistan, connecting the province with central and southern Tajikistan. Sughd's economic weight facilitated its political prominence in the republic. Traditionally representatives from Leninobod headed the Communist Party of Tajikistan. Rahmon Nabiev was the last Leninobodi to lead Tajikistan, until September 1992 when he was forced to resign by opposition. From 1991 to 1998 Sughd was considered as an aspirant for independence, even secession from the rest of Tajikistan. However, these trends have weakened after the defeat of the

Colonel Khudoberdiev's anti-governmental and pro-Uzbek mutiny in 1998. Imposed by Islam Karimov restrictions to the movements of the Tajik citizens to Uzbekistan and the mining of the Tajik-Uzbek border have also contributed into decline of the pro-Uzbek feeling all over Tajikistan. In result, the integration of Tajik North into the country's economic and political environment is growing. Nevertheless some frustration concerning the decline of political influence of the North in central government in comparison with its economic power remains among Northern elites.

3. **Mountainous Badakhshon Autonomous Velayat (MBAV).** *Velayati Mukhtori Kuhistoni Badakhshon in Tajik (Gorno-Badkshanskaya Avtonomnaya Oblast in Russian).* The MBAV is most geographically isolated part of the country. It covers a territory of 63,700 square kilometers and accounts for 44.5 percent of Tajikistan's territory but only three percent of its population (206,000). MBAV's center is the city of Khorugh; the province consists of 5 nohiyas, one city and

42 rural jamoats. The majority of the population belongs to the Ismaili branch of Islam, and follows Aga Khan. The MBAV also contains compact pockets of Tajik Sunni population in the three nohiyas of Darvoz, Vanch and Ishkashim. Six percent of the MBAV population is Sunni Kyrgyz living in Murghob. Inhabitants of Badakhshon speak Shughni, Rushani, Yazgulami, Wakhi and other dialects of the Eastern Iranian languages, distinct from West Iranian Tajiki-Farsi, but use Tajik as their intercommunal and state language. The MBAV is the least economically developed region of the republic. Since 1925 when it was given autonomous status, Tajik Badakhshon depends on supplies brought in by two motor roads. Badakhshon possesses a distinct socio-political and cultural identity from the rest of Tajikistan. Following the collapse of the USSR, calls for Badakhshon's independence from Tajikistan heightened. Since the second part of the 1990s, however, this separatist tendency has fallen. Currently, the Badakhshoni elites acknowledged their fidelity to Dushanbe and the Tajik nation-building project.

4. **Khatlon Velayat.** This southwestern province is the most populated part of Tajikistan. It was formed at the end of 1992 after the merging of Kulob and Qurghontepa velayats. Its territory is 24,600 square kilometers, and population in 2002 stood at 2,151,000 (401,400 urban). Khatlon is the country's most ethnically diverse province. It is populated by Tajiks (Kulabis, Gharmis, Badakhshonis, Leninabadis), Uzbeks (from Ferghana valley and local tribes), Tajik-and-Uzbek-speaking Arabs, as well as Russian, Tatars, etc. The province composed of 24 nohiyas, five cities of provincial significance, one city of district significance, 18 settlements, and 128 rural jamoats. This region had suffered the greatest shock during the civil war in 1991-1997 caused by people displacements, refugee flows, inter-ethnic clashes and mass killings. Since 1993, there has been a wide-spread opinion in Tajikistan that Kulob - the native region of the acting president enjoys particular attention of the capital. However, seemingly, the expectations of the "victorious" Kulob were not satisfied,

as the North appeared to maintain a higher economic position.

The Tajik war was not a primitive war of ethnic and regional groups. Rather, this was a war of regional political entrepreneurs and newborn "field commanders" who succeeded to various degrees in securing popular support in respective areas. Today there is almost zero open expression of antagonism between communities of different regions and ethno-confessional origin. Yet some experts argue that the Tajik peace is a result of the short-term balance of interests of sub-national leaders and wartime grievances and revenge impulses soon or later could cause a new war.

Local Government Structure

The local representative authority in regions, towns, and districts is the Majlis (assembly) of people's deputies, which is chaired by the chairperson. In Tajikistan chairperson of province, district, and town is a key element of local government, and president's main client. The province, town and nohiya have a local branch of the hukumat (government) which is the central administration. Executive and representative powers in all these locations are vested in the chairperson of hukumat. According to the constitution, chairperson heads

both (!) executive (as a head of hukumat) and representative (as a chairperson of Majlis) authority. As high administrator, the president has exclusive authority to appoint heads (chairpersons) of veloyats (provinces), nohiyas (regions), and towns, thus providing for a strong vertical of the executive, and, in fact, representative powers.

In 1994-1996 the former villages Soviets have been replaced by jamoats (groups of neighborhoods), *mahallahs* (local communities) and their leadership. Each nohiya is subdivided into jamoats. A jamoat thereafter, comprises a varying number of *kolkhozes* (collective farms) and *sovkhazes* (farms based on state form of ownership), which are made up of several *qyshloqs* (villages) or smaller villages (deha in Tajik) each.

Jamoats are rural self-governing organizations arranged on a territorial basis. They derive their financial resources from public budget funds allocated by town, regional Majlises and donations. According to the «Law on Local Self-government in Towns and Villages» passed in December 1994, jamoats have a wide range of competencies and duties. They adopt decisions on current issues by open vote. The chairperson of jamoat is selected by the chairperson of the town or nohiya and approved by the jamoat.

Local grass root activity below jamoats (mahalla councils etc.) is not covered by legislation. The mahalla does not have administrative functions. In some regions mahallas cooperate closely with state institutions, and sometimes even merge with local state bodies. In many cases, chairpersons of mahalla receive salary from hukumat.

Problems and Needs Assessment

Within existing legal framework, local government serves as a reliable agent of central government, responsible for the social and economic development of the region, realization of the Constitution, laws, and acts of Majlisi Oli and the president. To a lesser extent, it desires to encourage political education, participation, assessing needs and protection local interests. There is an urgent need, therefore, to help local government to build relationships with the center not in terms of client-patron politics, but in terms of responsible partnership of free democratic institutions. Unfortunately, yet Tajik society has maintained the strong sense of communal identity, local communities remain politically passive. Tajikistan rural communities failed to develop and support traditions of participatory politics. Strengthening of jamoats and mahallas as rural self-governing bodies should be in the center of the re-

form of the local government. Traditional institutions of power should serve as a counterbalance to the personified power of central and regional leaders who habitually corrupt these communal structures to promote their individual and group interests. These traditional institutes and networks, long-lasting erosion notwithstanding, are likely to remain central to Tajik politics. Such issues as role of communities and government in human rights protection, traditional institutes of power and their role in civil society, partnership with mahallas and hukumats, reform of the legislative base of local government, training of chairpersons of mahallas in the area of leadership, social partnership and market economy should be given special attention. Creation and supporting of accountable and effective Tajik institutions of local self-governance to promote participatory democracy as well as traditional concepts of self-help, volunteerism, and community mobilization is crucial for sustainable social and economic development in Tajikistan.

System of Power: Towards Strong Presidency and Weak Institutions

Tajikistan, following other USSR republics' example adopted declaration of state independence and declared a presidential system of government in September 1991. The presidential election of Novem-

ber 1991 led to the struggle of the opposition coalition of Islamic groups coupled with newborn secular democratic movements versus old Soviet elites. Debates turned into open armed confrontation in 1992. Political antagonism pro and contra communism was gradually overpowered by the region-based group discord. In November 1992, a government led by Emomali Rakhmonov had regained control, backed by Russia and Uzbekistan. In November 1994, Emomali Rakhmonov (by this time a chairman of parliament) was elected president of Tajikistan. Current Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan was adopted on 6 November 1994 after a nation-wide referendum. It replaced the Soviet Constitution that had been in effect since 1978 and amended after independence. According to it Tajikistan is a sovereign, democratic, law-governed, secular, and unitary state with separated executive, legislative, and judicial powers. The supreme legislative body, a parliament, is Majlisi Oli (Supreme Council) of the Republic of Tajikistan. Amendments to the Constitution, adopted in general referendum on 26 September 1999, sanctioned that the president is elected directly for one seven-year term (instead of maximum of two five-year terms). In November 1999 presidential elections, Emomali Rakhmonov won 96, 91 per cent of votes, while his opponent from the Islamic Renaissance

Party got only 2, 1 per cent. Simultaneously, a bi-cameral parliament replaced the national uni-cameral parliament. Since March 2000, the Majlisi Oli consists of two chambers: Majlisi Namoyandagon (assembly of representatives, or lower chamber) and Majlisi Melli (national assembly, which acts as the upper chamber or senate). Majlisi Namoyandagon consists of 63 members elected directly in a half-mixed basis (65 % as single member district candidates and 35 % according to party lists), for a five-year term. The upper house - Majlisi Melli is elected indirectly for a five-year term and consists of 33 members, elected by local majlises (parliaments). The remaining eight deputies of Majlisi Melli are appointed by the President. These election laws, codifies simultaneous plurality and proportional representation races. The aim of lawmakers here was to undermine traditional patron-client networks and provide for presidential system balanced by strong legislature. However, growing presidential authority challenges the autonomy of legislature from executive power. The post of prime minister is rather nominal as according to the Constitution, the president is both a head of the state and the government.

Most of political power is concentrated in the presidential office, which during last four years has consider-

ably widened its authority and turned into a sort of "super government". This process of the shift of executive power from the cabinet to the presidential office has started after the General Peace Agreement of 1997, according to which the United Tajik Opposition was given a 30% quota in the governing structures. In that time representatives of the opposition filled mostly governmental posts, not presidential office. The latter has remained beyond of any kind of control from the side of parliament. The Office of State Finance Control under the president of Tajikistan, formed in January 2001 assumed exclusive responsibility to control all finances, state property, and money flows (including foreign credits and humanitarian aid), tasks traditionally performed by the Ministry of Finance. In result, the presidential office increased its size and responsibilities, even duplicating the structure of the cabinet of ministries. In addition, the judiciary was becoming more open to influence by the presidential office as indicated in the in the scope of sphere of the Council of Justice. Through this Council, the president consumes exclusive power to nominate and control courts. Finally, as a leader of the most powerful regional grouping of Kulobis, the president enjoys mighty support of regional elite and militaries. Officials from Kulob fill four power

ministries, plus the General Prosecutor Office, Council of Justice, Committee on Radio and TV, the National University, and other key positions. The mayor of Dushanbe and chairman of Majlisi Melli, the official number two in Tajikistan, is also from Kulob.

Multipartism!

In the 1990s eleven parties (in addition to existed previously Communist party of Tajikistan) were formed in Tajikistan. As of autumn 2003, six political parties were registered in Tajikistan. In addition to the most influential presidential People's Democratic Party (PDP), the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), Democratic Party (DP), Communist Party (CP), Socialist Party (SP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) operate. Tajikistan differentiates itself from other CIS countries as the right to form a party on the basis of religious ideology is enshrined in the Constitution. This is, however, rather confusing as secularism remains principal point of the acting Constitution.

The most active oppositional political party in Tajikistan is the IRP. Born from a clandestine militant religious movement in the 1970s, today's IRP tries to survive in the modern world of participatory politics. IRP has never openly pleaded for an Islamic state. Despite their Islamist ideals, Tajik Is-

lamists have been closely attached to ethnic nationalism, and to the Tajik state building project, since the first days of independence. In 1991-1997 they had allied with the official clergy, nationalist-minded secular democrats and the country's non-Sunni (Ismaili) minority. Likewise, they could form coalitions with secular forces during the next parliamentary and presidential elections (in 2005 and 2006). The firm pressure of the General Peace Accord's international sponsors forced the Government to legalize the IRP, and accept a 30% power sharing agreement with the IRP. However, this imposed power-sharing arrangement has not resulted in the formation of the coalition government and institutionalization of opposition. Most of United Tajik Opposition (UTO) nominees, joined to the party of power as soon as they took governmental posts. Some members of the Government were still opposite to the IRP's inclusion and assert that the party's members are closely linked to terrorists and Islamic extremists. Escalation of persecution of IRP members and supporters and excluding them from legal political process could lead to a rapid radicalization of Tajikistan's political Islam and transformation of IRP back to militant religious movement.

The Communist Party of Tajikistan inherited a relatively developed Soviet time administrative infrastructure

all over the country, considerable estate, and enjoyed the support of the part of Tajik masses dreaming about restoration of the USSR. However, the CP having no patrimonial guardianship from outside patrons, and an effective support from regional elites and armed structures, almost lost mass-elite linkages and real influence upon politics.

Generally, all parties lack institutionalized ties between voters, leaders, candidates, and activists. They are elitist in character, have an amorphous mass base, and lack solid infrastructure. Both pro-governmental and opposition parties poorly articulate issue-based political programs or platforms. Despite the relative success of the Tajik peace process, political dialogue yet has not become a normal attribute of Tajikistan's political reality. In general, all political parties remain outside of the real political process. The President prefers contracting and patronage of real and potential opponents to direct competition and open debate.

War on Terror and its Ambivalent Implications

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Tajikistan has officially declared it will cooperate with the US-led campaign to combat terrorism. Soon Tajikistan together

with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan became frontline states in Operation Enduring Freedom. Tajikistanis hoped that along with US assistance and attraction of foreign investment, their country could move towards the opening of political process, liberalization, fighting corruption, drug trafficking, etc. Their expectations were met partially. Indeed the US military presence has stopped activities of militant Islamists, like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. It also contributed in combating drug trafficking along the Tajik-Afghan border. Together with this there were other more negative consequences of the US involvement in Central Asia.

Since the civil war of 1992-1997 Tajikistan has a negative image of an highly unstable region with a government unable to rule the country effectively. For that reason despite its geographical closeness to Afghanistan, the US did not pay much attention to Tajikistan (comparing to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan). To attract the US interest Tajikistan particularly assigned itself the task to complete the consolidation of state authority by spreading executive presidential power in all regions and tak-

ing control on the totality of non-state actors. In result, the main beneficiaries of the war on terror are the central government, not localities and civil society actors. Sadly, the US involvement indirectly gave impetus to anti-democratic tendencies. Particularly, not capable to resolve problems arising from Islamist mobilization and driven by Soviet-time authoritarian impulses the Tajik government is hardening its position vis-a-vis Islamists and seeking to strengthen its control over the clergy and mosques.¹

The main threat to the Central Asian security however is not in radicalization of Muslim policies and terrorism but in general failure of political and economic transformation, non-inclusive government and widespread corruption. The lack of cooperation between Central Asian governments and rapid militarization of the region further deteriorates the situation.

The June 2003 Referendum and its Significance

The national referendum held in June 2003 obtained popular support for a package of 56 Constitutional amendments. Amongst these is an amendment of Article 65 of the Constitution, which previously limited the President to one seven year term in office. Three (DP, SDP and IRP) out of six political parties expressed, in

¹ In July 2002 the president of Tajikistan during his visit to Isfara (Sughd) accused IRP in connection with Al-Qaeda terrorists. Subsequent state-lead de-registration of mosques and re-attestation of imams led to the firing of tens of imams and refusing to grant new licenses to several mosques.

different ways, their objections with regard of the referendum. The Democratic Party of Tajikistan had boycotted the referendum totally. While IRP, the most powerful opposition party, having cautiously disagreed with the idea of referendum refrained from boycotting and protest. The Social Democratic Party hoped till the last moment that Parliament will change its decision and accept a SDP's proposal to return to public discussing of the amendments. These objections and constructive proposals, however have not been taken into account by the government. Silent disagreement of UN and OSCE and cautious objection of domestic opposition notwithstanding, a 51-year Emomali Rakhmonov has cleaned a path for another two seven-year presidential terms after the expiration of his recent term in 2006. In Tajikistan few doubt that Rakhmonov, having in his command powerful administrative recourse, may succeed in staying in power till 2020.

Some may think that Tajikistan merely followed suit of some of CIS leaders that legally guaranteed their life-time non-alternative leadership. However, ensuring the succession of power that may occur in Tajikistan would not stabilize the situation and lead to the strong presidential power. Three main reasons could confirm this prediction - the first is the relatively weak (comparing to other Central Asian states) national cohesion, elite's fragmentation on domestic level and lack of autonomy in international arena. The IRP, which *de facto* supported Rakhmonov in June 2003, remains out of governmental control and it may at any moment change its position and become a real opposition. Second, the growing secular opposition (DPT and SDPT) whose opinion has been explicitly ignored has nothing to do but to take in a post-June Tajikistan a hard opposition stance. In addition to the above political competition, inter-regional grievances have never seized to

exist in Tajikistan. This political and regional elite's fragmentation would continually weaken the existing Tajik presidency.

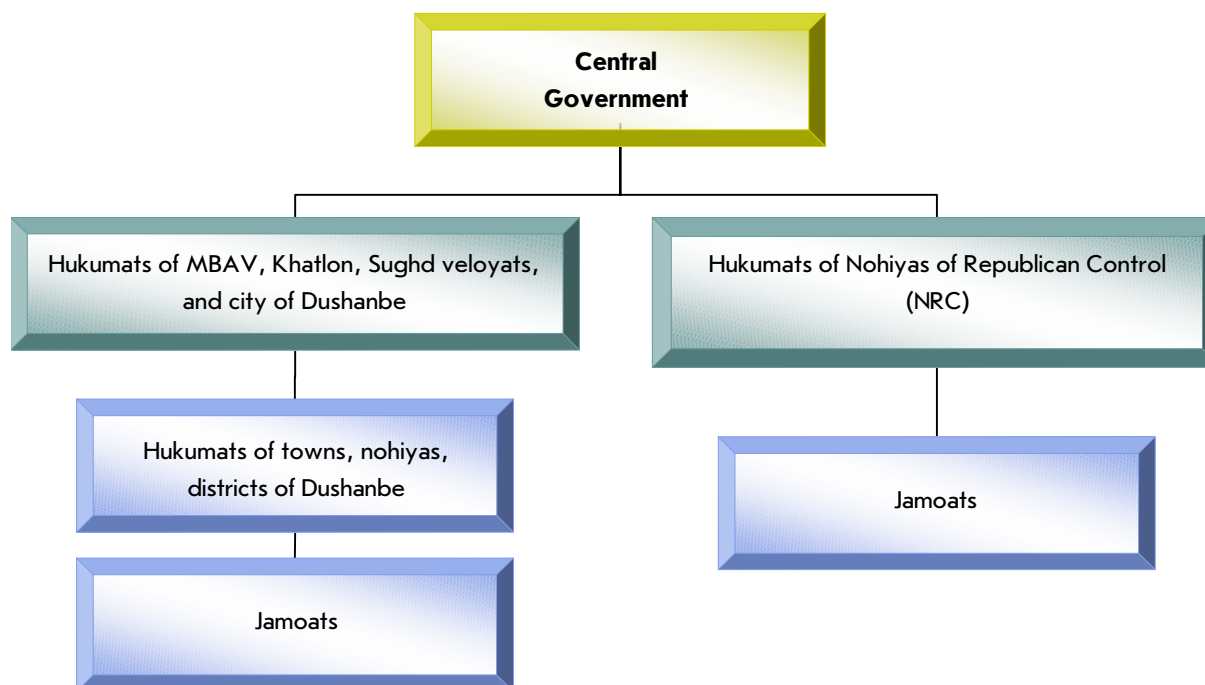
Another factor undermining Rakhmonov's presidency is his failure to meet challenges of a rapidly changing world. The current government of Tajikistan lacks autonomy and respect in the international sphere. The persistent and non-effective dependence on Russia comes in addition to the failure of privatization and restructuring of economy, growing poverty and wide-spread corruption. Apparently the current government opted for balancing between Russia and USA interest in maintaining minimum security presence of both actors in this part of Central Asia. This would allow acting president to keep lowest level of required Western legitimacy. Surely this minimalist formula would not be able to ensure sustainable development and attract significant inflow of investments.

Addendum

Table 1 *Tajikistan's administrative structure*

Province	Number of noniyas	Number of towns	Number of settlements	Number of jamoats	Rural villages	Population thousands	Territory thousand km ²
NRC	13	5	1	91	1225	1.900	28.6
Sughd	14	10	20	93	654	1.870	25.4
MBAV	7	1	0	42	396	206	64.22
Khatlon	24	7	17	130	1528	2.151	24.8
TOTAL	58	23	47	256	2803	6.127	143.1

Tajikistan's executive power at the local level



Tajikistan local self-governance: a potential bridge between government and civil society?

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Introduction

Five years after the signing of the Tajik Peace Agreement, Tajikistan is immersed in a process of political, social and economic reform which goes to the heart of the country's system of government. The State faces the challenge of establishing mechanisms to ensure good governance, decentralization and increased accountability.

The Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, passed in November 1994, and a series of subsequent laws lay the foundations for the country's current governing institutions. However this reform process dealt mainly with higher echelons of government. Eight years later one of the fundamental questions policy makers and legislators face, is how to further encourage decentralization and regulate the lowest levels of governmental authority. Since 1991, an armed conflict, loss of contacts and trade with the Soviet Union, and the rapid plunge of the country's economic production and living standards, have left all Tajik localities suffering deeply from unem-

ployment, social disruption, loss of revenue and lack of energy sources and communication links. Localities have been left mainly on their own, to cope with the situation in a most basic way, seeking piecemeal solutions to structural problems. However as social, political, and economic conditions have begun to gradually improve, the question of how to formalize the competencies of institutions of local self-government has come to the fore. The concept of local self-governance is not new in former communist regimes; and it was previously heralded during Khrushchev's reforms. Today local self-government has become a popular notion in development fields, where it is being applied in a host of countries from India to Costa Rica. In Tajikistan a de-facto tradition of local self-governance exists, which was partly superseded by socialist institutions, but regained legitimacy during 1994 legislative reforms. For the purpose of this paper, local self-governance is defined as a mechanism enabling citizens to decide about their common interests, and satisfy their common needs, in the

fields of infrastructure development, housing, communal activities, service provision and other areas of community and economic life. Empirical evidence reveals shortcomings in the leadership of existing institutions of local self-governance in Tajikistan, their degree of representativeness and accountability, competencies and ability to collect resources. Most significantly experience suggests that the de-jure institution of local self-government - the jamoat - is less a mechanism of self-government than a purely governmental form. At the community level a host of other traditional and new institutions function more effectively as local self-government entities. Since 1997 several internationally funded projects, adopting different approaches, have attempted to strengthen local self-government. The most substantial of these efforts was initiated by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) village organization program. The AKF's shortcomings and successes provide useful lessons to be integrated into Tajikistan's conceptualization of local self-government.

Theoretical and legal bases for Tajikistan local self-government

Local self-governance is historically ingrained in Tajik society and governing practice. Mahallas are a historical example of effective Tajik local self-governance. Mahallas brought people living on the same territory together on a voluntary basis, along interest lines based on profession or good neighborliness. They created a forum where local values, rules of behavior, and common interests were defined, through which group interests were protected and joint actions organized. Tea-houses (Chaihana) served as the meeting point for mahalla members. Though mahallas had limited powers and authority to oppose themselves to state decisions, mahallas could lobby neighborhood interests. Mahallas had some resources collected from the voluntary contribution of people belonging to them.

1. The concept of Jamoats According to 1994 Tajik legislation

The concept of local self-government as it is used today in Tajikistan was enshrined in the 1994 Constitution. According to the Constitution, a jamoat is defined as an institution of self-government in towns and villages. The framework for their authority is set forth in the Law on Local

Self-government in Towns and Villages passed in December 1994. In this law, local self-governance is described as «the system of organizing public activities to address issues of local importance autonomously and at their own discretion, directly or indirectly, in accordance with the legislation of Republic of Tajikistan. Local self-governments resolve issues within their competence directly or through their representatives.» (Preamble) Jamoats were set up on a territorial basis, and generally took over the jurisdiction of the former village councils. Local self-government was clearly set up as separate and distinct from other forms of government, whose competencies were defined under the Law on Local Governing Bodies. Significantly the legal basis for local self-government institutions in rural areas was provided for, while no such institutions were envisioned for cities. In 2002 some 350 jamoats existed on the territory of Tajikistan.

The legislation on Local Self-governance in Towns and Villages provides jamoats with a large range of competencies and duties. Fundamentally, as an institution of local self-governance, jamoats assist «in the fulfillment of the rights of citizens to participate in the management of the activities of the state and society, and unites them to solve social and economic problems on their territo-

ry, as well as the most important problems directly touching the interests of the population.» (Article 1) The lists of tasks assigned to the jamoat are extensive and include many that may be considered as falling within governmental competency. The jamoat should thus organize implementation of the Constitution, legislation, acts of the president, Parliament or the government of Tajikistan as well as local government decisions. It also assists government bodies in tax collection, and in the notification of reservists and recruits about their call to military service. (Article 19)

2. The absence of any legal basis for the work of mahallas

Though mahallas have existed for centuries as a traditional form of local self-governance, when the legislation on local self-governance was drafted in 1994, mahallas were not included. This is particularly surprising as during the Soviet era, though mahallas as a representation of urban self-organization weakened significantly, they gained new influence in rural areas. In urban areas many traditional forms of civic organization - such as the mahallas - were usurped by communist-style social organizations. But in rural communities, the communist system was much less successful in replacing and eradicating traditional structures. Therefore

in the 1980s a wide range of village level institutions - mahallas, shura aksakal - with their different forms of leadership - rais mahalla, rais chaihana, sardor, rohbar - continued to function. In the Karetegin Valley during the 1980s the population of villages gathered together to make decisions concerning the construction of public buildings - schools, mosques, teahouses (chaihana), libraries. They raised funds through benevolent contributions, carried out work through voluntary labor (hashar), secured the provision of assistance from the collective farm and established their own supervising bodies to ensure that the projects were carried out.¹

Although traditional rural institutions are not defined by law, as local self-government structures they carry out many self-governing tasks. Traditionally, mahallas are governed by a council of elders (shura aksakal), which helps resolve social problems and conflicts within the community. Mahalla committees facilitate the organization of key events in the lives of local citizens: births, marriages and burials. Mahallas help solve conflicts within families and between neighbors, thus helping build social cohesion and maintaining peace and unity. Mahalla committees can also initiate community work through hashar - for example, garbage collection, the cleaning of irrigation ditches, rehabilitation of public buildings, recon-

struction of the homes of widows and the elderly. Though this practice continues to exist in Tajikistan, according to a survey carried out in the NGO ASTI in Sughd Oblast, a large majority of mahallas did not organize a hashar between 2000-2002.² In fact though mahallas continue to play a significant role in the national psyche of Tajikistan, since the end of the civil war, they are increasingly passive and risk withering away.

Tajikistan legislation defines local self-government as «a system of organizing public activities to address issues of local importance autonomously.» Though a strong tradition of local self-government exists in Tajikistan, as does a legal basis for the functioning of local self-government entities, a large percentage of what in practice represents local self-government - the work of mahallas - is not regulated or legally recognized.

Local self-government in practice: problems and opportunities

The problems and challenges which institutions of local self-government face in Tajikistan, were the topics of a series of political discussion

clubs, with members of Tajik Government, jamoats, political parties and NGOs, organized by the United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peace-building (UNTOP) and the National Association of Tajik Political Scientists in 2001 and 2002. The clubs were held throughout the country, and provided an open form for discussions on jamoats' shortcomings and advantages. Three main areas of weakness were defined. They concern leadership, representation and participation in local self-government; undefined competencies and tasks of jamoats; and resource deficits.

1. Local self-government leadership and representativeness

Though jamoats are termed local self-government bodies, the executive powers in the jamoat are controlled from above. The chairperson of the jamoat is selected by the government (hukumat) chairman of the city or region, and approved by the jamoat council for a five-year term. The chairperson is responsible for nominating his/her own deputy, secretary, and committee - though in practice the hukumat may also influence this selection. Local participation in the selection of the chairperson and committee is nominally guaranteed as all nominations must be approved by the jamoat majilis. Jamo-

1 Information collected in interviews in the Garm region in July, 2002

2 Interview with Farrukh Tyuryaev, General Director, Association of Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia, on 27 June, 2002 in Khojand.

at majlis representatives are ad-hoc appointees selected at the level of the mahalla, village, street... They approve the jamoat chairman and staff nomination by a show of hands; rarely do jamoat representatives propose alternative candidates (in this case a closed vote may be organized). In practice the powers of majlis representatives are weak as the hukumat has the power to decide when the elections will be held, and how many representatives are needed to hold a vote. The hukumat's influence over the selection of the jamoat chair may provide the jamoat with better access to higher levels of government, yet it clearly limits the jamoat's accountability to local citizens.

Within the jamoat the majority of powers are consolidated in the hands of the chairman, and are only nominally delegated to members of the jamoat committee. The committees range in size, with an average of five to seven employees, depending on the vastness and population of the territory. They receive a nominal salary from the government (approximately 25 somoni for the chairman, and 10-18 somoni for the others). The role of the committee members is to carry out the administrative tasks assigned to the jamoat. Representation in the jamoat is guaranteed by the jamoat majlis. The jamoat chairperson must call ja-

moat majlis meetings not less than twice a year. These meetings are attended by jamoat representatives who may be considered to be the lowest-level of citizen representation. However as they are temporary appointees, and meetings of the jamoat representatives are rare, their powers are limited.

Though jamoat committees and jamoat majlis by law unite citizens to solve economic and social problems on their territory - in practice this is rarely possible, due to the jamoats' size. In 2002 356 jamoats functioned with populations ranging from 50,000 to 1,500. On average jamoats tended to represent some 6-12,000 inhabitants, or since the country was made up of 3,200 villages, cover about 10 villages. Many municipalities in Western Europe are much smaller; in Germany the average size of a municipality is 5,430, in Italy 7,120 and in Slovenia 10,360. The very size of most jamoats makes it difficult for committee staff to have a firm understanding of local needs. As some jamoat chairmen pointed out during the political discussion clubs, they frequently have neither the funds to travel throughout the jamoat territory, nor the time. Consequently the jamoat system therefore does not serve as an effective representative or participatory mechanism of government.

2. Tasks and competencies of the jamoat

The Law on Self-government in Towns and Villages distinguishes between the powers allocated to the jamoat (powers of the bodies of self-management) and the to the jamoat chairman. The jamoat majlis has eight main responsibilities according to law (Article 14), while the chairman has twenty-seven (Article 19). The main role of the majlis is to pass the program of activities and budget of the jamoat, hear the annual reports presented by the chairman, and monitor spending (Art. 14). In fact the jamoat is given few legal powers or means to fulfill its essential legal duty of «organizing public activities to address issues of local importance.» These responsibilities are under the competencies of the jamoat chairman who, «takes measures to improve the material and living conditions of citizens, and can represent the interests of citizens in the bodies of state authority» (Art. 19). Nevertheless according to the law, the chairman of the jamoat also represents the executive branch of local government and is thus engaged in a variety of tasks delegated to him by higher governmental authorities.

Though by law the jamoat chairman and his staff have vast responsibilities and competencies, in practice they are unable to fulfill many of its tasks because of a lack of staff and

resources. Instead jamoats appear most frequently to divide their time between carrying out tasks of local government and addressing citizens' complaints. In many instances, a large percentage of the jamoat's efforts are concentrated on revenue collection. According to the Nosiri Khisrav jamoat secretary,

«60-70% of the time of the jamoat is used in the collection of taxes on property, land, and transport and state duties/ fees. The jamoat is responsible for insuring that people pay on time, yet people have few monetary resources so it's difficult for them to pay. Because of this we have little time to do anything else then go after these people.»

This particular jamoat estimated that it collects approximately 3000 somoni (\$1000) a year. The degree to which institutions of local self-government are engaged in tax collection varies between localities, as legally Tax Authorities are responsible for tax collection, but may request assistance from jamoats. The second main function of jamoats is to receive citizens, examine complaints, register them and take appropriate measures. Complaints may concern group problems - such as the use of water, land, and waste - or personal disputes - such as marriage, divorce

or neighborly quarrels. Many citizens approach the mahalla chair or his/her staff in the first instance, then the jamoat, and only afterwards turn to the police or the courts. Mahallas and jamoats therefore maintain a higher degree of trust among the population than law enforcement bodies. In many parts of Tajikistan there is a dearth of judges, and inadequate courts, thus jamoats help fill an existing gap in judicial service provision.

3. Resources

Like all other levels of government in Tajikistan since 1991, institutions of local self-government suffer from a lack of financial and material resources. In addition, as they are not legally part of the country's governing structure, jamoats do not have official budgets or their own bank accounts, but are dependent on local governmental financial departments. During the political discussion club meetings, jamoat chairmen noted that one of the main factors limiting their work is the lack of a clear mechanism regulating how they can collect and employ funds. When asked whether they regularly prepared their own annual budgets, only a small minority of the jamoat chairmen responded affirmatively. Instead they rely almost exclusively on city or district councils' budget allocations, and employ the funds according to

the budget lines that the higher levels of government have assigned. In many instances jamoat chairmen are unaware of how much money they have at their disposal and how much they have spent. Each district government determines how much funding it wishes to allocate to jamoats and the sum may vary significantly from region to region.

Theoretically the strength of a jamoat lies in its ability to collect voluntary contributions from citizens, enterprises and other organizations operating on its territory. Yet since the end of the civil war few jamoats have successfully collected revenues from communities, or mobilized them in hashar. Jamoats also benefit from financial control over community property, which may include means of transportation, equipment and other facilities, public or social, which these institutions have built or purchased. They have broad rights to lease or use their property, as well as discretion over the use of the assets. Nevertheless it is extremely difficult to determine to what extent jamoats take advantage of these resources. Two jamoats attending a political discussion club, in the Karategin Valley, exemplified to what extent revenue collection differs. In 2001 one jamoat located in the Jirgital district collected 128,000 somoni (approximately \$40,000) while another in the Darban district gath-

ered only 26,000 somoni. Both jamoats have similar populations and are in neighboring districts, but the chairman in Jirgital collected some \$26,000 from potato producers on his territory. He claims that he convinced the producers to offer these funds as a voluntary contribution, and that he did not impose an indirect tax. However this example also reveals how the lack of regulation concerning jamoat revenue collection and budgeting leaves room for a host of distortions, inequalities and lost opportunities in resource management.

One of the greatest challenges for institutions of local self-government is the re-awakening amongst citizens of the former spirit of self-help, community participation and volunteerism that used to exist, especially in rural areas. Jamoat chairmen are finding this to be an impressive obstacle to their work; local communities are passive and unwilling to organize or participate in any form of community action. In this context local self-government is top-driven, and becoming increasingly weak. What changes may be proposed to reverse this trend?

A future model of local self-government: MSDP village organizations

The Aga Khan Foundation, Mountain Societies Development and Support

Program (MSDSP) has been one of the most successful externally funded community development projects in Tajikistan. Since 1998 the MSDSP has been supporting the strengthening of local «village organizations» (VOs) with the goal of «mobilizing human, physical and financial resources to empower local villagers, give them greater ownership of development activities and generate wealth.»³ From 1998-2002, the MSDSP became engaged in 400 villages in Gorno-Badakshan and 72 in the Karategin Valley. During that time the MSDSP achieved its immediate objective of ensuring the availability of enough food for the local population's survival; and it is now in the process of working with communities to reach food self-sufficiency. It can be argued that the MSDSP's VOs are a form of local self-government because they are representative bodies of households living in a given geographic locality, who voluntarily come together to make decisions and undertake activities to advance common interests and improve community livelihoods.⁴

When the MSDSP initiated its VO program, it did not seek to create entirely new community structures,

but rather based itself on existing institutions such as the mahallas and shura aksakal. It also promoted traditional concepts of self-help, volunteerism, and community mobilization (hashar, sadoka, maraka). Local citizens participating in VOs saw a direct link between these entities and traditional Tajik forms of village self-governance. During interviews carried out with six VOs in the Karategin Valley during Summer 2002, community members described how «everything that we are doing now through the village organizations, we used to do before.»⁵ As the VOs are accepted as a continuation of more traditional forms of organizing, they are clearly embedded in local communities.

As described above, though mahallas and other traditional village entities play a significant role in the national psyche of Tajikistan, since the end of the civil war, they have become passive and ineffectual. The goal of the VO program is thus to reverse this trend. According to the MSDSP 2002-2007 Strategy:

«During the Soviet period village-level institutions were sponsored by the government, but they had neither the funding nor the skills and experience to make long term plans and generally had few responsibilities. Lack of experience

3 MSDP Five Year Strategy 2002-2006, Khorog, April 2002 (p.6)

4 A Charter for Village Organizations, MSDPS, Khorog, February 2001 (p.4)

5 Interviews carried out in 6 village organizations in the Karategin Valley, July, 2002.

in election procedures led to the selection of poorly qualified people, and in practice, the institutions only carried out instructions from above. Over the last few years the MSDSP has adopted the village institutions and has been working to transform them into structural and better led village organizations with the potential to play a dynamic role in village level governance and resources management.»⁶

To improve the effectiveness of village structures, the MSDSP initiated efforts to support the development of democratic leadership, increased participation and accountability, the acquisition of resources and their transparent management, and project planning and development.

1. Village organization, leadership and citizens' participation

Village Organizations are based on the system of direct participatory democracy. The leadership of MSDSP village organizations - including a chair, deputy, bookkeeper and the head of the women's organization - is selected through open and fair elections, with the participation of at least 80% of village households. While representatives of official govern-

mental structures often attend the elections, they do not play a role in the nomination of candidates. Unlike jamoat chairmen, village organization heads are selected by direct suffrage, for a period of two years. While the VO leadership is responsible for the entity's day-to-day activities and planning, it is not authorized to execute decisions without consulting the community. Monthly the chair must call for a general VO meeting where projects are discussed and agreed upon. Within VO participatory decision-making is employed; this direct form of democracy is possible because VOs represent between 500 and 50 households, and cover a relatively small territory. VO leadership is more aware of local needs because they are expressed directly by citizens in the monthly meetings. The VO general gathering is considered to be the legitimate entity representing the community, through which citizens carry out self-management.

2. Village organization tasks

The main aim of Village Organizations is to improve the management of available resources - human, social, financial, natural and cultural -

to increase the livelihoods of all segments of the village. The VO chair is responsible for articulating a development vision for the village, and communicating it with citizens, donors, governmental officials, etc. The primary role of VO meetings is to serve as a forum where members can discuss needs, make policy decisions and agree on implementation. Members also hear activity reports, monitor spending, and may hold leadership accountable. Members have the right to initiate their own public activities and to request support from the VO as a whole. When governmental officials wish to provide information, or to request something from the village community, jamoat authorities participate in VO meetings - they do not directly delegate tasks to the VO or its leadership. The VO chairmen are ultimately responsible for insuring that members pay their dues. But since this is a voluntary contribution that can be bestowed in cash or kind, and is usually collected at the general monthly meetings - it does not require the same kind of effort as jamoa' tax collection. Examples in the Karategin Valley demonstrate that VO chairmen also facilitate social cohesion-building, as citizens come to them to advise and arbiter when there are problems within the family and between neighbors.

⁶ MSDP Five Year Strategy 2002-2006, Khorog, April 2002 (p.11)

3. Village organization resources and funding

While Village Organizations carry out many of the same tasks as jamoats, they may more readily access external funding and local financial and physical resources. According to the MSDSP Regional Manager in the Karategin Valley, 378 projects have been completed since 1998. Twelve main types of activities were implemented, including vegetable-planting, bird-farming, irrigating, infrastructure and micro-credit for women. VOs benefit from the MSDSP funding ranging from 30 to 70% of project costs. The financial injection provided by the MSDSP to VOs in 2001 in the Karategin Valley totaled 387,000 somoni. However, citizens also participate through voluntary contributions - collected through monthly member fees or ad hoc donations - and through the provision of their labor. In 2001 in the Karategin Valley MSDSP estimated that VOs provided approximately 234,781 somoni towards the implementation of projects. Though the infrastructure projects are generally financed by the MSDSP as grants, in the majority of the other projects were distributed as credits, which beneficiaries have to pay back in cash or kind. The aim of the credit system is to ensure that «We do not give anything to anyone for free. We want people to learn how to work,

to earn money for the bread themselves. Now farmers start understanding that in order to have something they have to work.»⁷

One of the goals of the MSDSP program is to help formalize VOs - especially in regards to the management, spending and planning of the use of resources. Since 2001, VOs have been encouraged to apply a Village Development Planning Process to regulate how they analyze existing assets, plan expenditures, collect resources, implement activities, monitor and report. This process aims to assist all involved to increase their awareness about local needs, resource allocation and budgeting - knowledge which jamoats, who have no clear mechanism regulating how they can collect and employ funds, sorely lack. VOs are also provided with their own budget through the establishment of Village Development Funds. These funds are set up with a one-time contribution by the MSDSP (generally between 500-2000 somoni), and supplemented over time with VO member contributions and other VO fund-raising activities. Since the MSDSP program started functioning in the Karategin Valley in 1998, the 72 VOs in the

region have amassed a total of 72,316 somoni in membership dues for the Village Development Funds. In July 2002, the total savings the 72 village organizations had placed in their Village Development Funds equaled 174,874 somoni.⁸

Conclusions

A fundamental questions which policy makers and legislators engaged in governance reform in Tajikistan face is: how can Tajik institutions of local self government be supported to lay the foundation for self-sustaining social and political development? In 2001 The Presidential Office of the Government of Tajikistan established a committee to work on new draft legislation on institutions of local self-governance. According to Rahmatillo Zoir, Legal Advisor to the President of the RT, it will include several significant changes: for the first time mahallas will be included as institutional form of local self-governance. While this will positively bring local self-governance closer to the people, it will also become important to delineate at this level the role of local self-government institutions and public associations - or NGOs. Several mahalla committees and MSDSP village organizations, with no other regulating edict to refer to, have already registered as public associations.

7 Interview with MSDSP Regional Manager for the Karategin Valley, July, 2002

8 Statistics from «Information about the savings of VOs of Rasht Valley,» prepared by MSDSP, dated 30.06.02

Lessons learned from past experience with jamoats and the MSDSP village organizations provides helpful indications for Tajik policy makers and legislators. Jamoat representatives are themselves vocal about the need to delineate their competencies; regulate their collection and use of funds; and allow them to have access to their own budgets. A fundamental lesson for local self-governance entities is the importance of reaching deep into local communities - at the level of individual villages, neighborhoods, or mahallas, rather than at the level of territories representing on average 6-12,000 inhabitants. The VO experience indicates that when local self-governance is organized at the village level participation of local citizens is more easily promoted. While jamoats may more appropriately be for-

malized as governmental institutions, rather than self-government bodies, reforms in jamoats leadership, structure, funding and working mechanisms are also needed. The jamoat chairman position should be directly elected, and there should be more opportunity for community consultation through the jamoat majlis. There is room for greater cooperation and division of competencies between jamoats, mahallas, higher governmental authorities, local NGOs and international donor agencies.

After over fifty years of communism, Tajikistan rural communities do not lack mobilizing capacities or a sense of volunteerism. They are, however, suffering from a loss of direction, passivity, and the absence of economic resources. Reforms that support more direct participation of citi-

zens in local decision-making may potentially increase popular participation. While deficits will continue as Tajikistan undergoes massive macro-economic reform, there is room for more efficient and equitable utilization of existing financial, human, and natural assets. A system rewarding voluntary contributions, and enabling a percentage of revenues collected in one territory to be directly utilized in the same region, has the potential of contributing to better resource allocation. For international donor agencies and political organizations interested in promoting good governance, decentralization and increased accountability, a clearer commitment to supporting Tajik institutions of local self-governance also has the potential of insuring more sustainable social and economic development in Tajikistan.

Regional government in Tajikistan (centre and regions)

Zarif Aliev,

Chairman Constitutional Court
Tajikistan

Tajikistan is a unitary (as an entity, non-federative) state. To govern the state the territory of the republic is divided into separate units. The nature and structure of these units is determined in the Constitution and the Constitutional Law «On Procedure of Administrative-territorial Organization of the Republic of Tajikistan» passed on November 4, 1995. They are the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), regions or oblasts (Khatlonskaya, Sogdiiskaya), the city of Dushanbe, cities, districts or rayons, settlements and villages. Within these administrative units the local State and self-governance representative and executive bodies were created on the oblast, rayon and city levels. State bodies do not exist below the levels of the city and rayon. As to self-governance bodies called Jamoats (sub-district) they were established on the levels of village and settlement. In the Republic of Tajikistan the existing rayons and cities are included into different administrative units: GBAO, Khatlon and Sughd oblasts and Dushanbe city. Some rayons and cities called «rayons and cities of republican subordination» do not be-

long to oblasts (these cities and rayons are located around the capital mostly in the Hissor and Rasht valleys) but they are directly subordinate to the central Government. Local State power is divided into two levels: 1) Oblast level 2) City and rayon level. The lowest level of governance consists of local self-governance bodies: settlement and village jamoats (communities). The above-mentioned Jamoats are independent and have equal status. There are so called rural jamoats in rural areas and settlement jamoats in settlements. The self-governance bodies (jamoats) are not created in urban industrial areas, cities and rayons (Dushanbe rayon and some others) because there are no correspondent administrative units such as village and settlement. In urban areas a mahalla council (city block council) does exist. The Mahalla Council is a public association of citizens living on the same territory; it is created by local residents on a voluntary base.

GBAO as an autonomous formation, and the city of Dushanbe as the capital of the republic, have some peculiarities. The following factors: a specific natural-climatic feature that

resulted in a particular and complete social economic system of the oblast, as well as the language, household and other ethnic features of the local population were taken into consideration to form Gorni Badakhshan as an autonomous entity.

Taking into account these GBAO peculiarities, there is a separate chapter (Chapter 8) in the Constitution of the Republic enacting that the status of GBAO is to be determined by a constitutional law. The constitutional law «On Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast» passed on November 4, 1995 determines a specific status of this oblast.

Taking into consideration the autonomous character of GBAO, the law enacts not to change the borders of the oblast without the GBAO Majlisi of People's Deputies' (representative body of the oblast) consent; that the government shall create conditions for the languages (Kyrgyz, Russian, Vakhani, and Yezgulyam) to be freely developed and used; one of the Majlisi Milli deputy chairmen (upper chamber of the Parliament) shall be a deputy from GBAO (as usual he is one of the people's deputies

elected to Majlisi Oli from GBAO); one of the judges of the Constitutional Court shall be a GBAO representative, (the appointment procedure is not defined by the Tajik Constitution and the Law on Constitutional Court. As usual his candidature is proposed by the Head of the Oblast. After that the candidature is proposed by the Tajik President, along with the candidatures of other Constitutional Court judges, to the Upper Chamber of the Parliament for further approval) to form the GBAO permanent representation to keep the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in constant touch with the GBAO executive bodies under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. (This permanent representation is formed in accordance with the central Government).

These rights enacted by the law are the guarantee for GBAO as an autonomous oblast in the structure of the Republic of Tajikistan, and the form to protect its interests (not as a State unit but as a social and cultural entity). As in some other similar cases around the world, during the creation of GBAO its cultural, language and some ethnic peculiarities as well as its geographical isolation were taken into consideration.

The city of Dushanbe has similar rights as the other oblasts. Since Dushanbe is the capital of the republic, it has some peculiar features. These fea-

tures are specified in the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan, «On the Status of the Capital of the Republic of Tajikistan» passed on December 13, 1996. It should be noted that in comparison with the other regions included in the structure of the oblast many of the social and economic problems of Dushanbe must be solved by the city itself rather than by the districts included in the structure of the city. Thus, the law (Article 5) stipulates that the Dushanbe government shall be responsible for the transfer of the land, buildings, structures, constructions and premises, amount of housing, utilities, transport and other services. Costs for services rendered by the local executive bodies located in Dushanbe should be reimbursed by donations and subventions from the republican budget. There is a special line in the republican budget for this purpose, (and a separate line for all other regions). The law also specifies a definite character of mutual relations that the city of Dushanbe has with the regions of republican subordination, especially those that border on Dushanbe (Hissor, Lenin, Varzob and Kafirnihon (Vahdat) rayons). These regions should support the development of Dushanbe, including working out and implementing development programs to be fulfilled in the regions of republican subordination and development of the utilities that render ser-

vices to Dushanbe, the regions of republican subordination, and others.

The administrative-territorial organization of the Republic of Tajikistan has been historically formed. The pre-revolutionary Russia and part of the present Tajikistan that used to be in the structure of czarist Russia were divided into the following local territorial structures - provinces, *volosts* (small rural districts), and districts. After the 1917 revolution it was decided to break this old local government system. In the late twentieth and early thirtieth of the 20th century a new system of local territorial organization of the Soviet state was developed that consisted of oblasts, areas, cities, regions, settlements and villages which are all included in the governmental system. This system existed before the USSR collapsed and it still exists in Tajikistan at present. Before 1994, when the Republic of Tajikistan passed the Constitution, there were self-government bodies in settlements and villages.

In the territorial structure system of Soviet and present Tajikistan, a rayon is the basic part of the rural area and a city is the basic part of the industrial centers. Since rayons and cities are situated closer to the agricultural and industrial enterprises they unite the agricultural objects and industries in the territory they are situated, and they are also nearer to

the population than oblasts and areas. All rayons are included into different oblasts or Dushanbe city. (As stated before, the rayons of republican subordination are not part of an oblast but they are directly subordinated to the Central Government). This peculiarity of the area was specified when Soviet power was being established. For example, the resolution of the XVI VKP(b) Conference specified that «the central unit for the Party and Soviet power instructions to be implemented is a region» (CPSS in the resolutions and decisions, volume 4, page 234)

A *rayon* is the basic unit in modern Tajikistan, the district is the lowest level of government. It is the *rayon* that solves the important problems of local government, economic and social-cultural development. The State power is limited at the *rayon* level beyond which the next level of self-governance unit is called the *Jamoat*. *Jamoats* are included into the territory of the rayons.

The *oblast* is an intermediate part to govern the territory between the Central Government, rayons and cities. In fact the oblast governs the territory, existing bodies, enterprises, departments and organizations. As it has already been mentioned the Republic of Tajikistan consists of GBAO, the Sogdiiskaya oblast, the Khatlonskaya oblast and the city of Dushanbe (Dushanbe actually has the

rights of the oblast with some differences peculiar to the capital of the republic) In Dushanbe city many economic, social and cultural questions are solved on the city level because there is a united administrative unit consisting of different branches and bodies (such as the water supply unit called Dushanbe Water Channel, the electricity provision unit called Gorelectroset, Heating System Network unit, Telephone Communication unit etc). Some regions and cities (so-called cities and regions of republican subordination (RRS)) have no part in an oblast. They directly communicate with the republican bodies. The situation of the RRS (lack of oblast part) limits their opportunity to express and implement their rights and interests, also to protect the rights of the population. For example, lack of the oblast court does not enable the people to appeal to the court of second appearance in order to protect their rights. They must go directly to the Supreme Court of the republic. The upper chamber of parliament basically includes representatives from oblasts and the city of Dushanbe, (five representatives from each oblast, Dushanbe city and rayons of republican subordination). The law developed a new structure for the RRS that do not have their own oblasts - a joint meeting of people's deputies for the regions of republican subordination, RRS cities, and

others. This Joint Meeting of people's deputies is created only for one purpose, which is the election of the Rayons of Republican Subordination representatives to the Upper Chamber of the Parliament. After the deputies are elected the Joint meeting is over because it has no other tasks or capacity.

Thus, local governance is carried out in the oblast, city, and district. There are local self-government bodies in the settlements and villages which are not administrative management bodies but are self-governance units.

The local State power is represented by executive and representative bodies. They cooperate and interact with each other and with other levels (oblast level) representing the State power on a local level. The representative and executive bodies represent the local government. They cooperate with each other and carry out local governance together with the other levels (region and self-governance level).

The representative bodies include Madjlisi (councils) of the deputies of oblasts, cities and regions elected by the population of these territories for five years. They regularly meet with their constituency voters. The number of deputies of the Madjlisis is different. The constitutional law «On Election of Deputies to the Local Madjlisis of People's Deputies» en-

acts the quota for the oblast madjlisis and the Dushanbe madjlisi to be not more than 70 deputies, and for the regional and city madjlisis not more than 40 deputies (Article 7).

Local madjlisis should express and represent the interests of the city and oblast population. Local madjlisis, as the representatives of the appropriate territory, approve local budgets and hear reports on the budget execution; approve perspective, social and economic development programs; approve general plans and rules of redevelopment; approve local taxes, charges and tariffs; approve the chairman and his assistants, chiefs of the structural divisions in the executive bodies, hear their reports; make decisions on issue, conditions and placement of local loans, lotteries and others. They make these decisions within the limits of the competencies.

The deputies of the local madjlisis do not work on a constant basis. They convoke sessions not less than twice a year. The chairman of the oblast, region and city heads a local madjlisi. The President of the republic appoints chairmen of the local madjlisis from among the deputies of these madjlisis for five years. The chairmen are approved at the session. The Chairmen usually head the executive and representative powers on the correspondent territorial units, which means that there are Chairmen of

oblast, city, rayon and Chairmen of peoples' deputies meetings of the territories.

Mutual relations between different local madjlisis are as follows: local madjlisis implement their activity independently within the limits of their competence. Higher local madjlisis can delegate part of their authority to the lower madjlisis, lower madjlisis can also, on mutual consent, transfer part of their authority to the higher madjlisi; higher madjlisis have the right to cancel the resolutions of the lower madjlisis if they contradict the law; the lower madjlisis have the right to go to court and contest the decisions of the higher madjlisis; the madjlisis also have the right to cancel the decisions of their chairmen, if the resolutions do not correspond to current legislation. These rights are not widely used but are in theory available.

The chairman of GBAO, the chairman of the city of Dushanbe, as well as the chairmen of oblasts, regions and cities, head the local governments. The chairman has a first deputy and assistants and his own office (administration) appointed by him. The chairman has overall charge of the structural divisions of the local executive bodies, and other bodies, enterprises and departments under the jurisdiction of the oblasts, cities and regions.

There are three types of bodies, enterprises, and organization according to the current legislation in place:

- enterprises, establishments and organizations of the communal property;
- structural divisions of local governments;
- local agencies, establishments, enterprises and organizations of the republican property.

The local governments manage the enterprises, establishments and organizations of the communal property; the chairman directly appoints their chiefs; and they have contracts.

Government Resolution No.216 as of March 17, 1995 determined the structural divisions of the local governments. The structural divisions include oblast, regional, and urban structures of education, public health services, culture, environmental protection, economics and foreign economic relations, justice, finance, agriculture and others which are in double subordination: first of all they are subordinated to the Chairman and then to the heads of Ministries and correspondent Government bodies. Heads of the structural divisions are appointed by the corresponding Chairmen in accordance with the Ministers and heads of governmental bodies. Their chiefs are appoint-

ed by the appropriate chairmen with the consent of higher bodies (Ministries, departments, organizations, agencies, etc.).

The third group of organizations is the one not included in the first and second groups. They belong to the republican property. Their chiefs are appointed and relieved of their posts by ministers and chiefs of the departments as agreed with the appropriate chairman.

These different groups should follow the resolutions of the local Madjlisis and chairmen passed by them within the limits of their competence.

Organizational issues and issues of territory management are in the authority of the chairmen of oblasts, cities and regions, and the chairman of the city of Dushanbe. Thus, the chairman convokes sessions of the local madjlisis, presides at the sessions, supervises the structural divisions of local governments, manages the communal property, coordinates the activity of the enterprises, organizations and establishments of the republican property, regulates land utilization and organizes the local budget execution, etc.

So, the chairman has real actual power and bears responsibility for the business situation in his territory (oblast, rayon, city).

The chairman, within the limits of his

competence, makes resolutions for all the bodies, organizations, enterprises and departments to follow. The Chairmen of oblast, Central Government and Court have the right to cancel the decisions of heads of rayons and cities. Central Government and Court may cancel the decisions of oblast Chairmen. The decisions of all Chairmen (of oblasts, Dushanbe city, rayons and cities) may be canceled by the corresponding Majlisi Oli on oblast, city and rayons levels in the case of contradiction with existing legislation. Mutual relations of the chairman, as the head of the local government, with local bodies and organizations are as follows: the chairman directly supervises the enterprises, establishments and organizations of the communal property, coordinates the activity of the republican property organizations, supervises the activity of all organizations located in his territory when it deals with land utilization and other natural resources, environmental protection, construction of communications, trade welfare service, social protection, administration of legality, law and security, protection of the citizens' rights and freedom.

The enterprises, establishments and organizations can appeal against and challenge the chairman's decisions to the higher chairman or in court. (For instance many farmers in Leninski rayon have objected to the decision of

the rayon Chairman applying to the Upper Economic Court of Leninski rayon) The higher chairman and court have the right to cancel the chairman's decision if the decision contradicts the law. The Government or the President of Tajikistan can cancel the decision of the chairman of GBAO and the chairmen of oblasts, the chairman of the city of Dushanbe and the chairmen of the cities and regions of republican subordination if they contradict existing laws or legislative norms.

The local representative and executive bodies have the following relations with the ministries, departments and other central executive bodies: in the case that local governments' rights and interests are infringed, the local governments have the right to address the Government or the President of the republic, or the court. So, the Constitutional Law of the Republic of Tajikistan «On the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Tajikistan» prescribes that the state bodies (including local governments) have the right to address the Constitutional court when the problems deal with constitutional doubt of the normative acts approved by the ministries, state committees and other departments (Article 37).

Public utilities of the communal property intended to satisfy the direct social and economic needs of popu-

lation form the economic and financial basis of the local governments. (Government Resolution No.383 as of August 6, 1993 determines the difference between communal and republican property). The basis also includes local budget, non-budgetary and target funds, credit resources, as well as subventions and donations from the republican budget. Thus, the 2002 republican budget stipulates a 32,648 thousand-somoni donation for the local budgets (10 million US\$), and a 2,500 thousand-somoni donation - for the city of Dushanbe (7.9 million US\$).

Local taxes and tariffs (retail sales taxes, immovable property taxes, passenger taxes); state taxes, donations and subventions from higher budgets; deductions from the state budget (85% of the land tax, 100% of VAT- except for the Sogdiiskaya oblast, the city of Dushanbe and the city of Tursunzade that contribute to the local budget 30%, 50% and 20%, income tax is 100 % , and etc.) draw up the local budget.

Local self-government in the Republic of Tajikistan

Local self-government in the Republic of Tajikistan is determined at the level of settlements and villages. It was established by the 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan. Prior to 1994 there were settlement

village councils and their executive committees. There is no local self-government in the cities. In the cities there are bodies of social activity in the form of Mahalla councils. The law of the Republic of Tajikistan «On Bodies of Self-government in Settlements and Villages» (December 1, 1994) regulates organization and functioning of the local self-government.

Jamoats of shakhrak (settlement) and dekhok (village) are the bodies of the local self-government. They are formed in settlements and villages. Jamoats are formed to realize the citizens' rights to govern the community and the state, to unite the citizens in order to solve their social and economic problems, to decide the most important questions directly touching the interests of the population, to facilitate the execution of the Constitution and other normative legal acts.

Jamoat, a local self-government body, is formed from the representatives (delegates) of streets, mahallyas, and villages. These elected representatives have meetings at least twice a year. The chairman, his deputy (deputies) and the secretary of the Jamoat are elected for five years. The chairman has a small office. The Chairman of the oblast (city) or the Madjlisi of people's deputies of rayon (city) level determines the number of the staff.

The Jamoat has limited powers. It is basically engaged in landscaping and improvement of a sanitary situation of the communities, streets, and etc. The Jamoat's activity is basically financed by the regional (urban) budget. A Jamoat has practically no self-financing sources and may be financed by voluntary funds transferred by the enterprises, organizations, establishments, and citizens.

The basic weight of work is assigned to the chairmen of Jamoats. The chairman practically implements all the work including organization of work, representation and protection of the Jamoat's interests; organization of public control for the sanitary situation in the communities, water supply system, dwellings, schools, and other establishments; registration of division of family property in the dekhkan households, registration of the inhabitants living in their territory; promotes due payment of taxes, insurance and other payments by the population; organizes obligatory presence of registrants and recruits in the commissariats, involves the population to participate in civil defense arrangements.

It should be noted that the powers of the former settlement and village councils and their executive committees were insignificant and this is also the peculiarity of current jamoats. The jamoat's powers are not very significant either, and are insufficient for

the complete functioning of the local self-governments, jamoats. Besides local self-governance bodies there are locally based public self-governance units (street councils, mahalla committees, neighborhood associations etc) which are public (non-state) citizen associations. Their activities are regulated by the Law, «On Public Associations)

Conclusions:

- Local governments and local self-government bodies were formed after the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan was passed in 1994; they are practically new structures. They have proved their viability but need to be developed.

- The powers of the local Madjlisis of people's deputies and their chairmen should be determined more precisely.
- The law should more clearly stipulate mutual relations of the local representative bodies and the chairmen with other local governments, public associations and citizens.
- The economic and financial basis of the local governments and local self-government bodies should be strengthened. With this purpose it is necessary to expand and precisely identify the financing sources of the local budgets and the budgets of the local self-government bodies.

- The legal structure of the local governments and local self-government bodies should be developed. The law should regulate more precisely the competence of different local governments (oblast, urban and regional), and expand the competence of local self-government bodies, fix the judicial protection of the rights and interests of the local governments and local self-government bodies, and others.

It should be noted that in order to develop these laws, the President of Tajikistan approved the Decree on July 11, 2002, and formed a Working group to develop new laws on local governments and local self-government bodies.

Economic aspects of the interrelation between centre and regions in Tajikistan

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Introduction

Economical and financial relationships between central government bodies and regions mainly predetermine the development of democratic processes in society. Either flawed legislation in this field or existing mechanisms infringing upon legitimate interests of parties can be sources for political instability, social tension and the development of separatism processes in the regions. On the contrary, a coordinated mutual relationship between center and regions is a strong catalyst for social and economical development in the regions as well as nationally. The Chinese experience is a good example: some experts believe that the Chinese economic marvel is a consequence of a successful financial relationship between central and local administrative bodies during last twenty years.

History demonstrates that central governments often intend to violate the mandates of local bodies, restrict their independence and exceed their constitutional powers. Sometimes local administrative bodies give up a

part of their rights or lose some of them in contradiction to the Constitution. Therefore regions often resist the efforts of the center to meddle with their mandates. A well-designed financial mechanism for interrelationship between the center and regions guarantees political stability in society, success in the country's economy development and nation prosperity. The society development level, its industrial capacity, and its historical, cultural or religious mentalities determine the features of the interrelationship.

After approving the strategy to move towards market economies, the majority of former Soviet states faced the need to choose financial mechanisms for proper interrelations between center and regions. The European Charter on Local Administration is the legal foundation for financial interrelation between center and local governance bodies in the majority of European nations [33]. Russia was among the first former Soviet countries to sign the European Charter on Local Administration on December 27, 1996.

The reform of the Tajikistan legislation system is still in process. As a result, there are no rules and regulations regarding financial interrelationship between the Center and regions. However, financial mechanisms regulating the interrelationship between the Center and regions have been improved. The Constitution of Tajikistan (1), Constitutional Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on State Governance in Regions (2), Tax Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, The Law on State Budget (3), as well as a number of state rules and regulations are its legal foundation.

A brief essay on the history of interrelation between the Center and regions in Tajikistan. The history of interrelation between the Center and regions is very long. Before 1917, there existed the local executive, legislative and judicial bodies such as the mingbashi, aksakal, and qazi in the Bukhara Emirate. In 1917-1920 these bodies were removed and the Councils of workers, peasants and army deputies (in northern Tajikistan) and Revolutionary committees (in Pamir) were es-

established instead. In 1936 these bodies were replaced by the Councils of workers deputies. In 1977 the councils were renamed Councils of People's Deputies. People's Deputies to these Councils were elected by public, equal and direct ballot. According to their mandates, Councils approved a local budget financial report, plans on social and economic development and supervised local administrative bodies, enterprises, organizations and agencies. In accordance with article 77 of the Soviet Tajikistan Constitution, the local representative authorities in provinces, cities and districts were Majlis of People's Deputies and in villages and towns - jamoats.

The state policy on local authorities changed several times. In the early 1980s the center announced that local administrations would be responsible for integrated and balanced socio-economical development in the region. However, their real legal sources and economic capacities were not widened. At the same time, the most important source that determines successful economic activity is the economic entity power extent. Without such a legal source - and recourse - it is impossible to implement economic activities.

In the late 1980s private businesses and cooperatives started to expand and develop. They were the first

nongovernmental enterprises that substantially influenced the region's further development. Since then, the interrelation between center and regions has been based on self-support. However, the nature of the interrelation between center and regions was unchanged. Local authorities designed an initial plan of economic development, then they sought income resources to implement their plans and pleaded for both the plan and its income resources in the Government. In this situation the largest part of financial resources flew up and the rest was spent restrictedly. At the same time, command-administrative governance was still in common use in the country. In the early 1990s the state started gradually to go over to market economy and to establish economic and financial mechanisms for local administration.

To analyze the history of Tajikistan's budget federalism we should use categories such as the level of local authority self-independence and the extent of political centralization in the country. We will use the system of coordinates whose axes will be the above-mentioned categories and then will have the general picture of Tajikistan budget federalism development during the last century. On figure 1 the analyses results have been outlined. We can see the same

evolutions occurred in China, Russia and Germany in their budget developments [34, 35, 38].

Before the Soviet era, people did not elect representatives of local authorities and the level of popular political activity and extent of local administration independence were very low. Such economic systems were defined as the «Asian mode of production», since plots and production sites were the property of local owners, while the irrigation system was state property. Due to this situation the state was able to impose high taxes. Point 1 on Figure 1 corresponds with such a situation of interrelation between the center and regions.

During the Soviet era, Tajikistan was notable for its high level of political and economical centralization. All means of production were state property. There was a vast indivisible economic space in which the Soviet integral economic complex functioned. The State Planning Committee of the USSR elaborated the centralized frame of economical development. The Ministry of Finance and its branches designed local budgets. All appointments to positions were under Communist Party control. Point 2 on Figure 1 corresponds with such a budget federalism situation.

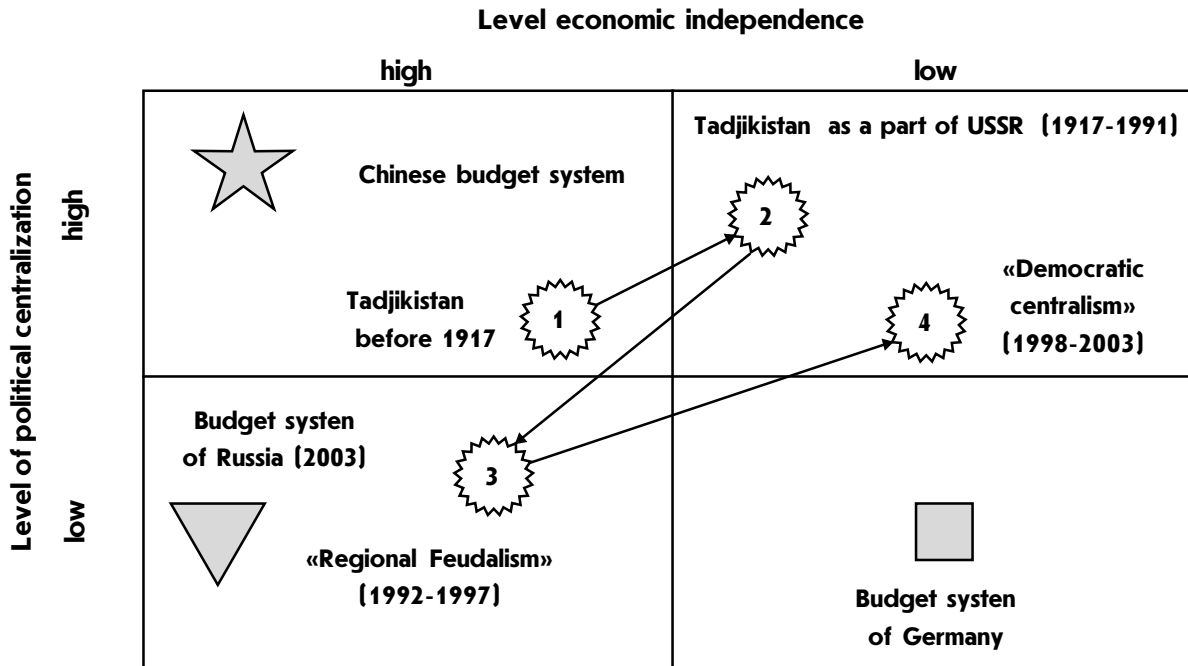





Figure 1. Budget Feudalism Development in Tadjikistan

-  Chinese option: of economic decentralization and Political centralization
-  German option: high centralization of income, ensuring high living standards throughout the country
-  Russian option

The collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent civil war in Tadjikistan caused a new situation in interrelation between the Center and local authorities. Economical links between different regions were cut, the territory of the country was divided by many «appanage princes» who were unwilling or unable to pay taxes to the state budget due to the collapse of the economy. Weak state power was unable to protect the economic integrity of the country or to efficiently collect taxes.

Experts call such an option «regional feudalism». Point 3 on Figure 1 corresponds with such a situation.

The Peace Accord signed by the Government and Opposition in 1997 allowed for rehabilitating the country's economic unity. The interrelation between the center and regions has got new features, characterized by the very weak economic independence of local authorities and the strong political centralization in the country. The characteristic features

of such interrelation between the Center and local authorities that we will deal with are the following: Local authorities have not enough power to regulate the economy in their territory. The cause of such a situation is that the majority of enterprises located in the territory of any district (rayon) or city, as a general rule are either province or central government property. Therefore the total volume of output produced by enterprises under local authority control is very low. As a result local

authorities are unable to amass enough financial surplus to develop their own territory economy. Local share to consolidated budget does not exceed 10-15% of overall budget. The low level of local authority motivation to develop the local economy occurs due to both the scantiness of local administration expenses power and the existing system of dividing income between local and center management bodies. Moreover, local management bodies have limited rights to impose tax types and rates. Thus, our conclusion is that there exists a weak economic independence of local authorities in the country.

As for the second category used in our study, namely political centralization in the country, our research uncovers a high level of political centralization in the country. In Tajikistan, there is no counterbalance and deterrence mechanism due to the conflict of interests among different branches of power. We have such a situation since legislative power, the justice system and the mass media are under the control of executive power. The «party of power» has been established and is in operation. According to the Constitution Article 69, the center is authorized to appoint local administration leaders and to dismiss them. The center often issues such decisions on appointment or dismissal without any com-

ment. There are no criteria for the evaluation of local administration leaders' activities. The local population does not demonstrate political activity, because citizens are afraid to criticize administrative bodies for their inefficiency. There is no protection for local administrative bodies independence in the frame of power outlined by legislation. The option of interrelation between the Center and regions is defined as «democratic centralism». The option is shown as point 4 on figure 1.

The next subjects of our research are budget and fiscal mechanisms of interrelation between the Center and regions.

Budget Mechanism of Interrelation between Center and Regions: Preview and Major Constraints.

The budget mechanism determines the process of economic and financial planning, budget design, financial results and monitoring (12-27). The method of financial process applied today in Tajikistan has been elaborated by the former USSR Ministry of Finance. The method takes into account the best achievements of Soviet economic school and has been elaborated and applied throughout the Soviet Union regardless of the different regions' economical development features. The method, having been changed only a little, is in use in Tajikistan of today.

The method consists of three stages - (1) approving development plan after situation analyses, (2) designing the budget, and (3) monitoring its financial results. It should be mentioned that the distinguishing feature is that a large part of the process is pretentious, but its implementation focuses on maintaining the achieved level but not developing further local economy. Unfortunately, of late, the abovementioned shortcomings have worsened.

The management system consisting of four levels (country, province, city, jamaat) operates in Tajikistan today. The three first levels elaborate independent budgets. Economic Departments of districts, cities, and provinces deal with economic and financial planning. In accordance with the regulations regarding departments and other operation manuals, during the first stage of budget planning process the economic departments are obliged to accomplish in-depth analyses of economy and social infrastructure development in a proper region for the past period. The analyses should substantiate socio-economic development directions and clarify priorities by classification. The analyses also should define the region's socio-economic development weak points and document existent and potential sources (material, financial, practical) that could be used in forecasting periods.

During the second stage regional budgets are elaborated and approved. The main task of hukumat economic departments is to identify, justify and adopt the most efficient budget for the region establishing its sources of incomes, amounts and expenditures (12-27). The developed budget has to be approved by time.

Monitoring the budget process is the third and final stage of budget implementation. The Ministry of Finance and its regional branches are responsible for monitoring financial results. This monitoring is designed to detect misplanning and misperformance, elimination of such mistakes, as well as for the establishment of a feedback system between center and regions. The monitoring also provides an opportunity to audit the accuracy of implemented management systems, optimization of deadlines, expenditures and final outcomes. In order to evaluate the quality of financial results a special system of indicators, which assess the form and effectiveness of management, is applied.

According to internal regulations the plan of economic development for next year shall be submitted by May 15 of the current year. The governmental standard plan scale is used for planning. Usually, the number

of such minimum standards to be followed, like economic growth index and expected inflation rate, are very small. The number of such indices has been increased after approval of the poverty alleviation strategy. The concrete forecast indices set by region socio-economic development would be mapped through this planning process. After adoption at the Parliament session (Majlisi Oli) the plan of socio-economic development of region will become a background for preparation of the budget draft.

In accordance with the approved plan for economic development, the regional budget draft is developed six months before the fiscal year. The Ministry of Finance submits control indices of inflation and ratio of minimum growth. Until August 15 of the current year, regional (oblast) administrations summarized the budgets of cities and districts and submitted them to the Ministry of Finance. After taking into consideration the budgets submitted to the Ministry of Finance, the estimate is revised and clarified. (By the way, clarifications are often restrictions. For example, the expenditure part of the Soghd oblast final budget draft submitted by local administrations was cut by the higher authorities in 16 out of 17 cases. The income part of the final budget draft was increased in all 17 cases). The

budget drafts of cities, districts, provinces, and countries should be submitted for consideration and approval to relevant representative bodies.

The analyses of existing budget mechanisms and the interrelation between the center and local governance have uncovered a number of issues appearing in the process of local budget development and approval. All the issues have to be taken into consideration by those who are responsible for elaborating a new version of the law on Local Administration. The problems outlined below are obstacles for the socio-economical development of regions.

1. The cause of a main problem of existing interrelation mechanism between the center and regions is a feature of local governance, namely, its two-faced nature. The problem calls forth contradiction between the formally equal legal status of all local governance system elements and the different economical capacities. This weakens local governance efficiency, and destabilizes governance vertical low levels. The problem in essence consists of the following: on the one hand, the local governance body plays like an equal economy partner at the market, according to its by-law. It can independently dispose of property, fi-

financial sources and land for execution of its public functions. On the other hand, the local governance bodies act as a subcontractor contracted by the government for executing state functions. The functions the local governance bodies are obliged to accomplish are to take care of accounting of migration of population and property, social security, daily communication with local population and others. Such activities demand substantial regulation on behalf of the state and create a base for effective performance of state power at every level. There is no official budget division: but in reality two types of local budget are applied: a budget directed at implementation of regional power by local administration; and a budget directed at in accordance with the Law on entities of local governance bodies. This creates a base for central government intervention in the budget process, and, as result, not only expenditures linked with the execution of state power, but also local budget incomes and expenditures should be submitted for approval. This phenomenon leads to a conflict of interests and the violation of local governance rules on management division. As result, the regional budget is approved by central government, whose objectives and tasks are rather different from regional ones. So, we can conclude that the

central government uses the old method of command-administrative management. In some cases local governance bodies incur additional expenditures after higher-level government decisions that do not ensure increasing incomes (privileges for some categories of citizens, social payment etc). There is fund reallocation for financing the priorities chosen by the central government bodies. Moreover, local budget completely loses its independency and becomes an expenditure estimate.

2. The majority of enterprises that have an impact on regional economic development are under state subordination. In practice, regional governments are unable to run the economic development of such enterprises or influence their policy. Enterprise interests quite often do not concur with the regional interests. The process of planning is narrowed to the interests of large enterprises and sector agencies, but not to the regional integrated development. The interests of industrial sectors substitute real goals of regional development. As rule, constant shortages of resources do not allow planning for middle term and long-term objectives and their implementation. Local administration has to postpone objective implementation in the long term. This phenomenon aggravates a very insufficient integration in plan-

ning the activities of local governance bodies.

3. There is no evaluation table for controlling the budget efficiency. Almost impossible to assess and control investments made in regional entities. The evaluation of results and the budget planning for next year based on yearly achievements complete the budget process. Based on actual achievements rather than the plan of regional development, the planning process goes ahead. This kind of budget process is inconsistent and ruins any initiative by local administrations towards self-development and does not allow the formation of efficient and the region integral development.

4. The financial resources of local administrations are too poor and after receiving money from the national budget more than 80% of new local budget must be spent on so-called earmarked articles of expenditure. This situation weakens capacities for efficient management of the socio-economic environment of the region. The economic incapacity of local administrations restricts their impact on economic and social sectors in their regions.

5. All abovementioned factors significantly reduce the capacity of local governance bodies to develop regional economical strategies and to implement them.

Fiscal Mechanism of Interrelation between Center and Regions: Preview and Major Constraints.

Article 9 of the European Charter on Local Administration defines general principles regarding central government policy on taxes and budget in application to local governance bodies. The conclusion of the Article is as below:

1. Local governance bodies have rights in the framework of national economical policy to possess their own sufficient funds, which they can freely spend to implement their functions.

2. Financial means of local governance bodies shall be in proportion with powers granted by the Constitution or law.

3. At least a part of the financial means of local governance bodies should be collected by gathering local taxes and duties whose rates local governance bodies have the right to impose within limits defined by the law.

4. The financial systems on which the funds of local governance bodies are based should be various and flexible in order to follow as far as possible the change of expenses taking place during the implementation of local administration competence.

5. To protect poorest local governance bodies in terms of finance it is necessary to implement the procedure of financial alignment or equal measures, intended for correcting the results of uneven assessment of potential sources and expenditures. Such procedures or measures should not limit the freedom to choose local governance bodies in the framework of their competence.

The tax system of Tajikistan is based on surcharges and deductions. It assumes to impose universal state taxes and their apportionment among all administrative levels. The taxes of Tajikistan consist of state and local ones. State taxes are: 1) income tax, 2) profit tax, 3) VAT, 4) excises, 5) social levies, 6) land tax, 7) tax on users of mineral resources, 8) enterprise property tax, 9) transport tax, 10) road tax, 11) entrepreneurship tax, 12) sales tax (on cotton and aluminum), 13) customs duties and levies, and 14) state duties. The local taxes are: 1) retail sales tax, 2) intangible property tax and 3) public transport tax

The state budget of the republic of Tajikistan for 2003 has been approved for income in the amount of 637"018"000 somoni (US\$206"200"000; rate 1\$=3.09 somoni) and for expenditure in the amount of 655"018"000 somoni with

deficit in the amount of 18"000"000 somoni [3]. The republic budget for 2003 has been approved for income in the amount of 427"568"000 somoni (US\$138"000"000; rate 1\$=3.09 somoni) and for expenditure in the amount of 445"568"000 somoni. The budget deficit is equal to the amount of 18"000"000 somoni. A part of the deficit equal to the amount of 7"500"000 is foreseen to be covered by funds received after privatizing state property. Taxes provide more than 90% of state budget. Other sources of budget income, such as non-tax proceedings, profits from state business and municipal credits are almost insignificant. Table 1 demonstrates that only three kinds of taxes (VAT, sales tax (on cotton and aluminum), and customs duties and levies) provide more than 71% of budget income. The phenomena show that the budget income items are very few and unstable. It should be noted that in 2003 the Soghd oblast allocates 50% of VAT, 100% of cotton sales taxes, and 100% of custom duties to the state budget for centralized reallocation.

More than 41% of budget expenditure items are spent to finance governance bodies, defense, law-enforcement structures, prosecutor and justice bodies (Table 1).

Table 1. Incomes and expenditures of the State budget in 2003

Incomes	amount	%
Total	427568	100
Including:		
1. VAT	166754	39
2. excises	35863	8.4
3. Sales taxes (aluminum, cotton)	66636	15.5
4. profit tax	8121	1.9
5. enterprise property tax	5202	1.2
6. income tax	4638	1.1
7. Custom duties and levies	72508	17.1
8. land	1888	0.4
9. road tax	11151	2.6
10. Other taxes and incomes	27807	6.5
11. International communities grants	27000	6.3

Expenditures	amount	%
Total	396575	100
Including:		
1. Governance bodies, defense, law-enforcement structures, prosecutor and justice bodies	166115	41.9
2. Education	18281	4.6
3. Health services	8131	2.1
4. Social insurance and social protection	24179	6.1
5. Environment protection and infrastructure of cities	4569	1.2
6. Cultural, sport and social events	13746	3.5
7. Energy sector	6296	1.6
8. Agriculture, forestry, fishery, and hunting	18407	4.6
9. Mineral mining and their processing, mining industry and construction sector	3724	0.9
10. Transport and communication	30246	7.6
11. Ministries and agencies conducting their business activities and offering their services	3434	0.9
12. Other activities	99447	25

There is a strong shortcoming in the existed tax mechanism: it supposes to regulate budgets at all levels. With such a scheme the easiest way to increase own incomes is the redistribution of income sources between power levels. But such redistribution, in its turn, leads to conflicts between local governance bodies and the central government when they are in the process of forming and implementing the budget. Opportunity to manipulate deduction rates is a cause of local governance body dependence

from the central government. It is easy to transform profitable regions into unprofitable ones and visa versa by changing deduction rates. A region, which would have collected more taxes and got its tax base widened, would lose transfers from high-level budget in next year. In such case no one is interested in increasing the level of tax collection. Besides, it is usual to make up retarded regions to the minimum level. Therefore those who are below the minimum level do not have a strong motivation to increase bud-

get income hoping to receive transfers. Thus, in 2003, of 17 towns and districts of relatively successful Soghd oblast, seven receive subvention (Table 2). Planned volume of subventions allocated from Soghd oblast budget form from 15.5% (Asht) up to 66.1% (Ayni) of all expenditures of local budget (average app. 50%). Such a system kills any incentive to develop and improve the base of taxation since budget adjustments level any initiation. It is impossible also to plan income sources for the long-term perspective.

Table 2. Income, expenditures, and subventions of budget for Soghd oblast towns and districts in 2003

Towns and districts names	Incomes	Subventions	Expenditures
1. Isfara	3827392		3827392
2. Kayrakum	867400		867400
3. Kanibadam	3000000		3000000
4. Khojand	7079002		7079002
5. Penjikent	4803408		4803408
6. Istravshan	2476306		2476306
7. Chkalov	957864		957864
8. Taboshar	158612	163326	321938
9. Ayni	536770	1048969	1585739
10. Asht	1730677	318030	2048707
11. Ghonchi	804162	1257321	2061483
12. Zafarabad	1345755		1345755
13. Matcha	1843387		1843387
14. Spitamen	1891580		1891580
15. Jabbor Rasulov	1863583		1863583
16. Shahrstan	238803	466744	705547
17. Mountain Matcha	270615	200109	470724

In general, the amount of 3'454'499 somoni (or US\$1'118'000; rate: \$1=3.09 somoni) is allocated to towns and districts budgets as subventions (Table 3). The mentioned amount forms 37% of expenditure budget. In 2003 the amount of 39'993'000

somoni is allocated to local budgets from the state budget as funds for special purposes (Table 4)

Regional and local privileges do not improve the system, as all the abovementioned shortcomings still exist. Income division between

administrative bodies though different models of taxation improves the first system slightly. In this case either the Government or local governance bodies impose the same kind of taxes but the principles of charge and collection might differ.

Table 3. The Soghd oblast budget for 2003

	Income and expenditures items	Items
	Total income	9293239
	Including:	
1.	Income tax	4264125
2.	Profit tax	2454894
3.	VAT	2656250
4.	Land tax Налог на землю	104484
5.	Entrepreneurship tax	501070
6.	Tax on users of mineral resources	1136862
7.	Local non-tax incomes	274328
8.	Road tax	1355724
9.	Other revenues from the oblast budget	-3454499
	Total expenditures	9293239
	Including:	
1.	Governance management sector	1199269
2.	Reserve foundation of the head of oblast	495860
3.	Oblast archive	5620
4.	Defense and law-enforcement structuresa	1616850
5.	Education	1448100
6.	Health service	2626675
7.	Social protection	291854
8.	Other aid to population	286484
9.	Cultural events	277602
10.	Sport and physical trainingт	19000
11.	Agriculture	165925
12.	Centralized revenues	600000
13.	Other expenditures	260000

Table 4. State budget expenditures for 2003, according to Economical classification

A. Current expenditures	379266
1. Expenditures for goods and services	213499
Interest payment for internal and external debts	82821
3. Subsidies and transfers	82946
including	
Subsidies to state enterprises and organization	12752
Funds allocating to local budget for special purposes	39993
Transfers to non commercial organization	450
Transfers to population	18136
B. Investments	65193
C. Crediting refugees, migrants, and states employees according to Tajikistan	1109

There are some suggestions to improve the system of taxation through the division of incomes between power bodies. The suggestion envisages introducing the following principles [28, 29, 30, 34, 35]:

1. There should be the correspondence of income sources with subjects under local governance body control. The local administrations can more efficiently implement taxation in those spheres, wherein they build up their policy.

2. The taxes that are linked with managing the social important activities in municipal entity should be assigned to local government bodies. Bound up with this is that the right for local governance appears not as

a private right but as a public right. Thus, taxes restricting rights to implement any concrete activity should also be attached to the competency of local governance. Transport tax might be a good example. Meanwhile, taking the abovementioned principle into consideration it would be much better to use for regulation the income taxes that the state raises from population. Thus, income tax is a regulating one in the majority of countries.

3. Opportunity to apply sanctions by local governance bodies. State power bodies impose types of penalties and define their rate. This approach leads to that situation that penalties and fines are not imposed, as local

governance bodies are not interested. Besides, it is well known that state power is very inert and unable adequately to react to fast changing conditions. It is important for local governance bodies to apply sanctions using them not only as income sources, but also as a mechanism applying their power. Thus, severe and wise decisions on implementing different rules and regulations made by local governance bodies will not work if there is no constraint mechanism as a sanction for nonobservance.

Difficulties in forming the Government Regional Strategy. Unequal socio-economic development of separate regions and hence, different

income levels are an objective fact. It is related to natural-climatic conditions and industrial capacity of regions. Therefore, a number of regions are behind the average socio-economic standards. The Government is responsible for the socio-economic development of all regions. Unequal development of regions and hence unequal incomes might cause high social tension and political instability. There is an obvious need to support such regions and the Government does so. However, there are few options for assistance. There is a very good metaphor: you can grant a fish daily, but also grant a fishing rod and show how to catch fish. So far we still are on the first way. But such a system is unable to find solution for problems our country has faced. Either wrong objectives or structure, due to which the achievement of declared objectives are unprofitable for all players, cause its shortcomings. The main mistake of the existing system objectives is that the system operates to equalize all levels of population life standards instead of providing equal opportunities for all citizens from all the regions of Tajikistan, wherever they reside. Thus, the strategy of assistance should be not catching up backward regions but providing equal opportunities for development in all the regions of the country. The policy should be transparent and guided by the legislative base.

A main instrument used for the development of individual entities by the Government is the design and implementation of the State Investment Program. The Program has elaborated for five years and every year the Government revises it. The financial sources of the Program are means of the state budget, long-term loans and grants. Of late, the Government has invested in the building programs for the Kulyab international airport, the Kurgan-Tyube-Kulyab railway, the highway approach to Karokarum highway, the improvement and development of individual towns on the occasion of their jubilees (for example, the 2500th anniversary of the town of Istravshan or the expected 2700th anniversary of the town of Kulyab). The conference of donor countries held in Dushanbe in May 2003 supported the State Investment Program. According to the plans, in the next three years 900'000'000 somoni will be invested in the frame of the Program.

Regional policy is a kind of policy such as foreign trade or economic: it has its goals and objectives [31, 32, 34]. It is necessary to evaluate the regional policy not only in the terms of economical aspects but also in the terms of social and political efficiency. Regional policy should not be under the control, say, of the Ministry of Economy and Trade: they are oriented to efficiency and treat it as

their major priority. Regional policy should be implemented by a special agency, e.g. the Ministry of Regional Affairs. However, the Government has not discussed such a suggestion yet. In general, the concept of budget relationship should provide a compromise between economic and budget efficiency, social justice and political stability in society.

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Economic Relations between Centre and Regions: the Case of Sughd Province

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Synopsis

This is the first ever comprehensive study devoted to the emergence and development of a market economy in the Sogd Region, Republic of Tajikistan.

The report contains 6 sections, covering the different aspects of the regional economy.

1. The Sogd Region: Introduction. A geographic profile of the Sogd Region is followed by a description of the Gross Regional Product and its structural variation, and an assessment of the impact of transitional processes on the regional economy.

2. Interregional Economic Ties. We look at commodity exchange trends between the Sogd Region and other regions of Tajikistan before and after independence, determine the respective roles of industry and agriculture in interregional relations, identify the driving factors of national disintegration, and review the flaws in the transportation sector as a hold-back for interregional relations.

3. International Economic Ties of the Sogd Region. We analyze the change patterns in the region's in-

ternational trade turnover, import and export; separately review Sogd's cross-border trade with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan; stratify the markets for domestic and imported goods; and assess the influx of foreign investment into the region.

4. Plurality of Ownership Formats in Sogd Regional Economy. We analyze privatization as the groundwork of a market economy; the growth of the private sector in industry, agriculture, retail, catering, services, and other forms of enterprise.

5. Emergence of Market Institutions. We analyze the reasons of the one-time growth and subsequent decline of cooperative businesses, the strengthening of private companies, and the growth of sole entrepreneurship as a form of small business.

6. The Center and the Region. We identify the flaws of the existing system of economic administration and the imperative need for its decentralization; look at the reasons why regional needs are ignored and the same decision-making powers are given to different governmental bodies, and why the economic role of bottom-level administrative bodies,

the Jamoats, has been unjustifiably reduced.

I. The Sogd Region, Republic of Tajikistan: Introduction

1.1 Geography

The Sogd Region is located in northern Tajikistan, in the heart of Central Asia, bordering on the Uzbek regions of Tashkent, Jizak, Syrdarya, Samarkand, Fergana, and Namangan, and the Kyrgyz regions of Osh and Batken. One of the principal Central Asian waterways, the Syrdarya, flows through the Sogd Region, and many important international roads and railways cross it. The region is close to several major cities: Tashkent and Samarkand in Uzbekistan, and Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan (see map in Annex 1).

Originally established on October 27, 1939, the Sogd Region was reconstituted as an administrative entity on December 23, 1970. Its territory is 26,100 sq. km; population: 1,956,300, of which 513,300 (26.2%) live in cities and towns, and 1,443,000 (73.8%), in rural commu-

nities. Administratively, the region is divided into 10 cities, 20 townships, 14 districts, and 93 Jamoats.

The capital of the Sogd Region, Hujand, is 2500 years old, located on the route of the ancient Great Silk Road.

Climate and Terrain:

The climate of the Sogd Region is continental with steep seasonal and diurnal fluctuations. A relatively cold winter is abruptly followed by a rainy spring that, with equal promptness, gives way to a dry summer with next to no rainfall for months. Unstable air temperatures are typical for the autumn. The local flora is exceptionally diverse and rich. The terrain is incredibly uneven and varies, from a height of 2000 m above sea level in the Turkestan Ridges, to terraced flood plains along the Syrdarya, surrounded by the Adyrs (hills): Digmai, Ispisor, Aqbel, Aqchop, and Supetau. Ice Age mountain lakes, particularly the Alpine Lake Iskander-Kul, are ideal holiday destinations.

1.2 Economy: Gross Regional Product and its Structural Changes

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the

summary index of national industrial output; the same index for a region is Gross Regional Product (GRP). Viewed in comparable prices, the region's GRP dynamics reflected the general economic decline in the years 1992 to 1996. In 1996, Sogd's GRP amounted to only 14.1% of the 1991 level, versus 32.5% for Tajikistan overall. The GRP as a physical volume of goods and services steadily declined over that period.

Notably, it took a long time for the general economic decline to be reversed and turned into a general economic growth.

The year 1997, when Tajikistan cemented its peace and national accord, is considered the year when the economy leveled out, although production grew 1.7% nationwide, and 5.8% in the region. Despite the devastating damage inflicted on the region by the incursion of armed militants in November 1998, Sogd posted a GRP growth of 5.1% that year, close to the national GDP growth of 5.3% in 1998. Sogd did even better in subsequent years, posting a GRP growth of 17.6% vs. 8.5% nationwide in 2000; 86.5% vs. 10.8% nationwide in 2001; and 11.6% vs. 10.6% nationwide in 2002.

During the Soviet era, Sogd was the leading industrialized region of Tajikistan. In 1991, when Tajikistan became independent, Sogd was home to more than 2/3 of Tajikistan's industrial enterprises, employing a proportionate percentage of industrial personnel and accounting for about the same share of the national industrial output. The region produced 37.5% of Tajikistan's GDP in 1991. The percentage plummeted to 16.3% in 1996, then slowly rose to 21.2% in 2000, and 36.3% in 2002.

Conclusions: Sogd's contribution to the GDP declined in consequence of (1) faster development and commercial realization of natural and other resources in the south of the country; and (2) small business development, growing small factory output, and more goods produced by self-employed sole proprietors.

The table below shows aggregate and per capita GRP figures for the Sogd Region in 1991 through 2002 versus the same figures for Tajikistan overall.

Table 1 Sogd GRP Dynamics Versus Tajikistan's GDP

Tajikistan				Sogd Region				
Years	Total, million somoni	Per capita		Total, million somoni	Per capita		% share	% vs. national average
		Somoni	US \$		Somoni	US \$		
1991	5872	962	390	2202	1316	555	37.5	142
1996	1908	301	127	311	174	74	16.3	137
1999	2119	334	141	415	229	97	19.6	69
2000	2295	362	152	487	256	108	21.2	71
2001	2529	399	168	910	471	199	36.0	118
2002	2799	431	182	1016	513	216	36.3	119
2002, % vs. 1991	47.7	46.5	46.5	46.1	39.0	39.0	-	-

Notes to the table:

1. The average annual exchange rate used to convert per capita GDP and GRP figures to US \$ was 2,37 somoni = US \$1;

2. The 1991 GRP of the Sogd Region includes the output of industrial and agricultural goods and commercial services rendered by construction, transportation, telecommunications, and consumer services providers.

The table above shows that per capita GRP bottomed out in 1998, but has since substantially recovered. The aggregate annual per capita value of goods and services produced in the Sogd Region in 1991 was 1316 somoni (in 2001 prices), or US \$555,

42% above the national average. By 1996, the figure dropped to a record low of US \$74; it improved to US \$108 in 2000, and \$216 in 2002, which, however, is only 39% of the 1991 level.

The GRP structure by industry changed dramatically, both in industry and agriculture. Over the period reviewed, industry's share in GRP dropped from 64.7% in 1987 and 63.6% in 1990 to 14.8% in 1996, representing a drop of 4.5 times. Later on, as former state-owned factories were privatized and retooled, and a number of joint ventures were launched, industry's portion of the GRP improved to 40.9% in 2002 (see Graph 1 attached).

The pro rata share of agriculture in

the GRP of the Sogd Region also changed, having climbed from 18% in 1998 to 48.6% in 2000.

1.3 Market Reform: the Impact of Transitional Processes on Sogd Regional Economy

The collapse of the Soviet Union, which made Tajikistan independent, rearranged the geopolitical and economic map of Central Asia. New borders cut Tajikistan off from its main trade partners: Russia and Kazakhstan, disrupting long-standing economic ties and transportation routes between the regions of neighboring newly independent states, including Sogd, and erecting artificial barriers for the flows of goods, capital and people. Ties were also sev-

ered at the grassroots level. In Soviet Uzbekistan, for instance, goods flows from the three Uzbek regions of the Fergana Valley and the rest of the country went by road and railway via the Sogd Region, while Sogd had access to the mountainous Pamir Region of Tajikistan via the Osh Highway, now in Kyrgyzstan. These roads and railways were always of tremendous importance to the residents of the Fergana Valley, which encompasses 6 regions in three countries, but are even more vital now, being less readily accessible. New transportation links between cross-border regions have been forming very slowly. The Sogd Region found itself in virtual isolation, blocked off from international markets. Widely practiced by customs authorities, corruption and utter disregard for the law facilitate cross-border contraband traffic, but hobble the legitimate business of companies and self-employed small-time import/export operators sometimes called "shuttle traders."

Another major development affecting the economy of the Sogd Region was the abrupt transition from a planned, government regulated economy to a free market with tenuous government regulation. All newly independent states opting for a free-market economy underwent similar socioeconomic turmoil for varying periods of time. In Tajikistan,

the transition was complicated and prolonged by the civil war, slow post-war recovery, proximity to the source of instability in Afghanistan, and a mass exodus of qualified engineering and managerial human resources. The hardships of transition were further aggravated by interregional economic disparities, differences in regional specialization, and unequal opportunity in adapting to new market realities. Three groups of districts in the Sogd Region proved particularly vulnerable to the adversities of transition.

The first group includes the District of Hujand: the cities of Hujand, Chkalovsk, Kairakkum, Gafurov, and others, where industry used to be highly concentrated and dedicated to specific products that either ceased to make a profit when prices became deregulated, or lost their markets as a result of severance of long-standing ties. One example is the Kairakkum Carpet Factory (currently Kolinho AOOT) that once operated facilities producing 11.5 million square meters of quality carpets for all the 15 republics of the Union as well as 13 Warsaw Pact states. After the loss of these markets, production plummeted, falling to an all time low of 0.4 million sq. m of carpets in 2002.

The Hujand Silk Factory (currently Abreshim AO) halted production af-

ter its products proved unable to compete in a free market. In 1990, the factory manufactured 62.6 million sq. m of silk fabrics for export to 18 countries. Now the factory no longer produces any silk at all.

A number of local defense industries had to close down when government contracts stopped. Torgmash, for one, which used to manufacture ovens and vats for the Army, is mostly idle these days.

Moreover, 1/3 of state-run mining industries in the Sogd Region used to be unprofitable and government-subsidized during the Soviet era.

The second group includes some peripheral districts where the economic situation worsened as transportation prices grew faster than the prices of local products, eventually destroying the commercial rationale of economic exchange within the Sogd Region and, especially, with other Tajik regions. Due to high transportation costs, remote districts like Asht, Zafarabad, Penjikent, Aina, Isfara, and Gornaya Matcha, do more import/export business with the neighboring regions of Uzbekistan than the rest of Tajikistan. The Asht District, for instance, produces a huge surplus of table salt. In 2002, some 25,000 tons were produced here, 3.5 times more than the district needs, and the surplus was exported to other regions of

Tajikistan and across the border. While Istaravshan is readily accessible for domestic suppliers, Isfara is too far away for them to make a profit. As a result, Isfara imports from the Osh and Batken Regions of Kyrgyzstan.

The third group comprises districts that once received large government subsidies to invest and subsidize production, but lost those income streams after the Union fell apart. Among these districts are the particularly remote and inaccessible Aina and Gornaya Matcha. Here, stocks have to be brought in well ahead of time as the only road linking these mountainous areas with the rest of the country via the Shahr-istan and Anzob Passes is impassable from November until May, when goods can only be delivered by air.

The beginning of market transition was marred by a profound economic crisis that struck all Tajik regions without exception in the early 90s, reshaping Sogd's economy out of recognition.

The crisis took different forms in every Tajik region. Home to about 2/3 of Tajikistan's industry, Sogd was hit the hardest. As markets were cut off and government contracts stopped, production came to a virtual standstill, resulting in sweeping unemployment, and impelling the

majority of qualified labor to leave for Russia in search of work.

Construction projects were frozen as investment stopped. Cheaper imports killed the domestic consumer industry, which produced ready-to-wear clothing, shoes, and hosiery. The once-thriving silk industry was eradicated. While prevalently agricultural districts were less affected by crisis trends, they suffered from the shortages of herbicides, mineral fertilizers, machinery, technology, and other farming supplies. This caused a slump in both land productivity and harvest yields. Cotton yield dropped from 30.2 centners per hectare in 1990 to 18.1 centners in 2002, or 40%; rice, from 34.5 c per hectare to 27.4 c, or 21%; tobacco, from 32.5 c/ha to 19.7 c/ha, or 41%; potatoes, from 130 c/ha to 100 c/ha, or 23%; corn, from 245 c/ha to 140 c/ha, or 44%; and so on.

Liberalization of international trade is a transitional process that has occasioned the most dramatic economic changes in the Sogd Region, accelerating market transformation and enabling the region to benefit from the international division of labor. Sogd districts have acquired direct, independent access to international markets to trade and raise foreign investment in order to up-

grade their economies. On the other hand, liberalization of international business has affected the districts differently. Districts exporting products that command steady international demand, e.g. cotton fiber, especially its fine-fiber varieties, silk-worm moth cocoons, tobacco, and some others, have reaped the most benefits. These include the districts of Matcha, Zafarabad, Jabbor-Rasoul, Hojent, Kanibadam, Asht, and Spitamen, which grow regular cotton; Aina and Penjikent, which grow tobacco; Isfara, Kanibadam, and Hojent, which grow fruit; the potato exporting districts: Gornaya Matcha, Gancha, Ura-Tiube, and Shahr-istan; and silkworm growing districts: Hojent, Kanibadam, Spitamen, and Jabbor-Rasoul.

Districts filled with industries that have failed to compete with the imports, or are strongly dependent on expensive imported raw materials, supplies, or components, have found themselves at a disadvantage. These include Kairakkum, Chkalovsk, and smaller towns: Chorruh-Dairon, Adrasman, Kansai, and Shurab.

The districts attracting the highest percentage of trade/reselling, and financial business have derived maximum benefits from the opportunities of market transition. Hujand, Istaravshan, and Gafurov are the most successful of those.

II. Interregional Economic Ties of the Sogd Region: Before and After Independence

2.1 Regional Industry Within a System of Interregional Links

Goods exported from Sogd to other Tajik regions are those produced

in excess of local needs, or the products of narrowly specialized local factories, dedicated to the manufacture of few product names or even one only.

The manufacture of carpets is concentrated in Kairakkum; silk fabrics and leather shoes, in Hujand; outdoor wear, in Istaravshan; rubber boots,

in Tabashar; paints and varnishes, in Isfara; coal, in Shurab; fruit and vegetable preserves, in Hujand, Gafurov, Kanibadam, Penjikent, and Isfara.

The table below lists 8 consumer product groups making up the bulk of interregional trade flows.

Table 2 Industrial Output in Sogd, and Exports to Other Tajik Regions

Years	1990			2002		
	Output	Export		Production	Export	
Description		Total	B%		Total	B%
Carpets and similar products, million sq. m	10.9	3.4	31.2	0.4	0.1	
Silk fabrics, million sq. m	62.6	21.0	33.5	0.2	-	-
Outdoor garments, million units	8.3	5.4	65.2	0.1	-	-
Rubber boots, million pairs	6.3	4.2	66.8	0.1	-	-
Leather shoes, million pairs	4.2	2.6	62.3	0.1	-	-
Coal, thousand tons	475	252	53.2	24	-	-
Paints and varnishes, thousand tons	13	6.0	45.5	0.1	-	-
Fruit and vegetable preserves, million conventional cans	215	41	19.3	126	19	15.3

Notes to the table:

1. During the Soviet era, Tajikistan was mandated to export carpets and similar products, silk fabrics, and fruit & vegetable preserves to the rest of the Union and abroad. That's why their respective shares in interregional turnover were lower: 31.2%, 33.5%, and 19.3% respectively.

2. Other industrial products manufactured in the Sogd Region were supplied to other regions as required by the state pro rata to regional population figures. In addition, Sogd exported lighting fixtures (Isfara Factory), and gas appliances (Hujand Factory).

3. In 2002, the Sogd Region ex-

ported much fewer industrial products to other Tajik regions, including: fermented tobacco leaf for tobacco factories, pure alcohol for a distillery in Dushanbe, non-alcoholic beverages and spring water, and fruit and vegetable preserves, juices, and marinades for retail distribution.

2.2 Regional Agriculture Within a System of Interregional Links

Agricultural produce has played an increasing role in the interregional

trade of the Sogd Region, which both uses vegetables, melons, potatoes, fruit, berries, grapes and other produce for internal consump-

tion, and exports them to other regions, primarily to the capital, Dushanbe.

Table 3 Agricultural Exports from Sogd to Other Tajik Regions

(thousand tons)

	Output	Internal consumption	Exports (2 - 3)	Average price per ton, thousand somoni	Total exports (4x5), million somoni
1	2	3	4	5	6
Potatoes	126.4	59.6	66.8	450	30.1
Vegetables	181.1	152.3	28.8	550	15.8
Fruit	67.2	47.0	20.2	960	19.4
Melons	15.5	10.5	5.0	350	1.8
Grapes	23.1	12.1	11.0	1100	12.1
Total:	413.3	281.5	131.8	-	79.2

Notes to the table:

1. The agricultural output totals in column 2 include all farm formats: state-run, private farms, and private vegetable patches.

2. Internal consumption (col. 3) was tallied based on the findings of a door-to-door poll, conducted by the national statistics authority among 10% of the region's population to determine per capita consumption of agricultural produce, and Sogd's permanent population figures for 2002.

3. According to our calculations, the Sogd Region exported more than 130,000 tons of potatoes, other vegetables, fruits, melons, and

grapes worth 79 million somoni or US \$25,500 million, in 2002.

Conclusions:

1. One of the main potato growing districts is Gornaya Matcha, which turned out 34,000 tons, or 27% of Sogd's potato harvest in 2002, averaging 1920 kg per capita. Potatoes provide the only income stream for the locals, who are entirely dependent on their potato sales. Being aware of this, the government has officially given local farmers full discretion to sell their potato harvest to any buyers, domestic or international, for cash or in exchange for any goods or produce they need. The

time and transportation factors are of the essence to the livelihood of the local population and the future of local potato farming in Gornaya Matcha.

2. Onions are the only vegetable that, along with fruits such as apricots, peaches, pomegranates, and grapes, are exported to eastern and northern Russia, and are partially exempt from customs duty. These exports were included in our interregional commodity exchange figures.

Imports from other Tajik regions are a crucial supply source for the Sogd market. The following goods were shipped into the Sogd Region

from Dushanbe in 1990: household refrigerators, cotton fabrics, non-woven fabrics, hosiery, leather shoes, cigarettes, furniture, candy, pasta, fats, farm animals, and much more. The region also imported cabling products, pipe fittings, cement, slate roofing, and other industrial supplies.

From the Hatlon Region, Sogd imported mineral fertilizers, caustic, carbamide, ammonia (all produced by the Vahsh Nitrogen Fertilizer Plant and Yava Chemicals), power transformers (Kurgan-Tiube Factory), subtropical fruit and derivative products.

Sogd imported porcelain tableware from Tursun-Zade, sparkling wines from Shahrinav, wool from Kuliab, and unprocessed gems from Horog.

These trade links have since been eradicated, and these goods flows no longer exist.

Conclusions:

1. Full liberalization of external

trade has equalized domestic and international prices, triggering a dramatic slump in interregional trade. This has resulted in a situation when, over the past 5 years, international trade has supplied an average of 64.2% of domestic consumer needs in industrial/technical goods (excluding electric power), leaving only 3% to interregional suppliers; the percentages for consumer goods are 32.3% and 12%, respectively, which signifies an extreme weakness of domestic trade links, and virtual disintegration of the domestic economic environment in Tajikistan.

At the same time, the majority of enterprises in all industries have drastically downsized production; domestic products have been substituted with imports; and able individuals are finding it ever harder to find employment domestically.

2. Along with production downsiz-

ing and a general commodity market slump, the accelerated decline of interregional commodity exchange has been driven by very considerable changes in the value of products exchanged. As many domestic products lost their competitive edge domestically, they have been superseded by imports in interregional exchanges. Hujand and Istaravshan are the main import destinations, from where goods are shipped on to other Tajik regions.

2.3 Transportation Problems as an Obstacle to Interregional Trade

The curtailment of interregional trade flows was mainly the fault of transportation challenges. Shipping rates grew faster than the prices of the goods shipped, significantly reducing demand for transportation services. Cargo carriage operations in the Sogd Region have dropped dramatically as a result:

	1991	1995	2001	2001 vs. 1991
Goods shipped, million tons	22.8	3.2	1.4	16 times down
Cargo flow, million tons/km	405	5,8	19	21 times down

A part of the truck pool has been privatized. These vehicles and their owners are currently doing business outside the region, mostly in Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. Some

trucks are idle due to a lack of fuel or shipping engagements.

Conclusions:

1. A drop in interregional trade was

not necessarily a bad thing. The market transition put an end to many irrational and unsound economic practices imposed on enterprises reporting to the same ministries. For in-

stance, silk fabrics made in Dushanbe were shipped to the Hujand Silk Factory for processing and dyeing, then finished fabrics were shipped back to Dushanbe for sale.

2. The most important improvement was that new integration factors appeared with transition. For example, manufacturers now have a vested interest in overcoming regional market boundaries, and exploring new markets. This interest is encouraged by the regional authorities, realizing that expanding production and growing sales boost government revenues, family incomes, and reduce unemployment.

3. Regional disintegration processes have continued unabated in Tajikistan since the Soviet Union collapsed. Deterioration in interregional trade and economic ties is the mainspring of spatial economic disintegration in Tajikistan. To halt this process, it is necessary to step up domestic manufacture of goods to supersede imports. The choice of an import-substitution strategy in economic development will lay down the groundwork for new economic ties, pro-

moting interregional commodity exchange.

III. International Economic Ties of the Sogd Region

3.1 International Trade and its Change Dynamics

In an independent Tajikistan, international trade is the key to socioeconomic progress nationwide and in the regions.

The domestic market in small countries like Tajikistan tends to depend heavily on international trade, which largely shapes economic reproduction and makes sure the needs of both local manufacturers and individuals/homesteads are adequately met by market supply. The Sogd Region is located in such a way that its links to other Tajik regions remain severed for 6 to 8 months every autumn and winter season (when mountain passes are inaccessible), which makes its industries and population so much more dependent on international trade.

The state of import/export trade

is largely conditioned by domestic macroeconomic processes. As the GRP improved appreciably and major industrial enterprises were privatized and resumed operation, import/export activity picked up in the Sogd Region. On the other hand, the region is too dependent on more advanced CIS economies, especially Russia, and has to import the bulk of its energy resources. This dependency adversely affects import/export trade, causing serious disproportions and developmental difficulties. Looking at the import/export dynamics, we can see how the operation of these factors conditioned fluctuations in the import/export turnover, which reached US \$309.6 million in 1997, then dropped to US \$284.4 million in 1998.

In 2002, the Sogd Region posted an import/export turnover of 749.4 million somoni (US \$281.7 million at the official average exchange rate of the National Bank of Tajikistan that year), 6.5% up from 2000 and 26.7% higher than 1996, but 11% below the 1997 level.

Table 4 Import/Export Trade of the Sogd Region, 1996-2002

Index	Years	1996	1998	2000	2001	2002	2002, % vs.	
							1996	2000
Total, US \$ million, including:		222.2	284.7	264.9	272.6	281.7	127	106
Export: US \$ million		52.4	63.1	64.1	62.5	65.2	124	102
% vs. total		23.6	22.2	24.2	23.0	23.2	-	-
Import: US \$ million		169.8	221.6	200.8	210.1	216.5	127	108
% vs. total		76.4	77.8	75.8	77.0	76.8	-	-

During the entire period reviewed, the regional trade balance was plagued by a deficit with imports far exceeding exports.

Conclusions:

1. International trade is the main source of new technology and production equipment for the Sogd Region, enabling domestic manufacturers to enlarge and diversify their product portfolios, improve production processes and make their products more competitive. Having launched new, advanced production lines, Zarafshon JV (in 1993-1994), Kabul-Tajik Textiles JV (1994-1996), Javoni (1996-1997), Obi-Zulol JV, and a few other companies boosted Sogd's export potential very considerably.

2. Import/export has a major role in shaping domestic supply. In the Sogd Region, upwards of 1/3 of foods and 3/4 consumer goods on the market come from extraneous supply sources.

3. Import/export trade can also reshape domestic consumer needs. In the Sogd Region, the growing international orientation of production has deepened the gap between demand, which reflects the level and structure of international commodity supply, and the poor options of meeting that demand with domestic production. Whereas some markets have become competitive, the IT market is still in a fledgling state. The rapid arrival of computers, the Internet, and email facilities in schools and

colleges has paved the way for electronic commerce. In the Sogd Region, people already search the Web for prospective partners to do business together, advertise, buy, sell, promote different products, and so on.

3.2 Scope and Structure of Exports from the Sogd Region

It is interesting to look at Sogd's international trade ties with other states in the former Soviet Union (FSU)/Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the rest of the world (ROW): Europe, Asia, the Americas, the Middle East, etc.

The table below shows Sogd's export figures for the FSU and the rest of the world:

Table 5 Sogd Exports to FSU and ROW

	1996	1998	2000	2001	2002
Export total, including:	52.4	63.5	64.1	62.5	65.2
FSU					
US \$ million	27.5	10.5	19.1	16.9	10.1
% vs. total	52.5	16.5	29.8	27.1	15.5
ROW					
US \$ million	24.9	53.0	45.0	45.6	55.1
% vs. total	47.5	83.5	70.2	72.9	84.5

The share of FSU destinations in Sogd exports has been decreasing year on year.

In 2002, CIS destinations, including the former Soviet Baltic republics Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, accounted for 15.5% of Sogd exports versus 29.8% in 2000, and 52.5% in 1996. No trade as such existed between the former Soviet republics; all commodity exchanges went according to a centrally designed inter-republic supply plan, which amounted to very substantial sums. In the years from 1987 through 1991, commodity exchange between Tajikistan and other republics of the Union reached an average of 65% to 72% of the republic's GDP annually; 80% to 85% of Tajik import/export transactions were conducted with other republics in the

Union. The Sogd Region supplied 35% to 50% of Tajik exports.

Traditionally, the Sogd Region exports three types of commodities:

1. *Raw materials*: cotton fiber, silk-worm cocoons, rare-earth metals, concentrates, and other goods after primary processing;

2. *Halfway finished products* that have gone through several successive processing cycles, but are not yet ready for use or consumption: undyed cotton and silk fabrics, fermented tobacco, unrefined geranium oil for perfumes, dried herbs, etc.

3. *Fully processed products* that are ready for use: between 50 and 60 product items.

It is interesting to see how the make-

up of the regional export portfolio changed after Tajikistan gained independence. During the Soviet era, group 1 products (raw materials) made up 70% of regional exports; group 2, 12%; and group 3, 18%. After Tajikistan became independent, these percentages changed to 81%, 8%, and 11%, respectively. The shift in favor of a higher percentage of group one exports (products after primary processing) does not bode well for the economy, signifying higher dependency on raw materials exports. This trend needs to be reversed.

While the regional authorities rightfully view import-export trade as a way to generate foreign currency, relieve excessive dependency on a few exportable product items, expand export geography, and reori-

ent foreign trade towards countries outside the FSU, these favorable changes have been progressing very slowly. The share of Sogd's

export destinations outside the FSU was 47.5% in 1996, 72.9% in 2000, and 84.7% in 2002, currently totaling 146.5 million somoni, or US \$55.2

million. Tajikistan mainly exports cotton fiber, cotton yarn, denim trousers, and a few other commodities to Europe.

Table 6 Exports of Cotton Fiber, Cotton Yarn, and other Cotton Products from Sogd to Europe and the US, US \$ thousand

Country	Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total, 5 years
Switzerland		9400	26893	18146	16494	7246	70129
UK		194	2231	4087	4844	4501	15837
Germany		924	1456	205	692	317	3614
Austria		6485	7147	4927	4904	6607	30000
Slovakia		72	-	483	762	421	1838
Italy		2254	6236	7907	5032	5731	27210
Portugal		-	-	-	565	693	1258
Belgium		-	12206	12248	6365	5674	36503
Spain		-	375	579	287	-	1241
US		-	1905	2430	887	-	5222

Between 1996 and 2002, the Sogd Region exported US \$192.8 million worth of cotton fiber, cotton yarn, fabrics, and other cotton products to nine European countries and the United States, which represents 92.2% of Sogd's exports of these commodities, totaling US \$209.1 million for the five years in question.

The top five importers of cotton fiber, yarn, and 100% cotton fabrics produced by Tajik-Italian and Tajik-

Korean joint ventures using up-to-date textile equipment based in the Sogd Region, are Switzerland, which absorbed US \$70.1 million, or 36.4% of Sogd's aggregate cotton exports to Europe and the US, in 5 years; followed by Belgium with US \$36.5 million, or 18.9%; Austria with US \$30 million, or 15.6%; Italy with US \$27.2 million, or 14.1%; and the UK with US \$15.3 million, or 8.2%.

Lesser volumes were imported by

Germany, Slovakia, Portugal, Spain, and the US.

Sogd has recently launched cotton exports to Israel, South Korea, China, Vietnam, UAE, Iran, and some other countries.

Sogd exports to the former Soviet Union include fruit and tomato juice worth between 7 and 10 million somoni (US \$2.6-3.8 million) annually; quartz powder (US \$500,000 to

1 million); industrial explosives (US \$8-9 million); buses (US \$1 million); carpets (US \$500,000), and much more. In addition, Sogd exports a range of agricultural products to the CIS and the Baltic states.

Conclusions:

The Sogd Region will have to step up the output of these products to be able to boost exports, but in the meantime, there are opportunities for Sogd to further diversify into less customary exports such as vintage

wines, Shifo balsam, geranium oil, karakul, fine-fiber cotton, natural silk fabrics, healing herbs, and some other products that require great numbers of unqualified labor to produce.

Untraditional exports are expected to be profitable due to:

1. low production costs;
2. sufficient local labor pool with adequate skills and experience;
3. the labor market is saturated, and part-time employment is widespread.

3.3 Imports and Local Distribution Challenges

Sogd's imports have been increasing constantly to keep up with the growing needs of homesteads and industries in both consumer and industrial goods of various description. In 2002, the region imported goods worth 576.5 million somoni, or US \$216.6 million, 8.3% or US \$16.5 million up from 2000, and 27.5% or US \$46.7 million up from 1996.

Table 7 Sogd's Imports from FSU and ROW

Years	1996	1998	2000	2001	2002
Total imports, US \$ million	169.8	221.6	200.8	210.1	216.5
FSU, US \$ million)	161.6	214.6	183.6	193.4	202.2
% vs. total	95.1	96.8	91.4	92.1	93.5
ROW, US \$ million	8.2	7.0	17.2	16.7	14.3
% vs. total	4.9	3.2	8.6	7.9	6.5

Unlike exports, Sogd mainly imports goods from the FSU. In the past 5 years, FSU countries have supplied an average of 90% to 95% of Sogd's imports, leaving only 5% to 10% to the rest of the world.

The Sogd Region currently imports from 12 countries in the FSU, 14 countries in Europe, and 17 countries in the ROW.

The top five exporters to Sogd are

Uzbekistan, supplying US \$169 million annually, or 84.5% of total imports coming into Sogd; Italy with US \$10.3 million, or 0.5%; Kazakhstan with US \$8.2 million (0.4%); Russia with US \$7.3 million (0.4%); and the UK with US \$3.5 million (0.2%).

Conclusions:

1. The mix and prices of goods imported from the FSU are more in line

with the low purchasing power of Sogd consumers, who typically earn up to US \$10 a month.

2. In large cities like Tashkent, Bishkek and Almaty, major wholesalers from China, North Korea, Turkey, and Russia have set up joint ventures with local companies, operating large distribution warehouses where goods are cheaper to purchase and import into the Sogd Region.

3.4 Cross-Border Trade with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan

Of particular note are the trade links the Sogd Region has with the cross-border regions of Uzbekistan: Fer-

gana, Namangan, Tashkent, Jizak, and Samarkand, as well as the Osh and Batken Regions of Kyrgyzstan. These neighboring regions are crucial to Sogd's economy.

The table below shows the volume and mix of Sogd's import and export from the neighboring regions, excluding electricity and natural gas.

Table 8 Sogd's Cross-Border Trade with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan

	Uzbekistan			Kyrgyzstan		
	1996	2000	5 years, 1996-2000	1996	2000	5 years, 1996-2000
Total trade turnover, US \$ million	23.0	14.7	62.3	1.3	0.5	5.9
Export	14.2	6.3	17.1	1.2	0.2	3.1
Import	8.8	8.4	45.2	0.1	0.3	2.8

These figures indicate a negative trade balance for the Sogd Region in its cross-border trade with Uzbekistan.

Over the five years reviewed, imports from these regions, worth a total of US \$45.2 million, exceeded exports, worth US \$17.1 million, by more than 2.6 times. Import/export

from Kyrgyzstan remained more balanced during the same time period.

Sogd's steady exports to the neighboring countries include industrial explosives and quartz powder, used in glass manufacture, which together account for 90% to 93% on average of Sogd's exports to Uzbekistan,

and 55% to 60% of the region's exports to Kyrgyzstan.

The Sogd Region has stable export contracts in place for 20 commodity items with Uzbekistan, and 12 items with Kyrgyzstan.

The table below shows a breakdown of exports from the Sogd Region.

Table 9 Cross-Border Exports from Sogd to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan

(US \$ thousand)

Commodity	Uzbekistan			Kyrgyzstan		
	1996	2000	5 years, 1996-2000	1996	2000	5 years, 1996-2000
Quartz powder	500	400	3047	250	126	397
Industrial explosives	8560	5693	38024	110	50	1213
Crude oil	1640	112	865	-	-	-
Gypsum powder	110	68	268	12	3	16
Lead	-	-	-	-	-	49
Paints and varnishes	80	12	45	-	450	14
Drilling equipment	-	-	10	-	-	30
Furniture	-	-	-	-	-	40
Buses	-	-	29	-	-	-
Other	283	75	331	1540	167	990

Notes to the table:

1. The region extracts crude oil, which is then refined at the Fergana Refinery in Uzbekistan, but Sogd retains preferential quotas on purchases of gasoline, diesel fuel, and other oil products from the refinery. Sogd produced up to 250,000-300,000

tons of crude oil annually during the Soviet era.

2. Tajikistan does not manufacture oil drilling equipment, yet has exported a quantity of such equipment in recent years, apparently taken from Soviet equipment stocks still remaining at the warehouses.

3. ZIL-Hujand JV manufactures medium-range buses for sale to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

The Sogd Region imports 33 commodity items from the cross-border regions of Uzbekistan, worth US \$8.4 million annually, and 8 items from Kyrgyzstan, worth US \$300,000.

**Table 10 Cross-Border Imports into Sogd from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan,
Excluding Electricity and Gas**

(US \$ thousand)

Commodity	Uzbekistan			Kyrgyzstan		
	1996	2000	5 years, 1996-2000	1996	2000	5 years, 1996-2000
Cement	203	377	1821	-	-	-
Gasoline	892	162	3774	54	124	237
Diesel fuel	6656	2416	21503	-	-	-
Lubricants	414	91	1538	-	-	-
Glassware	58	80	374	-	-	-
Nitrogenous fertilizers	-	592	3678	-	-	-
Tractors	-	-	975	-	-	-
Chemical fiber	-	-	1320	-	-	-
Natural wool	-	-	-	7	22	57
Yarn	-	2430	4535	-	-	-
Flour	26	41	85	-	452	562
Cotton seed oil	39	-	185	-	-	-
Other	540	2212	7688	39	304	1814

Notes to the table:

1. From cross-border regions in Uzbekistan Sogd imports mainly die-

sel fuel (28.5%), yarn and chemical fiber (34.5%), nitrogenous fertilizers (7.2%), and other goods. Sogd im-

ports mainly flour (23%) and gasoline (9.2%) from the Osh Region of Kyrgyzstan.

2. Typically, trade deals between Sogd and its cross-border partner regions in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are made on an ad hoc basis, and are prone to sizable variation in prices and supply mixes.

Cross-border trade is strongly affected by market changes, including domestic output, transportation rates, customs duties, and how easy it is to clear imported/exported goods

with customs, fiscal authorities, and banks.

Although Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have officially agreed to offset a portion of electricity supplied from Uzbekistan to the Sogd Region with power supply from Tajikistan's Nurek Hydroelectric Power Plant across the border to the Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya Regions of Uzbekistan, actual payments are made in hard cur-

rency, putting a heavy strain on Sogd's balance of payments. With this in mind, the Sogd regional government has been taking steps to cap energy imports and streamline consumption.

The figures below show how electricity and gas imports to Sogd from Uzbekistan have decreased in recent years:

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2002, %
Electricity (million kW/hr)	3484	3145	343	2911	83,6
Natural gas (million m ³)	169.5	167.2	158.2	123.6	72.9

This signifies two contrasting patterns in energy use: firstly, industries tend to abandon the high-cost strategy, which was widespread in the Soviet Union, realizing that it impedes the chances of upgrading production and improving resource management; secondly, market pricing practices are gaining wider circulation in the relations between electric companies and consumers as both come to better understand the equivalent value exchange principles governing the utilities market.

Conclusions:

1. As the Soviet energy supply system fell apart, Sogd industries and homesteads alike found themselves desperately short of electricity and

natural gas. The situation was exacerbated by the continued use of old, high energy-consuming equipment by regional industries and other power consumers, which cancelled out the potential benefits of low labor costs and cheap raw materials.

Earning salaries around or below 32 somoni a month (US \$10), locals are unable to make timely payment for the energy products they consume. Essentially, shortage of energy has emerged as the greatest single impediment to economic growth in the Sogd Region.

2. The choice has been made in favor of smaller HEPP construction. Three small HEPPs have been built in

7 years to supply electricity to small rural communities.

3. Cost-conscious use of imported energy; minimizing network losses. Network losses currently add up to as much as 1/5 of imported energy supply.

4. Accelerated construction of the LEP-500 South-North power line; the feasibility study for this project, and pre-construction groundwork, had been completed in Soviet time.

3.5 Market Structure for Domestic and Imported Goods in the Sogd Region

It is important to identify the different market segments for domestic and

imported goods, in order to find an optimal import/export proportion, rationalize imports and exports, and determine the region's potential to meet domestic market needs and earn hard currency to purchase the necessary goods abroad (see Graph 2).

Imports supply 32.3% of Sogd's consumer market, so one in every three somoni paid by consumers is paid for an imported product. For consumer goods other than food, imports make up 74.3% of the supply, leaving only 25.7% to domestic products.

In the food segment, imports make up 17% of the supply. Key imports include tea and sugar (100% imported), flour (72%), confectionery (69%), vegetable oil (33%), seafood preserves (100%), butter and spreads (27%), cereals and pasta (18%), brandy and sparkling wine (72%), beer (23%), and soft beverages (13%).

The market for imported consumer goods other than food shows similar differences between segments. Many products are not manufactured in sufficient quantities domestically, or not at all, and have to be imported from the FSU or farther afield. Sogd imports all its television and radio sets, sports equipment, "cultural" utility products, timber, motorcycles, automobiles, computers, paper and stationery.

Other goods are imported as necessary to meet local demand, if local output is insufficient.

Conclusions:

Sogd imports from the FSU and ROW:

- to meet the demand for goods not available domestically;
- to meet local demand for better quality foods, not available in sufficient quantities domestically;

- to meet the demand of upper class consumers for premium, organically grown foods.

3.6 Foreign Investment in the Sogd Region

Another important aspect of inter-regional relations is extraneous, or foreign, investment. While foreign investment has been limited so far in the Sogd Region, it is on the grow. As sociopolitical and economic climate improved in the region, a better environment was created for an influx of investment dollars. Indeed, foreign investors are increasingly sizing up investment opportunities in Tajikistan's Sogd Region.

The table below shows foreign investment dynamics in Tajikistan and Sogd over the ten years since independence.

Table 11 Foreign Investment in Tajikistan and Sogd, 1991-2001

(US \$ million)

	Direct investment		Other investment		Total	
	Amount	% vs. total	Amount	% vs. total	Amount	%
Tajikistan	248.9	61.8	154.4	38.2	403.3	100
Sogd Region	202.1	94.8	11.3	5.2	213.4	100
Sogd vs. Tajikistan, %	81.2	-	7.3	-	52.9	-

Notes to the table:

1. More than half (52.9%) of foreign investment in Tajikistan goes to the Sogd Region. Over the ten years, foreign investors have invested US \$403 million in Tajikistan, US \$213 million of it in Sogd.

2. The highest percentage of foreign capital has been invested directly: US \$249 million nationwide and US \$202 million, or 81.2% of the total, in Sogd. Direct investment is usually made in joint ventures (JVs), the number of which has reached 105 nationwide, and 34 in Sogd.

3. Other investment, including health-care, education, small and medium-sized enterprise development, aid to farmers, etc. totals US \$154 million nationwide, and only US \$11 million in Sogd, or 7.3% of total foreign investment in the region.

Table 12 Foreign Investment in Tajikistan and Sogd by Provenance: FSU or ROW

Origin	Index	Tajikistan		Sogd Region			
		Total	Incl.		Total	Incl.	
			Direct	Other		Direct	Other
FSU							
- US \$ million		1.8	1.7	0.1	1.6	1.6	-
- % vs. total		0.5	0.7	-	0.8	0.8	-
Дальнее зарубежье							
-- US \$ million		401.5	247.2	154.3	211.8	200.5	11.3
- % vs. total		99.5	99.3	100	99.2	99.2	100
Итого:							
- US \$ million		400.3	248.9	154.4	213.4	202.1	11.3
- %		100	100	100	100	100	100

Notes to the table:

1. As the majority of newly independent states in the former Soviet Union share the same economic hardships, the entire US \$1.8 million in foreign investment originating in the FSU was invested by Russia, which is keen to maintain its interests in certain defense industries remaining

from the Soviet Union.

2. The majority (99.2%) of direct investment and 100% of other investment in the Sogd Region was made by investors from countries outside the FSU.

3. Nations having invested in Sogd directly include the UK (US \$93.6

million), South Korea (US \$53.4 million), Italy (US \$39.5 million), Luxembourg

(US \$31.2 million), the Netherlands (US \$3.6 million), Switzerland

(US \$2.4 million), Vietnam (US \$2.5

million), Austria (US \$1.8 million), and the US (US \$8 million).

Notably the geography of incoming investment flows expanded from only 2 investor nations in 1991 to 27 in 2001. The leading direct investors in Sogd are the 6 European nations listed above, having committed US \$176 million, or 87.2% of total major investment in Sogd, between them over the ten years.

4. Other - indirect - investments come to Tajikistan from: the UK (US \$64.6 million), the US (US \$55.2 million), the Philippines (US \$13.7 million), Germany (US \$5.4 million), and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (US \$4.3 million), who have committed a total of US \$143.2 million to the Tajik economy, or 92.8% of all similar investments in the country over the decade. Major indirect investors in the Sogd Region are the UK, Germany, the US, and Japan.

At the city level, the cities attracting the highest percentage of foreign investment in Sogd are Penjikent with US \$101.3 million, including US \$91.7 million in direct and US \$9.6 million in other investment, adding up to more than 50% of total foreign investment in Sogd to date. The next runners-up are Hujand with US \$99.8 million, Ist-aravshan with US \$8 million, Kairak-kum with US \$2.1 million, and Zafarabad District with US \$1.7 million.

Conclusions:

1. Foreign investment has enabled the Sogd Region to draw more extensively on its natural resources and labor pool, improve production management, build up export potential, and successfully continue market reforms.

2. Foreign investment is crucial for those industries that urgently need a shot in the arm to begin manufacturing up-to-date, competitive products, especially groceries, consumer goods, services, pharmaceuticals, and other essential commodities.

3. The priority targets for foreign investors in the Sogd Region are:

- revitalization and retooling of facilities to process, store, ship, and trade in agricultural produce;
- fuel and energy sectors associated with the construction of hydro and thermal electric power plants, small HEPPs, development and extraction of oil, gas, and rare earth metals;
- modern infrastructure development, including transportation, telecommunications, warehouses, business facilities, and services.

IV. Plurality of Enterprise Formats in Sogd Regional Economy

4.1 Privatization, the Groundwork of a Market Economy

The private sector was formed through privatization in the Sogd Region.

Privatization or other ways of conveying government property to private owners, form the groundwork of any market economy. A growing private sector, formed through transformation of government property into collective, joint, cooperative, rented, or other property formats, relieves the government from financing economically unviable investment needs and losses, while participation of foreign capital in the privatization process creates new investment opportunities. Privatization of government property is the best way to encourage citizens to engage in private enterprise.

In the Sogd Region, privatization policies have been aimed to achieve two goals: firstly, to form a class of private owners, the core of private enterprise and, secondly, to de-monopolize the economy, unbundle conglomerates and major enterprises, differentiate production and thus create a favorable climate for competition. These goals have not yet been achieved in full.

Table 13 Privatization of Government Property in the Sogd Region

Index / year	Годы	1991	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
No. of enterprises privatized										
Tajikistan		39	434	696	1264	1538	648	417	542	6837
Sogd Region		3	147	238	477	395	114	75	111	2110
% vs. total		7.7	33.8	34.2	37.7	25.7	17.6	18.1	20.5	30.8

A total of 6837 enterprises have been privatized in Tajikistan since the privatization drive began in 1991, 2110 of them, or 30.8% of the lot, in the Sogd Region. Another 18.1% were privatized in Dushanbe; 39.7% in the Hatlon Region, 2.2% in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, and 16.2% elsewhere in Tajikistan.

The figures in the table above suggest that the bulk of enterprises were privatized from 1997 to 2000, when 4146 enterprises, or 60.7% were privatized in 4 years nationwide, and 1224, or 58.2%, in the Sogd Region.

Before privatization, small and medi-

um-sized enterprises were generally in local or municipal ownership, while major ones were owned by the central government. Their respective percentages in the aggregate number of enterprises privatized in 10 years, 1991 to 2001, was as follows:

	Tajikistan	Sogd Region
Central government property	1050 enterprises, or 19.4%	184, or 10.1%
Municipal property	5400, or 80.6%	1826, or 89.9%
Total:	6450, or 100%	2010, or 100%

The table below shows the structure of central and local property privati-

zation portfolios by industry as they shaped up between 1991 and 2001.

Table 14 Government Property Privatization by Industry, 1991-2001

Industry/Ownership	Central government			Local government		
	Tajikistan	Incl. Sogd Region		Tajikistan	Incl. Sogd Region	
		No.	% vs. Tajikistan		No.	% vs. Tajikistan
Manufacturing	88	24	27.3	32	13	40.6
Construction	99	22	22.2	204	42	20.6
Transportation	46	1	2.5	36	8	22.2
Retail and catering	323	58	18.0	1810	648	35.8
Utilities and community services	133	22	16.5	1858	792	42.6
Agriculture	61	8	13.1	516	27	5.2
Other	300	49	16.3	944	296	31.3
Total:	1050	184	17.5	5400	1826	33.8

Notes to the table:

1. Similarly to the rest of the country, the retail and catering sectors showed the highest privatization rate among all industries in the Sogd Region: 31.5% for centrally owned establishments, and 33.5% for local government properties; the respective percentages for consumer services and utility providers were 12% and 34.3%.

2. Few major central government-owned enterprises have been privatized in the Sogd Region because the majority of these enterprises are in mining or defense, the two industries forbidden by law to be privatized.

3. While the majority of small businesses have passed into private hands,

privatization of major properties is underway and gaining momentum; the process has been facilitated by the recent opening of a stock exchange and real estate exchange.

4.2 Growing Private Sector in Regional Industry

It is illuminating to analyze industrial output by ownership format, especially since the multiplicity of ownership formats, as a crucible of competition, largely determines how advanced a market economy is.

In 1990, when the market transition began, the majority of enterprises in the Sogd Region and the rest of Tajikistan were owned by the state.

Kolkhoz farms, or "collective" farms, were not really collective, but state-owned. Citizens were only allowed to own the limited amount of possessions they needed for their own use and consumption. It became obvious that the government's property monopoly stood in the way of market transition. The Property Act adopted in Tajikistan in 1991 opened the floodgate for all property formats on an equal footing, including private property on all production facilities excluding land. The way was now paved for the advent of a private sector.

The table below shows how the public and private sectors have evolved over the years in Tajikistan and the Sogd Region.

Table 15 Public and Private Sectors in Manufacturing Industries

% vs. total

Index / Year	1987	1990	1995	1996	2000	2001	2002
Tajikistan	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Public sector	99.0	98.1	96.7	90.4	79.7	71.8	68.4
Private sector	1.0	1.9	3.3	9.6	20.3	28.2	31.6
Sogd Region	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Public sector	99.5	98.4	94.4	89.1	76.6	64.3	59.4
Private sector	0.5	1.6	5.6	11.9	23.4	35.7	40.6

Notes to the table:

1. In 1987-1990, private enterprise was limited to private, home-based tailors, shoemakers, custom manufacturers of windows and doors, artists, craftsmen, and manufacturers of a few other products for personal use.

2. The private sector, which began growing fast in 1995, reached 31.6% nationwide by 2002, and 40.6% in the Sogd Region, having soared 9.6 times nationwide and 7.3 times in Sogd. Apparently, privatization has progressed faster in Sogd than the rest of the country.

The current practice is to consider joint stock companies and joint ventures derived from government-owned industrial properties, to be government-owned. This is not quite correct, and certainly not since the government has sold off more than 50% of the shares it once owned in manufacturing companies, in the past

two years. Private shareholders now own majority stakes in some of those companies, which should, therefore, be considered private. With this update in mind, the share of the private sector is actually 67.1% nationwide and 78.5% in the Sogd Region (see Graph 3).

The respective percentages of the public and private sectors in regional industrial output are different in Sogd from the rest of the country.

1. The high (40.2%) share of private companies in the national industrial output is mainly secured by two industry giants: Tajik Aluminum in Tur-sun-Zade, and Barqi Tochiq energy holding in Dushanbe.

2. In the Sogd Region, it is joint ventures that account for a substantial share of regional industrial output: 45.3%, but more than 50% in some years. A relatively advanced industrialized region of Tajikistan, Sogd

possesses unique natural resources that attract foreign investors, and is home to between 30% and 32% of all JVs operating in Tajikistan, producing 87%-90% of the value of products manufactured by all JVs nationwide.

4.3 Agriculture: Slow Structural Change

Growth in agriculture is conditional on its structural reengineering and a more active policy in supporting the more successful rural industries.

There is every reason to promote growth in the agricultural sector as:

- 73.8% of the population live in rural communities, producing 44% of the gross regional agricultural output; living standards in rural areas are directly dependent on how well agriculture is doing;

- Agriculture provides 2/3 of domestic food supply; the scope of agricultural output is vital to the success of such industries as textiles, cotton refining, tobacco, food, fruit & vegetable canning, and others, including joint venture businesses;
 - The country earns the bulk of its hard currency by exporting cotton fiber, silkworm cocoons, leaf tobacco, vegetables, fruit, and derivative products.
- With all this in mind, the reform currently underway in Sogd is designed to upgrade agricultural production, foster new business entities and management practices in rural production. The reform targets primarily private farmers. The table below shows how the number of private farms, and their output, have increased between 1996 and 2002.

Table 16

Index / Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2002, % vs. 1996
1. No. of private farms								
Tajikistan	2386	8023	10223	9293	12344	11939	12105	507,2
Sogd Region	395	460	812	932	1266	1622	2211	560,0
% vs. total	16.6	5.7	8.0	10.0	10.3	13.6	12.3	-
2. Output, million somoni								
Tajikistan	7.0	27.0	41.1	70.0	103.5	139.8	196.5	28 times
Sogd Region	4.6	7.8	10.8	19.1	20.6	67.1	106.2	23 times
% vs. total	65.7	28.9	26.2	27.3	19.8	48.0	54.0	-

Only 12.3% of private farms operating in Tajikistan are based in the Sogd Region, but they produce upwards of 54% of the total output of private farms nationwide, which means the farms are bigger in Sogd.

Note: There are 187 kolkhoz (collective) farms in the Sogd Region, 37 of them, or 28.2%, reorganized into joint stock companies. There are 2211 private farms, and more than 219,000

rural families have vegetable patches.

The table below shows gross agricultural output by branch and ownership format in 2002 vs. 2000.

Table 17

Branch/Index	Value, million somoni		% vs. total					
			Collective sector		Private farms		Private patches	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Total, including:	226.6	493.9	38.1	34.7	9.1	21.5	52.8	43.8
Growing	154.7	383.8	52.6	42.4	13.1	27.2	34.3	30.4
Animal farming	71.9	110.1	7.0	7.8	0.5	1.9	92.5	90.3

If you look at the structural changes in regional agriculture, it is obvious that private farms have increased their presence and output exponentially in recent years, from 9.1% of gross regional agricultural output in 2000 to 21.5% in 2002. The most private farms were established after the president of Tajikistan decreed to allot 7,500 hectares of land to farmers. There are more private farms that grow crops (27.2%) than breed animals, because growing requires lower investment. The few private farms that exist in the animal breeding sector produce only 1.9% of total output. As a high percentage of collective farm cattle has been privatized by homesteads, the overwhelming 90.3% of farm produce is supplied by homesteads.

In the Sogd Region, private farms supply 37.7% of the gross cotton

wool harvest, 19.7% of grain crops (wheat, corn, etc.), 25.1% of potatoes, 8.2% of other vegetables, and 38.1% of melons (watermelons, cantaloupes, pumpkins, etc.)

Note: Pursuant to a recent presidential decree, farmers in 4 Tajik regions will be charged a flat, uniform land tax in 2003 instead of the 7 types of tax levied so far, which is a good incentive to start new farms and increase production.

A percentage of collective farm cattle has been privatized by homesteads. Most animals are kept on their owners' estates. Consequently, the bulk (90.3%) of animal farm produce is supplied by homesteads.

In the Soviet Union, agriculture was dominated by collective farms: kolkhoz and sovkhoz, which supplied the highest percentage and, in some

cases, 100% of agricultural produce. For instance, collective farms supplied 100% of cotton wool, tobacco, silkworm cocoons, geraniums, and healing herbs. Individuals were allowed to own up to 0.5 hectares of land for their vegetable patches, orchards, and cattle, which supplied 1/3 of homesteads' own needs. Private patches and orchards were filled mainly by women, children, and seniors, who were not involved in kolkhoz work.

4.4 Trade: Changes in Retail Volume and Structure

Families acquire goods and services for personal use through retail outlets. The retail turnover, or sale of goods to end-consumers, has been growing in Sogd year on year as the table below convincingly demonstrates:

Table 18 Retail Turnover in All Outlet Formats

(million somoni)

Year	Tajikistan			Sogd Region		
	Total	Incl.		Total	Incl.	
		Private sector	%		Private sector	%
1987	2861	1536	53.7	993	514	51.8
1990	3462	1887	54.5	1215	635	52.3
1992	18.8	9.3	49.5	7.9	4.1	51.8
1996	130.7	97.0	93.5	40.4	37.8	93.6
1997	194.7	187.4	96.3	88.6	86.2	97.3
1998	435.9	426.4	97.8	157.2	153.8	97.8
1999	567.8	557.0	98.1	186.9	182.9	97.8
2000	558.2	543.9	97.8	183.2	176.9	96.6
2001	777.7	759.9	97.6	283.7	273.6	96.4
2002	1054.6	1031.4	97.8	380.7	370.7	97.4

Notes to the table:

1. In the Soviet Union during the years immediately preceding its demise (1987-1990), there were, essentially, three retail formats in the Sogd Region: state-run stores in cities and towns (47.7% in 1990); cooperative outlets in rural areas (48.3%), and kolkhoz outlets (4%). The turnovers of consumer goods (other than food) at outdoor markets («Sunday bazaars») were not monitored or accounted for since vendors were officially allowed to sell used items only. Meanwhile, ac-

ording to sample surveys conducted around that time, “unorganized” markets posted very substantial sales figures reaching 1/5 of the aggregate retail turnover of non-food commodities in the region.

2. In 1987 through 1990, the prevalent non-governmental retail format were cooperative stores, but most rural stores and warehouses were destroyed and looted during the 1992-1996 civil war. The share of cooperative outlets in the total retail turnover consequently plummeted to only 2.3% in 2002.

3. Unorganized food and non-food markets are the favorite place to shop with local families, small firms, and public institutions in the Sogd Region, accounting for 89.2% of the aggregate retail turnover in the region.

4. A percentage of goods is retailed through “commercial” stores (as opposed to state-run stores where prices were regulated by the government), a retail format that appeared in the late 80s as a precursor of market reform. In 1990, “commercial” stores sold only 1.2% of the aggre-

gate turnover; the figure was 2.7% in 1996, and currently stands at around 5%.

“Commercial” stores mainly carry imported goods, quality domestic

goods, and various “elite” or premium products for the affluent classes.

Graph 4 in the Annex shows how, by retail format, turnover figures changed in the Sogd Region.

Structurally, the retail turnover of goods has changed dramatically in Tajikistan and the Sogd Region since the country gained independence.

Table 19 Groceries vs. Other Goods as a Percentage of Turnover

Year	Index	Tajikistan			Sogd Region		
		Total	Groceries	Other goods	Total	Groceries	Other goods
1990		100	44.3	55.7	100	39.1	60.9
1996		100	55.2	44.8	100	58.2	41.8
2000		100	59.5	40.5	100	64.8	35.2
2001		100	57.5	42.5	100	63.3	36.7
2002		100	56.1	43.9	100	62.6	37.4

Notes to the table:

1. Market turnover structure is considered progressive if the percentage share of non-food commodities is growing. As disposable incomes increase, families begin spending more on quality clothing and footwear, as well as various goods for comfort and leisure (the Engels Law).

2. The retail turnover structure in Tajikistan shows a negative trend with grocery spending increasing, and non-food spending dropping, which is indicative of plummeting living standards after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1990, consumers spent 55.7% of their budgets on non-food

purchases; in 1996, non-food spending was down 10.9% to 44.8%. It is obvious that during the civil war and post-war recovery, refugee repatriation, etc. people spent most of their available funds on groceries: flour, sugar, tea, butter, and other indispensable foods.

3. The trend was even more pronounced in Sogd, where non-food retail sales dropped from 60.9% in 1990 to 41.8% in 1996, or 19.1 percentage points. The share of non-food sales as a percentage of retail turnover continued to decline until 2002, when it bottomed out at 40.5% nationwide and 35.2% in the Sogd Region.

Conclusions:

1. In the past two years, grocery spending has begun to decline in favor of non-food spending both in Sogd and nationwide, which appears to be a logical trend indicating a sizable improvement of living standards. On the other hand, Tajikistan and the region will need another few years to reach the level of 1990, the year when the market transition commenced.

2. The surge in retail grocery sales in Sogd until 1996 was probably caused by bulk purchasing to deliver food to families and friends in the war-stricken Dushanbe and further south.

The structure of grocery sales in 2002

was very different from 1990 (see Graph 5).

1. The aggregate percentage share of three product groups: flour, including pasta, cereals, and bread; vegetable oil; and potatoes increased during the period reviewed, from 26.4% to 41.2%. The share of fruits, especially grapes, climbed slightly from 2.5% to 3.7%.

2. The aggregate percentage share of meats, meat products, milk, eggs, cheese and fats dropped considerably, from 28.7% to 22.5%; sugar and sugar products (candy, jams, etc.) dropped from 10.7% to 7.1%; alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, from 15.9% to 4.4%; and vegetables, from 2.4% to 2.2%.

3. The retail turnover structure in Sogd, which had changed markedly between 1990 and 2002, indicates a lack of consumption balance typical for regions with low per capita monetary incomes.

The turnover of non-food commodities also sustained major structural

alterations associated with cultural and lifestyle changes (see Graph 6).

1. The percentage share of clothing and footwear in the non-food retail turnover dropped from 47.7% in 1990 to 39.7% in 2002; perfumes and toiletries, from 6.9% to 2.4%; and automobiles, from 6.1% to 2.6%. Sales of construction supplies naturally declined from 4.1% to 3.7% as urban and rural housing construction stopped; sales of jewelry dropped due to lack of consumer confidence in the quality and workmanship of gems and precious metals.

2. The percentage shares of such non-food commodities as petrochemicals (1.4% to 3.7%), medical supplies (0.5% to 2%), and tobacco products (1.5% to 2%) increased as the state lifted its monopoly and restrictions, and prices went up for these products.

3. The share of other goods went up from 12.2% in 1990 to 24.7% in 2002, or nearly doubled as the sup-

ply of "other goods" was expanded from 13 to 37 product groups, the largest of them being "lifestyle" supplies, bicycles, motorbikes, electric supplies, arts/crafts, matches, spare parts for long-life products, and so on.

V. Emergence of Market Institutions

5.1 The Rise and Fall of Cooperatives

Cooperatives were buds of private enterprise born in the depths of the Soviet system. Unlike state-run businesses, they were allowed to set their own prices and offer any goods or services that happened to be in demand, but most importantly, they had the discretion to use their profits as they saw fit. All these perquisites inspired a swift proliferation of cooperative businesses in all industries, and increased the retail presence of cooperative goods. The table below showcases the rise and fall of cooperative businesses.

Table 20 Cooperative Businesses in the Sogd Region

	No. of co-ops			No. of employees (thousand)			Sales		
	1987	1990	2002	1987	1990	2000	1987	1990	2002
Cooperatives: total, including	85	563	34	1.3	10.8	0.3	15.8	94.8	137.0
Manufacturing	19	115	6	0.40	3.3	0.04	5.2	33.2	97.1
Reselling and food & beverage	11	29	8	0.18	0.3	0.06	2.1	5.2	10.5
Consumer services	27	108	4	0.17	2.5	0.02	1.8	16.1	2.2
Construction	2	93	5	0.12	2.4	0.06	1.5	17.1	10.1
Agriculture	5	35	3	0.08	0.5	0.04	1.9	2.5	1.0
Other co-ops	21	183	8	0.35	1.8	0.08	3.3	20.1	16.1

The year the government gave a go-ahead to cooperatives or, more precisely, between July and December 1987, 85 cooperatives were established in the Sogd Region, 27 of them doing business in consumer services, 19 in consumer goods manufacturing, and 11 in retail and food & beverage services. Then cooperatives came to agriculture.

Unlike Soviet state-run organizations, cooperatives did their marketing and sought to meet real consumer needs. No wonder they soon cornered the marketplace and won consumer loyalty. There were 563 cooperatives in the Sogd Region in 1990, representing an increase of 6.3 times in three years. The number of manufacturing cooperatives had soared 6

times; consumer services co-ops, 4.2 times; and retail and food & beverage co-ops, 2.6 times. Cooperatives multiplied the fastest in construction (45 times) and agriculture (7 times).

At that point, cooperatives employed some 11,000 in the region, or 8.3 times more than in 1987. Sales proceeds on cooperative-manufactured goods and services had climbed 6 times to Rbl 94.8 million. The largest percentage shares in cooperative sales belonged to manufacturing (35%), construction (19%), and consumer services (17%) cooperatives in 1990.

It is a mystery what happened to the cooperative movement in the years that followed. By 2002, their

number was down to 34, or 16.5 times, and cooperative employee numbers had dropped 36 times.

Conclusions:

1. Some cooperatives in Dushanbe and farther south were destroyed during the civil war. As these sad tidings came from the south cooperatives began wrapping up business in Sogd.

2. Once the prices and international trade were liberalized, most cooperatives found themselves unable to compete with imports from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Iran, and Turkey.

3. Some cooperatives were reorganized into limited liability partnerships or limited companies, the business

formats that have proved particularly successful in the majority of market economies.

4. As the government shifted its financial focus to private farms, rural cooperatives, numbering 103 in 1998, dissolved. The 3 rural cooperatives still in business in 2002 are used as a testing ground for different agricultural improvements.

5.2 Small Enterprise: Private Firms and Sole Entrepreneurship

The laws of Tajikistan provide two options for small enterprise:

1. Establishment of a corporate entity in any available legal and organizations format.
2. Sole entrepreneurship: individuals carrying on their business as sole

entrepreneurs without incorporating a company are required to obtain an appropriate patent from the government, and pay a non-recurring tax.

The choice is made in favor of incorporating a firm or doing business as a sole entrepreneur based on the nature of the desired business activity.

Table 21 Small Enterprise in the Sogd Region

Format/Year	1991		1996		1998		2001		2001, % vs. 1996	
	Tajikistan	Sogd	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S
1. No. of corporate entities (thousand)	2.6	0.7	3.1	2.0	2.0	1.1	1.2	0.5	38	25
12. Individual entrepreneurs (thousand patents)	8	5	46	30	116	68	70	52	152	173

Small enterprise peaked in 1996, when the number of small businesses exceeded 3,000 nationwide and 2,000 in Sogd. Meanwhile, small businesses were operating in an uncertain, unstable environment. On the one hand, small business had built up the potential for a major breakthrough that could enable it to saturate the domestic market and even go international; on the other hand, there were numerous obstacles and hurdles impeding this aspiration to grow. Those impediments included political and economic instability; in-

effectual legal and regulatory framework; lack of start-up capital and unavailability of credit; limited choice of available technology; pressure from local authorities (endless inspections, extortion, etc.) and criminal groups.

Taken together, all these factors effectively arrested the development of the small enterprise format involving the incorporation of a firm. Starting in 1996, the small business bankruptcy rate far exceeded new business starts, resulting in a general slump in their numbers from 3,100 in

1996 to 1,200 in 2001, or 2.5 times. The trend was even stronger in Sogd, where the number of small businesses dropped from 2,000 to 500, or 4 times, during the same time period. Small business employee head count dropped from 31,000 in 1996 to 11,700 in 2001 nationwide, and from 18,400 to 4,700 in Sogd.

Notably, in 1996, the government offered a simplified patent application procedure for individual entrepreneurs, boosting the small enterprise format involving no incorporation. In 1996, the government issued

46,000 patents to sole entrepreneurs nationwide, and 30,000 in Sogd, 2.4 and 2.3 times more, respectively, than the year before.

Sole entrepreneurship bloomed in 1998, when 116,000 patents were issued nationwide to engage in 78

types of business, and 68,000 patents in Sogd.

In subsequent years, as small enterprise stabilized in general, the number of sole enterprise patents issued also leveled out at around 50,000-70,000 nationwide and 35,000 to

50,000 in the Sogd Region.

Small business has been increasingly dominated by privately owned firms.

The table below shows basic operating statistics for *privately owned small businesses* in the Sogd Region.

Table 22 Basic Small Business Statistics in the Sogd Region

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
1. No. of private firms	266	165	170	161	151	494	449
Including: Manufacturing	59	25	26	24	22	107	104
Construction	40	23	13	13	11	36	26
Retail, food & beverage services	100	70	72	77	77	220	190
2. No. of employees	1817	967	1021	1278	1004	4519	4565
Manufacturing	472	240	237	351	235	1221	1256
Construction	225	103	102	99	78	365	345
Retail, food & beverage services	620	335	332	446	415	1611	1598
3. Sales, thousand somoni	248.0	351.9	1784.3	2580.9	2991.0	15479.9	16548.8
Incl.: Manufacturing	130.8	198.4	72.8	379.8	165.0	3222.4	4984.7
Construction	4.5	5.7	57.1	138.0	167.1	552.3	654.7
Retail, food & beverage services	93.4	128.9	1453.9	1917.9	1222.0	9664.8	9137.0

Notes to the table:

1. The number of private businesses dropped 44%, from 266 to 151, between 1996 and 2000, while their employee numbers dropped 45%, from 1,800 to 1,000.

2. Over the period reviewed (1996-2000), the number of small private

businesses dropped in all major industries: 63% from 59 to 22 in manufacturing; 67.5% from 40 to 13 in construction; 23% from 100 to 77 in retail and food & beverage services. The head count of employees and the output of products and services by small private businesses decreased accordingly.

3. The trend has been reversed in the past two years, 2001 and 2002 after (1) the Tajik president met with entrepreneurs to resolve a number of crucial issues that had hampered enterprise for years whereupon government support was made available, bureaucratic hurdles were removed for new business registration,

the taxation system was simplified, the patent issuance process was streamlined, and so on; and (2) the president decreed the maintenance of so-called "Audit Logs" for small businesses, both corporate and individual. According to the decree, regulators may only audit a small business or a sole entrepreneur once a year, and the findings of every audit are to be recorded in the Audit Log.

These incentives immediately led to a dramatic rise in new small business starts, both corporate and individual. In the past two years alone, the number of small businesses soared 4 times, reaching 449 in 2002: 5 times to 104 in manufacturing; 2.6 times to 26 in construction; 2.4 times to 190 in retail and food & beverage services. As the number of small private businesses increased, their sales of goods and services also rocketed 5.5 times. Steady operations were launched by 75 small privately owned workshops, mini-plants and factories manufacturing various consumer goods, more than 20 mobile and full-service construction companies, 150 major stores, supermarkets, malls and restaurants, all of which have obtained the necessary registration with fiscal authorities. Small private businesses established in 2001 and 2002 are generally more fit to operate in a market environment than their predecessors.

Conclusions:

1. Small enterprise has a huge po-

tential in the Sogd Region. Its fast-paced growth is the key to a sweeping social restructuring precedent to a full transition of the entire economy and population to market-based economics. Small business promises thousands of new jobs and rapid GRP growth in the region.

2. Small businesses have a tendency to grow and become major companies. A number of small businesses established in Sogd in the 1990s, have reinvented themselves as major, widely specialized companies. These include Bars, Nur, Amon, Lal, Istaravshan Technocenter, Imcon, and Hunar, to name a few.

3. Small, patent-based individual enterprise propagates a large substratum of small owners earning a decent living and ensuring high living standards for their families. This helps ease social tensions and fill the market with domestic goods and services.

VI. The Center and the Region: Decentralization of Economic Administration is Imperative

6.1 Administrative Practices: Bodies with Identical Responsibilities and the "Tug-of-War" Method

The Soviet system whereby economic administration was industry-focused, has survived with only

marginal changes. It is typical for this administration system to consolidate enormous economic powers and discretions within central government ministries, which manage the entire economy. The role of local administrative bodies is very limited while the *Jamoats* are left entirely outside the economic system.

Every enterprise, a key economic player, finds itself reporting to two governmental bodies, the relevant ministry and the local *Hukumat*.

This administration system has always sacrificed regional interests in favor of the industry concerned, and continues to do so while weak local authorities stand and watch. Conflicts of interests could be reconciled, and ideal solutions for regional development could only be found if local authorities had more power. The standoff between ministries and *Hukumats* in economic matters has been reconciled to an extent by the Local Government Authority Act of Tajikistan. However, the law is frequently ignored, entailing two sets of consequences:

1. When spending appropriations are made in the national budget, a region may receive a larger or smaller amount of funds irrespective of its contribution to government revenue. Misinterpretation of this practice, perceived as unfair distribution of government funds, may cause an adverse social reaction.

2. As the democratic process gains momentum, the remit of local self-government is broadened, and the competence and responsibility of local authorities rises as they increasingly perceive themselves as owners of their land, and patriotic sentiment is fostered in local communities.

Research results indicate an imperative need for new, better laws on local state bodies and local self-government that would ensure decentralized economic administration.

Decentralization must secure the protection of local interests, rising social awareness in local communities, and relocation of local area-focused decision-making centers to the bottom administrative level (village Jamoats and Mahalla Councils). The bottom-level governmental body is the city or district Hukumat, which manages the local budget, communal property, and utilities, and administers local logistical, social, cultural, environmental, and other matters according to the powers vested in the Hukumats by law.

The Graph in Figure 1 (see attached) shows how powers are divided between the center and the regions in the existing scheme of economic administration.

Notes to the Graph showing the existing regional economic administration system:

1. The ministries used as an example represent major industries producing around 90% of Sogd's GRP.

2. In the existing regional administration system, the vital role is reserved for regional agencies managing specific branches of industry and agriculture, established as the local body of the relevant ministry through which the ministry implements its technological and investment policy, awards government contracts, coordinates the international business of affiliated enterprises, secures credit facilities and issues guarantees, etc.

3. Regional, municipal, and district Hukumats are vested with the power to implement central government policies and edicts. Special units called "Industry Committees" (for industry) or "Departments" (for agriculture), which are part of the Hukumats, make sure the Hukumats perform this duty, as well as carry out steps to improve and develop production, protect the environment, and secure regional interests.

4. In this parallel administration system, many identical duties are performed by both regional agencies of the ministry, and local Hukumat agencies. Sometimes government decisions are misinterpreted or distorted as they travel from top to bottom, and the decisions fail to work properly. Both the ministries and the Hukumats sometimes abuse their pow-

ers, resulting in general administrative inefficiencies.

5. There is a missing link in this economic administration chain: local self-government authorities: Mahalla Councils in cities and towns, and village Jamoats.

Government decisions sent to affiliated enterprises via the relevant ministry or Hukumat committee never reach the Jamoat or Mahalla Council on whose territory the enterprise operates.

6.2 The Role of Jamoats in the Regional Economy

Under the Constitution of independent Tajikistan, Jamoats are representative local authorities in small towns and villages. Jamoats were formed to replace village councils pursuant to the Tajik law On Self-Government Authorities in Rural Communities, passed on December 1, 1994.

As of the beginning of 2003, there were 20 small-town Jamoats and 93 rural Jamoats in the Sogd Region. The town of Kairakkum has the largest number of small-town Jamoats: 6; the Matcha and Zafarabad Districts have 3 each; Isfara has 2; the town of Chkalovsk, as well as Aina, Asht, Gancha, Jabbor-Rasoul, and Spitam Districts have one Jamoat each. The Penjikent District has 14 village

Jamoats; Hojent has 11; Istaravshan, 10; Isfara, 9; Asht, 8; Aina and Gan-cha, 7 each; Kanibadam and Spita-men, 6 each; Jabbor-Rasoul, 5; Matcha, 4; and Shahristan, Zafara-bad, and Gornaya Matcha have 2 Jamoats each.

The average population within a single Jamoat jurisdiction varies from 5,300 in the Isfara District and 8,100 in Gornaya Matcha to 20,500 in the Kanibadam District and 22,200 in the Hojent District. The seven districts have an average population figure of between 11,000 and 15,000 per Jamoat.

The Jamoats as local self-government authorities, have the following duties:

- to debate and pass Jamoat activity plans and budgets to fund the activities necessary to ensure the normal livelihood of homesteads within the Jamoat jurisdiction;
- to create favorable conditions for the start of new small businesses, cooperatives, workshops, and other business entities needed to supply the local market with desired goods and services;
- to raise funds from homesteads, local businesses and organizations irrespective of ownership (with their consent) as contributions towards so-

cial infrastructure improvements within the Jamoat territory;

- other duties typically performed by local self-government authorities.

Conclusions: To be able to perform all the duties in their charge, Jamoats need more funding than they currently have, divorced as they are from the regional economic system. Consequently, further drive towards greater decentralization of economic administration will be associated with the need to admit the Jamoats as an integral part of the system in the capacity of bottom-level government authorities operating onsite.

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VII. Attachments: tables, graphs, maps, and charts

Annex 1

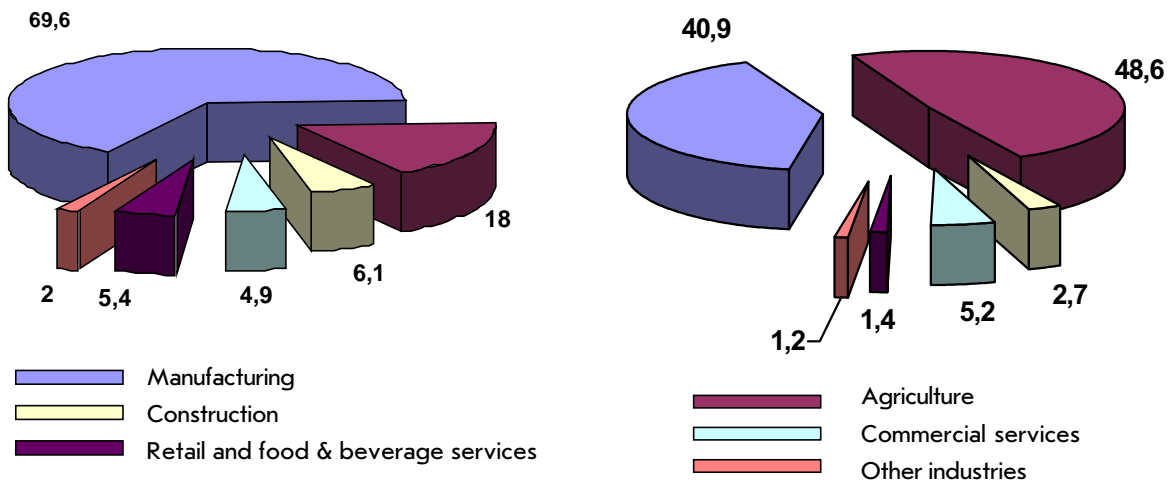
Sogd's Gross Regional Product and its Structure by Industry.

	1987 r. *)		1990 r. *)		1996 r. **)		1999r. **)		2000 r. **)		2001 r. **)		2002 r. **)	
	Rbl mm	%	Rbl mm	%	Mm somoni	%	Mm somoni	%	Mm somoni	%	Mm somoni	%	Mm somoni	%
Total, including:	2680	100	3015	100	311	100	415	100	487	100	910	100	1016	100
Manufacturing	1735	64.7	1920	63.6	46	14.8	192	46.0	208	42.7	385	42.3	416	40.9
Agriculture	502	18.7	542	18.0	202	65.0	198	47.8	227	46.6	446	48.9	494	48.6
Construction	173	6.4	183	6.1	18	5.8	4	1.0	21	4.3	24	2.6	29	2.7
Commercial services	98	3.7	148	4.9	13	4.2	7	1.9	16	3.2	34	3.8	53	5.2
Retail and food & beverage services	125	4.7	162	5.4	20	6.4	10	2.4	11	2.3	12	1.3	14	1.4
Other industries	47	1.8	60	2.0	12	3.8	4	0.9	4	0.9	9	1.1	11	1.2

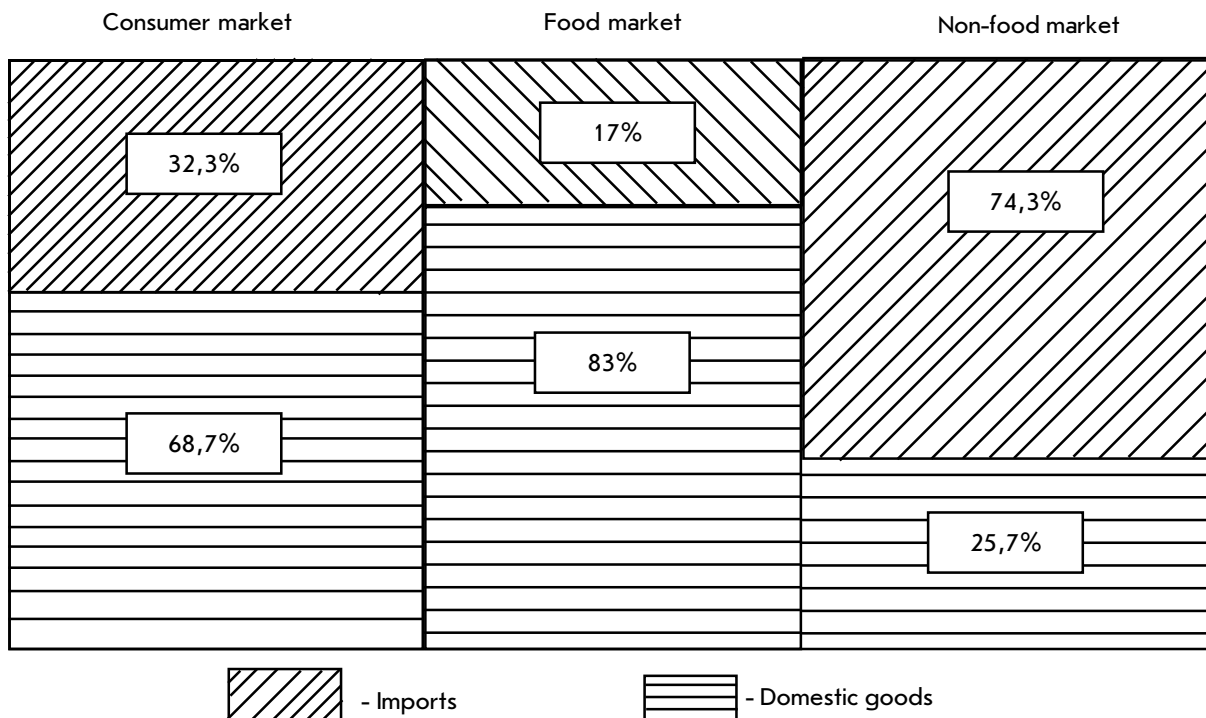
x) 1987 and 1990 GRP is shown in Soviet rubles

xx) Source: Annual Statistical Bulletin of the Republic of Tajikistan. 2002, pages 11-16; Annual Bulletin of the Sogd Region. 2001, pages 6 & 7.

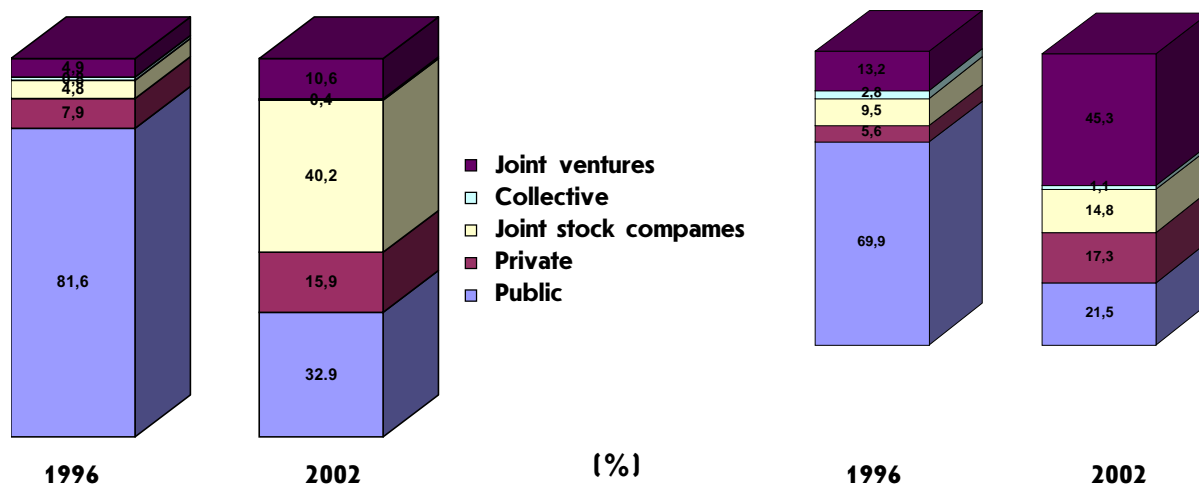
Graph 1: Sogd GRP by Industry (%)



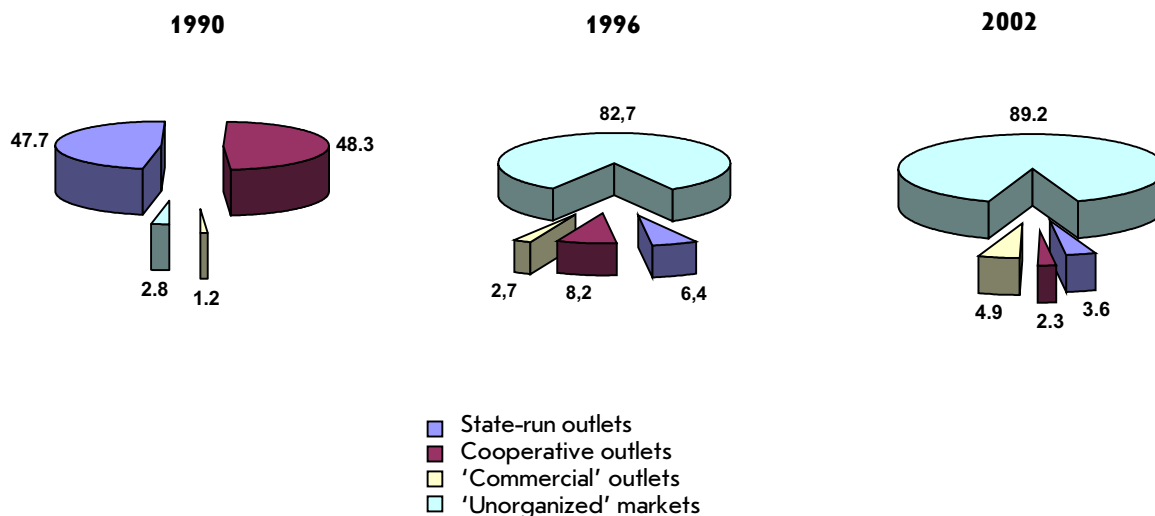
Graph 2 Consumer Market Segments for Domestic and Imported Commodities in the Sogd Region



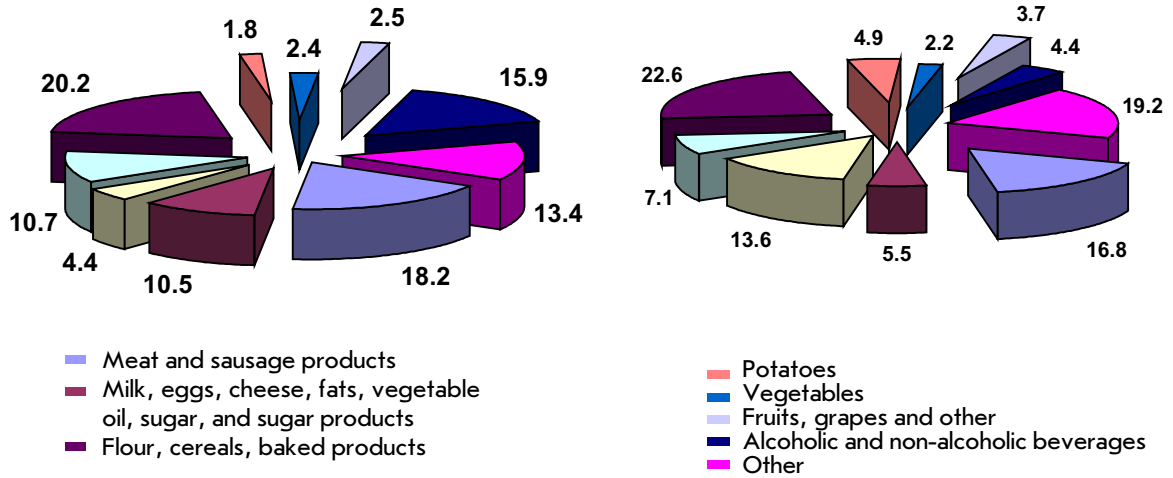
Graph 3: Industrial Output by Ownership Format



Graph 4: Percentage Shares of Ownership Formats in Aggregate Turnover (%)



Graph 5: Domestic Food Market Segments in the Sogd Region (%)



Graph 6: Non-Food Market Segments in the Sogd Region (%)

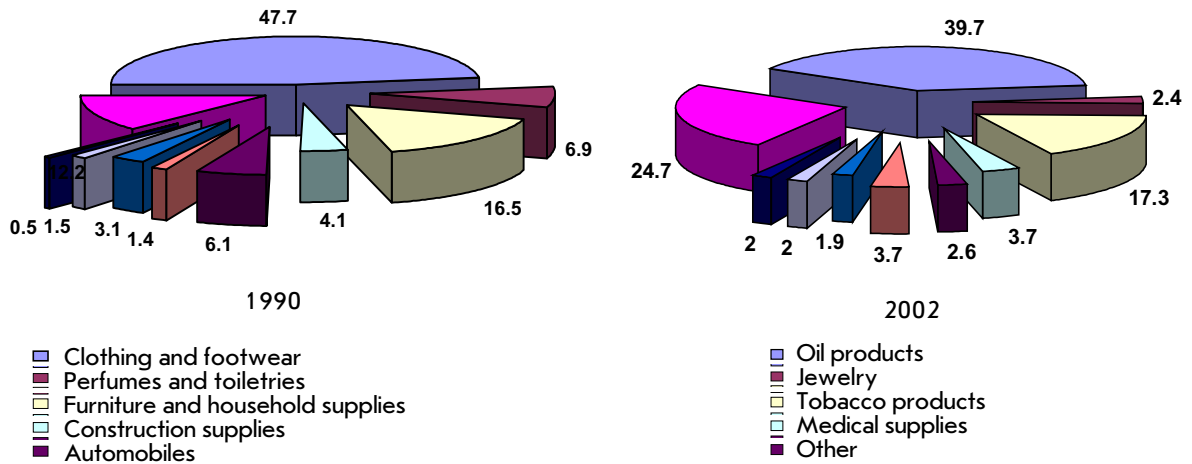
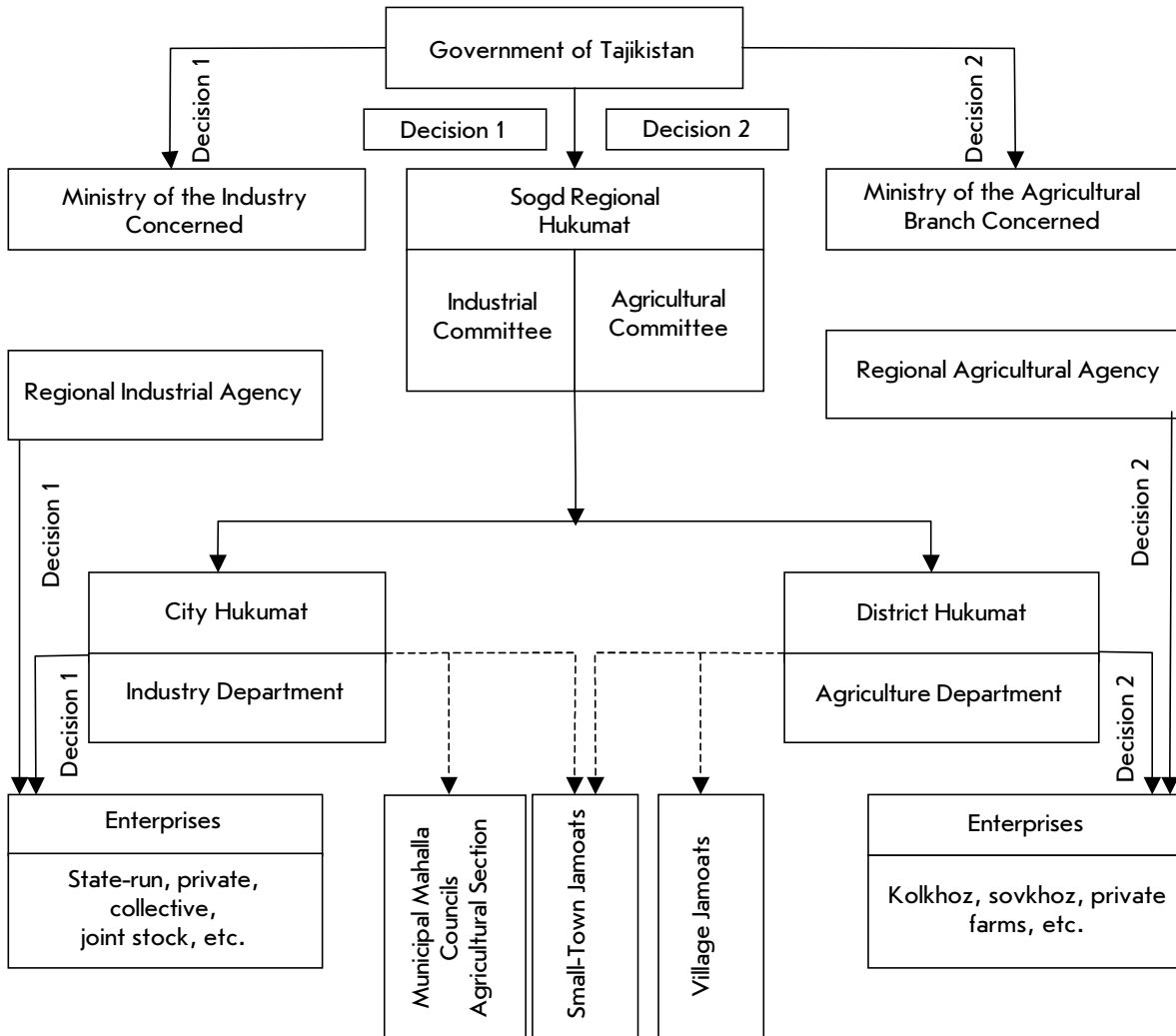


Fig. 1 Existing Administration System in Industry and Agriculture



Regionalism and its perception by major political and social powers of Tajikistan.

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Introduction

This document is a final report aiming at studying the regionalism phenomenon in the Republic of Tajikistan. The goal of the study was to shape regionalism as a social factor, its mechanisms of replication, structure and factors rationalizing its viability in Tajik society, as well as the vision of regionalism by various social and political groupings of the society. One of the main research objectives was to map all possible ways to mitigate this problem in the country.

The empirical base of the research is based on the progress of work of two focus groups and focused interviews (N = 20). The respondents of each group were preliminary selected from elite layers of Tajikistan, i.e. parliament members, political leaders, supreme government (ministers, vice-ministers, heads of governmental agencies and President Office), as well as well-known journalists and academicians (historians, ethnologists and conflictologists). A number of interviews were conducted in Qabodiyon, Khatlon, Shughnon, Isfara and Sughd regions. Some material from previous public opinion interviews by «Shark» center in 1996-

2002 was applied as well. In August 2002, under the research framework another two focus group discussions were held in Dushanbe. Focus groups consisted of ten people, each of which were represented by the following categories:

- Young men - students of the Tajik National University, 20-24 years old.
- Young women - students of the Russian-Tajik Slavonic University, 18-22 years old.

Shaping of the problem of regionalism. How political and social powers define regionalism?

Our research has confirmed that the majority of interviewees believe that regionalism is a significant problem in political, social, economic and cultural life of Tajikistan. The research shows that opinions on this issue are rather dissimilar. However, generally, regionalism can be divided into two major factors:

- a) Abrasive relationship between ethno-regional groups
- b) Abrasive interrelation between center and regions.

Regionalism as an interrelation of ethno-regional groups.

The dominant number of respondents considers regionalism from the perspective of ethno-regional groups.

Quote. Region - it is principally an ethno-regional group that inhabits one region and its representatives living in other regions than the territory of their origin. Unquote. (Political party leader).

The ethno-regional groups may be described as communities or groupings originating from the same place and united by a common dialect or sometimes language (i.e. inhabitants of Shughnon, Rushan and etc.) and common identity.

Answer of young men - Quote. Regionalism - is a compartment of people of one nation by regions and separate groupings. For example, we are Tajiks and live in one country, but are still divided into regions, like, Pomiri, Kulo-bi, etc. Unquote.

All respondents admitted that Tajiks practice a sustainable self-identity by regions of origin and geographic frames of regions and its people are different. Inside every large region,

like: northern Tajikistan, Kulob, Qurghon-Teppa, Karategin valley, Hissor valley, the latter often called Dushanbe and suburbs, and finally Badakhshon there are many small valleys, oases and districts. Thereafter, in accordance with their place of birth and regional origin respondents distinguish small communities in their own region and much larger regions in the areas far from their own territory. For instance, people from the north of Tajikistan differentiate the regions of Tajikistan as follows: Khujand, Uro-Teppa, Zarafshon, Isfara, Maschoh (all of them are north Tajikistan), then goes Kulob, Dushanbe and Badakhshon. Kulobi respondents listed separately Khovaling, Baljuvon, Danghara, Kulob, but the northern part was named as one, integrated region. The research has shown that people have no relevant perception of regions that could be accepted by all ethno-regional groups. Many adult respondents were proposing to consider districts as regions.

In principal, original Tajiks represent a conglomerate of large and small ethno-regional groups of manifold

origin. Herein, the ethnic identity of the older population is almost unrecognizable, therefore Uzbeks, Tajiks and other nations living in Kulob call themselves Kulobi and correspondingly Tajiks, Uzbeks, Arabs and Turkmens that live in Qabodiyon call themselves Qabodiyoni.

Answer of young men - Quote. Being overseas we are proud of our united nation. Upon return to Tajikistan we immediately split into regions, upon return to districts we split into villages. Even in villages we try to split into streets. Unquote.

Usually, the self-identification of original people of Tajikistan has a complex nature. For example, in Porshnyov village of Shughnon (GBAO) people distinguish themselves by their mother village i.e., Tishori, Pashori, Midenshori, etc. At Khorog level they call themselves Porshinyovi, meantime, further out they prefer to call themselves Shughnoni. Finally in Dushanbe they are Pomiri. Out of Tajikistan they are comfortable to be Tajiks in accordance with passport. This is true for all Tajik and

Uzbek ethnic groups populating Tajikistan, including so called intelligentsia.

Answer of young men - Quote. Regionalism is a compartition by regions, districts and even villages. One would support his motherland and its people. Unquote.

As per National Poll of Public Opinion IFES - 96, in Tajikistan 64% of respondents account themselves Tajik, 22% - Uzbek, 5% - Russian, 2.5% - Khujandi and 2.5% Pomiri, 1% each - Kulobi and Qurghon-Tepagi and the rest 3% - others.

Obviously, despite the fact that all nations of Tajikistan have a good sense of ethnic origin more than 6% of respondents, Tajiks or Uzbeks defined their nation by regional origin. In January 1999, the same question was asked during the Public opinion review. 64% of Dushanbe dwellers accounted themselves Tajik, 2.6% were called Kulobi and Leninoboti (Sughdi), 1.3% - Karategini and 1.7% Pomiri. Thus, about 8% of adults (18 and older) of Dushanbe are ignoring their ethnic identity and determine themselves by regional nationality.

Table 1. National composition of Dushanbe population.

Nationality	Percentage
1 - Tajik	63.8%
2 - Uzbek)	8.8%
3 - Russian	13.1%
4 - Kulobi	2.6%
5 - Leninoboti	2.4%
6 - Khujandi	0.2%
7 - Karategini	1.3%
8 - Pomiri	1.7%
9 - Other	6.0%
9 - Other	100%

Source: Report on Public Opinion Review of Dushanbe electorate, «Shark» center, Dushanbe, 1999.

Evaluation of the degree of importance of self-identification is a way to complexity. Thus, in 1999 ethnicity (nationality) was important only for 34.3% of respondents, but 12.6% of respondents considered regional nationality as a most important factor. In this regard, one can state that regional identity is a significant element of identity for the Tajik population.

A somewhat different self-identification style is accustomed by youth. For them ethnicity is a key factor. Young people deny regional identity, calling it an engine of civil war.

Quote. Adults do not understand the difference between regionalism and nationalism. The war was inevitable since our people could not distinguish and differentiate regionalism from nationalism. Our country had to suffer social and economic losses. Unquote. (Young men).

Quote. For us, young women and future mothers it is highly important to get married. Today it is a hard job. If a girl will select a husband from another district, her parents will be against it. This problem is very frequent. Unquote. (Young women).

Regionalism is more about interrelation of ethnic groups, than its natural existence.

Quote. Regionalism is a competition and confrontation of local societies. Unquote. (Parliament member).

Quote. «The case when regional interests are above national is called regionalism. No matter where one works he/she thinks not about public and state interests or at least organization, but about their ethno-regional groups. Regionalism is a competition and confrontation of re-

gions. Inside each region the situation is unchanged – districts, villages, mahallas. We do not have a formed sense of single nation and national consolidation. We do not think on national, but on local level». Unquote. (Scientist/Conflictologist).

Unclear perception of regions goes well with manifold senses and definitions of regionalism. Research shows that perception of regionalism mostly depends on social status and position of the respondent.

Governmental and managerial personnel and political leaders are positive that regionalism is a system for organization and realization of power in Tajikistan. As per research, the major elements of this system are as follows:

1. Socio-political structure of Tajikistan's society forms a conglomerate of ethno-regional groups, structured in hierarchy, which elements represent dynamic equilibrium. It creates a constant competition and opposition between groups, resulting in support of balance among regional forces. Misbalance of which induces large shocks in the political life of Tajikistan sometimes wrapped up by military acts.

Quote. *Competition and opposition of regions is well spread in many aspects of our life. For instance, in Sughd province Khu-*

jand and Uro-Teppa experience continuous opposition. Whereas, in Khatlon province the dominant power is held by Baljuvoni people. Currently, Kulob is affronted; in the past Danghara was a sort of rimland under Kulob's umbrella. Meantime, other small «counties» like Muminobod, Shuroobod, etc. are hurt as well. Unquote. (Political party member).

The features of traditional society are very strong in the political life of Tajikistan. As an individual in Tajikistan one can be independent in private or spiritual life, but must be completely and always a part of his/her community, which in turn is a part of some ethno-regional group. Here, a person is not just a citizen with his/her rights and responsibilities; he/she is an integral member of some community. Consequently, every political opinion belongs to one's ethno-regional group. They become some social organisms of the political scene of Tajikistan lead by regional elite representatives, sometimes named as clans by our respondents.

Quote.

- *Regionalism is a collective name for organization of local clans and its elite in charge of some territory, its life and problems, protection of its interests through promotion and placement of its rep-*

resentatives in governmental structures.

- *Clan usually means a successful take-over of power and influence by people of one territory. Unquote. (One of PIRT leaders).*

2. Clans do base on territorial unity, but do not form it. Clan's nationality does not dictate the dwelling-place. That is why very often, local communities are heterogeneous. It is also normal to identify the regional nationality of immigrants of third generation (likewise, Buhori, Farghoni, Samarqandi, Khujandi and other ethno-groups of Dushanbe). One clan or coalition of relative clans under the umbrella of a hierarchal and well-organized clan scheme leads the political life of country, region, and district. This principle is practiced both at central and local level, such as jamoats.

Quote. *Governance of clan is subject to promotion and placement of its representatives. Unquote. (Leader of political party).*

3. Recruitment of elite (political, economic, military and intellectual) is done by regional indication at every level. This is true both for regional and central governmental elite.

Quote. *Every chief is trying to fill in vacancies with the thankful and trustful: a) relatives, and b) coun-*

trymen, that will guarantee his/her future support. Unquote. (Senior Ministry staff).

4. Clans or elites, both central and regional, are defended by their own ethno-regional groups through the elite and non-elite ethno-regional recruitment system, practiced in all organizations, institutions, enterprises, private companies, etc.

As a result we build a very common Eastern scenario, where every ethno-regional group or sub-ethnos occupy their own niche in the country's economy and policy. This system was gradually demolished during the Soviet era. But the Soviet mechanism was collapsed as a result of the break in of a new governmental elite, when due to civil war the positions of all clans and ethno-regional groups were changed. Currently, taking into account a new recruitment scheme based on an ethno-regional basis, this system is coming back, but often with new ethno-regional groups in power. For instance, before the fiscal system was in the hands of Sughdi and Gharni people, today, it is in hands of Kulo-bi people.

5. The governing group of clans holds the central power in its hands, meaning governmental ministries and agencies. An integral part of their governance is the control and regulation of customs and tax systems

and correspondingly the control of the business sector. However, the key instruments of governance are the legal system and military forces. That is why the law enforcement structures and its commanding elite are being fully recruited by the governing ethno-regional group. Obviously, the commanders of military units are closely related to the central government, moreover, they represent the same ethno-regional group.

Quote. I do not know how to describe upcoming presidential elections. Change of high governmental officials is not possible unless the commanders cease to serve the private interests of some individuals. Unquote. (President office staff).

The role of law enforcement bodies becomes highly important because: the central Government elite is trying to monopolize the power and the regions are trying to promote and place more of their own representatives. Herein, as far as the region, it is harder to bring it under control. Here are some tools to cope with this problem: a) location of militia in more or less independent regions, for example, in Sughd province every district center has its own militia unit; b) President is practicing an assignment and full control of his envoys in regions. Fast reshuffle of regional chiefs (heads of local admin-

istrative units) is practiced to empower this system.

Quote. Regions do not influence the governance of the country. Today, the governing south is pulling itself together to prevent the north coming into power, constantly reshuffling the Heads of Sughd province. It is obviously unfair and creates natural opposition in the province. Taking into account that Sughd province is the biggest one and contributes the biggest share of GDP and state income. Unquote. (Party member).

Establishment of a «governmental party» - The People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT) is lead by the ruling ethno-regional group. This party is uniting the chiefs of ministries and governmental agencies all over the country; meantime the lowest units of this party are established in every governmental agency, organization and even companies and their chiefs automatically lead this lowest party unit.

Quote. Why is the PDPT allowed to create units in organizations and enterprises automatically leading them, while we, the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, do not have this right? Unquote. (Party member).

Use of ideology - promotion of «Vahdat» governmental ideology

based on ethno-nationalism. In accordance with the laws adopted after independence one ideology cannot dominate in Tajikistan and pluralism should be a core principle of political, cultural, and socio-economic life of the country. Despite this, the leader of the state in his speeches and books («Tajiks in the Mirror of History», by E. Rahmonov), as well as other governmental officials in their statements and mottos in press clearly say otherwise about the new ideology called «Vahdat» (translated as the Accord). The key rationale of this ideology is the declaration of accord and solidarity of ethnic Tajiks despite the differences in political views, social and cultural statuses. The key idea of this accord is the ethnic communion and the role of ethnic ancestor of all Tajiks is given to the ruling ethnic group. The research works of contemporary Tajik historians and publicists form a new political mythology where “genuine” Tajiks are represented by the ruling Kulobi ethno-group, which find their roots back in ancient Bactria and became a lineal descendant of Arians.

Nationalism in post-Soviet Tajikistan enjoyed a fast development not only in respect of the need to retrieve some new foundations for national statehood, but also as a new method of collective survival in the transition period. Nationalism is replicating the principles of geographic con-

trol by “blood relatives”. Underdevelopment of individual conscious is fueling nationalism, which becomes a collective-defensive tool against the realities of open market. This requires higher mobility and individual freedom.

Use of supplementary control instruments. For example, cotton mafia is headed by a coalition of governing ethno-regional groups - Kulobi and Hissori control the production and processing of cotton, owning most cotton refineries: according to regulatory and law papers agricultural producers are attached to cotton refineries and have no right to independently sell cotton.

Quote. The Center's logo is «Plant the cotton, die, but plant it». Futures contracts are strangling us. For three years we have not been paid for produced cotton. We cannot fight with them taking into account that they are relatives of high officials. We can't sell our cotton due to prohibition. But, we need to survive. We can do nothing and live our days in slavery. Unquote. (Chief of farm of Khatlon province).

Stage II

Journalists and scientists have a contrasting perception of regionalism. It seems that they feel regionalism and realize its consequence, but cannot

reveal the acting mechanism of regionalism. They pay more attention to cultural diversity of regions of Tajikistan. This makes a big difference between humanitarian intelligentsia from politicians and administrators, which fully denies the existence of substantial difference in culture, traditions and customs and dialects among all ethno-regional groups.

Moreover, governors and politicians believe that different levels of development of every region condition the existent dissimilarity.

Quote. There are no big dissimilarities in the types of cultures of Tajiks. There is a difference at the cultural level. Consideration of distinct regions of Khatlon will show that poor, undeveloped Muminoboti people will look like representatives of some other culture in comparison with rich and modern Khujandi. In reality, they are quite similar; it is more about low income and opportunities. That is it. Unquote. (Parliament member).

People of culture, science and journalism decidedly deny this point of view. They think that ethno-regional groups have their own culture and psycho-type.

Quote: Provincial people are different. Diverse culture, dialect, music, customs and traditions and finally, mentality. Gharmi were

always diligent and initiative. Kulobi - open and simple, but quite lazy and inactive. Sughdi hate to host guests. Southern Tajiks are very hospitable. North loves «shashmaqom» (classic Tajik music). Southern people have no sense of it and sing their own «falak» (type of traditional vocal music). Kulobi women love red dresses and in the North wear green and purple colors. Still, we are so different. Unquote. (Journalist).

Perception of regionalism through the eyes of young generation.

The young generation also binds regionalism with ethno-regional groups, which they think, occupy one territory, have their own culture, traditions and customs and dialect. Girls were more active in this issue:

Quote.

- Regionalism is a presence of well-determined territories occupied by people united by their own customs and traditions.

- Regionalism is distinguished by the dialect.

- Regionalism distinguishes people by their territory, customs and traditions.

Unquote.

Young men (more than women)

were putting more emphasis on the importance of regional solidarity and the sense of regional patriotism in their life.

Quote. Regionalism is a protection of place of birth and honor of each human being. Unquote. (Young men).

Both men and women consider regionalism a normal thing. Regional solidarity is a natural sense, to be owned by every person.

Quote. I want to describe some human attitude. For example, the chairman of some enterprise and you are from same region. If you ask for help he must support you. This is an advantage. To my opinion, regionalism is a natural feeling for every human being. Unquote. (Young men).

The work of the focus-group discussions attests that for the young generation regionalism is a norm of life to be faced countrywide.

Quote. At a University test a Professor will inquire about your regional nationality before making final mark, an overestimation will be natural if you are both from one region. Unquote. (Young man).

Our study testified that civil war caused internal consolidation of ethno-regional groups in areas inhabited by various regional nationalities; new,

closed ethno-regional communities with their housing blocks, mosques, schools or school classes.

Quote: Before placing their children to school class many parents inquire about the teacher's «regionality». Mothers do not want to place their children at classes where the teacher is from some other region. Anyhow, if parents are from Sughd province they are trying to find their countrymen, parents from Kulob will try to select a teacher from Kulob. Teachers show different attitudes towards their people. Thereby, adults initially oppose children. Before the war, parents were looking for professional teachers, but now for relatives or countrymen. Unquote. (Young women).

More often regionalism is seen when looking for a job. In parallel, with massive unemployment, people have to face supplementary obstacles set by institutions based on their internal environment. As per our respondents, one of the most important factors in getting a job is to have relatives or good friends (from same area).

The traditional structure of Tajik society has a distinctive style of employment. Until today, Tajik employers preferred to base on old, but very strong relative, matrilineal ties (here

called «avlod» - clan) when making decisions of employment. A national poll held by the International Foundation for Election Systems in 1996 reported that 68.3% of Tajiks consider themselves a part of some clan (avlod). A consolidated number of avlods had predecessors buried at the home territory of the mother from one ethno-regional group.

Strong family and regional ties and mutual support make it easier to find a job for low class members of local groups.

Quote. Any governmental official prefers to build a team of trustworthy people from his own region. For instance, if I was appointed as the Chairman of Khukumat I would also build my team on an ethno-regional basis. This helps at work. I can punish and encourage him/her and give any task and be sure that it will be executed anyway. Unquote. (Young women).

Another traditional element of regionalism is patronage. This style of relations in modern Tajik city substantially affects professional mobility and predetermines the future of the young generation of Tajikistan.

Quote. I cannot explain to you or express myself, but everyone has a «ceiling». Unquote. (Young men).

Young men more than women be-

lieve that regionalism means competition and rivalry.

Quote. Tajiks are separated in regions consisting of 100-200 areas. Every region is competing with other regions. Each region is dissatisfied and annoyed with another region. «What are they thinking of themselves? They pretend that power is in their hands?» they say. One region is blaming and abusing another region, more and more detaching each other. Unquote. (Young men).

The young generation points to the relation between regionalism and the political formation of Tajik society. It is obviously felt that there is a continuous conflict of regional elites resulting in the balance of elite groups. Youngsters understand that each group is holding its own niche in a clan pyramid and that there is a ruling regional group, which regulates other regions and the country in general.

Quote. Regionalism - creation of special conditions and environment, so as to let people of one region take advantage of other regions. Unquote. (Young women).

Regional solidarity moderates the creation of closed juvenile regional groupings taking into account that young people are more inclined to

fall into groups. Respondents say that in the student environment there is continuous opposition between men of different regions. Often this opposition leads to physical fights between youth groupings of different regional nationalities.

The engine of regionalism.

Almost all respondents expressed an opinion that regionalism is being supported by the Government at every level. After the collapse of the Soviet Union regionalism became an instrument of governance.

Quote: Regionalism is surging at governmental level. At low levels there is no acute sense of regionalism. The higher the level of Government the stronger the regional ties and regional solidarity. Unquote. (Scientist/Conflictologist).

Talking about regionalism, one should mention that regional ancestry is not the only way of getting into the ruling elite. There is a quota system of regional representation of every region in the government. This system was partially used in the Soviet era. Name quoting was implemented through a system of personnel appointments in state and party agencies by ethnic-regional representation. Therewith, from 1930 until 1992, the Government of Tajikistan was ruled by representatives of the

former Leninobod region (now Sughd), and Russians. The secondary posts were occupied by Samarqandi, Buhori and by the inhabitants of other regions of Tajikistan. For instance, from 1930 until the collapse of the USSR the Heads of Communist Parties were: B. Ghafurov, T. Uljaboev, J. Rasulov, R. Nabiev and K. Makhkamov. All of them are from the Leninobod region. At city and district levels the first secretaries of the Communist Party's Committees were Leninobodi Tajiks, second secretaries - Russians and third secretaries again Leninobodi Tajiks and seldom others.

The Heads of Supreme Council (Parliament) starting from 1920 were usually the representatives of Gharm region (Karategin valley) or GBAO (for i.e. Nusratullo Mahsum from Gharm, Shirinsho Shotemur from GBAO, Sh. Shogadoev from Garm, N. Dodhudoev from GBAO, Rahmatov from Gharm, M. Holov from Gharm and G. Pallaev from GBAO.

The Heads of Government were always Leninobodi Tajiks, except for two cases: in 1950-60s N. Dodhudoev from GBAO was the Head of the Council of Ministers and at the end of the 1980s, Mirzoev from Kulob became the Head of the Council of Ministers.

Ministry of Interior, KGB and Prosecutor Office senior people were always from Russia.

The Komsomol Committee - first people were always from Leninobod and seldom from Kulob area. At the city and district administrations there was a rule: the chairman of a city or district must be from another district or region. For instance, for many years the Chairman of Isfara city was from Konibodom, and vice versa, however, there was an exception: the Head of Khujand was always from Khujand city itself. In Qurghon-Tepa, the major posts were taken by Gharmi and Leninobodi, in Kulob by Russians and Leninobodi.

However, J. Rasulov, former Chairman of Communist Party, changed this system. He abolished the monopoly of Leninobodi's rule in the government and started to recruit people from all ethno-regional groups. More and more often first secretaries of the Communist Party were represented by Gharmi, Hissori and less often by Kulobi. In accordance with regulations, the first secretary's term of assignment was not more than two years, with some rare extensions. However, long-term prolongations were not possible. This newly introduced system was hindering the formation of regional clans and groupings.

The traditions of regional representation remain at present, for example the Prime Minister is usually a representative of the economic elite of the most developed, industrial

region of Sughd (Prime-ministers of Tajikistan after independence: A. Abdullojonov, J. Karimov, A. Samadov, Ya. Azimov, O. Oqilov), Speaker of the Lower chamber of Majlisi Oli (Parliament) S. Hairulloev is from Gharm (as it was in Soviet times the Head of Parliament is a representative of Gharm or GBAO). However, these are all vestiges of the old system of regional representation in modern Tajikistan.

However, as a rule the Prime Minister should be the representative of the economic elite of the most developed region - Sughd province. After seeing the CVs of governmental officials it is clear that still there are free places and promotions due to advantageous marriages and merits earned by «outsiders» towards ruling ethno-regional elite. This fact is attested by the occasional promotion of officials from other ethno-regional groups. As said before, these people have family ties or some merits with ruling region.

Many respondents stated that regionalism is almost unknown among farmers and workers of Tajikistan.

Quote: Simple people do not need regionalism. It is for people that fight for high positions, in parallel using their regional or family ties. Unquote. (President office member).

There was an opinion that the elite

often uses marginals and the underclass through their mobilization under regional solidarity logos.

Quote. The source of regionalism is the elite, supported and trusted by the social underclass of their region. In a positive outcome they will forget about regionalism. Unquote. (President office member).

Regionalism was always an efficient instrument of political mobilization in Tajikistan. Political leaders firstly rely on their ethno-regional supporters. That is why any oppositional movement widely uses regionalism in its political aspirations and struggle.

Officials noted that in Tajikistan regionalism is often a key instrument in cabinet and political games.

Quote. Regionalism is a comfortable instrument of governance and manipulation of people. Before we also had limits of regional representation, but today they carry slightly different functions, of which the biggest one is manipulation of people and career intrigues. It is always simple to write off misperformance to the account of regionalism. Failures can be always explained by regional sabotage. Unquote. (Tax committee member).

Young people have also stated that regionalism is fostered by elite. However, a number of focus group mem-

bers have mentioned that regionalism is an integral of traditional political culture of the Tajik nation, intensively used by local elites after independence.

Quote. Seems like regionalism is fostered by all people, but efficiently used by the Government for their own sake. The society itself created this system and the Government is successfully using it. The Government is regulating and directing the river flow. Here, people obey and follow seniors. Obviously, to live in the society and oppose the Government is hard, like swimming against the river flow. Unquote. (Young women).

Moreover, youngsters accept that there are also «third players» in interregional games. Some of them suspected that external players are using regionalism to manage events in Tajikistan.

Quote. We are not sure who is supporting and using regionalism in our country. Maybe it is some external power. Unquote. (Young women).

The academic circles, particularly humanitarian intellectuals, stay somewhat detached. They suspect that the moving forces of regionalism are some political movements that promote separatist logos, as well as Islam propagandists, which are trying

to use regionalism for their benefit. Some officials also acknowledged that Moslem clergy, particularly, Sufi Ishans foster regionalism. Since Ishans are an integral part of the regional elite all over Tajikistan and keep high positions they orderly support regional consciousness. Despite the declaration of Islamic integrity most political movements of the Islamic party of Tajikistan have apparent regional characters.

Quote: Regionalism is stimulating both the ideological and the Islamic factor. Do not forget, that there is a large number of regional Islamic parties in Afghanistan. Unquote. (Scientist/Historian).

Scientists assume that people with average education and low-income level, mostly villagers and farmers, are supporting regionalism. These are people with acute regional consciousness.

State leaders, high governmental officials and a scientist/conflictologist, which participated in our poll, have emphasized that militarization is an influential strengthener of regionalism. This factor was not conspicuous for the society though.

The Tajik militia represented by two opposing camps was formed on the base of partisan brigades and recruitment of combatants was based on family and regional background. As a result, right before the Peace

Agreement of 1997, the Tajik army (both national and oppositional) was grounded on family and regional brigades. Currently, its commanders are trying their best to keep and foster regional brigades. They understand that regional support is the guarantee of their power. Financial disability of Tajikistan makes regional support an advantageous and an essential factor to backup the combativity of military brigades taking into account that regional elites and businessmen render financial and in-kind assistance to «their» brigades.

Quote. Militants are supporting regionalism, precisely, those combatants that came into power during the war among regions. Its commanders are keeping the power only due to regional solidarity and assistance. Unquote. (Scientist/Conflictologist).

Regionalism incidence.

Politics and governance.

All respondents named power and state governance as the most active zone of regionalism.

Quote. Regionalism is all about governance. Unquote. (President office member).

Many people think that regionalism is an integrated part of the political process in general.

Quote. - Tajik regionalism is most-

ly conspicuous in the political process - in elections, personnel policy making, as well as allotment of zones of influence. (Political party leader).

- Regionalism is an ancient stone. It is usually related to politics and politicians. Unquote. (Young men).

Economy.

In the transition period, new collisions started to occur between politics and economy. The ability to convert administrative potential into financial capital in the period of state property re-allotment has created new motivations for empowerment of regionalism in Tajik society.

Quote. Regionalism is more seen in governance, as well as in prestigious and rich organizations. In time of allotment of resources and control administrators are trying to build a team of «brothers». This manner was also used in the Soviet system, but that Government was trying to prevent regionalism and clanism. Today the situation has changed. Sughd province is out of power. Relatives and «brothers» of the President hold key positions - Kulobi. It is a root of regional nationality of our government and state in general. Regionalism is less observed in small, low-income enterprises, where one can hardly get any-

thing. Unquote. (Party member).

Increase of the number of governmental officials of one ruling region is surging an opportunity to re-distribute the state treasury during privatization, in parallel strengthening the capacity and power of their ethno-regional group.

Quote. In our country being close to government means being by resources. Our business society is intermixed with politics; precisely it cannot survive without political «roofs».

That is why an increase in the number of «their people» in the governmental structures means an increase of access to the «privatization pie» by ruling ethno-regional group. Obviously, the elite takes the best products and simple people are left with remainders. Unquote. (President Office member).

The governmental leaders well realize all risks related to such regional privatization of state property, particularly the risk of occupation of large industrial objects by ruling ethno-regional groups and the obvious surge of contradiction between regional elites.

Quote. What are the parallels of privatization and democratization in our context? It is appropriation of former state property by private persons with an obvious

despoliation. It is quite unfair and dangerous. We are not like Russia and we do not have their unlimited resources. We are constrained in resources, economic potential and each industrial object is highly important for its own region. Unquote. (President Office member).

Concentration of power in the hands of a small number of top elite, which converts administrative resources into financial capital is provoking leaders of both central and regional elites to re-distribute power to their own hands. Meantime, regional elites are in charge of military brigades that could be used as an influential political instrument. So if, some regional elites, in control of substantial financial, political and military capital are not happy with the apportionment of power they can gather a momentum and to try to turn the power to their own respect.

Elections. Political parties.

Some regional elites are using political parties as an instrument of struggle. All political parties of Tajikistan have regional background, sometimes open, like NDPT or a hidden one, like «Ittihod» and «Adolathoh». Others prefer to use ordinary nomenclature methods for getting the balance of political powers, such as political bargain and back-door negotiations, and of course powerful pressure.

Quote. - Regionalism is strong in Parties. The Socialist Party of Tajikistan is supported by people of Aini, Penjikent, Uro-Teppa (the «Adolathoh» party - recently prohibited), Shahrستان and Konibodom. The Party of Islamic Revival of Tajikistan is supported by Rasht valley, Kofarnihon and Qurghon-Teppa. More than others the Communist Party of Tajikistan is supported by GBAO, by some districts of Republican Subordination and Sughd province. (Party member).

- All people are trying to vote for the person from their own region. Of course, after selection, the People's Deputy will help and support those people that gave their vote to him. Unquote. (Young men).

Criminal sphere.

Our research attested that regionalism is widely used in the criminal world, including drug trafficking. The criminal groupings are formed on an ethno-regional basis. The solidarity of criminal groups is interrelated with regional loyalty; together they lay foundations for the establishment of criminal mafia clans. This is especially true in the drug business. There were a lot of cases when a drug dealer would involve his family, relatives and countrymen into drug trafficking. Thereby, such a drug trafficking group

becomes a family business, which starts to use its "long hands" with family solidarity and loyalty. As an example, the clan of Cholov brothers, who used to be both the commanders of the People's Front brigades and later commanders of Governmental militaries (Qurbon Cholov, former commander of Border Brigade of the Ministry of Security of Tajikistan) and strong narco-barons of Kulob. Regionalism is also well spread in the criminal economy. Since the major share of business is in the shadow economy, the criminal circles are controlling business through the establishment of «roofs» based on regional character. Illicit Tajik business is also active out of Tajikistan.

Quote. We have visited Moscow. Tajiks live there as well. On Cherkizovskiy market Tajiks also practice regionalism. Vanji, Kofarnihoni and others - all of them work under their regional «roof». «Roof» here means protection of client. For example, if I am from «X» region, my countrymen will help me. I will have to pay money or to somehow reimburse it. Unquote. (Young men).

Regionalism grows roots for illicit financial organizations, which make remittances from and to Tajikistan. Usually, these organizations are working without any guarantees and the main factor of credibility is clanship.

Youth and regionalism.

The survey confirmed that adults experience regionalism in politics and economy, namely, in power and distribution of capital. Apparently, regionalism touches less in ordinary life, communication and culture. However, regionalism is penetrating into the lives of all young people. In ten years of reforms the power of regionalism substantially increased. Young people grow into adults, they socialize and observe regionalism everywhere. They go to school and make friends by ethno-regional factors. The biggest affect of regionalism for youngsters is concentrated during education, employment and marriage.

Education.

Professional niches occupied by one or another regional groups, dictating them to select their occupation and form their life plans.

Quote. Before entering the University, we inquire about the Chancellor's regional nationality or during semester exams we inquire about Professor's «regionality». We are happy if the Professor is from our region. It means I can easily enter the University and pass all the exams. It is all in my pocket from now on.

Always there is the chance to pass an exam for nothing. Because,

they will assess your origin, but not your knowledge. Unquote. (Young women).

Employment.

Quote. - If you are from Kulob, doors are open everywhere. With wrong geography it is easy to find a hundred reasons not to employ you (Young women).

- I was an accountant in one organization for a year and there were no problems at all. In a year we got our new director from Kulob and after about a month he started personnel clearance. I was called to his office. «Where are you from?», he asked. «From Hissor», I replied. «Why couldn't you find a job in Hissor? Go and work there», he finished. I was forced to resign. (Young women).

- That is a reality of Tajikistan. For instance, I have got an education and I want to work. «What is your region?» the first question of employer. He will not evaluate your skills first. Unquote. (Young men).

Entering marriage.

Many ethno-regional groups of Tajikistan preserve ethnic monogamy. Besides, the status of ethno-regional groups in regional hierarchy depends on well-arranged marriages (the position of marriage partner and mar-

riage contract). In the Soviet period, these marriage traditions were gradually disappearing. At present, traditional types of arranged marriages are being revived.

Quote. - Nowadays parents look for regional marriages. For example, I want to take girl from another region. When I send my matchmaker to her house, her parents will refuse me taking into the account my originality. Badakhshoni man will not marry Sughdi woman, meantime Sughdi man cannot marry Khatloni woman. (Young men).

- For instance, one guy fell in love with a girl, though he knew that she was from another region. He went to ask for her hand in marriage, but never got it. Her father never gave permission. This story happened in our region. (Young men)

- We have a neighbor from Sughd province. She fell in love with a Kulobi guy. There were strong feelings on his side as well, but the girl's parents do not want this wedding, because he is from Khatlon. They think that he will leave her anyway and marry a woman from his region. They have different traditions and that she will never be happy with him. Unquote. (Young men).

Welfare and Social Services.

The collapse of systems of social service, education, healthcare and social protection has made people reliant mainly on family, relatives and their ethno-regional groups.

Quote. - *Let's say there is a funeral or a wedding, only countryman will come to support it. Social backing from your own region is already a good thing. (Young men).*

- *When I fall sick, the doctor will be from my region. He will charge less and treat better. Unquote. (Young men).*

Reasons of Regionalism

All respondents thought that geographical obstacles were the reasons for the formation of separate original regions in RT, (mountains, rivers, prairies, etc.). These marked off valleys and oases from each other and facilitated the establishment of relatively isolated regions.

Historic rationale: in the past many regions of Tajikistan were part of different states. For example, Sughd province was a part of Bukhoro Emirate and Kukond Khanate. Small independent counties inhabited south and central parts of Tajikistan, as well as GBAO. Only in the second half of the XVIII century did some of them join Bukhoro Emirate. Badakhshon

counties were concurred by Afghan Emir - Abdurakhmon Khan and were passed to Russia as a result of the big Russian-British game in the Middle East. Despite all concurs and constant feudal wars which were changing the political map, during the centuries the administrative map stayed unchanged up to the invasion by Russian Empire. It testifies that regions remained pretty much the same for centuries, from time to time rejoining newly established countries as administrative-territorial units or independent countries. This fact is a big concern for a government that is trying to form one united state.

Quote. *The reason there is regionalism is due to the nonexistence of a unified state in the past. There is no one sense of common territory, no universal center. We do not have a base for consolidation and no national consciousness. Unquote. (President office member).*

A number of scientists and officials from the South of Tajikistan believe that regionalism is a part of Soviet power, which was governing the country through representatives of the North of Tajikistan. The elite from the North was used to control the whole country.

Quote. *During Soviet rule governance was done by one region - Sughd province. Other regions*

were dissatisfied. This situation was decelerating national consolidation. Unquote. (Scientist/ Conflictologist).

This group also believes that regionalism is about unequal development of regions, especially in the economy.

All respondents accept that regionalism has grown during the post-Soviet period.

Quote. *Because of Civil war, which was a conflict of regions for power. Unquote. (Parliament member).*

Apparently during inter-Tajik conflict shaded by ethno-regional measurements, we could observe a formation of the most acute aggravation of conflict and post conflict period. The internal consolidation of ethno-regional groups has taken place. In 1997 one could see the obvious formation of sub-ethnic territories with their own system of governance, culture and economy. These territories were inclined to self-isolation and inter-conflict. Disintegration was a real risk. This tendency was broken down by the Peace Agreement of June 27, 1997. Along with building peace, empowerment of nationhood and law and order the relations between territories and regions became better. However, there were new factors that facilitated regionalism in the political, economic, social

and cultural lives of Tajikistan. These are the major ones:

State incapacity.

All administrators agree that Tajik governance is very weak, quite unregulated and uncontrolled; the state machine is ineffective and regionalism has replaced it.

Quote. There is no school of state service, no professional officialdom, no traditions of bureaucracy that are guarding state interests, regardless of place of birth or family ties. Most Government officials do not know their terms of references, which is why they are often busy with private things. Unquote. (Member of President office).

Some officials believe that state weaknesses are due to poor strategic planning, lack of common goals, unclear future and plans. The governance is done inefficiently. Private needs and interests are put above public and in the context of Tajikistan these are also the interests of ethno-regional groups.

Quote. There is no common goal and strategic planning. Unquote. (Member of President's office).

In transition period the state started to forget about social services. Today it renders only a small number of social services. Healthcare and education are not free anymore and

social protection is almost nonexistent. Social incapacity of the government has weakened its performance. Clan interests are at the cutting edge. Ethno regional groups that support and protect their own members, making them more and more influential, hold the social services.

Quote. The reason for regionalism is an unavailability of state thinking and security in future, people are not sure about their destiny. Unquote. (Member of the Ministry of Finance).

Almost all respondents believe that the reason for regionalism are low culture and education of people and governmental officials.

Quote: The reasons for regionalism are:

- *Low culture of administration and culture in general, as well as poor education of new administrators. (Party member)*
- *Poor education and unawareness, especially political and legal. Low access to information and incapacity of intelligence. Unquote. (Member of President office).*

A number of interviews carried out in Isfara district among young entrepreneurs confirmed that the reason for regionalism is a current strict au-

thoritarian regime, which is based on appointments rather than on free elections. This notion confirms that regional elite, which hold political power in central government, has the benefit of an absolute dominance in all spheres of life of the country, including the economy, defense and security. The ruling elite is not dependent on people due to their system of appointments to all official posts. As for elective posts, like the president, members of the lower chamber of the parliament and heads of local governments, the ruling elite has all the administrative tools for "arrangement" of elections, falsification, manipulations and pressure during the election period. That is why the ruling elite is making every effort to hold the power in hand and not to let other ethno-regional groups have their share. The ruling regional elite gets the super price and tries its best to keep it. Personal loyalty to one ethno-regional group and ethno-regional solidarity are the main instruments of management.

Assessment of Regionalism by various social and age groups.

The survey showed that evaluation of regionalism depends on a person's ethno-origin and age. The representatives of the ruling ethno-regional group believe that regionalism is sometimes useful. They say that regionalism is facilitating formation of

political clans that can guarantee effective governance.

Quote. Regionalism is empowering the social political system and development. Formation of new political clans is good and facilitates sustainability of the society. Actually, regionalism is not an important political factor in Tajikistan. Unquote. (Member of President office).

Many respondents noted the positive influence of local patriotism as a part of regionalism.

Quote. The positive side of regionalism - people are conscious of their region, support it at their official positions. It is their small motherland. Unquote. (Member of President office).

Almost all young people that participated in our research emphasized that regional solidarity gives them support and provides opportunities and resources in every life situation. They say that young people without their ethno-regional ties or people from weak and indistinct regions are almost deprived from their social resources. If they are intelligent and talented they are employed by an NGO that is less affected by regionalism than state organizations or business. Representatives of regional elites see regionalism as an opportunity to protect the interest of their regions.

Quote. At present regionalism is a protection of interests of taken territory, in the context of Tajikistan. Unquote. (Member of Khukumat of Qabodiyon district).

Regionalism is very much condemned by career officials and representatives of old bureaucracy. They believe that regionalism is collapsing state structures and governance. Intellectual elite - scientists, journalists, also condemn regionalism.

Apparently, dual perception of regionalism, by politicians and administrators from a ruling ethno-regional group is closely related to their practice. They see and realize the negative influence of regionalism on the life of state and society, so they implement it at work. Our young generation has got a dual position; from one side - regionalism for them is an inevitable factor, from other side - they more than others feel the negative consequence of regionalism. Regionalism, community organizations and traditional social institutions helped people to survive during and after the civil war, but on the other hand they conduced people to stay within their regional and community groups. Factional conscious and solidarity are opposing individualism, which is the effect of market reforms. The development of market economy and democratization are fueling the change of paradigm and development of individualism. These

changes are prevailing among the young generation, where one could observe a big conflict between the traditional-collective and individualistic systems. The collision and deterioration of the system of social values is the major source of intergenerational conflicts. A number of young pro-European people are against group solidarity and loyalty, but they all use the benefits of the regional support. Therewith, the majority of focus groups concluded that regionalism is helping them in some way, but more endamages; moreover it has damage on the society in general.

Stage II. Regionalism as an interrelation between center and regions.

In ten years of independence it became obvious that political powers of the country are built on regional basis, rather than political preferences. In absentia of civil society, regional political elites become the independent political powers that thirst for full control of power. Regional elites could be the strong foothold structures of an authoritarian regime, if this elite that controls the central governmental units could gain a nationwide status. It never happened until now and the current dominative elite is of a regional character. Mean-time, all other regional groups are trying to implement their own policy

to secure their interests and forming main political position, opinion and tactics. In reply, the central government is depressing regions, trying to keep away from decision-making.

Quote. Having many regions is not a problem. The problem is their alienation and competition. Center-oriented and centrifugal state trends depend on development speed of regions, as well as the economic and cultural policy of the country. Unquote. (Scientist/Historian).

Thereby, regionalism should not be considered detachedly from territories. The governors draw a clear parallel between regionalism and territories and administrative-territorial apportionment of the country:

Quote. Regionalism is a group of persons in control of certain administrative-territorial area of their origin. Meantime, appointment of administrative staff at any level is executed on a regional basis. Regionalism is integrating interests of both ethno-regional group and territory. Unquote. (Tax committee member).

Miscommunication between center and regions is an attribute of different understanding and establishment of power in center and regions. The situation grows more complicated with sector administration (ministries and agencies). In reality, governance

in Tajikistan is executed at the crossway of relations among regional elites, sector administration and regional response.

Quote. Differences and contradictions among regions are explained by regional diversity, contrast in their capacity and interests and of course competition between regional elites. Unquote. (Party member).

Complexity and contradiction in such type of governance is well observed in opinions of elites and bureaucracy on place and role of regions in the life of the country.

Are there any interests of GBAO, Sughd and Khatlon provinces and Districts of Republican Subordination? If yes, what are they about?

The answer on this question was almost equal. Representatives of regions, particularly members of Qabodiyon Khukumat, businessmen of Isfara and members of Porshnyov jamoat, as well as, representatives of ruling region have replied «yes».

Quote: Regions/territories that have administrative-territorial status (province) have their common interests, especially economic and social. Unquote. (President office member).

Representatives of ruling elite and top governors completely deny the existence of special regional interests.

Quote. Regions do not have special regional interests. There are common national interests of Tajikistan: unemployment, improvement of economic and social sectors. This could be solved through effective sector management. However, our Ministries and agencies prefer to do more paper and administrative work, though there are many important technical tasks to be solved. Unquote. (Tax committee member).

The state decision-making process is done by a small number of people, not regulated by anyone. There were samples of such decision-making, for instance: resolution on partial delimitation of Tajik-Chinese state border that have affected the interests of GBAO.

Quote. Regions have no influence over internal and foreign policies of the country. Decisions are made by a small number of individuals. A couple of people, which will never account for regional opinions. Unquote. (President office member).

A number of officials are concerned that ignorance of regional interests and corresponding contradictions and conflicts are dangerous for the country.

Quote. Interests of regions and country in general are sometimes different. But, it is not a dreadful

thing. It is worse when there is a conflict of interests between regions and top governors and some governors lobby the interests of their regions, meantime harming other regions or the whole country. Unquote. (President office member).

This kind of conflict must be controlled by the government, particularly by governmental officials in charge of regional politics and interrelation with regions.

Quote. At the level of President all interests of regions shall be represented at Registry office, Office of the State adviser on personnel policy and Committee on State affairs of Majlisi Namoyandagon. At present, Zokir Vazirov, Vice-Prime Minister, regulates the issues on regional policies. Unquote. (Parliament member).

However, all respondents agreed that existent bodies are not performing accordingly.

Quote. Special envoy and representative of GBAO, as well as People's deputies of GBAO districts are based in Dushanbe. There are Advisers on regional policy in President office. So what? They do not protect anyone. Unquote. (Scientist/Conflictologist).

All elite representatives accepted that regional interests are hardly ac-

counted for in the center. Relationships with the regions are built on an informal basis, i.e. through direct or indirect pressure, political intrigues, inter-elite negotiations, bargains and mediation. Actions for demonstrations of power by regions or intimidation by government, particularly by ruling ethno-regional group are widely used. The problem of participatory approach of territories and governments and provision of balance of group interests is one of the most complex one for Tajikistan. It is important both at the level of center vis-a-vis region and at low-level units of territorial management. For example, in GBAO like in other regions of Tajikistan there is a clan, family and ethnic fight for power. At present, the key administrative posts are in the hands of Shugnan people. They dominate in most regional organizations and agencies, located in Khorog city. Meantime these clans are distinguished by Dormurukhti, Shokhdari, Suchani, Khorugi, Porshniyovi, etc.

We were informed that present local administration facilitates no balance of interests of ethnic groups. It was obviously seen during elections to Majlisi Oli, when regional administration was openly supporting their placemen from Khorog clan. This fact accumulates dissatisfaction of regions, which are not represented in management.

Does the government control the economic life of regions or they are free to act independently? Is economic life centralized?

Stage III.

Do regions have any degree of independence?

All respondents acknowledged that administrative regions, namely provinces are not independent. The central government is treating them like ordinary administrative subdivisions with a very limited delegation of power. However, almost all interviewees realize the necessity and importance of the development of regions and accounting of their local interests.

Quote. Regions are extremely dependent. Ideally, we should take into account the interests of regions and keep a medium degree of self-sufficiency. It is better to sustain a middle line between centralization and decentralization. Unquote. (President office member).

Almost all respondents pointed to an incapacity of regions in terms of implied powers and decision-making.

Quote. The regions are quite dependent. It is implied that they have to make decisions themselves. For that, they need to be more independent and not to be

too much afraid of the consequence of such decisions. Unquote. (Tax committee member).

In line with low application of implied powers our regions do not have enough responsibility. The major power and responsibility is focused in districts.

Quote. The regions are dependent. Though, they should have independence. At present, it is all dictated by the Center. Unquote. (Senior staff of the Ministry of Finance).

This situation is suggesting abolishing regions and delegating all powers to districts more centralizing the governance. Curiously, these suggestions were made only by respondents of the ruling ethno-regional group. The reason: the ruling ethno-regional group is trying to eliminate every possible chance for consolidation of other ethno-regional groups in regions/provinces, as these groups are potential candidates for governance. These concerns reasoning a very low degree of delegation of powers to regional administrations, though our experience attests that regional administration is a good instrument for management of different, unequally developed and separated districts of Tajikistan. At present, the real power is implemented by the Central Government, district administrations, whereas, the Khukumats of provinc-

es are sort of liaison offices for reconciliation of interests of the center, regions and ethno-regional groups.

It is quite hard to evaluate the economic self-sufficiency of regions. After massive privatization the center was supposed to lose its industrial leverage. As of January 1, 2002 some 24.4% of enterprises were in state property (Source: Socio-economic development report of the Republic of Tajikistan, Statistical magazine, 2003, page 103). However, this has never happened and the state is still the main investor of the country. It signifies that our economic sector is still substantially centralized and does not depend on regional administrations (meaning Khukumats of provinces).

Quote. In principal, the center shall be in charge of strategic issues and regions should have more opportunities to develop their economies. However, we should be realistic in the sense that Government must control regions. Unquote. (President office member).

In accepting that regions do not have an opportunity to form their economy our officials realized that meantime the state cannot control the economy of regions as well. The reason for this is incapacity of the government to prepare one real economic development strategy. Non-

existence of common values and goals, as well as a unique coordinative state economic policy, the interests of regional elites are at the cutting edge and regionalism is used for re-allotment of state resources to the benefit of the ruling ethno-regional group.

Quote. I cannot say that center is controlling regions; there is no decent control. Center has no development strategy and control scheme. All investments are made into sectors that were important in Soviet times. Investments are done inertly, so as just to continue support and to prevent final collapse. There is no preventive strategy, but there is an inert input of money into old priority sectors. This government should prepare a development strategy paper. Until it is prepared money and resources will continue to flow into pockets. (Ministry of Finance member).

It is a time of pocket interests, not to the benefit of state though. Unquote. (Senior staff of the Ministry of Finance).

Administrators do recognize that the prevailing tendency of centralization is facing a number of obstacles, of which absence of a reliable system for collection and processing of information. Neither the ruling elite nor Central Government has a clear pic-

ture on development of regions. Deterioration of statistical service, collapse of science and incapacity of mass media create a vacuum of information, both for elite and ordinary people.

Quote. Dushanbe is not fully regulating economic life of regions. In order to control them fully we should have maximally evident information on regions, which we are not possessing at the moment. Unquote. (Staff of the Tax Committee).

The most evident part of the relation between center and regions is budget policy. Regional administrations have limited budgets and lacking opportunities to manage the resources of their region.

Quote. Regional independence doesn't go out of budget allocated by the center. They don't and will never have political independence. Unquote. (President office member).

Budget formation - the main battle place of ethno-regional groups. This battle is concentrating all interests and ambitions of ethno-regional groups, as well as contradictions between regions from one side and regions and center from another side.

Quote.- The major contradictions between regional groups are seen during distribution of bud-

get and election period. (Political party leader).

- In practice, regional budget is in competence of the Ministry of Finance. During the development of regional budgets the Ministry of Finance is taking into consideration the opinion of regional financial departments and the opinion of Deputy chairmen of Khukumats on economic matters. In process of budget formation they participate in discussion sessions in the Ministry of Finance and protect the position of their region. But, the final word is for the Government of Tajikistan. In case regions are interested in budget improvements, they are trying to lobby it through the Ministry of Economy that is in charge of budget resolutions. They are using corruption. However, sometimes these resolutions are never implemented, for example, the Ministry of Finance does not have enough funds. Very seldom is the center making some exceptions. Unquote. (Member of the Ministry of Finance).

Youth opinion.

Curiously, young people both women and especially men acknowledge that regions should not be independent and it is necessary to even more centralize governance. We imagine that it is related to Soviet

traditions of centralized governance and to a strong habit to rely on central government as the only protector and counter-pressure, even in cases of abuse of power by governmental officials.

Young people are often insufficient and lack initiative, which often creates nostalgia for «iron hand and order».

Quote. No, I think regions should not be independent and center must govern them. Of course, they will be against it. At present, the chairmen of Khukumats are bosses and they apply their own constitution. Unquote. (Young men).

For the past years regions and districts have formed social communities of a mobilized, authoritarian type, which fully replicate the political management of the central government. The young generation is observing this local baronage and assumes that such feudality and anarchy can be curbed only by a strong, centralized power. This opinion is a result of an involution of the society after the independence of Tajikistan. The wrong consequences of the war are: collapse of the legal system and legal rights of citizens, poor respect of the law, devaluation of human life; in addition, people become accustomed to atrocity and consider it natural. Our young generation has grown up and was socializing in the period of war and instability and that

is why they consider the power games as a normal social behavior. The market reforms are bringing in a spirit of competition, individual activism and freedoms, which go in line with post-conflict deterioration of the legal system and order stimulating the escalation of power games among young people. Therefore, the young generation considers it natural when clans and their leaders fight, win and oppress each other with the help of their ethno-regional groups.

The majorities of youngsters do not believe in elections and call them "bluff and falsification". They think that people make a herd, which requires a good herdsman, and that is why they do not really see the regionalism as a tool of regional expansion and territorial dominance.

Shaping of preferable organization of political life and power model for RT.

The research has attested that political views and preferences primarily depend on ethno-regional origin and less on the official position of respondents. Officials and politicians of ruling ethno-regional group are more interested in centralization and its empowerment.

Quote. Centralization is vital today. After some ten years we can shift to decentralization. Unquote. (Party member).

A lot of administrators realize that all failures of the Government, of which inefficient political and economic reforms, detrimental social policy and regional discrimination are invoking a deep dissatisfaction of people. This state of affairs may tend them not to vote for present government in future. The most dangerous competitors are other ethno-regional groups, since they are the major players in the political process of the country. That is a reason, why this Government is against free elections of local governments.

Quote. In reality, our Government has left society adrift. The interrelation of the Government and society can be simply called - anarchy. This is the result of the civil war and collapse of power system. For 10 years of independence our Government got used to not to pay for work. The state land is distributed in an unfair manner. bThis attitude is deepening people's distrust and regionalism. How to act in such circumstances? It is better to rather appoint than vote, because elections will not be faithful. In such elections the regional elites will take all power. So, how should the central government communicate with them? Power and assignment are natural partners. Unquote. (President office member).

Authoritative assignment of representatives of ruling ethno-regional group to various posts in regions and districts generates complex problems.

Quote. - There were cases of massive civil conflicts in those regions where assignments of outsiders took place. New conflicts and contradictions occur between local regional-clan elites and outside liegemen. It is necessary to develop a decent program. We do not have a State adviser on internal policies. There is no longer an adequate analytical service. We need a system for collection of information and assignment of proper liegemen in regions. We should also have an efficient, concrete process of adaptation.

- Besides, our Government should pay attention to local elections. They are not considered seriously at the moment. What is Majlisi Oli? Its operations bring no benefit to regions. It is a simple bureaucratic body. Unquote. (President office member).

An authoritative assignment of liegemen by the ruling ethno-regional group is fostering regionalism and corruption in provinces deteriorating its economic and social situation due to poor management. It also escalates unexpected oppositional moods. Young men pointed out that

such authoritative assignment of regional representatives on behalf of ruling ethno-regional group is stimulating corruption as this representative conceive it his duty to despoil this region and pass a share to the central government.

Quote. The center is assigning its loyal people. Regions deliver portions to Center and ask for support and promotions. Unquote. (Young men).

In this regard, sometimes among ruling elite, here and there occur suggestions on introduction of free elections at district and city level. However, the top governors never accept these suggestions.

Quote. If regions will have free elections we will never be able to control them. Unquote. (Party member).

At present, such an authoritative assignment system is contradicting with the Constitution and invokes its collisions that are not solved yet.

Quote. Something has to be done about these assignments. Today, it is all about violations of the Constitution. The Chairman of the district must be the member of District Majlis of People's Deputies. For instance, the Center wants to appoint a new Chairman that has nothing to do with District Majlis. But, in accor-

dance with the Constitution he cannot become a Chairman of the district, unless he is a People's Deputy of local Majlis. Now, there is a new term - Acting Chairman of District. After his appointment they wait until one of People's Deputies of Majlis dies or leaves the region and officially appoint the Acting Chairman to the post of Chairman. You may imagine that there is a constant reshuffle of Chairmen. Unquote. (Parliament member).

Our poll of public opinion and interviews in regions confirmed that people vote for free elections in every governmental level in regions.

Quote. Princelings rule everywhere, but it is better that Heads of regional administrations are elected rather than appointed. They have to be responsible for their acts to their electorate and the law. Unquote. (Scientist/Historian).

Conclusions on Stage II.

The facts of the research have generalized two major conclusions: Tajikistan is on the way to form a state that will represent an amalgam of elements of Soviet planning-distributive system, revived elements of traditional-archaic state and new democratic institutions and relations.

In accordance with the Constitution,

Tajikistan sustains a multiparty, parliamentary democracy separated in legislative, executive and judicial system of power. The President is both the Chief of State and the Chief Executive. However, instead of objectively operational democratic institutions we have off-institutional political mechanisms.

The state is based on three systems of dependency:

- Administrative-territorial subordination: provinces, cities and districts, jamoats, mahallas and villages.
- Ethno-regional groups headed by clans.
- Sector management: ministries and agencies.

Two of which are formal and one, ethno-regional - informal. First two systems are closely interrelated, but not concurrent. They are based on territory and land. From one side, ethno-regional groups are close to their land, home of clan leaders (often seniors of leading «avlods» of the region) and graveyard of their predecessors. The legacy and continuity of a family are ruling these relations, however the clans do not form administrative-territorial unities. Clans do form territorial unities that act and manage the behavior of people of this unity, no matter of location.

From other side, the political hierarchy of the President/Sovereign represents different levels of administrative-territorial divisions of competence: province, city, district, jamoat, etc. Thus, the territorial structure is a foothold of the political-administrative cabinet of the state. This structure is centralized, hierarchal and is based on administrative division of territory and personal relationship. At the same time, the regional-clan structure carries on. This structure is partly based on the fact that regional elites are often landlords.

The political will of the President and personal relationships (patron-client) guarantee the territorial state organization, which may be described, as a net consisting of: a) horizontal clan structure - regional leaders, not necessarily administrative officials; b) hierarchic vertical structure - officials, reported directly to the President (Chairmen and management of provinces and districts).

In Tajikistan, the real governance is executed at the crossroad of these systems. Sometimes, the clan and state systems are interrelated, but sometimes they compete with each other. That is why central government is blocking the independence of regions. This sector system was very important at the time of the Soviet Union, but now it is gradually losing its influence.

Stage III. The effects of regionalism on social, political and economic life.

The consequences of regionalism:

- Distrust, rivalry and animosity among ethno-regional groups. Dominance of one clan and ethno-regional group is invoking the discontent of others and provoking a struggle for the «super prize».

Quote. Danghara is in power now and other clans are dissatisfied with it. The dominance of one clan over others and ambitions of clan leaders create hate and competition between regional groups. The sense of hate is penetrating the country. Unquote. (Political party leader).

- There is no unity among regional elites. This fact is dramatically balking the progress of national ideology. There is no feeling of integrity and integration aiming at determination of national goals and priorities and realization of national interests.
- Incertitude, distrust and negative attitude of Tajik citizens towards the Government.

Quote. The personnel policy is a combination of dissatisfaction and suspicions. People are suspecting each other and secondary staff

is discontented with senior management. This is true all over the country. Unquote. (Parliament member).

- Poor management in governmental layers, in economy, in social sphere and culture.

Quote. Low professionalism and incompetence of managers at all levels and governmental bodies. Unquote. (President office member).

- Repression of economic growth, stagnation in development of regions and low efficiency of investments

Quote. Imprudent preparation of strategies for development of regions. Every clan is dreaming of how to get more and more for their regions, though there is no appropriate environment or conditions for feasibility of investments. Everyone is pulling the blanket to his back. Unquote. (President office member).

- Stagnation of development due to brain escape of professionals. Intensification of brain escapes due to lack of jobs for «irrelevant» specializations.

Quote. - Experienced doctors, economists and lawyers are in search of jobs, meantime their

potential jobs are occupied by unqualified workers, and young doctors that do not have any experience. They are employed because they are from Kulob. (Young men).

- The competition among regional elites is surging social tensions and may finally cause social outbursts taking into account present poverty state. (Party member).

- Government is not responsible for its decisions and it is all around us. (President office member).

Unquote.

Stage IV. Mapping of potential solutions to overcome regionalism. If regionalism is a named problem, how it can be solved?

Political actors are separated by ethno-regional origin and official posts. The representatives of regions are suggesting introducing free elections for regional governments. As per them, it will motivate more responsibility in regions. From the other side, citizens will select professional and capable people, efficient managers, and not just the representatives of their ethno-regional groups. Free elections will break the clan system of management in Tajikistan.

Quote. Every governor must be elected, starting from the Presi-

dent and ending with the head of the smallest village. Authoritative assignments must be minimized. Regionalism will pass away automatically. People will select managers by their qualifications. Unquote. (Tax committee member).

As per some governmental officials, elections are necessary in order to banish the feeling of inconstancy, at present prevailing in the society.

Quote. At present, everyone wants to get as much as possible. That is why our society must create some control mechanisms, which will limit the power. Now, every chairman is a king of his district. There is no mechanism of influence on power by public, and no public control of power. (Senior Ministry member).

In spite of regional origin, many administrators and politicians emphasized the necessity to implement a real self-administration.

Quote. Now, it is a right time to introduce adjustments to the Constitution. It is necessary to expand the responsibilities and competence of self-administration, especially at the level of jamoats, districts and even provinces. Before jamoats were keeping bank accounts and budget. Today district Khukumats are ruling the jamoats. It is time to solve the problem. We need to improve and

develop self-administration and give more powers to mahallas. Finally, we were reduced to the situation when mahallas are not governmental, but their heads are appointed by the center. We need to adopt a new law on local administration. The local governments, including the Chairmen of provinces should be elected. In general, the election process should be re-structured. It is also necessary to organize some legal training for governmental officials, especially for high-ranking managers. Unquote. (President office member).

A number of central government officials, particularly the representatives of the old bureaucratic school suggest the strengthening of: statehood and centralization, regulatory bodies, struggle against regionalism and training of governors and managers, especially of a high rank.

Quote. - Effective reform of government is required. It should cover both state governance and local administration. Some work is done under the framework of state reforms of administration, started back in October 2001. Some duplicate state bodies were already abolished and a number of high professionals were invited from regional governments to center. All this shows that there are changes, but quite minor ones.

- For example a new Department for State Service under the President and Academy for State Service were organized, but all of it is on paper only. However, it would be more efficient to organize some short-term courses for officials, both in center and regions, including Ministries and agencies. Since we are left without professional bureaucrats we need to bring up new professionals. It seems to me that regionalism is immortal in this part of the world, but it is possible to mitigate it applying fine personnel policy. Unquote. (President of office member).

Representatives of political parties think that it is necessary to develop a multiparty approach. Firstly, they say that integration of people by political preferences will release them from the influence of ethno-regional elites and will decrease the affect of regionalism. Secondly, development of parties and a multiparty approach will gradually create a political system, where legal institutions will fade out the influence of informal off-institutional structures.

Quote. Empowerment of multiparty approach will reduce regionalism. However, parties should represent some regional interests as well. Unquote. (Party member).

Young generation and representatives of political parties consider de-

mocratization and development of mass media as important instruments to cope with regionalism.

Quote. - Our Government declares that Tajikistan is an independent and democratic country. But, in reality it is not. There is no democracy here. Laws are inactive. We should replicate Russian experience of free elections of President and glasnost. If we would act as in other civilized countries and apply free elections, even for election of City Mayor, regionalism will fade away.

- It is required to develop mass media. People should have chances to speak out. This is a way out. Unquote. (Young men).

Young people see a way out of regionalism in development of national consciousness, formation of ethnic identity that will dominate over other elements of identity. Curiously, young people think that ethnicity should dominate over citizenship.

Quote. The resolution of this problem is as follows, regardless of location and country the answer to the question «Where are you from and what is your nationality?» should be, «We are Tajiks from Tajikistan».

Regionalism is taking its beginning from families. Parents must give good education to their children.

Meantime, schoolteachers must give quality education. Unquote. (Young men).

One of the ways to solve the problem of regionalism suggested by young people is to eliminate traditional, arranged, ethnic-regional marriages, which escalate endogamy and hierarchy of groups. They have suggested forming a Commission or Committee, to which young people can complain in the case of parents of marriage partners refusing due to ethno-regional origin.

Quote. Another instrument to cope with regionalism is to foster and encourage family relations between different regions. Unquote. (Young men).

Young respondents expressed an opinion that in order to cope with regionalism it is necessary to refer to Islamic leaders to make propaganda of Islamic integrity.

Quote. Every group has its leader, Mullah and Ishan. They can help to solve this problem in the form of discussions with local communities and describe its negative impact. If they would more often exhort people to integrate and say «Let's solve this problem together!» it would be solved faster. Islam is forbidding regionalism. The para «Lo ilo illa-l-loh» means, «We are all one nation». Unquote. (Young men).

Young people are certain that implementation of agitation and cultural events, like discussion clubs, seminars, festivals and other actions can serve an instrument for mitigation of regionalism.

Quote. We need to create some working groups, which will visit local communities, schools and universities and hold workshops and round tables among youth on aspects of regionalism. Unquote. (Young men).

Young women think that it is good to create agitation brigades, hold contests and competitions of comedians for young people from different regions of Tajikistan in order to acquaint each other with the customs and traditions of our regions.

The interrelation between the center and regions: suggested model.

In accordance with the research the most preferred model of this interrelation is self-sufficiency under the direction, coordination and control of the Central Government.

Quote. Regions should basically develop themselves. Center must determine common goals and objectives and coordinate the activities of regions. This kind of approach is sometimes used for sector management and orders,

occasionally to satisfy needs of some officials. (Tax Committee member).

Regions should independently determine and set their economic policy. Meantime, the Center shall direct and coordinate their activities. Regions must independently form this policy, as proposals should come from the lowest level. Unquote. (GBAO representative).

Young people, more than their elders, prefer larger centralization.

Quote. All regions prefer to be more or less independent, but the Center should manage them. (Young men).

And yet, the most loyal devotees of centralization are politicians and governors from the ruling ethno-regional groups. They are sure that Tajikistan is not ready for free elections, decentralization and self-administration.

Quote. - The unitary state is an efficient and comfortable form of management. The local governments at provinces should be abolished. We do not need them. (Party member).

- In prospect, decentralization is required. But, at present centralization is more appropriate. (President office member).

- In ten years time we will need to introduce a real self-administra-

tion, including municipal administration based on free elections. When the system of such regional administration will be introduced and well-managed there won't be any need for authoritative assignments. Unquote. (Party member).

Parliament members, officials and regional representatives are concerned that Tajikistan has no sufficient legislature that would regulate relations between Center and regions. Tajik Constitution and laws are full of contradictions.

Quote. A great work should be done for the formation of a legislative base for interrelation of center and regions. Unquote. (Parliament member).

Senior governors from the Center and regional representatives accepted the importance of legislative segregation of powers at all governmental levels.

Quote. Very precise systems of segregation of powers should be set at all administrative levels. At present, politics is extremely lacking in this. Unquote. (GBAO representative).

Nearly all respondents noted that there is no legal mechanism of reconciliation of interests between Center and regions. This process is going in informal spheres through the

traditional technique of peace building, (negotiations, bargains, intrigues and mediation).

Quote. We need a mechanism for reconciliation of interests of regions and Center. Unquote. (Member of Qabodiyon Khukumat).

Only representatives of humanitarian intelligentsia and GBAO representatives pointed to the necessity of restoring the system of regional representation in Central government.

Quote. It is necessary to rebuild the regional balance of representation of regions in Central Government. Unquote. (Scientist/Conflictologist).

The majority of respondents agreed that Parliament is the best place for reconciliation of interests and positions of the Center and regions.

Quote. The interests of regions could be reconciled at the level of Parliament. If elections would be carried out in an honest and fair manner the People's Deputies will guarantee protection and reconciliation of interests of regions (between each other) and the Center. Unquote. (Tax Committee member).

Members of Political parties stated that the establishment of a real multiparty political system in Tajikistan, including active work of parliamen-

tary party factions would be a good instrument for optimization of relations between Center and regions.

Who are the major actors at the scene of regionalism that can find or force a decision on this problem?

A collective opinion of respondents was as follows: the key actors that can solve the problem of regionalism are President, Parliament and other senior governors (supreme management of the country).

President and Parliament.

Quote. - The Governmental bodies in leadership of the President should combat regionalism. A President cannot be a leader of any party. He cannot express the interests of one ethno-regional group. As per Tajik Constitution he is a guarantor of rights and freedoms. It is quite the contrary here. (Party member).

- Who can fight regionalism? President, Majlisi Oli and local Governments. The President must regulate personnel policy. Majlisi Oli is a legislative body that can initiate and adopt the laws aiming at restriction of regionalism. Local Governments are executors. The mediation between them is inactive, that is why most laws are

just on paper. (Parliament member).

- Parliament members should reconcile and protect regional interests. This is not true any more in Tajikistan. Unquote. (Scientist/Historian).

Parties

Quote. Parties can positively influence the easing of the problem, especially during pre-election campaign. Parties' representatives could contribute a lot through the Governmental bodies in which they are being elected. (President office member).

For political parties and movements it is necessary to acquire national meaning. Nowadays, there are three such parties - NDPT, KPT, PIRT. They should reverse the situation and switch from regional-clan to political-regional entities. Unquote. (President office member).

Society in general

Young people think that the problem of regionalism can be solved only by the society, if it can recognize the influence of regionalism in future.

Quote. - In my opinion all our problems that appear today we should solve by ourselves, independently and without outside intervention. (Young women).

- We should form a party to op-

pose regionalism and to agitate people in the regions in order to join together and to handle a problem inside the region or republic. Unquote. (Young women).

The major part in the process of solving the problem of regionalism can be played by the following groups of people:

Chairmen of districts.

Regional representatives emphasized that among the main actors who represent interests of the regions are chairmen of districts. However, they are in an ambiguous position now, from one side they are placemen of the President and report directly to him, from the other side they are governing bodies of the districts, that consist of influential autonomous powers that cannot be controlled by state administration.

Quote. *Chairmen of Khukumats have a two-edged policy; they are scared of constant reshuffle of personnel. Moreover, the Chairman must gather back all bribes, which he spent buying his position.* Unquote. (Member of district Khukumat).

Many people expressed the opinion that handling the problem of regionalism is impossible without regional integrative elites, which include economic, military and intellectual elites.

Quote. *In reality, intelligentsia, People's Deputies and powerful regional military commanders, managers of big industrial enterprises and businessmen protect the interests of regions.* Unquote. (Member of party).

High level administrators consider that the resolve of regionalism is impossible without the formation of a national elite, which will be the only party that could provide the solution to the problem.

Quote. *Nowadays, there are few people who care about national interests. National elite should be formed and represent the power which will assure the solution of regionalism problem.* Unquote. (Sukhrob).

From the point of view of young people, combatants can play the main role as well.

Quote. - *Combatants, power and weapons protect the regional interests.* (Young women).

Businessmen.

- *Entrepreneurs also put forward the interests of their regions. One of their objectives is to develop the economy of their region.* (Member of Ministry)

- *Businessmen can also express the interests of their regions. They export treasures of their regions,*

such as gold, cotton, precious stones etc., they are making money and money opens doors. (Young women).

- *Businessmen are against regionalism, because they are working for themselves and consequently trying to hire valuable experts, regardless of place of birth.* Unquote. (Young men)

Art intelligentsia.

Quote. - *It is possible that an educated part of the population could mitigate this problem. Political parties exist only on paper. Laws passed by the Parliament are not functioning.* (Scientist/Historian).

- *It would be good if writers and poets would organize some mobile groups that could travel in regions or theatres and conduct topic meetings and discussions. For instance, visit of Sughd theatre to Gharm, and from Gharm to Kulob. It would be beneficial to have cultural gatherings more frequently.* Unquote. (Young men).

Mass Media.

Quote. *Mass Media is also playing one of the major roles in solving the issue of regionalism. For instance, the popular «TV- Subkh» program, which is broadcast to the whole republic. So, this*

program can help to suspend people from regionalism. Unquote. (Young men).

Education System.

Quote. It is necessary to make a negative propaganda of regionalism to children and young people in schools and universities. On the given problem some discussions, seminars and conferences should be conducted. Unquote. (Young men).

What and how to change to make the solution possible?

It is necessary to:

build a market economy.

The majority of respondents consider that implementation of economic reforms, establishment of market economy and in prospective - formation of internal common market in RT will lighten the problem of regionalism.

Quote. It is necessary to form one common market. (Scientist/Conflictologist).

Improvement of the life standard will destroy regionalism. Economic reforms conduce to decrease regionalism. Market makes people come closer. Unquote. (Party Member).

Combating poverty and developing socio-economic situation.

Young people think that massive un-

employment and poverty detach people from each other, facilitates ethno-regional solidarity and preserves clan power. That is why it is vital to improve socio-economic situation in country and reduce poverty.

Quote. - If I had been the chairman, I would give jobs to people. (Young women).

- No money, no job, the consequence is that person will search for the guiltiest and will accuse other regions. Unquote. (Young women).

Formation of state ideology of ethno-nationalism.

Youth, especially young men and representatives of high-rank governmental officials deem that the solution of the problem of regionalism is in formation of ethno-national consciousness.

Quote. - The only way out of regionalism is national accord and nationalism. If Tajik people will unite and recognize themselves as one community, the problem will be resolved. (Young men).

- We need nationalism that will unite all citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan. Unquote. (Member of Presidential Office).

Strengthening of the Government. Restoring the control system and governance.

Quote. - We need a strong Government that will erect above the regions and will subordinate them under the national interests. (President office member).

- We should not forget about Governmental officials. We should feed wolfs to save sheep. If the salary of Governmental officials equals to USD 7-10, there is no use in battling corruption and regionalism. With this salary an official is dependent not on government, but on his head or protector, who will find him the »gravy train« or at least will close eyes on illegal acts. Unquote. (Member of Tax Committee of RT).

Restoring of law and order in the country.

Incapacity of law and order is the major reason for surging clans and regionalism. There is a necessity to restore legality in society and the legal conscience of citizens, emphasized all respondents.

Quote. - We have some decent laws, but they have to start to work. For example, the law on governmental services envisages conducting competitive examinations, to evaluate the profession-

al level before recruitment. (Party Leader).

- The legislative power is not only about passing the laws and resolutions. The legislation should be applied in practice. Unquote. (Parliament member).

Conduction of honest and fair elections.

Quote. It is necessary to make the election process absolutely real, but not fictional. People will elect those candidates that will represent their interests. It will guarantee that People's Deputies will really represent their regions. Only then, there will be sense in development of new law on self-administration. Unquote. (Parliament member).

It is time to build a civil society. The young generation believes that more open mass media will help to apply public control over the government. This will allow young people outside the ruling ethno-regional elite to have access to good career opportunities. Free mass media will foster information openness in the society, counteract the isolation and closed status of ethno-regional groups, encourage dialogue between different ethnic groups and the formation of the universal national conscious.

Another part of young people believes that the increase in the num-

ber of NGOs and capacity building will also improve the situation. They say that young, talented and active young people can realize their potential through NGOs, which are not touched by the regionalism yet.

Existence of external threats.

Quote. A foreign enemy can integrate Tajiks. Alliance against external enemy will help to combat contradictions of regionalism. Unquote. (President office member).

What is the role of external actors? Who are external actors?

International organizations are external actors, respondents say. They can introduce international experience in solution of reciprocal problems, give recommendations and force the Government to take into consideration the opinions of international organizations and institutions.

And yet, there was an opinion that international organization can do nothing, because it is also corrupt and infected by regionalism through its local staff.

Quote. - Every international organization is surrounded by its own mafia, which in turn has ethno-regional character. (Head of NGO).

International organizations are just

strengthening regionalism. They are focusing their attention on regionalism factor.

Quote. - If international organizations are intending to help, it would be better if they helped to solve economic problems. But in principle, they are all corrupt. They are squeezing their projects through our government officials. (President office member).

- International organizations should not aggravate regionalism as it is done now. For this it is necessary to eliminate corruption. Control, targeting and transparency in extension of grants are essential. The number of projects that are directed at development of civil society should be increased. Unquote. (Member of NGO).

Many respondents deem that assistance of international organizations in the handling of the problem of regionalism can be focused on support of civil society.

Quote. Conducting various forums with NGOs, support of regional NGOs, promotion of the projects focused on interaction of NGOs from several regions, and support of mass media - all these will help to find the solution for regionalism. Unquote. (Political party leader).

Young people assume that in principle we should reject external assistance.

Quote. - It would be better if we could do without external forces. (Young men).

- I think that foreigners cannot help us. (Young men).

International organizations should not interfere in the life of regions. (Young women).

Conclusion

The interaction between the center and regions is determining the structure of the government, plays the major role in the achievement of domestic political stability, resolves the task of reduction of tension in the society that is going through the difficulties of the transitional period. The problem of regionalism and cooperation between centrifugal and center-oriented powers in the government is of a paramount importance for Tajikistan. This problem has got an affinity between each other and is divided into: a) interrelation of ethno-regional groups and b) interrelation among the regions and between the Center and the regions.

The regionalism processes in various political and social circles and different regions of Tajikistan have a diverse nature. The Soviet style of a strongly centralized management is

joined by local political traditions, which is the reason why regionalism is perceived negatively. The regionalism acquires a negative color, signifies separatism and a threat of dissolution of the state. The Soviet authoritarian regime was repressing regional identity and political independence of regions. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the newly established state named the Republic of Tajikistan had no experience in democratic federalism, but in parallel had a state with a clan-regional system of management. Regional contradictions, poor ties between the regions and the government in political, economic, social and cultural spheres are the major bottlenecks on the way of development of Tajikistan.

So, what is regionalism?

It should be acknowledged that for the past decade of independence Tajikistan was able to form a state, which bases on authentically local traditions. The role of the Soviet statehood and new democratic institutions is significant, but not crucial for the development of the society and the state. The state is founded on a threefold system of supervision:

1. Administrative-territorial supervision: regions, cities, districts, jamoats, mahallas and rural settlements.
2. Ethno-regional groups and their leading clans.

3. Sector management: ministries and agencies.

At present, the most efficient ones are the first two. The core base of both systems is land.

The foundation of the socio-political chart of Tajikistan is a conglomerate of ethno-regional groups, which form a hierarchic system of a dynamic balance. The ethno-regional groups are represented by a complex of communities inhabiting same geographic location (region), often these inhabitants have a special dialect or even language and subculture. These so-called social organisms are headed by regional elites or better called clans. The members of these ethno-regional groups can live outside their region, but still feel its subordination.

An individual has a right to his private and spiritual life, but in political life he/she is always part of a community, which in turn is a part of some ethno-regional group. He/she is not just a citizen with rights and responsibilities, but a representative of some community. One clan or coalitions of relative clans, which form a hierarchic system of clans, direct the political life of a country, province, region and district. This principle is being implemented at all levels, like central government, administrative-territorial organizations, including the local communities (jamoats).

The ethno-regional elite, which takes

over the power, enjoys the benefits in all spheres of life, including state administration, politics, economy, defense and security. Since Tajikistan is practicing the system of nomination to almost all posts the ruling elite has little dependence on people. The only elective posts are president, members of Majlisi Namoyandagon (Lower Chamber of Parliament) and heads of jamoats. The ruling elite has got all the administrative tools for organization of elections (including falsifications, manipulations and suppression). That is why the ruling elite is making every effort in order to keep the central power closed for the representatives of other ethno-regional groups. The recruitment of officials (in politics, economy, military and even intellectual) is done on regional basis. This is true both at central and regional levels, including even organization, enterprises, private companies, etc. The foundation of state management is the personal loyalty to some ethno-regional group, ethno-regional solidarity, accord and unity of clans.

The president is not only the leader of the country, but also a leader of some ethno-regional group, which won in the inter-clan battle and won the main prize, really. From this point of view, he is a head of the system of clans and ethno-regional groups. The people of Tajikistan accept this state of affairs. The various levels

of administrative-territorial divisions present the political hierarchy started from a sovereign-president, such as: province, city, district, jamoat and others. Hence, the territorial structure is a ground for political-administrative machine. This structure is highly centralized and hierarchical. It is based on administrative-territorial divisions and personal ties and relations. The real governance of Tajikistan is done through administrative-territorial and clan spectrum. The central government is carefully balancing the relations with clans from other ethno-regional groups in order to reach a certain degree of stability. The government, however, tries to reduce the independence of administrative-territorial units to avoid the strengthening of clan groups.

Thus, regionalism in Tajikistan is a system of power, which is based on collectivism and community solidarity of traditional pre-industrial society. This system is quite unstable. The centralization of power in hands of some small elite oligarchs is provoking the leaders of the ruling and other ethno-regional groups to re-distribute the power to their on advantage. This process keeps the majority of people away from the process of decision-making and fuels the instability of state power and social control correspondingly. The ruling elite is strengthening its military units

in order to indemnify itself from negative developments. It is worth acknowledging that there is a close relation between regionalism and militarization of the country.

What causes regionalism?

- Geographic isolation of regions due to diverse natural obstacles, like mountains and rivers.
- Historic facts: annexation of regions into different states; due to that the regions had different histories, they formed contrasting political and cultural traditions and were attracted to manifold external political, economic and cultural centers.
- USSR control instruments were authoritarian and were not giving any chances for self-management; on the other hand during the Soviet era the governance was implemented through northern Tajiks that were more advanced and owned an ancient and cultural ethnicity.
- Unequal development of regions (especially economic).
- Civil war caused disintegration, strengthening of ethno-regional solidarity, increase of the role of traditional social

institutions, which became a way of survival (namely: avlod, mahalla, etc.).

- Governmental incapacity - the Soviet command-administrative control was substituted by the state with no political will, but with a strong clan system. There is no strategic planning or universal goals. Personal interests are over public and ethno-regional interests are of a crucial value.
- Political traditions of Tajiks also foster regionalism.
- Post-Soviet involution of political, economic and social spheres of Tajik society encourages revival of ancient forms of political and social life.

Perception of regionalism by various social and age groups.

The regionalism is positively perceived by:

- a) Politicians and officials from the ruling ethno-regional group, saying that regionalism is helping to keep the power.
- b) One part of young people believes that regional solidarity is a good support, which opens wide opportunities and resources.
- c) The representatives of regional

elites consider the regionalism as a tool for protection of their regional interests.

The regionalism is negatively perceived by:

- a) Career officials - they believe that regionalism is deteriorating state structures and jeopardizes the governance in general.
- b) Representatives of intellectual elite - scientists, journalists, etc.
- c) One part of young people believes that regionalism is closing opportunities in many fields, for i.e. self-actualization, career development and individual achievements.

Regionalism - interrelation between the center and administrative-territorial units.

The territory control is a very complex problem for Tajikistan. Constraints in interrelation of regions of Tajikistan: Dushanbe has never been a real center for all regions of Tajikistan. Regions were always a part of political process of Tajikistan. The economic relations between regions had a complex nature. There is no common market. Tajikistan had never formed a single economic body. Sughd province was ruled by Moscow directly, both during Soviet times and first years of independence.

The constitution of the country envisages that Tajikistan is a unitary

state. The issue of centralization is quite controversial to this fact. Tajikistan is a small country with more or less homogenous population. Nevertheless, existence of various regions always reminds us about decentralization, regardless of the opinion of the center. On the other side, strongly bureaucratic cabinet, urgency of shocking economic reforms (that could be implemented only by the strong central government) and finally importance of peace process are partly justifying strong centralization of Tajikistan. This is relevant not only between the center and the regions, but also at the lowest territorial management level. In addition, the territory interests of the regions are not considered, the right for regional identity is not being watched, and there is only bargain and fragile balance of ethno-regional groups. Taking into account that the regions were always participating in the political process of Tajikistan the attempt of the government to leave regions with no chance of independence is provoking a confrontation of regional elites. This situation is getting worth taking into account that Dushanbe never had the status of a real center for all regions of Tajikistan. For instance, for Sughd region Moscow was the center during the Soviet times. This was related to the fact that Sughd region used to be one of the areas of industrial importance to

the Soviet Union. The economic ties with the regions of Tajikistan were also uneven. In soviet era Tajikistan was not considered as one economic entity. Regional economic disproportions were always used by Soviet power. After the independence and the civil war the road and transport sector lost a lot, which in turn increased the isolation of regions. There is no market system in the Republic. The representatives of regional elites acknowledged that the regional interests are not considered by the center.

The interrelation between the center and regions is built on informal basis, through direct or indirect pressure, political intrigues, inter-elite negotiations, bargains and mediation. The worst situation is observed in provinces (oblasts). The range of their powers, rights and responsibilities is limited and implemented mostly on district level. Reason: the ruling elite is trying to reduce to nothing any chance for regional consolidation, because this could be growing power for future take over of the power in the country. However, since the regions have no capacity to build their own economy, the central government also lost its potential to control the economy of regions. This is because this government failed to build the universal economic objectives and development strategy.

Nonexistence of a coordinative state economic policy and common values are fuelling the increase of the role of interests of regional elites, which are using regionalism as a tool for re-distribution of state resources.

How to overcome the regionalism? The opinion of respondents (main points).

A) Through strengthening of the government, further centralization, suppression of regional elites, formation of one universal elite, formation of a strong bureaucratic school, intensification of the state control, development of market institutions, development of market economy with a strong regulatory hand of the government (Officials).

B) Development of market economy, liberalization of entrepreneurship, democratization (to be started with fair elections at all governmental levels), support of parties and development of civil society, support of independent mass media as a tool for civil control. (Party functionaries and intellectuals).

C) Further centralization. Development of national consciousness. The nationalism will repress the regionalism. The Islamic integrity can help to fight the regionalism (Young people).

D) Legislative segregation of pow-

ers at all levels of the government, formation of legislation that will regulate the relations between the center and the regions, fair elections, decentralization, promotion of self-management (Parliament members and representatives of regions).

E) Restart of the system of regional representation in highest levels of the government (Humanitarian intelligentsia, representatives of GBAO).

The project respondents acknowledged that the strife against regionalism must be started from the sovereign powers; only the President can initiate this movement. The issue of centralization is controversial. In accordance with its constitution, Tajikistan is a unitary state. Tajikistan is a small country with a quite homogeneous population (80% of its population are Tajiks). However, the presence of a number of different regions is making the issue of decentralization topical. In reality, the regions are trying to run decentralizing policies and not to depend on the center's preferences. On the other hand, application of market reforms will cause short-tern dislocations, which can be overcome only by a strong and centralized government. More important is to sustain the peace process, which partially acquits the aspirations to centralization practiced by almost all officials and politicians interviewed under the project.

From Ambivalence to Ambiguity? Some Paradigms of Policy Making in Tajikistan

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«Ensemble nous oeuvrons pour la postérité
de nos deux magnifiques nations.
Vive la probablement future République d'Iran !»

SAN-ANTONIO, *Ma langue au chah*
(Paris: Fleuve Noir, 1970), 60.

The announcement, ten years in advance, of the proclamation of a republic in Iran, by Frederic Dard (1921-2000), *alias* Commissaire San Antonio - a French, Swiss-based (from 1966 onwards), «He used to say after this date: «I committed swisside» (je me suis suissidé)», liberal best-seller thriller writer who never hesitated to mock «serious» human sciences¹ - is a thing not easy to find in the political literature of the time. A San Antonio may have been lacking to Tajikistan, if we refer to the much predicted dislocation of the Soviet Union, but much unexpected proclamation of Tajik independence in 1991. San Antonio's absence, the lack of his joyful derision may feel even more acutely - relatively speaking, indeed - whence the future of Tajikistan seems to many more unpredictable than ever in almost two decades.

Why, will object our reader, did we

take the risk of beginning the present study with an idle quotation, and a pointless parallel between the unexpected Tajik independence and the unpredicted proclamation, twelve years before, of the «Republic of Iran»? The author did so with the intention of suggesting some answers to one of the questions which were the most oftenly asked to him during his long stay in Tajikistan, during the spring and summer 2003, partly for CIMERA: **«Doesn't the overall situation in Tajikistan today - i.e., in the first years of the 21st century C.E. - remind you that of Iran in the decade which preceded the Is-**

lamic Revolution!» Such was one of the most recurrent questions the author was asked by colleagues and various observers between April and August, 2003. Such a popularity of comparison with Iran among international researchers working on Tajikistan, and the strength of the paradigm of an Islamic revolution, and of «Islam» in general as a common denominator of everything potentially hostile to the West,² have provided us a sort of common theme for our study. This theme should at least allow us to underline, beside the unpredictability of political evolutions in Dushanbe, fundamental differences of all kinds between the Iranian and the Tajik cases.

The most striking of these numerous discrepancies between these two different - if not antinomic as we shall see - cases concerns the respective size and populations of both coun-

1 On French Iranologists and one of their oddest habits, viz their taste for complicated transcription systems, that we have tried to avoid in the present study: *Ma langue au chah*, 99.

2 Cf. Edward W. SAID, *Covering Islam. How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981 [2nd ed. New York: Vintage, 1997]), in particular the chapter about Iran, 81-133.

tries, and the ability of each to resist, or to oppose pressures from abroad. If most observers of Tajikistan do stress indeed the unpredictability of the evolution of the political situation there, they explain it for a significant part **by the decisive role of a multiplicity of external factors**, each of which could suffice to decide the overall future of the country (e.g., DJALILI & KELLNER 2003, 275 ff.). *(Among them, those most oftenly mentioned are: the evolution of the political situation in Afghanistan; the unpredictable destiny of the anti-terrorist coalition set up in the aftermath of September 11, 2001; the unstable attitude of Russia and the Russians toward 450,000 to 1,5 million - according to official or unofficial statistics - Tajik economic immigrants in the Russian Federation; the possibility, sometimes exposed in the Russian medias and echoed in the American ones, of a rapprochement between the armed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and some of the former Tajik warlords of the civil war period; the continuous expansion of drugs traffics; the political dissatisfaction of the important Uzbek minority of Tajikistan, and the popularity among its ranks of the an Islamist party of Near-Eastern origin, the Hizb at-Tahrir, which in Central Asia has been*

playing the card of Uzbek minorities outside Uzbekistan, etc.)

In terms of periodization we are probably still in Dushanbe in a phase which has been opened in 1994 with the launching of negotiations between the Rahmonov government and the armed opposition, then positioned mainly in Afghanistan, both parties being then put under the

3 «Nahzat» is the Tajik common denomination (Hizb-i Nahzat-i Islami: Party of the Islamic Renewal) of the Islamic Party of Renewal (IPR) of Tajikistan; it will be currently used for more commodity in the present paper. The term nahzat (not to be mistaken for nazhat: «voluptuous pleasure») makes reference to the intellectual renewal of the early 20th century in the Arabic and Islamic world (see N. TOMICHE, «Nah1/2a,» The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed. [Leiden - New York: E. J. Brill, t. 7, 1993]: 900-903); such a global reference should suffice to differentiate the Nahzat from more radical organizations which claim to be followers of the Muslim Brothers or Islamist political movements posterior to WWII: the former shows guided by an overall project of modernising Islam, whence the latter's project remains limited to an Islamization of modernity.

4 At the congress of the Nahzat devoted to the Reconciliation Day (Dushanbe, 25 June 2003), the party's historical leader Sayyid Abdulloh Nuri (b. 1947) devoted the second half of his discourse to a violent accusation of President Rahmonov's police, and to a severe warning to the government. (Full text: Sayyid Abdulloh NURI, «Vahdati milli az e'timodi hamdigari sarchashma megirad [National Unity Takes Its Source in Mutual Respect],» Najot [the party's weekly newspaper] 27 (2003/7/4): 1-3).

5 On the situation of this groups of interest in Tajikistan at this moment, see HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, «Tajikistan: Leninabad, Crackdown in the North,» HRW 10/2 (April 1998): 20 p.

fierce pressure of the Taliban threat. **The situation, although pacified since the late 1990s, remains shaky in spite of collusions of interests between the former foes.** This overall frailty has been recently illustrated by general nervousness during the weeks preceding the Referendum of June 23, 2003 and by mutual threats that we have been listening before and since that date in the mouth of leaders of the two main opposite camps - the presidential faction and the Nahzat.³ *(See infra our comments on the arrestation of one of the Nahzat's leaders in the Soghd region, Shamsiddin Shamsiddinov [alias Ishan Shams al-Din Khan], in early June 2003).*⁴ It is reinforced by the exclusion from the peace process of quite many protagonists of the political arena, like the representatives of the formerly powerful «Leninabadi» (i.e., northern) faction of the Tajik Communist Party and state, whose dissatisfaction had caused the failed coup by Colonel Khudoyberdiev in Khujand in November 1998 - the main political crisis in Tajikistan since the very signature of the peace agreement.⁵

Despite the difficulty, and the risky character of pronostics, provisional perspectives for the decade to come will be sketched in the present pages. They are based mostly on an analysis of **the logics of the Tajik**

political system as it has been working, in the framework of a specific and provisional balance of forces, since the signature of the General Peace Agreement between the Rahmonov government and the then United Tajik Opposition on June 27, 1997, up till the very recent developments of the Tajik political scenery. It does not take into account the possible impact of most of the above-mentioned external factors, but focuses on the inner parameters of political culture, and the balance of forces inside the heterogeneous leading class of Tajikistan.

Before proceeding to the main body of our study, it is perhaps worth mentioning that there is a second reason at least to open it through the Iranian tropism, for practical purpose concerning the work of donor states and their organizations in Tajikistan. If Iran has been showing for more than two centuries a general attitude of *ambiguity* towards everything coming from the West,⁶ in Tajikistan's official circles the dominant and characteristic posture towards Western innovations, especially those brought about by those programmes of technical assistance which have been flowing to this country during the last six years, seems to be that of **ambivalence - an attitude characterized by a special ability to integrate alien ideologi-**

cal motos, and to play simultaneously in different, sometimes openly contradictory registers of discourse, if not of thought.⁷

Such dispositions can be easily traced, to a lesser extent, in other Central Asian countries; they may be partly explained by a **long experience and a rich imaginary of foreign domination** (*in which current Western donors have recently taken a place occupied beforehand by the Soviet power*), partly by a **dependence on foreign assistance** which, among Central Asian countries, remains more specific to Tajikistan. Bringing this country's political leaders from current ambivalence to future ambiguity may perhaps be considered a goal to attain for people involved in technical assistance in fields such as that of political and economic reforms.

In the shorter term, the ambivalence of the recipients, coupled with a particular **ability at instrumentalizing assistance from abroad for goals which may have nothing in common with durable development,**

may be considered a key aspect of any cooperation programme, although this dimension is generally very much underestimated by the protagonists of humanitarian activity and technical assistance (e.g., RYF-MAN 2002). As to recent political events in Tajikistan, like the tensions after the arrestations of members of the Nahzat during the weeks preceding the Referendum of June 2003, one should never forget that the OSCE as well as other international organizations established in Dushanbe, and implicated then in the resolution of the conflict between the Islamist party and the Tajik presidency, are now considered locally a full-right protagonist of the political arena. All discourses and actions by Tajik political actors, at least since since 1997 should be replaced in the context of communication strategies aimed at the strongest possible involvement.

1. The Political Substratum

Few attention has been paid, in these pages, to official political practice and discourse, especially those relative to diplomacy and cooperation with donor countries. What we have been trying to do during four months and a half in Tajikistan has been to cast light on some of the **societal and mental structures which underline these practices and discourses**: the balance of antagonistic

6 For a synthetic overview, see for instance DIGARD, HOURCADE, RICHARD, 353-355.

7 For a very recent illustration about the division of collective memory, see Sabine TREBIN-JAC, «Le savoir musical des Ouighours: s'il s'agissait d'ambivalence de la memoire?», in Stephane A. Dudoignon, ed., *Devout Societies vs. Impious States? Transmitting Islamic Learning in Russia, Central Asia, and China through the Twentieth Century* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2004), in print.

forces, the active cultural models (or *lack of cultural models ...*), the strategies (or *lack of strategy ...*) of political leaders and thinkers, whom we have tried to identify, and finally an overall set of unformal practices and negotiations common to the political class of Tajikistan, but usually hidden to outside observers and, it goes without saying, poorly documented in official literature.

For this, we have notably tried to study some of the main political questions of the time - in particular that of relations between the central state and the regions - in the terms in which they were dealt with during this year by various local protagonists, with sensitive variations depending on the identity of their own respective interlocutors. These questions have been studied according to a great variety of protagonists, from the grassroots level⁸ to that of political strategists, with a special attention to the particular manner in which these two levels are mutually articulated - or not - in Tajikistan. So doing, we have always tried to measure the relativity of what was said to us as to one of the possible interlocutors. For that, we have given ourselves the time necessary to check and compare all the assertions which were being made to us, or publicly expressed in different medias, in order not to appear as the mere bearer of any of the protagonists'

words, nor the mere messenger of such or such Tajik institution to such or such donor institution, nor the proponent of a necessarily gentle and creative «society» against a necessarily evil and immobile «state».

This has allowed us to cast light on political demands, thoughts, and practices which remain dominated, since the end of the Soviet period - even among members of the Nahzat - by economic preoccupations of an unquestionable technicity (DUDOLIGNON 1994; 1998). (We will notably evoke the manner in which the question of decentralization is closely associated, in the mind of our various interlocutors, with those, no less actual, of privatization, and with the reform of the tax system with a redistribution of the tax resources at the local level). The present report begins with considerations on the political substratum of Tajikistan at the turn of the 21st century ([A] the overall balance of forces; [B] the contemporary logics of localized political clientelisms, through that of the Nahzat; [C] the political personnel. It continues with an attempt

8 This approach has necessitated very numerous informal meetings, sometimes in difficult conditions (I went as far as interrupting a medical congress in Khujand for questioning the director of the town hospital), which added to long periods of illness in May and June, explain the long delay with which the present report has finally been submitted to CIMERA's direction.

at analysing some key paradigms of policy making in Tajikistan today: [A] *the constant reelaboration, since the last decades of the soviet period, of what we have been calling the «quota system,» for the integration of various, sometimes antagonistic figures and forces into the state apparatus and government organs; [B] some paradoxical effects of foreign technical assistance; [C] the adoption of Perestroika-style legislations deprived of measures of application, or including mutually contradictory articles). Last we will try to sketch some tracks for further country studies ([A] the non-reform of regional power and local communities; [B] a growing Islamo-Christian animosity - to be replaced in the context of a local instrumentation of international organizations of all kinds established in Tajikistan; [C] and a case of multiple: regional, national, economic and political cleavage, that of the Uzbeks of Tajikistan).*

1.1 The balance of forces

The logics of the protagonists in the political arena of Tajikistan cannot be understood without taking into account the clear conscience that each of them has of its respective weigh, possibilities and limitations at present. The balance of forces, marked by an over-

whelming domination of President Rahmonov's Popular-Democratic Party (PDP) and network, is a heritage of the civil war and the peace agreement of June, 1997. The hegemony of the PDP has been largely reinforced during the last years, due to massive assistance to the Tajik government from the international community after the launching of the anti-terrorist coalition in the aftermath of 11 September, 2001 and Tajikistan's demonstrations of loyalty to the coalition at least until the beginning of the US-British intervention in Iraq in Spring, 2003.

Since 1997, multipartism has been gradually introduced again in the political life of Tajikistan, although one can hardly speak of the existence of a real political opposition or alternative in the country. **During the past six years, the higher personnel of former oppositional forces of the Perestroika and civil war periods - the Nahzat and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan - has been partly integrated into the state structures, whether political or economic. As to newly founded parties (the Socialist Party and the Social-Democratic Party), they used to appear until these very last months as mere think-tanks.** Beside their purely elitist character, their absence of mass support, and their amorphous infrastructure (well seen by ABDULLAEV 2003, 5), these new

parties remain devoided of the essential tool of a political organization in Tajikistan: the disposition of armed forces or the possibility to mobilize them in a quick time - such a resource remains specific to the PDP and, to a much lesser extent, to the Nahzat.⁹

A common denomination of all the political organizations of Tajikistan is a total lack of stable and identifiable electoral basis, as well as a lack of strategy for enlarging it. (*The enlarged benevolent activity which has shown so decisive in the political fortune of the now governing reformist Islamist party AKP in Turkey seems to be totally absent from the activity of the Nahzat, which shows mainly pre-occupied in the maintenance of existing ties with its traditional sub-*

stratum from the «Tajik highlands (Kuhistoni tojik)¹⁰» and the Tajik highlanders' migrant communities of the Wakhsh cotton valley - a significant part of which composes now the Tajik migrant manpower in Russia.)¹¹

The present political power still comes out largely from the «Kulabi» faction which has long been considered the main victor of the civil war in December 1992.¹² During this period, however, President Rahmonov has managed to partly restore some authority of the state, and to get rid of the main warlords who had permitted the victory of the «Red» southern militias in the civil war. (*See the very recent arrestation in Moscow, on the request of the Tajik authorities, of the former warlord Yoqub Salimov, the first Minister of the Interior of the Rahmonov presidency, then ambassador of the Tajik Republic in Ankara, and finally the chief of the much lucrative Direction of Customs of Tajikistan, before his fatal participation in the failed coup by Colonel Mahmud Khudoyberdiev in Khujand, in November 1998, which had forced Salimov and his family into exile.*)¹³ President Rahmonov has also managed to put an end to the rivalry of great families and their factions of the late Soviet period (the Khudonazarov's, Osimi's, Karimov's, etc.) for the control of

9 Conversations with Muhiddin Kabiri and Parviz Mullojonov, Dushanbe, June-July 2003.

10 In the Nahzat this denomination designates the higher part of Gharm (now Darband) Valley, the Higher Zerafshan Valley and Higher Mast-Choh area, migrants of Lower Mast-Choh in the Soghd region, and for some part the Khowaling hilly area in Khatlon.

11 See a short biography of Shamsiddin Shamsiddinov, in SATTORI 2003, 87.

12 The term «Kulabization» has been widely in use among the political elite of Tajikistan during the last ten years; e.g., conversation with Dr. Iskandar Asadulloev, a former director of the Institute of Strategic Studies for the Presidency of the Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, early May 2003.

13 Comments in Asia Plus (2003/7/3): 1; Nerui sukhan 22 (2003/7/3): 1; 26 (2003/7/31): 2; for further comments: Marat MAMADSHOEV (interviewer), «Gaffor Mirzoev: Prezident ne khotel teryat' Yakuba ... [Gaffor Mirzoev: The President Did Not Want to Lose Yaqub],» Asia Plus (2003/7/10): 1 & 5.

the Central Committee, then of the Presidency of the Republic.¹⁴ In the same time however, inescapable reversals of alliances have also occurred, sometimes spectacular, which on the long term could undermine the power of the President: some of Emomali Rahmonov's former allies have turned against him, as can be seen for instance through the present opposition of leading imams of the Khatlon region, his former supporters from the very beginning, whence some of his major political partners in the former «Red» coalition, such as the ambitious Mayor of Dushanbe Mamadsaid Ubaydullaev (b. 1952), already appear as potential rivals inside the state and party apparatus.¹⁵

The Kulabi faction, however, has been opened in the meantime to most deserving officers from various geographical backgrounds, most with a Soviet-style professional and political pedigree: as well as the former Prime-Secretary Qahhor Mahkamov (in charge from 1985 to 1991) and most of the local leaders of the last decades of the Soviet period, **the main pillars of the regime are still ingeneers specialists of metallurgy and electricity, cotton production or mine industry, added with a transition through the Komsomol and, for some privileged ones, a stronger political education in the Tashkent Party**

School. (See the biography of the Qurghon-Teppa-born agronomist *Abdumajid Dostiev, vice-president to Rahmonov in 1992-4, now a vice-president of the Lower Chamber of the Parliament, and one of the main strategists of the regime since its very foundation: BASHIRI 2002, 79-80; OLIMOV 2002, 144-5).*

The **enlarged «Kulabi» faction** concentrates in its hands the control over the main resources of the country: the aluminium factory (*more than 250,000 tons a year,¹⁶ which consumes half the electricity produced by the country and has caused so many dramatic electricity cuts shortages last winters*); *the cotton production (ceded for years, by those who control it in the state apparatus, to Swiss companies whose activ-*

ity has caused an over-indebtedment of cultivators, which should hamper for years any kind of reform in this sector [see ICG 2003a]); the extraction of precious and semi-precious stones (a confidential sector, on which it remains difficult to obtain any valuable statistical or cartographic information); and newly discovered oilfields (the symbol of a redistribution of playing cards after a privatization confiscated by the Communist nomenklatura, the state-owned firm Tajik-Gaz has been ruled during last years by the president of the oppositional Democratic Party of Tajikistan). The biography of Saydullo Khayrullaev (born in 1945 in Gharm), an ingeneer in hydrology who has also passed through the Tashkent Party School, and who is since 2000 the President of the Lower Chamber of the Parliament, and since this year the number two of the regime (*he was ubiquitous on the Tajik TV during the weeks preceding the June 2003 referendum*), is characteristic of those technicians who, although not coming from Kulab, but like in his case from «loyal» families of the Gharm valley (*a highland sanctuary of the Nahzat's*), have managed, in spite of «privatization,» to keep in their hands the main assets of the republic. (*See his presidency of the strategic State Committee for Precious Metals in*

14 Conversation with Iskandar Asadullaev (former Director, the Institute of Strategic Studies), Dushanbe, late April 2003.

15 Interview with Amb. Marc Gilbert, then chief of the OSCE mission in Tajikistan, Dushanbe, mid-May 2003. On Friday August 8, the day before our departure from Dushanbe, the appearance of a new private, nation-wide newspaper, *Ruzi nav* [The New Day], was interpreted among leading members of the *Nahzat* as the launching of a «machine of war» by Ubaydulloev for future electoral struggles - the interesting testimony of a state of mind, in a period characterized, as we shall see, by intense political manoeuvres.

16 These are official figures, the real production probably exceeds 300,000 tons a year: conversation with Amb. Marc Gilbert, mid-May 2003; ICG 2003a.

1995-8,¹⁷ then his presidency of the no less strategic State Committee of Agricultural Resources and Agricultural Development in 1998-2000: BASHIRI 2002, 157-8; OLIMOV 2002: 214-5.)

1.2 Localised political clientelisms: the example of the Nahzat

On the side of the opposition, the Nahzat does not seem to have a clear representation of its present electoral weigh, which has never been properly measured and is probably very much overestimated by most observers - who usually do not take into account the massive migration to Russia of many active young men from the large Highlands (*Kuhistoni*) community. (The lack of regular opinion polls does not seem to bother the Nahzat's leaders, neither the officers of the international organizations established in Dushanbe. Such polls, indeed, could appear instrumental in the expansion of a culture of multipartism in Tajikistan, and contribute to reduce the present exclusive showdown of the Presidency and the Islamists - although, as we will still repeat in the current study, the disposal of armed forces, or the ability to mobilize them in a short time still continue to appear today in Tajikistan a matter of survival for any political

force worth of this denomination.)

A «Tajik» political party which has, since its clandestine creation in 1973 (SATTORI 2003, 6) and its official recognition in 1991 limited its action to Tajikistan (ROY 1999) and, inside Tajikistan, to the Highland Tajik communities of Gharm in the East, Mast-Choh in the north and Khowaling in the south, **the Nahzat appears more and more as the specific political instrument of «Tajik Highlanders» and of migrant communities from these Highlands in the Wakhsh basin**, south and south-west of the country, largely devoted to cotton monoculture since the early 1950s. Highlanders still make off a yet unmeasured, but probably considerable portion of Tajik economic migrants to the Russian Federation. **The main preoccupation of the Nahzat seems to be maintaining its present position as the sole real interlocutor of the power, which may drive him to permanent one-upmanship and research of violent confrontation with systematic appeal to the intervention of the OSCE, in order to avoid any further opening of the political system which would allow a reenforcement of newly created and potentially alternative political parties.**

The temptation of violence may become stronger in the next future, since the Nahzat has felt the limits of the PDP's disposition for openness, whence the Tajik Islamist party itself has simultaneously lost a part of its initial legitimacy by its participation in a regime where its position remains largely symbolic. (*The Nahzat has recently lost key positions in the executive power, such as the important Ministry of Economy occupied in 1998-2000 by the influential Davlat Usmon - opponent to Rahmonov in the November 1999 presidential election, in which D. Usmon was forced to participate at the last moment, receiving an official and symbolic amount of 2,1% of expressed votes -; besides, the party counts only for two deputies in the Parliament, including one who is not a member of the Islamist party, but a renegade from ... the PDP.*) During the last three years, the Nahzat has been more and more **challenged by the development of the Hizb at-Tahrir**, a non-violent but radical organization of Near-Eastern origin (e.g., ROY 2002: 200-201), especially active in the Uzbek-peopled districts of northern and western Tajikistan, as well as by ... **the aggressive missionary activity throughout Tajikistan of Evangelist and Baptist Churches**, which have commonly contributed to undermine the

17 On the developments of foreign investment in mine industry, interviews with Tim Dixon, a British businessman active in Tajikistan, Dushanbe, May and June 2003.

Nahzat's prestige and legitimacy inside the country (see *infra* 3/B). Despite its recent loss of influence, the Nahzat has curiously continued to benefit by the solicitude of foreign and international organizations, as the only credible counter-weight to the over-domination of the PDP - a foreign assistance which seems to be aimed at maintaining the political statu quo in the country, although it is more and more badly perceived in the presidency,¹⁸ and among newly created political parties, as well as in the popular base of the Nahzat itself.

One of the numerous specificities of Tajikistan in recent years, if compared with neighbouring Central Asian states, has been the very phenomenon of **multiplication of political parties and organizations**. Six officially registered parties exist today in the country, plus several others (an Agrarian party, the «Wahdat» [Union] Party, etc.) waiting for their official recognition. Beside President Rahmonov's hegemonic PDP, we find two parties with a potentially significant - although poorly quantified - electoral basis: the Communist Party (CP) directed by the Pamir-born electricity ingeneer Shodi Shabdolov (b. 1943; BASHIRI 2002: 317), a historical figure of this organization (*during Perestroika he was heir apparent to Qahhor Mahkamov, another ingeneer, specialist of*

mine industries),¹⁹ and the Nahzat, at this date the only credible oppositional party in Tajikistan. Then come mini-parties more or less closely associated with the PDP and the state apparatus: the Socialist Party (SP) and the Social-Democratic Party (SDP), the personnel of which comes out from the Communist party and the state apparatus, and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), a former oppositional force of the Perestroika and civil war periods which shows from time to time impulses of opposition (*it has officially boycotted the June, 23 Referendum*).

It is stating the obvious to write that most of these organizations share a common political culture: that of the Soviet-time Communist party and Komsomol. An extreme ideological and sociological closeness can be observed, in particular, between the presidential party and the Communists, whence the Socialists also come out of the Soviet Communist appa-

ratus. (*In the past, they had been inspired by Safarali Kenjaev (1943-1999); a potential rival to Rahmonov among the victors of the civil war, and notoriously hostile to the President's policy of higher state executives' appointments, Kenjaev was mysteriously assassinated in Dushanbe in the year of the second presidential election in the history of the country*). Both aging Communists and younger Socialists remain deprived of a charismatic figure, and of an armed force which would help them to represent an alternative to President Rahmonov's PDP. The leader of the still non-registered Agrarian Party, the 55 year-old Hikmatullo Nasriddinov, from Kulab, is himself a former leader of the Communist party in the Khatlan region - not the best guarantee of future diversification of the Tajik political arena.

Moreover, leaders and representatives of political parties which claim to be oppositional use to occupy, sometimes until now, higher positions in various organs of the executive power.²⁰ Scandals have recently aroused around some of these figures, such as the president of the Democratic Party Mahmad-Ruz Iskandarov, the director of the state-owned strategic company Tajik-Gaz,²¹ and Rahmatullo Zoyirov, the founder of the Social-Democratic Party and a close adviser to Presi-

18 Interview with Sayfullo Safarov, vice-director of the Institute of Strategic Studies, Dushanbe, mid-May 2003.

19 On the evolution of the sociological basis of the Communist Party of Tajikistan in the first years after the independence, see the pioneering and unfortunately still unique study by Saodat K. OLIMOVA, «Kommunisticheskaia partiia Tadjikistana v 1992-1994 gg. [The Communist Party of Tajikistan in 1992-1994],» *Vostok* 1996/2: 52-62.

20 See the analysis by Suhrob SHARIPOV (a politologist generally favourable to President Rahmonov), «Politicheskie partii RT: na pervyivtoroi rasschitaetes'!», *Asia Plus* (2003/2/6): 4.

dent Rahmonov, until his recent resignation from this position.²² In May 2003, another scandal had occurred: that of those officials of the Communist party who, in order to preserve their personal career in the state apparatus, had also taken the card of President Rahmonov's PDP.²³

1.3 The political personnel

This phenomenon of double political affiliation characterises the idea that most Tajik officials have of political «engagement.» The erratic attitude of most non-governmental parties before the referendum suggests, at the same time, the existence of fierce pressures from the PDP and from the state apparatus for the conformation of other political forces to the official lines. (See, in particular, the repeated threats of re-opening the hostilities formulated by higher Tajik officials against the *Nahzat*, in May and early June 2003.) These pressures have made difficult, if not impossible, the reinforcement of the block or front of «oppositional» parties which had been sketched in the months preceding the June referendum - although the obvious lack of interest among voters may also explain the weak commitment of political parties in this affair. The current reform of the electoral law and code for the 2005 parliamentary, and 2006 presidential elections, under the aegis of the OSCE's ex-

perts, may allow in the short term a (slightly) stronger representation of existing registered parties in the Parliament. At the same time, the appearance of new leaders, and the eventual transformation of political parties into mobilisation tools at the service of these figures may on the longer term bring some change to the overall rules of the game. Of course the scanty Tajik press is still in the hands of a little amount of lob-

bies closely linked with leading economic sectors, and remains mostly characterized by its non-profitability - a common feature of many periodicals of the post-Soviet era, including leading Russia journals, which in the Tajik case can explain occasional demonstrations of «venality.²⁴» However, one may not totally exclude the possibility of a quick transformation of several of some recently appeared Tajik newspapers into «machines of war» for alternative candidates - as suggest the recent rumors on the creation of *Ruzi naw* by a lobby favourable to Mamadsaid Ubaydullaev's alleged presidential designs.

A prominent political figure like the Kazakhstan-born, Ukraine-educated young lawyer Rahmatullo Zoyirov (b. 1958) - a man of higher Sufi ancestry, still another strong and significant difference with most of his potential rivals in Tajikistan -, may appear in the perspective of the 2013 presidential election²⁵ a credible alternative to the 50/60 year-old ingeneers with a Communist background and a Tashkent Party School education (Ubaydullaev, Khayrullaev, Dostiev, etc.) who are still over-dominating the PDP, the state apparatus, and the integrated economic system of Tajikistan. However, this is not the scenario according to which the system is supposed to change in a predictable future. **Since the signature**

21 Khurshid ATOVULLO, «GKChP dar hizbi demokrat «Tojkgaz»-ro besarvar naguzosht [The Coup in the Democratic Party Did Not Deprive Tajikgaz of Its Leader],» *Tojikiston* 30 [291] (2003/6/24): 5.22 Rajab MIRZO [interviewer], «Charo Zoyirov az mushovirii prezident dast kashid? [Why Did Zoyirov Give Up His Position as an Adviser to the President?],» *Nerui sukhan* 22 (2003/7/3): 4-5.

23 See for instance the anonymous paper and interview: «Komunisty: na dvukh stul'yakh ne sidet' [Communists: One Armchair per Person!],» *Asia Plus* (2003/4/3): 2; «Karim Abdulov: Fraktsiiai HKT az tanqid megurezad [Karim Abdulov: The Fraction of the TCP Flees from Critics],» *Tojikiston* 24 [285] (2003/6/12): 5.

24 On the overall practice of subsidized advertisement papers, including papers paid by international organizations established in Dushanbe: conversations with Andre Loersch, media expert of CIMERA, Dushanbe, early August 2003.

25 Nobody in Tajikistan accepts the idea that a real challenge may be opposed to Rahmonov in the presidential election planned for 2006: see among others (although this author is not always among the most non-conformists in the Tajik press, which allows us some doubt on the present serenity of the power, less than three years before the election) Suhrob SHARIPOV, «Tadzhikskii referendum: izvlechem uroki [The Tajik Referendum: Let's Take Its Lessons],» *Asia Plus* (2003/6/25): 4.

of the General Peace Agreement of 1997, we are situated in an overall institutional logics where representative organs of power, and the government itself, led by the pale Prime-Minister Oqil Oqilov, have been deprived of any political significance for the exclusive benefit of the presidency. Although the United Tajik Opposition has been given since 1997 an apparently significant 30% quota in the governmental positions, most of political power has been concentrated in the presidential office, depriving oppositional leaders of their initial share (ABDULLAEV 2003, 4).

This process of shift of the executive power from the cabinet of ministers to the presidential office, which is out of any kind of control from the parliament, has been characteristic of the extreme flexibility of the Tajik political system, a worth heir to the Soviet institutions where one and the same constitution used to allow spectacular movings of the centre of power from one place to another (e.g. LEWIN 2003: 429-439). One may add that, on a slightly longer duration, in Soviet time the Central Committee of the CP, whose building is now occupied by the Presidency of the Republic, has always been exerting a tutelage over the Cabinet of Ministers. In this matter the shift of a part of central executive power from the Presidency to-

wards the Ministries during short-lived coalitions (with non-Communist parties in 1992, with the Khujandi leader Abdumalik Abdullojonov in 1993) appears in retrospect as mere peripeties, before a kind of return to the norm with a more usual concentration of decision power in the hands of what is called today the Presidency.

Moreover the country, for the moment, knows no division between the executive, the regional executive, the legislative, and the judicial powers, which allows a limited amount of people to hold all the political and economic might in their hands. Even the universities are totally submitted to the authority of the Presidency, which makes still more difficult than in the past the appearance of an autonomous academic intelligentsia. Tajikistan remains deprived of a really independent Constitutional Court, although the separation of powers was one of the formal goals of the confuse referendum of June 2003.²⁶ The relative weakness of the Tajik press deprives the country of any

kind of real counter-power, despite sensitive openings since early 2003.

These recent changes have been symbolised by the appearance, in February of this year, of the radical independent newspaper *Nerui sukhan* [«The Strength of Word»], an organ with a rich history in clandestinity, now edited at 500 copies by Mukhtar Boqizoda, the president of the Association for the Defense of Journalists, and distributed on Dushanbe's main avenues. Published by a staff of 5 persons in all, *Nerui sukhan* has immediately become the main canal of written protestation throughout Tajikistan.²⁷ As we have already suggested, the appearance on August 8, 2003 of the new private-owned, nation-wide newspaper *Ruzi Naw* [The New Day] was interpreted in Tajik oppositional circles as the first step of the mayor of the capital, Mamadsaid Ubaydullaev, towards a candidacy to the next presidential election in 2006 - an interpretation characteristic of the climate which prevails now in Tajikistan, where a relatively great variety of poorly diffused, but abundantly commented newspapers has been enhancing the role of rumors in the making of an embryonic public opinion. The impact of recent innovations remain, in fact, limited by the weak circulation of the press. (*The amount of printed copies of the most important non-commercial*

26 R. ZOYIROV, «Izmeniat' konstitutsiiu neobkhodimo v interesakh naroda [Changing the Constitution Is A Necessity for the Sake of the People],» *Asia Plus* (2003/3/13): 2.

27 The pessimistic Report on the Media situation in Tajikistan by Andre LOERSCH and Mark GRIGORIAN (Geneva: Citera, October 2000, 27 p.), although of an extreme acuteness on the dark period 1993-2000, should be offered, by the same authors, a second volume on more recent developments.

*Russian-language newspaper of Tajikistan, Asia Plus, has fallen from 10,000 to 5,000 during the last five years.)*²⁸

Despite such slight changes, the leading impression remains that of a low level of political education, and general lack of technicians of public life among the officials of political parties, government, and public institutions. **An overall brain drain of specialists from these institutions towards international organizations recently established in Tajikistan has been generally observed, and often deplored by our interlocutors, local and foreign; this phenomenon can be considered one of the significant deregulating side effects, among the political and intellectual elites of the country, of the massive influx of international technical assistance to Dushanbe during the last two years.** The demand for more «specialists» of law and government, in the parliament and the political parties, has been a moto of the meetings of party leaders and advisers at the OSCE during the spring and summer 2003.²⁹

The Nahzat has delegated to the Parliament its only lawyer and former president, Muhammad-Sharif Himmatzoda (*b. 1951, also an engineer, with a later education in law and government at the University of Peshawar - an Islamic equiva-*

lent to the Tashkent Party School? - during his exile in Pakistan from 1993 to 1997). So we cannot exclude that the Nahzat deprived itself of a precious help during the sessions of the commission for the reform of the election system. During the meetings of the commission at the OSCE, the lawyer Rahmatullo Zoyirov, the President of the newly recognized Social-Democratic party, who is graduated from the Kiev Academy of Law, has had no difficulty to appear as a judicial expert of international standard, although showing few interest, if at all, for existing rules in European, North American, and other democratic countries. *(The only model provided up by him till now has been that of the Federation of Russia, and the election of a State Duma still dominated by a hegemonic party submitted to the authority of President Putin.)*³⁰

One question remains: who, and where are the strategists, the think-

ers of the current reforms, and opposition to these reforms? In the government and its various organs? In the political parties? In the international organizations present in Tajikistan? Or in the local NGOs which have been mushrooming in Dushanbe, with international support, during the last six years, with a special vigour since 2001? Inside the state apparatus, a first echelon can be differentiated: that of the president Rahmonov himself who, although sometimes considered a mere «wedding's general,»³¹ has proved able to change pragmatically the alliance systems on which his power used to lie down, every time it was felt necessary.

Such an unexpected political instinct has probably been fueled by the pillars of the regime and a handful of advisers (some officials like Dostiev, and specialists like Suhrob Sharipov or the mysterious, anti-conformist high-ranking economist who signs papers in the Tajik press under the pen-name «Anvar Kamolov» [*infra note 47*]). The president benefits from the fact that **most officials come out of the Komsomol system: the ideological differentiation remains too weak, and the taste for consensus too high inside the ruling class for bringing any risk of open schism inside its ranks (Zoyirov, when referring, in a purely rhe-**

28 Conversation with Andre Loersch, Dushanbe, early August 2003.

29 The author's participation in the meeting of the Commission for the reform of the electoral system, Dushanbe, OSCE, 5 June 2003.

30 Meeting of the same commission, 26 June 2003; on the referendum, see the detailed paper by Rahmatullo ZOYIROV, «Vozrazheniia i predlozheniia [Objections and Proposals],» *Vechernii Dushanbe* 16 [280] (2003/4/18): 8-9.

31 In Russian: general svad'by, a grotesque figure of Anton Chekhov and other late 19th-century Russian playwrights: interview with a local officer of the OSCE, Dushanbe, May 2003.

torical way, to the German or Swedish Social-Democracy, remains an exception). **Moreover, all these peoples are united by a strong «counter-revolutionary» solidarity,³² reinforced by clientelistic relationship:** in spite of the increasing roles of political agencies with a NGO status, many of these new structures remain dependent on the Presidency and its numerous advisers for the allowance of international grants. Besides, the venality of most public offices, beginning with ministerial positions, reinforces the inter-personal relationship between the members of the executive power and their common benefactor: President Rahmonov himself - as in the early 20th-century Emirate of Bukhara, if such an anachronical comparison can be allowed: then the same venality of charges, or the payment of huge fines by the detainers of the main civil, religious and military offices, used to draw the same links of inter-dependence between the sovereign and the first circles of political power [DUDOIGNON 2003].) A methodological parenthesis, if allowed: through such a comparison with a past and allegedly traditionalist society - a common feature of area studies, especially when Islamicate societies are concerned - should not serve as an ideological tool for underlying the archaism of Central Asian societies, vs. imported mod-

ernism: as we have tempted to suggest in the above-quoted study on the Bukharan Emirate, the very logics of political clientelisms - a common feature of modern societies, although they are usually underestimated in political studies on «developed» societies³³ - was then deeply affected by that of the Russian domination on Central Asia; in this framework of a functionalist, not culturalistic, analysis, it is sometimes interesting to put in perspective the clientelistic systems of one and the same region of the world over different, although close periods of history.

A second echelon of expertise is

32 Conversation with Sa'dullo Safarov, Dushanbe, May 2003.

33 For new, iconoclastic approaches, see Pierre TAFANI, *Les clientele politiques en France* (Paris: Editions du Rocher, 2003).

34 See for instance a bright comparative sociological study on youth in Tajikistan and in Uzbekistan, ordered by the UNESCO to the Sharq Research Center of Dushanbe, and promptly forgotten by the UNESCO itself soon after its publication in the summer 2002: conversation with Muzaffar Olimov, Director of the Sharq Research Center, Dushanbe, October 2002.

35 The Moscow-educated, well-known to CIMERA politologist Parviz MULLOJONOV in the Public Committee, and the politologist Dr. Abduali TOIROV in the OSCE are both considered close to the former opposition parties of the Perestroika and early independence periods; the historian Muzaffar OLIMOV and the sociologist Saodat OLIMOVA in the Sharq Research Center are sometimes considered more conservative, although all of these scholars active in the political field remain remarkable by their courageous independence of thought, and their often iconoclastic inquiries. Significantly enough, none of them has for the moment managed to acquire a real audience among the ruling circles, nor among the greater public in Tajikistan.

made of mid-aged Tajik political and social scientists who have cut off their former ties with a rotten Academy of Sciences in the mid-1990s, and have been working since then in a limited number of private centres and NGOs financed directly (*i.e.*, *not through the Tajik Presidency, nor its agencies*) through grants from abroad (*mainly from the USA*), or in international organizations based in Dushanbe. These scholars have exerted an undirect, although not neglectable influence on the course of events, partly through their publications (*although the latter remain for the most part ignored by Tajik authorities*),³⁴ mainly through their participation in the multifold working groups and seminars on topics as different as the relations between the central state and the region, or the current reform of the election system of Tajikistan, which were being multiplied throughout Tajikistan since the 1997 General Peace Agreement. We may deplore the lack of audience of these activists of their own among the greater public inside Tajikistan; the responsibility of such a lack of echoe must be attributed in most cases to the Western organizations which finance them, and rarely take into account this specific aspect of public activity in Central Asian states.³⁵

As to the Institute of Strategic Studies, it could be recalled «Potemkin

Villages, Inc.» Most literature which comes out of this institution do not show outstandingly original, a majority of its experts having abandoned dialectical materialism for various categories of Western political correctness, in the intention of bringing more attention from donor institutions. Most of the researchers of the ISS seem lacking real convictions, and capable of defending any kind of position, or its exact contrary in the following quarter of an hour. It goes without saying that most declare themselves ready to write any study on any subject, including even decentralization, in a very short time (*elementary politeness and our projects of future stays in Tajikistan forbid us to give concrete illustrations of these tendencies*). If the Institute of Strategic Studies must be the main source of information on the country for the presidency, many attitudes and decision of the power become then understandable.

A third echelon is made of overnumerous ideologists educated in the humanities, who are in charge of purveying the overall philosophical legitimation of the regime. Deprived of any control on the economic apparatus and of a real influence on the course of political affairs, they fully rely on the meagre subsidies given to them by the presidential apparatus. The members of this plethorical

intelligentsia dispute each other the favor of the Prince, and that of rare foreign organizations (among which the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran) through generally abstruse quibbles on the origins of the Tajik people, which carry on early 20th-century Soviet teachings on the «ethnogeneses» of the peoples of the USSR. (*See for instance the harsh polemics of the last years between the Darwaz-born historian Rahim Masov [b. 1939], a proponent of the restrictive southern «Bactrian» identity of the Tajiks, and the Bukhara-born, pan-Iranist literary critic Muhammadjan Shakuri [b. 1926] [MASOV 2001, TABAROV 2003, IBN QURBON 2003].*) These academic intellectuals are the heirs of those abundant literati who, in the last decades of the Soviet period, were in charge of shaping, and propagating the collective proletarian identity of each national republic. It is remarkable that nor the overall sociology of academic circles, neither the ideological framework of their disputes have been substantially affected since the last decades of the Soviet period - today's leading seventy-year-old scholars are those fifty-year-old ones who had taken power during Perestroika. In spite of official support, and the reinforcement of the Soviet theory of nationality, the main upheaval in matter of academ-

ic life seems to be the growing limitation of these circles' own audience throughout the country, thanks to the quick escheat of the school system, and the striking lack of social prestige of everything linked with science.

In the religious field, one can only observe in Tajikistan the absence of a properly educated clergy which would be able to give responses to challenges such as that of the Hizb at-Tahrir or that of reformed Christian missionary activity. (*The most active, listened, and promising ideologists and strategists of the Nahzat are non-religious peoples: Ibrohim Rahnamo, an adviser to the former mufti and Islamist moderator Hojji Akbar Turajonzoda, and Muhiddin Kabiri, Sayyid Abdulloh Nuri's adviser - although Kabiri seems now tempted to use the NGO that he presides, and his personal ties in Europe for taking some distance with the Islamic party, and for playing a more personal card: a strategy perfectly conform to that of Tajikistan's political institutions, but the contrary of what was probably waited from him by his European partners, probably not very well informed of the specific functioning of these institutions since the mid-1990s*). **Another peculiarity of present Tajikistan is the very weak theological**

differentiation between the revolutionary proponents of the Nahzat and more quietist religious leaders (e.g., in *Khujand the still active lineage of Abdulloh Kalonzoda, the Mufti of Tajikistan during the Brejnev era*): both have read the same books, and advocate for instance the orthodox thought of the founder of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi mystical order, the 17th-century northern Indian religious thinker Ahmad Sirhindi, alias Imam Rabbani.³⁶

There is, moreover, a deep generational and qualitative gap between the generation of the locally famous neo-traditionalist Hanafi theologian Domullo Hindustoni (d. 1989), who was active during the second half of the Soviet period, and his much younger, mostly undirect disciples and followers of the Nahzat, whose ethical and intellectual education seems very weakly different from that of a handful of «official» mullahs educated in the same years. In this matter the gap between an old, now vanishing generation of whether «official» or «parallel» ulama, on the first hand, and on the second hand a largely secularized generation of «baby-boom» mullahs educated during the last years of the Soviet system seems culturally more significant than that between the young proponents of such or such tendency of re-Islamization. (See *BABADJANOV & KAMILOV 2001, passim*;

OLIMOVA & OLIMOV, 2003, passim; the latter have noticed current problems for authority building among the religious people - a characteristic which would suffice, if needed, to differentiate early 21st-century Tajikistan from pre-revolutionary Iran . . .).³⁷

2. Some Paradigms of Policy Making

2.1 A «quota system!»

It is universally admitted in Tajikistan that the current political schemes are contrary to any kind of change, and nobody seriously - or publicly, which is not exactly the same thing - admits the idea of the possibility of a

political alternance of any kind at the summit of the state for the decade to come.³⁸ This apparent immobility of the political scenery has been unexpectedly reinforced by the gesture of the international community, first after the peace agreement of 1997 (with the mainly symbolic opening of the state structures to a limited number of representatives of what was then the armed opposition), second after the launching of the current «crusade» against terrorism (with pressures on the government for further opening of the political system, and on opposition forces for more moderation).

The present governmental «coalition» repeats, more or less, the schemes of a first coalition set up in the spring 1992: the opposition parties had then got a share in the Communist government, for the most part in the shape of the «ministries of talk» (THOM 1989), whence privatisation of the assets of the Tajik CP and state was already going on for several years in secrecy, with no control on it by representatives of oppositional forces. Even during those fatal months of 1992, at the eve of the civil war, a regime dominated by ingeneers of cotton culture, metallurgy and mine industries, educated in the main party schools of the CPUS had managed to maintain its control over the key resources and political

36 Conversations with Hojji Domullo "Ibodullo Kalonzoda, vice-khatib of the Soghd region, Khujand, mid-April 2003, Muhammad-Sharif Himmatzoda, vice-president of the Nahzat, Dushanbe, early June 2003.

37 See also the author's conversations with Sayyid Ahmad Qalandar, director of the «Sipehr» research centre and journal, Dushanbe, June and early August 2003.

38 In the weeks preceding the referendum, at a time when the Nahzat publicly advocated the «No», the present author jokingly asked Muhiddin Kabiri, political adviser to Sayyid Abdulloh Nuri, founding father and president of the Islamist party, what would happen if the result of the referendum would be favorable to the Nahzat, and President Rahmonov would decide to retire. The answer was simple: M. Kabiri answered that in such a most unpredictable case, Sayyid Abdulloh Nuri would refuse the responsibility of government, and appeal to Rahmonov to come back to power. Interview with M. Kabiri, Dushanbe, early May 2003.

positions of the country in spite of endless, hostile street demonstrations. This may explain why today the leaders of the former opposition, in the Nahzat and the Democratic Party in particular, are still much more preoccupied in the reform, or re-making of privatization, which was crucial to them fifteen years ago, than in problems such as the administrative relations between the central state and the regions.

The composition of the parliament since the 2000 general elections provides a clear illustration of the balance of forces - in fact an unbalanced hegemony of the PDP, to which can be added the 6 sieges of the Communist party, against only 2 for the Nahzat. The itinerary of Atobek Amirbekov (b. 1950), a founder of the «La'li Badakhshan» Pamiri autonomous movement, in the opposition to the Communist power in the years 1991-1993, now a deputy to the Parliament (OLIMOV 2002: 126-7), provides us an illustration of the destiny the Rahmonov presidency proposes to salient figures of oppositional parties.

In fact, several opposition parties have been advocating for long a line of «cooperation» with the Rahmonov government. Such is the case of the Democratic Party, after first years in the opposition.³⁹ As to the Nahzat, a tendency has always existed inside this party,

since its recognition in 1991, for cooperation with the state apparatus. The now well-known to us ingeneer and lawyer Muhammad-Sharif Himmatzoda, the president of the party from 1991 to 1999, has long advocated cooperation with the Communist regime and then with the Kulabi faction,⁴⁰ against the financist Davlat Usmon, an ephemeral minister of the Economy in 1997-1999 and the candidate of the Nahzat to the presidential election that year, beforehand a proponent of confrontation with Communist authorities. *(The temptation has long existed in the Nahzat, since Perestroika, for an alliance with the Communists against the other political forces of Tajikistan. It must be noticed that in the late 1980s, the KGB itself was favorable to such a line of rapprochement with the Islamists, in order to marginalize the then aggressive political or-*

ganizations of the nationalist intelligentsia.⁴¹ The current policy of the party for appearing as the only alternative force to the Rahmonov regime can be considered a continuation of this revolutionary strategy.)

As to the government, it has long inaugurated **a tradition of selective engagement of alternative and non-conformist political figures into the executive apparatus.** Some people see here a mere attempt at «harmonisation and stabilisation of the political sphere,» and attribute this attempt to the «pragmatism» of the head of the state?⁴² Such an explanation, however flattering for President Rahmonov, does not take into account the **capacity of the regime born from the Soviet period and the civil war to integrate those alien elements which are estimated too dynamic to be let out of state structures.** *(Muhiddin Kabiri himself, today the main political adviser to Sayyid "Abdullah Nuri, founder and President of the Nahzat, was invited by the government to integrate the state apparatus after his return from Moscow in 1997.)*

This system, enlarged to representatives of political parties, could be called the «quota system.»⁴³ Its history is longer than that of independent Tajikistan, since its roots can be found in the politics of the CPUS in

39 M. ISKANDAROV [president of the DPT], «Nasha tsel' - sozidatel'noe sotrudnichestvo [Our Goal Is a Constructive Cooperation],» Asia Plus (2003/3/5): 5.

40 Interview with Muhammad-Sharif HIMMATZODA, Dushanbe, mid-June 2003.

41 Conversation with Sulton HAMAD, a Gharborn former collaborator of the KGB, the former chief of the intelligence service of the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan during its exile in Afghanistan, now an independent journalist and memorialist, Dushanbe, late June 2003. See also DUDOIGNON 1994.

42 SHARIPOV, «Politicheskie partii RT», 4.

43 A denomination borrowed from a Tajik officer of the OSCE, our regular interlocutor in Dushanbe, Summer 2003.

the last decades of the Soviet period. It consists in the **selective aggregation to the hegemonic party and to the state structure of a limited amount of prominent figures from various political movements and forces. This is probably the way the system will (try to) perpetuate itself, without big changes, during the next decade, at least until the 2013 presidential election, if this process is not interrupted in the meantime by a major landslide linked, for instance, to some external factor.** In spite of tensions, sometimes inside the Kula-bi faction itself (see the overall fear of Mamadsaid Ubaydullaev's personal ambitions among both «opposition» and official circles), a fragile consensus exists today, among political leaders of Tajikistan, including former oppositional leaders, on this global evolution, or lack of evolution; discontent is mainly expressed, for the moment, on precise points such as the remaking of privatisation and the redistribution of political authority at the local jamoat and mahalla level - two postulates essential, however, for any structural change in the longer term, although they deserve, curiously enough, little attention from donor states and other foreign partners of the Tajikistani authorities.

Despite guarantees given by the 1997 peace agreement and efforts by international organizations (the

OSCE, in particular) at opening the Tajik political society, **only three parties seem in situation of playing some role in the next future: Rahmonov's PDP, the Communist party, and the Islamist party (the Nahzat). The Communists and Islamists, two organizations with a limited but stable clientele, will probably satisfy themselves with the unequal sharing of state power and, to a lesser extent, economic assets. As to «little» parties (the Perestroika-born Democrats, and the Socialists and Social-Democrats still deprived of an electoral past), their personnel and most of their programmes come out from the CP and PDP's ranks and political culture. In the next political campaigns, these parties will probably appear as mere prolongations of the hegemonic presidential camp. All the strategy of these parties seems to be oriented towards the creation of a niche inside the state apparatus and state owned economic system, rather than the enlargement of their still inexistent, or poorly quantified electoral basis.**

An illustration of this phenomenon can be given by the case of Rahmatullo Zoyirov, a bright lawyer (according to Tajikistan's criteria), an undisputable virtuoso of manoeuvres inside the apparatus, and the president of a little Social-Democratic par-

ty with a rather erratic ideology. (*Advocating the suspension of taxes in order to favour the appearance of SME, as Zoyirov did in a recent past, can hardly appear specific to Social-Democracy.*) A future adviser to President Rahmonov, R. Zoyirov created his party in 1999, which immediately brought attention to him. What his case suggested then is that **the creation of a political party, or the threat to create one, far from bringing obstacles to a successful political career, may on the contrary become a key instrument for personal promotion of a leader, or of a limited group of people inside the state apparatus.** (*From this point of view, Tajikistan, and former Soviet Republics, do not constitute exceptions: see the successful threat formulated by the French Socialist leader Jack Lang in 2001 of participating in the Paris municipal election where the Socialists already had a candidate, for getting a ministerial post that Lang effectively received very soon; or more recently, the threat by Valery Giscard d'Estaing to participate in the French 2002 presidential election, and to hamper President Jacques Chirac's chances of reelection, if he did not receive the presidency of the European Con-*

vention, that Giscard finally got thanks to President Chirac's efforts.)

«Little» parties in Tajikistan express no pretention to win elections: they should merely serve in the future as a reservoirs of young political leaders, as the Komsomol used to do during the Soviet period.⁴⁴

These parties, as well as the Communists and the Islamists in most cases, satisfy themselves with the sporadic denunciation of alleged «defects» (Rus. *nedostatki*) in the administration of the hegemonic party.⁴⁵ The content of their press remembers more and more that of the Komsomol's during Perestroika. Possible federation of insatisfactions can occur on questions such as the failure of privatization, which has been covered by confiscated in Tajikistan by corrupted figures of the state apparatus and several mafia groups, and resulted in the ruin of many of those enterprises concerned.⁴⁶

Too much attention has been given in the past to the Islamist movements in Tajikistan, not enough to the global functioning, since the last decades of the soviet period, of the Tajik state, inside which the Tajik Islamists of the Nahzat have found a kind of niche of their own, which should be progressively, and reasonably enlarged in the next future in the framework of the quota system, notably

through the parliamentary elections in 2005.

Nobody should nevertheless forget that, behind the overall curtain of a consensual culture inherited from a recent past, all the political forces in presence characterize themselves, like the CPUS at the time of its glory, by a high «fissionability» and permanent research of alliances between antagonistic coteries (LEWIN 2003: 309) - which makes its observation and prediction by outsiders a particularly thankless exercise. Whilst the Tajik Communist Party has given way, after independence, to the creation of the late Safarali Kenjaev's Socialist Party (*the Mensheviks?*) and Emomali Rahmonov's hegemonic Popular-Democratic Party (*the Bolsheviks?*), the latter is for the time to come under constant threat of scission/coalition under the efforts of faction or party leaders such as Ubaydullaev and the «political adviser» Zoyirov - for whom the conquest of an electoral basis is probably, for the moment, a least preoccupation. The Nahzat itself, according to the same political culture and logic, is very much exposed to permanent inner scission of its leadership, and autonomization of

some of its figures - like that of Mu-hiddin Kabiri, another «political adviser» who, as we suggested earlier, seems currently tempted to use his European connections for taking some distance with the direction of the Islamist party, and for playing his own card inside the overall system (*a system which now includes the international organizations of all kinds present in Tajikistan, or linked through regular partnership with Tajikistani institutions*). **These tactics of autonomization of individual leaders, a specificity of the period immediately posterior to the referendum of June 2003 may bring significant changes in the alliance systems which have been prevailing grosso modo inside Tajikistan's political apparatus since 1997. However, in spite of upheavals such as the relative freedom of speech enjoyed by Tajik mass-medias since the beginning of this year, this tactical changes will not necessarily affect the overall logic of these systems.**

2.2 The erratic, limited, but salutary foreign intervention

Such evolutions, it may be remembered, could not be observed without the strong presence in Tajikistan of the international community, and its strong pressures on the central power in Dushanbe. Until now, the Tajik authori-

44 Marat MAMADSHOEV [interviewer], «R. Zoyirov: demokratiya yavlyetsya usloviey a ne sledstviem razvitiya [Democracy Is a Condition, Not a Result of Development],» *Asia Plus* (2003/1/9): 4.

45 ISKANDAROV, «Nasha tsel' - sozidatel'noe sotrudnichestvo,» 5.

46 Ibid.

ties have perfectly negotiated the unpredictable, sudden and probably short-term solicitude shown by foreign powers for their country after the rise of the Taliban in a first step, then in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 - at a time when, it should be remembered, most Western companies and banks were preparing their withdrawal from Central Asia Such a strategic reversal must remember us the superficiality and versatility of Western commitment in the region. This specific commitment has exerted locally deep deregulating effects. Among the latter, we may not forget some favourable influences on the relative and still very limited opening of the political game. An example of these influences can be given by the role played in Tajikistan, during the last six years, by the OSCE Mission, which appears to many as the sole real guarantee of the new political order. *(After the arrestation, in early June 2003, of Shamsiddin Shamsiddinov, a vice-president of the Nahzat from highland Mast-Choh and a founder of the Islamist party's branch in the Soghd region, the direction of the party appealed not to the Tajik state, but to the OSCE representation in Dushanbe.)*

However the role played by international organizations illustrates the

fragility of the overall peace process, and of the inter-Tajik dialogue. The threats formulated by members of the presidential apparatus against the Nahzat, and conversely by Sayyid Abdulloh Nuri against the regime at the tribune of the party congress on the Reconciliation Day, remember a recent past of confrontation. As the same time, the highly declarative character of these confrontations between the Nahzat and the Presidency may remember to us that they are intended towards observers of international organizations, which have become a full protagonist of Tajikistan's political arena. Nevertheless, these organizations, although intimately implicated in the political processes, have rarely proved capable of exerting a real influence on the very logics of the state apparatus in Tajikistan, especially on the implementation of the quota system as it has been developing during more than a decade of independence, according to schemes experimented under the guidance of security organs during the last decades of the Soviet period.

It is true that international organizations and foreign NGOs which have

47 Anvar KAMOLOV [pseud.], «Inostrannaia pomoshch': plusy i minusy [The Foreign Assistance: Pluses and Minuses],» *Asia Plus* (2003/2/6): 5; the author, an economist, is a high ranking official who regularly writes, under pseudonyms, on the economic situation of Tajikistan in the local press; we unfortunately did not manage to identify this interesting figure during our stay in Tajikistan.

acquired a foothold in Tajikistan have lost, during the last years, a considerable part of the moral credit that they initially enjoyed in the country. **The non-coordinated and often redundant offer of technical assistance has accentuated the attitude of ambivalence of the Tajik authorities**, which had a long habit of dealing with contradictory and un-consequent demands from Moscow during the late Soviet period. **If the multiplication of donor organizations has had some mechanically positive impacts, especially on the pacification and on the relative opening of the political game, however the redundant character of that offer, the dispersion of resources, the lack of coordination, the lack of knowledge of the institutional framework in Tajikistan, the weakness of these foreign organizations' local partners, whether governmental or non-governmental, have complicated local perceptions of foreign assistance, whence they were permitting the most conservative segments of the state apparatus and economic system to elaborate means of resistance to change, allowing numerous members of this new nomenclatura to use these new incoming resources for building fortunes sometimes considerable.** *(In the course of the past fifteen years, one could observe an interesting*

reversal of stereotypes about Tajikistan's nouveaux riches - the «New Tajiks,» Tojikhoi naw -: focused during a long time by the vox populi on petty merchants accused of illicit commercial activity, these stereotypes now concern mainly those members of the nomenclatura who notoriously misuse their position in the apparatus for diverting international assistance towards non-governmental structures created for this goal.)

Moreover, **most foreign NGOs active in Tajikistan are, in fact, intimately linked, for their survival, to Western governmental agencies** and fundings, a general trend in the humanitarian business since a decade (RYFMAN 1999: 114-129) - which make most western NGOs present in Tajikistan appear and act, in fact, like what should be called «MGOs»: Mainly Governmental Organizations (in French «OMG»: *organisations moulte gouvernementales*). This characteristic is significant for our purpose, since **these links often oblige these NGOs to act exclusively at the most official, governmental level, whence they have to deal with the ambivalent attitude and duplicity of most local partners from the government, the state apparatus and the presidential party, with very few real possibilities of action and effect on the**

local civil society - which may be, indeed, the last preoccupation of most European or Northern American Foreign Ministries. (*When asked why, although his party is preoccupied more in privatization than in decentralization, it has regularly participated in CIMERA's programmes on the relations between the centre and the regions, of which he and his party do not care very much at present, Muhammad-Sharif Himmatzoda, the vice-president of the Nahzat, answers: «Because, guys, that was a condition for obtaining your grants!»*)⁴⁸

Further losses of credit have been endured locally by international organizations after promises of massive funding were not fulfilled in reality, which has contributed to fuel distrust and discontent among the Tajik authorities as well as population.⁴⁹ It is true that **a real will for a radical change in Tajikistan can hardly be discerned among donor countries.**⁵⁰ «On the contrary, the idea of an evolutionary development of reforms, the supposed support and confidence of the population, the implementation of post-privatization

programmes, the creation of an attractive image of the country for investors, the actual stimulation and technical armament of the small and medium production potential, etc. all appeared out of the priorities of the government as well as of the donors themselves.»⁵¹

If we add to these considerations the lack of any real follow-up of most assistance files, money being distributed with no great care for its real attribution and, in another register, the contradictory action of Western companies (see for instance the impact of Swiss companies on the ever-growing indebtedness of Tajikistan's cotton cultivators and on the subsequent non-reformability of this economic sector;⁵² the more recent impact of the activity of French companies on the ever-growing dependence of Tajikistan on its notoriously non-rentable giant aluminium factory), we get an idea the paradoxical way Western influence can be perceived locally. All these realities have deeply influenced the paradigms of political thought and activity in Tajikistan during the last five years of further desovietization and rapprochement with the West. A special field of activity has appeared: that of the permanent reformulation and conformation of these paradigms for Western donor states and their agencies in Tajikistan.

48 Interview of M.-Sh. Himmatzoda, Dushanbe, mid-June 2003.

49 ICG 2003a; the author's informal interview with Jacob von WEIZSACKER, World Bank delegate in charge of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, early May 2003.

50 ICG 2003b.

51 KAMOLOV, 5.

52 ICG 2003a.

It remains that international organizations and NGOs present in Tajikistan have played a key role in the shaping of a dynamics of inter-Tajik dialogue. Whatever may be the concrete result of such or such specific programme, manifestations like the multiparty meetings organised under the aegis of the OSCE about the current reform of the electoral system, or by CIMERA on decentralization have played a crucial role in the last years in the shaping of a constructive dialogue between various protagonists of Tajikistan's political arena. The main result of such meetings has up till now lied less in their concrete results - however crucial may show the future electoral reglamentation elaborated under the auspices of the OSCE -, than in the dynamics and sense of common, if not public interest that they have contributed to create inside a nascent Tajik «political class.»

In the next future, societal aspects of change should be less underestimated by the main purveyors of technical assistance. More coordination, at all levels,⁵³ will also prove decisive in the ability of the international community to obtain structural changes from the Tajik authorities. Less formal approach may also be favoured, and a better account of the specific recent history and functioning of the institutions

of the Tajik state (*through its specific quota system, inherited from both the soviet era and the civil war, for instance*): this only can allow foreign protagonists to obtain from their Tajik partners something else than the ambivalent attitude they have shown until now, and to exert an impact on the durable opening of this specific system to new protagonists.

2.3 The adoption of Perestroika-style legislations

Tajik officials have up till now shown up a cosmetic commitment to norms enunciated by international agencies, coupled with a total lack of political will for change. Strong resistances to change inside the state apparatus, added to an obvious lack of will for modifications among donor states (*for which present stability is preferable to any kind of political adventure under pressure of an «Islamic threat»*), make more complicate the work of organizations involved in a partial reform of Tajikistan's closed political and economic systems. The newly adopted legislation on trade, which has great chances never to be really imple-

mented, gives us an example of the way Tajik law-makers deal with cosmetic innovations imposed by donor states.⁵⁴ The structure of the newly adopted legislation remains very similar to the preceding one. **The Tajik parliament has used a well-known Perestroika technique, of a purely rhetorical character, consisting of the vote of a lot of complicated texts devoided of the beginning of an application measure, or containing articles mutually contradictory.** The best example of such legislations doubtlessly remains that of the Law on the National Language voted on 22 June 1989, under pressure of street demonstrations - a founding event for the Tajik intelligentsia and for the first alternative political organizations, and at the same time an excellent example of the faculty shown then by the party and state structures for resisting to change beside giving the impression of joining, if not guiding the flow of overall agitatsiia (see for instance AYUBZOD 2002: 235).

At the same time many reforms - such as that, crucial, of the jamoats and other local communities - remain impossible without deeply amending the constitution,⁵⁵ which after the June 2003 referendum will hardly be imaginable for the time being. Instead of the separation of powers demanded by some political actors, the referendum has

53 See the current, meritorious attempts of the ICG to obtain more coordination between two international European organizations very active in Tajikistan, the EBRD and the OSCE: ICG 2003b.

54 Interview with Amb. Marc Gilbert, Dushanbe, mid-May 2003.

55 DE MARTINO 2003a, 3.

considerably added to those of the president, and postponed the real perspective for change at the head of the state until 2013, if not until 2020. Most dignitaries will keep unchanged cumulative responsibilities, such as the ubiquitous and enigmatic Mamadsaid Ubaydullaev, a political leader of the Kulabi faction during the civil war, now the Mayor of Dushanbe, as such a member of the government, and the President of the National Assembly of Tajikistan, which used to make him, until the past summer, the *de facto* and *de jure* N°3 of the regime. In the cat and mouse game played by the international community and the Tajik government, a fatal occasion may have been lost by the formers to obtain minimal legal conditions for change. On the contrary, the worst habits of the former Soviet regime may have been perpetuated for some time, which arises fears as to the organization of Tajikistan's next parliamentary and presidential elections in 2005 and 2006.

As to the decentralization advocated for Tajikistan by various foreign organizations, it may remain devoided of signification unless the privatization process undertaken since the mid-1980s, and the current reform of the tax system have come to an end that would be satisfactory for the main parties. The decentralization process

offers us a perfect example of those working groups which have been organised in Dushanbe under pressure of the donor states (in order to please the latters and receive the funds linked with the adoption of new legislations); those groups are usually dispersed at the moment when they give their first concrete results.⁵⁶ Our interrogation of many protagonists concerned with change have convinced us of the necessity to associate legal change in administrative matters with transformation in the economic system - transformations already demanded by the Nahzat and the Democratic Party on the eve of the independence of Tajikistan (DUDOIGNON 1994), but still unsatisfied for the most part after almost twelve years of a much agitated history.

3. Some Tracks for Future Studies

3.1 Regional power and local communities

⁵⁶ Interview of M.-S. Himmatzoda, Dushanbe, June 2003.

⁵⁷ Conversations with Iskandar Asadullaev, former director of the Institute of Strategic Studies, Dushanbe, late April 2003; with Jakov von Weiszacker, World Bank representation in Dushanbe, late June 2003.

⁵⁸ Interview with the director of Khujand Town Hospital, April 2003.

⁵⁹ Iskandar Asadullaev in our interview with him.

⁶⁰ Conversation with the director of the Town Hospital of Khujand, late April 2003; confirmed by further interviews of local entrepreneurs.

The structural changes demanded at the grassroot level in the provinces, as well as in several political parties in Dushanbe concern primarily the redistribution of both economic/fiscal and political powers between the centre and regions. In the provinces of Tajikistan, it is generally admitted that 80 to 85% of the income of taxes goes to the state, whence 15 to 20% remain at the level of the districts.⁵⁷ In an overall context of extreme rarefaction of resources (*present «decentralization» is seen locally, since independence, as a total suppression of public dotations*)⁵⁸, this can be only insatisfactory for the local tax payers. In the comparatively rich region of Khujand (*Khujandi people use to speak of the «parasitism» of other regions*)⁵⁹ **strong demands are being formulated for a liberalization of the legislation which would authorize local tax payers, especially big companies or production units, to pay a significant part of their taxes directly to the local public institution of their choice.**⁶⁰

Another key aspect of demanded reforms concern sub-district local communities, jamoats and mahallas, both institutions with a strong past, an a decisive economic and social role, but no political status of their own - they remain under control of nominated administrators who also preside local assemblies,

according to the same logic of non-separation of powers which prevades at the centre of the state as well as in its most remote peripheries.⁶¹ Generally speaking, in Tajikistan as well as in neighbouring former SSRs, the state has been for some time tempted to play these local entities as a mere intermediaries of the central power, and as a self-financed instrument for keeping local populations under control. Whence numerous «*anti-jamoats*» and «*anti-mahallas*» have made their appearance for resisting this tendency (*in Uzbekistan, notably, where the state's effort at controlling these local institutions have been particularly strong since half a decade [MAS-SICARD 2004]*), powerful grassroots demand are being formulated for a depersonalisation of the local executive power, now concentrated, in Tajikistan, in the hands of nominated, non-elected presidents of local assemblies (*the reincarnations of the former local secretaries of the Communist party*). **Most alternative political leaders in Dushanbe point out the importance of the jamoat level as the only space for introducing elections for the local officials, and bringing some real political pluralism to the country in a predictable future.**⁶²

A reform such as that of the fiscal system would of course bring consequences of various character, in-

cluding the creation or reinforcement of strong local clientelistic relations on the local and regional level, which could escape the control of political power. Furthermore, a change of this kind would run counter to the official opposition of numerous officials to the idea of decentralization, especially in the framework of cooperation with NGOs.⁶³ Decentralization in fiscal matter would oppose the nationality theory elaborated, under the influence of the Uzbekistani model, by another leading political adviser to President Rahmonov, the philologist Ibrohim Usmon (b. 1947) - a theory based on the principle of a unitary state, open to affirmative action but with one language, and where nobody wants to hear about autonomous entities or national minorities.⁶⁴

Then the potential economic aspects of any change in the centre/regions relation retain most of the attention among simple citizens as well as among the main protagonists of the political game. **Whilst the fiscal legislations has been submitted to four changes in ten years, no satisfactory impact has been observed yet**

in this field of relations between the centre and the regions. Our interlocutors in the Soghd region have generally underlined the under-representation of the 98 jamoats (98) and 405 mahallas of this area in the process of decision making (*see the report by Prof. Alijon Boymatov on the economic aspects of the integration of the Soghd region in Tajikistan*). The region (in Russian *oblast'*) remains in many fields the unique intermediary level between the state and local communities, whence the effects of newly legislations laws generally stops at the city or district (*raion*) level. *Jamoats* and *mahallas* still remain deprived of a proper budget, and remain outside the economic and social life of the country life: taxes are gathered, and remain at the level of the town and *raion*.

Up till now, administration executives come from the centre, and the necessity of a radical change of paradigm, and to «go to the mahalla» (*an adaptation of a late 19th-century motto «go to the villages» of the Russian Populist movement*) is largely felt even outside the precincts of the Nahzat, although judging by legislation now in preparation, resistances to any kind of change remain very strong in the Tajik state as well as among foreign donor states, and any further modifications of the existing texts will probably have a main-

61 DE MARTINO 2003a, 3.

62 DE MARTINO 2003a, 4; interview with Mu-hiddin Kabiri, Dushanbe, «Dialog» Centre, May, 2003.

63 Interview of Sayfullo Safarov, vice-director of the Institute of Strategic Studies, Dushanbe, early May 2003.

64 Interview with Sayfullo Safarov, Dushanbe, early May 2003.

ly cosmetic character. It is true that in Tajikistan people remain generally unaware of these plethoric new legislations, and continue to ignore the rights which have been conceded to them during the last half-decade. Only petty entrepreneurs have managed in the recent past to develop a juridical culture, in the main goal of protecting themselves against impediments brought on their path by regional and local authorities⁶⁵

3.2 A Religious threat: Islam... or its present weakness?

The «Islamic factor» arbitrarily isolated by security agencies and outside observers makes the bulk of current literature on Central Asia - even more than on the worlds of Islam as a whole since September 11, 2001. Most of these publications and expertise usually do not take into account the specificity of the current politization of Islam in Tajikistan, if compared only with other regions of the former USSR. An essentially cultural movement at its very origin in the 1950-60s, in the years following Stalin's death, re-Islamization in Tajikistan took a political dimension as soon as 1973,⁶⁶ through opposition of a young generation of Muslim «Baby boomers» to the Mufti "Abdullah Kalonzoda"s quietism and «lack of devotion» to the cause of Faith - although, it should be noticed, there was **no theological schism** among

them: if the «young mullahs»⁶⁷ of the early Nahzat used to differentiate themselves from «official Islam» by references to the «pure Islam» of the Prophet and his Caliphs, they nevertheless always remained very far from those called nowadays «Wahhabis» by their refusal to cut off with the rituals of the traditional Hanafi school, and by the importance they use to give up till now to reformed Sufi learning (*a tendency Tajik Islamists share with their more quietist religious leaders of*

the late Soviet period, although they reluctantly accept to admit it).⁶⁸

This relative conservatism of the Nahzat, an organization inspired, although indirectly, by the neo-traditionalist teachings delivered by Dammulla Hindustani (1892-1989) in Dushanbe from the 1950s to the 1970s, **makes it relatively fragile against the assault of newly born and more radical Islamist organizations** such as the Hizb al-Tahrir. The Nahzat's current flimsiness can also, if not mainly be explained by the **lack of educated mullahs and ulamas who would be able to oppose the messages of the Tahrir as well as that of Christian missionary activists** (e.g., KABIRI 2002, OLIMOVA & OLIMOV, 2003). This social and intellectual lacuna seems to be specific to Tajikistan, a country which, during the Soviet period, did not enjoy an important access to Islamic higher educational institutions, then located in Uzbekistan (*the Imam-Bukhari Institute in Tashkent and the Mir-i "Arab Madrasa in Bukhara*). **Tajikistan is now a country where the unfathomable institutional weakness of Islam, and the temptation of reaction against de-culturation through violence, makes a problem more important than Islam itself ever was.**

Moreover, the Nahzat must face a current political weakening and del-

65 Interview with Domlo "Ibodullo Kalonzoda, Shaykh-Muslihiddin Great Mosque, Khujand, April 2003.

66 Foundation by Sayyid "Abdullah Nuri of the «Nahzat-i Javanan-i Islami-yi Tajikistan» [Renewal of the Youth of Islam of Tajikistan], the basis of the future IRP of Tajikistan: see for instance SATTORI 2003, 6. This periodisation is exclusively based, for the moment, on testimonies by leading members of the Nahzat (see also my interview of M.-Sh. Himmatzoda), and should be taken with precaution, since it remains otherwise poorly documented (see for instance RO'1 2000: 357-8).

67 Javan mullayan, by analogy with the Young-Bukharans of the early 20th century.

68 See in particular the role of the locally famous Naqshbandi murshid "Abdurahman-Jan in the religious education of Muhammad-Sharif Himmatzoda - an education based on the practice of traditional ceremonies of dhikr, as well as the reading and comment of the early 18th-century Northern-Indian Muslim mystical poet Bidel's verses, of the arch-classical Mathnawi of the 12th-century C.E. Persian poet Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, and of the Maktubat of the 17th-century Indian reformer of the Naqshbandiyya Imam Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi (interview of M.-Sh. Himmatzoda, Dushanbe, June 2003).

egitimisation, that we can explain in part by its cooperation with the Tajik state institutions - a long-term tendency in the Nahzat, as was suggested earlier, but a policy also dictated by general circumstances since 1997: the elaboration of the anti-Taliban coalition with support of Russia, the USA and Iran; the peace agreement and the disarmament of the Islamist militias; then the launching of the current «crusade» against terrorism with massive support of the international community to Tajikistan's political authorities; and on the other hand the massive emigration to Russia of Tajik Highland young manpower - the main electoral support of the party -: all these phenomena have considerably reduced the Nahzat's room for manoeuvre.

One of the consequences of this conjunction of factors is the **present embarrassment of the party leaders in front of the expansion of US-based Christian (mainly reformed) missionary activity in Tajikistan** - a phenomenon with no equivalent in the region, except Qyrghyzstan, although in the Tajik case, the wave of conversions has been more recent and spectacular, which contributes to reinforce the political specificity of Tajikistan among the Central Asian states. Some seventy churches are now active throughout the country, with more than 20,000 faithful of various na-

tional background, among whom many Tajiks, young and old, who have embraced such or such reformed Christian faith.⁶⁹ **The already rich, although very recent, history of Christian missionary activity in Tajikistan has been marked by violence** which, for example, was not observed in Qyrghyzstan: on October 1st, 2000 ten persons are said to have been killed, eighty injured in the bombing of the «Corean Church» of Dushanbe (*a Californian-based Evangelical congregation, led by a Corean pasteur with strong personal ties in South Corean*). Narratives of miraculous healing of a dozen of badly burnt victims have greatly contributed to unite the young community, and permitted its resurrection after the eventual reconstruction of the church, which has been considerably enlarged and is today coupled with an academy of taekwondo.⁷⁰

According to our data and personal observations, most conversions to Christianity remain individual, and they affect mainly the outcast youth of the main cities of the country, among whom Tajikistan's residual minorities are over-

represented (*beside the Coreans, who show particularly receptive, we have met Russian, German, Tatar, and Qazaq converts*). Conversions still rarely concern full families or communities - except nuclear families in the relatively rare case of aged converts. The propaganda for the new faith is oftenly coupled with moral (*teaching of children and adults on Sundays*) and material assistance (*distribution of parcels, disposition of collective meals at the church on Sundays*), or medicine. (*See the travel to Dushanbe of a Corean team of specialists of acupuncture led by a famous pratician from Seoul in July, 2003, a moment when the rebuilt «Corean church» was attended every day by more than 2,000 persons exposed to intensive propaganda as well as medical care - which created conditions of various receptivity to acupuncture among the patients.*)⁷¹

Although this phenomenon has not yet taken the social dimension it has found in Qyrghyzstan, it has aroused a great alarm among opinion and political leaders. Those of the Nahzat could be tempted to use it in the next future, in different manners, for recovering a part of their lost legitimacy. Anyway, the Islamo-Christian cleavage, which have proved so significant in other regions of the former USSR during the past decade (*in*

69 Interview of Abduali Toirov, local officer of the OBSE, Dushanbe, mid-July 2003.

70 Personal inquiries among the faithful, Dushanbe, spring and summer 2003.

71 Parviz Mullojonov's courageous testimony have reinforced our previous consideration on the decisive placebo effect of confidence in medical care, whatever may it be.

Chechnia, in particular), has already taken a special symbolic and political weight in Tajikistan - a weight probably increased by the permanent presence of many organizations of the international community in Dushanbe, which can be invoked by both parties in the regulation of ever growing conflicts.⁷²

3.3 Uzbek minorities: a multiple cleavage?

In this case of Christian missionary activity, a religious cleavage recovers regional, social, ethnic, economic and political ones. (New converts, as already suggested, come mainly from the big cities' outcast youth from residual national minorities, with poor perspectives of economic integration in the future Tajikistani society.) Curiously enough, such is also, at least in part, the case of alternative Islamic missionary activity as it has been developing in Tajik land since the turn of the 21st century.⁷³

Inside the Muslim community of Tajikistan itself, in spite of this new Christian pressure and under an appearance of stabilization and normalization of relations between the religious and the civil political organizations, we also face the same quintuple problem of a religious, regional,

ethnic, economic and political cleavage. The social and intellectual weakness of traditional Hanafi Islam (*even in its politicized way as it is symbolised by the Nahzat, a party of Tajik Highlanders poorly established in big cities and lowlands, except the migrant-peopled suburbs in Dushanbe and numerous kolkhozes in the Wakhsh cotton*

valley) has paved the way for a **rapid expansion of the Hizb al-Tahrir as an organization promoting rigorous ethical and cultural norms acceptable to the people of the bazaar and other city-dwellers, and as a party which defends the interests of lowland and urban Uzbek-speaking populations throughout former Soviet Central Asia.**⁷⁴

To such an extent that, during the last years, the Tahrir has been gaining popularity among **the Urghuti «progressive class»⁷⁵ of the valleys and cities of northern and western Tajikistan**, including the capital Dushanbe. These Uzbek-speaking petty traders, shopkeepers, changers, and shop-tour organisers originating from the Uzbekistani city and district of Urghut make off, in Tajikistan, an overall population of some 35,000 persons, which has managed to take control of significant segments of trade activity - for instance, no less than one third of the «luggage-holder» (in Turkish *ba-vulcu*) international trade mainly with Turkey or China. The direction of the Nahzat now admits, although not always willingly, that it has lost contact with this dynamic «Urghuti» clientele with solid roots and connections in Uzbekistan.

The problem here is not the Hizb al-Tahrir itself, but rather that party's growing popularity among

72 For instance: Shodi MUHIDDIN, «Isoi Maseh dar kuchahoi Dushanbe chi mejuyad? [What Does Jesus the Messiah Try to Find in the Streets of Dushanbe?],» Tojikiston 32 [293] (2003/8/7): 6.

73 For general considerations on the way confessional cleavages mask in Tajikistan national and ethnic fractures, see DZHAILOV 2002.

74 On recent arrestations of Uzbek members of the Hizb al-Tahrir in Tajikistan, and the installation of this party in Uzbek-peopled areas of Central Asia, see notably Aleksei MATVEEV, «Tsentral'naia Aziia: bor'be za demokratiu meshaet ekstremizm [Extremism, an Obstacle to the Struggle for Democracy],» Asia Plus (2003/6/12): 9. On the party's establishment in Uzbek-peopled regions of Northern Tajikistan and South-Western Qyrghyzstan, see two papers, very different in their spirit, by Kurbonali MUHAB-BATOV [the Procuror of the Soghd Region], «Religiozno-oppozitsionnye gruppy v Tadzhi-kistane: Hizb-ut-Tahrir» [Religious Oppositional Groups in Tajikistan: The Hizb al-Tahrir], in Lena Jonson, Saodat Olimova & Muzaffar Olimov, eds., Religiozni ekstremizm v Tsentral'noi Azii. Problemy i perspektivy. Materialy konferentsii Dushanbe, 25 apreila 2002 g. [Religious Extremism in Central Asia. Problems and Perspectives. Proceedings of the Dushanbe Conference, 25 April 2002] (Dushanbe: Devashlich [for the OSCE]): 73-87; and by Saniia SAGNAEVA, «Religiozno-oppozitsionnye gruppy v Kyrgyzstane: Hizb-ut-Tahrir» [Religious Oppositional Groups in Qyrghyzstan: The Hizb al-Tahrir],» *ibid.*: 64-72.

75 «Sinf-i pesh-qadam»: interview with M.-Sh. Himmatzoda, Dushanbe, early June 2003.

various Uzbek-speaking communities of Tajikistan, on the basis of economic and national discontent, whence the Nahzat, a purely «Tajik» party from the beginning with few interest for political and religious affairs outside Tajikistan (weel seen by ROY 1999), has been cultivating its specific and limited geographical establishment among the Tajik-speaking Highland and Highlander migrant communities of the central and southern parts of the country. Nothing has still been said here of the Loqay Uzbek communities of the South, one of the poorest and most poorly integrated in the limited labor market of Tajikistan: in short, the reverse of the more dynamic and fortunate Urghuti community. In such conditions, it remains of course difficult to speak of a united Uzbek community or minority in Tajikistan.

However, the common denominator of Urghuti, Loqay and other Uzbek-speaking populations of Tajikistan (25% of the overall population according to official statistics), in spite of their heterogeneous economic status in this country, is their lack of political representation (except two Uzbek MPs: one for the giant aluminium factory in Regar, and one for the city of Regar itself), coupled with a common dissatisfaction which drives them towards radical organizations which use to promote,

outside of Uzbekistan, the interests of compact Uzbek minorities. In Tajikistan, where the Uzbek president Islam Karimov, in spite of the failure of various military adventures (*the last one in Khujand under Colonel Khudoyberdiev in Fall 1998*),⁷⁶ has never completely given up his ambitions of having installed in Dushanbe a political regime more conform to his wishes, the existence of structured demands for representation among Uzbek minorities may give Tashkent an interesting, although risky, playing card. A partial solution to this problem may be the current reform of the electoral legislation, and redefinition of the electoral districts (*okrugs*) in search of a better coincidence between the electoral and administrative/national okrugs in regions with a compact Uzbek population,⁷⁷ - although a possible side effect of such a legislation could also be the enforcement of a still volatile «Uzbek» political identity in Tajikistan

Beside the new interest of Uzbek-speaking minorities of Tajikistan for the Hizb al-Tahrir, **direct Saudi influence** has proved powerful in some specific areas of northern Tajiki-

stan such as the little city of Chorkuh, in the Soghd region. In this case, such links can be explained by the presence of an emigre community from Chorkuh in the Hejaz since the 1920s (SABBAGH 1999), and by the cultural and economic influence of this emigre community in northern Tajikistan since the very first years of independence. However, according to various testimonies received during our stay in Tajikistan, **several hundreds of Tajik students are said to be studying now in various educational institutions of the Hejaz.**

If the shabby-looking Imam-Termezi Madrasa in Dushanbe remains conservative in its teaching (*its poor library, although composed for 70% of Saudi publications, remains dominated by classical Hanafi literature*)⁷⁸, however its cursus seems hardly capable of satisfying the religious demands of the Tajik society. **The future return to Tajikistan of numerous young theologians, after several years in Saudi madrasas, may not remain devoided of impact on the religious situation in this country, still deprived of authoritative Hanafi ulama whose authority could offer a counterweigh to direct or indirect Wahhabi influence.** Only the high degree of secularization of Tajik society, and a strong attachment to cultural traditions specific to medieval and modern Central Asia seem to-

76 Significantly enough, this event is seen, in both Dushanbe and Khujand, among both proponents and adversaries of the reunion of Tajikistan with Uzbekistan, as the most important event since the independence in 1991.

77 Meeting of the multiparty commission for the reform of the electoral legislation, OSCE, Dushanbe, 5 June 2003.

78 Personal visit to the Imam-Termezi Madrasa and its library, early July 2003.

day⁷⁹ able to protect Tajikistan from such an «**shock of [Islamic] civilizations**» - if the growing pressure of Christian missions from abroad, and the current de-legitimation of the Nahzat do not drive the Tajik Islamist leaders, or their young concurrents of the Tahrir and Nahzat's most radical wing, to the search for violent confrontation with everything Western.

Conclusions

Beside external factors briefly evoked at the beginning of this study, **five main elements of destabilization of Tajikistan** have been identified by security agencies for the coming decade: (1) a possible come back of the past warlords; (2) poverty; (3) drugs; (4) Islam; (5) nationalities.⁸⁰

The danger of a possible rapprochement between the Tajik warlords of the civil war period, especially the still active Mahmud Khudoyberdiev, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan has been oftenly mentioned in a recent past as an important threat to the overall stability in the Central Asian region.⁸¹ Yaqub Salimov's arrest in Moscow in early July 2003 gives us an interesting element on the **Tajik authorities' will to cope with this potential danger, whilst the search for a direct implication of Russia in this**

process may indicate a choice of Dushanbe for internationalizing the regulation of this problem - in order, perhaps, to exert a better pressure on Uzbekistan, which had backed Khudoyberdiev during his last unsuccessful coup in Khujand in 1998, and is now suspected to favour the activities of Islamist organizations like the (armed) IMU and the (non-violent) Hizb al-Tahrir in defense of the Uzbek populations outside of the country's boundaries (*in the Qyrghyz and Tajik territories of the Ferghana Valley, in the Western regions of Tajikistan, in the Charjuy region of Turkmenistan, and in the south of Qazaqstan*).

As to persistent poverty and its direct impact on the political sphere, an aspect which remains out of the scope of the present study, Tajikistan remains a country which lives beyond its means. The question of drugs is intimately linked with that of

poverty: most of the predominantly rural population of Tajikistan struggles by on subsistence agriculture, remittances from relatives working abroad, and humanitarian aid. A growing number benefits from drug money and other aspects of an ever growing shadow economy. **If Moscow used to fund some 80% of the national budget before independence, the present relance on foreign assistance is generally perceived as the only chance for the Tajik state to maintain a plethoric administration and redundant body of poorly paid civil servants - the key of the overall corruption of public bodies in the country. However foreign recommendations of reducing the financial burden of civil service has to this date met no real success. Because these purely accounting pre-occupations of international organizations rarely take into account the decisive societal functions of this abundant administrative body: it has permitted the Tajik state to integrate, at relatively low cost, large segments of the society into the overall system of social networking.**

As to «corruption» linked with the practice of low salaries for this numerous body of civil servants, the clash between the definitions of corruption held by international organizations and the practices of ritual

79 See Muhammad-Sharif Himmatzoda's words, when speaking of the radicals and one of their main ideologists, the Pakistani al-Maududi, about the specific taste for mysticism in Persian and Urdu culture - including al-Maududi's writings: interview with M.-Sh. Himmatzoda, Dushanbe, June 2003.

80 Interview with Ambassador Marc Gilbert, Dushanbe, mid-May 2003.

81 Sayyid Abdullo NURI, «Nasha partiya ope-spokoena [Our Party is Worrying],» Asia Plus (2003/4/24): 4; on the IMU as a threat to Tajikistan, see for instance Ludwig GIBELHAUS [a journalist of Die Deutsche Welle], «Tsentral'noi Azii ugrozhaet eskaladiia napryazhennosti [Central Asia Is Threatened by a Growth of Tension],» Asia Plus (2003/5/22): 8.

exchanges which are characteristic of modern Central Asian societies comes from the fact that **most approaches by development agencies fail to take into account local definitions of what kinds of behavior are appropriate forms of social networking.** Gift giving, even between citizens and government officials, is part of the fabric of social life in Central Asian countries (WERNER 2000; ADAMS 2003). It should be seen in its cultural - and socio-political - contexts before bringing about new legislations with a mainly cosmetic effect, and subsequent aggravations of the ambivalent attitude of local partners towards the self-legitimizing requirements of donor states and organizations.

Islam and the nationality question have been given more attention in the preceding pages, since they lie at the foundation of political life and strategy in Tajikistan. **The nationality question, in particular, when coupled with all the criteria mentioned above, as in the case of Uzbek minorities, remains a crucial threat for the future of the country.** Another of the manifold aspects of this question is the political segregation of the Soghd region, which has been left out of the 1997 General Peace Agreement, and thus has little access to political power, as well as the Badakhshan and the Rasht [former Gharm] Valley.

What to do? If it seems difficult to pretend to exert an action on the long term on external factors, whatever decide these factors may prove in the next future for the stability of Tajikistan and the whole Central Asian region - it should, in fact, be the task of diplomats to exert pressures, for instance, on the Russian and Uzbek governments, in order to facilitate the establishment of Tajik immigrants, or to ease the further opening up of Tajikistan's boundaries to free movement of persons and goods. **Something, however, may be undertaken on the inner level, for favouring evolutions of the current political situation. CIMERA's overall project on decentralization in Tajikistan had been based upon one fundamental postulate: «Where reform is slow to come, is in the regions.»**⁸² Not that any significant change may be expected in the short term at the central government level (*especially without a major and coordinated pressure from key international operators such as the funding institutions*). According to our inquiries, however, the local, self-governance level is probably the one where a much expected and fruitful work may be carried out. **Support-**

ing the debates at local level (*where the distance between the government and those who are governed is the shortest*) **constitutes, in the present political framework of Tajikistan, an opportunity to stimulate much awaited changes in the long term** (see DE MARTINO 2003b, 2). **At the same time, it would be only to the advantage of such activities if they are enlarged to a wider public, notably through media and public discussions** (ABDULLAEV 2003, FREIZER 2003, and the present author's oral recommendations to CIMERA during the 2002-3 term).

The permanent redefinition of programmes of humanitarian and a fortiori those of technical assistance has been a characteristic of any coordinated action in Tajikistan. From this viewpoint, the challenges that CIMERA has been facing since the beginning of this year is a matter of norm. Whence most chanceries active in Central Asia remain dependant on short-sighted, day-after-day policies, a technical assistance worth of this denomination cannot choose to overlook the necessity of the mid-term investment of important resources. Up to this date, most NGOs which are dealing with political reform have acted exclusively inside a narrow circle of deciders with few interest for the intermediaries of political power in the regions and sub-regions of the

82 SMEC Team Leader Ed Hankin, quoted by Luigi de MARTINO 2002a, 3.

country, and even less interest for different categories of opinion makers, however specific may be the typology of opinion makers in post-Soviet Tajikistan. The concept of informal consultation with interlocutors outside the Tajik administration seems indeed to be an unusual concept and a new instrument of technical assistance in the CIS. However, in a UNTOP meeting on December, 2002 nineteen representatives of the Nahzat had already voiced that they were not aware of the Government initiatives in the local governance field, and that no political discussion was taking place in this matter.⁸³ Up till a recent date, clearly formulated political demands continued to face a total lack of a real public debate. Instead of a formal and, as we have tried to suggest earlier in this study, fatal concentration on legislation writing, the founding role of initial public meetings should have been enlarged to a wider range of protagonists.

A good many differences one can observe between the Tajik and the Iranian societies lies in the colonial, then Soviet past of Tajikistan, and its specific culture of both public debate and relation to donor countries of all kind. The ambivalent attitude of most of our local interlocutors towards everything pertaining to the hegemonic political systems and cultures, as well as the lasting lack of space for public debate constitutes perhaps the main non-visible difference between the Tajik and the Iranian cases; it should probably constitute, in the near future, two of the main obstacles to reform in Tajikistan, especially in foreign intervention is to be developed in the years to come. Another key difference, underlined ad nauseam in the present study, is the surprising weakness of Tajikistan's Islamic religious institutions - a factor of social violence, as we have suggested in the body of this study,

which should be less underestimated by international donor organizations. Last, as to analogies between the Tajik and the Iranian cases, if the scope of this paper did not allow us to develop as we would have liked to do the initial idea of a comparative approach between the two, there is probably one key common point between them - which is also one of the main taboos in both Tajik and Iranian political cultures: a common reluctance of the leaders of each country to recognize their respective ethnic diversity, and to promote measures for a better identification of sometimes very dynamic minorities to the state in which they live. A potentially dangerous fact in a region, Central Asia, where, in a context of very quick differentiation, religious differences, including those inside the Islamic community, tend to recover ethnic, social, and economic cleavages.

*Dushanbe and Paris,
September 2003*

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Tajikistan at a Crossroad: Contradictory Forces at the Heart of the Tajik Political System.

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Summary

This paper¹ analyses the political situation of post-conflict Tajikistan and identifies two sets of contradictory forces as being at the centre of the Tajik political system: the centralisation vs. decentralisation trend and the inclusion into the government vs. exclusion trend. The elite that came into power with the civil war has used a strategy of centralisation of power and inclusion of the opposition and has thus so far been able to successfully manage the political forces of the country in order to establish political and economic domination. The author makes the hypothesis that this mode of operation may reach its limits due to the emergence of opposition forces that are not easy to integrate into the present political system. As perspectives for broader political change and reform are grim in Tajikistan, government-supported repression and violence may become the only instrument to deal with such opposition. The paper is based on published materials and on research produced within the frame of the CIMERA project «Strengthening the

Inter-Tajik Regional Dialogue», an initiative supported by the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A conflict for the control of the state and its resources

In 1991, the breakdown of the Soviet Union suddenly projected onto the international scene a group of new states, among them, the five Central Asian republics, Kirghizstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Nothing had prepared the populations and their authorities to this new «independence» and to the sudden disappearance of the socialist economic system into which the «new» states were integrated. For these states the world had changed, a whole system of references, political, economical and social had disappeared.

One of the challenges that Newly Independent States (NIS) had to deal

with was that of identity and of the legitimacy of the political system in place. The former socialist republics of Central Asia had been created in the 30s by integrating vast spaces characterised by a strong geographical and cultural diversity and, at the same time, by a strong social and economical coherence and complementarities into a vertically integrated system where the centre, Moscow, was the ultimate source of power.

The breakdown of the soviet system has led to a crisis situation affecting all social and political relations. It has been a moment of political fluidity, a «multi-sectorial crisis» reshaping the relations regulating the interactions among social groups (Dobry, 1996). Uncertainty becomes thus a central parameter of such moments of «transition» (Banegas, 2001).

Confronted with a crisis that had no precedents and with the necessity to (re)-build the state, the political elites in power during the Gorbachev period played the card on national construction in order to give legitimacy to their power.

¹ A previous version of this paper was presented at the 4th Annual Conference of the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) held in Cambridge, Massachusetts on October 2-5 2003.

In 1992 in Tajikistan, a competition for power among local elites triggered a conflict, the consequences of which can still be felt today. The main aim of the conflict was the control of the state, at the confluence of political and economical power. In 1992 Tajikistan did not have an economic sector outside of the state itself. The economy was the polity; in this situation winning political power simultaneously ensures a preserve on all or most economic opportunity (Haysom, 2002).

The Tajik civil war (approx. 1992-97) was driven by overlapping antagonisms arising from generational, ideological, regional and inter-communal competition (Akiner, 2001: 40). Regional political entrepreneurs and warlords fought the Tajik conflict and succeeded to various degrees in securing mass support in their respective areas (Abdullaev and Freizer, 2003: 24). The war however, in weakening the authority of the national government, re-emphasized regional divisions (Akiner, 2001: 66, Seifert, 2002: 67). This led to a deep fragmentation of the society and economy of Tajikistan and to an increased authority for sub-national elites.

The war has furthermore allowed a change of elites at the top of the state, the «Kulyabis» replacing the previously politically dominant «Leninabadi»². «Regionalism», sub- social

networks based on patronage and to a certain extent on geography, has not only been the instrument for mobilizing support for fighting the war, but continued to be the key instrument to assert the predominance of certain groups and to access economic resources through control of the state.

Rebuilding the state using old recipes

Tajikistan is in many ways an amazing country. Considering the magnitude of the challenges of the post-conflict period and the double heritage of the civil war and break down of the Soviet Union, it almost surprising to see that during the period from 1999 to 2003 the political situation in Tajikistan has stabilised, the Government has successfully integrated the opposition, including the Islamic Revival Party (IRP), and has been able to marginalize those opposition forces that refused integration. At the same time it could also bargain agreements with those elements within the «government camp» that posed serious military threats to the stability of the situation. After the September 11 2001 events, the US-led military intervention in Afghanistan, and the support given to the anti-terror

coalition by the Rahmonov government, the Tajik authorities gained important goodwill at the international level. All these factors contributed to the stabilisation into power of the incumbent President and his team.

These processes can be considered as positive developments in a war-torn country like Tajikistan, on the other hand no deep political reform or change of the functioning of the political system has taken place. Even though the 1994 Constitution declares that Tajikistan is a sovereign, democratic, law governed, secular and unitary state with separated executive, legislative and judicial powers (Abdullaev, 2003), the current regime and its political personnel have operated according to established political models and cultures which were in place in the Soviet Union. This is no major surprise since the political personnel in Tajikistan are a very homogenous group in terms of education (mostly engineers with KOMSOMOL and Communist party education) and in terms of political culture and references (URSS system, Russia) (Dudoignon, 2004).

It is important to recall that at the signature of the Peace Agreement in 1997, the conflict parties were confronted with the enormous task of (re)-building the state, a task that required the central government to (re)-assert its control over the entire country (large parts of the country

² «Kulybis», «Leninabadis» or «Gharmis» are rough, general terms that indicate patronage networks that are partly regionally based. These groups are not monolithic but their structures of alliance change constantly.

were under the military control of the opposition) and to give new substance and content to its institutions (the war had not only destroyed much of the social infrastructure in certain regions but also severed the links between state institutions in the capital and in the regions).

At the same time, the post-conflict period has been characterised by the necessity to implement the power-sharing agreement at the base of the 1997 Peace Agreement, to integrate personnel from the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and to reward those groups that supported the new government during the conflict.

First Trend: Centralisation vs. Decentralisation

As mentioned above, the groups that came into power with the civil war and took over control of the central government have tried to monopolize both political and economical power. The centralisation of state power in the hands of the Presidency has been at the base of this strategy. Currently, the President appoints the heads of provincial and district governments; in turn district authorities nominate local self-government level chairpersons. Moreover, the Presidential Office controls all finance, state property and money flows through the Office of State Finance Control. With the creation

of the Council of Justice in 1999 the President has the power to nominate judges and control courts. Finally, as a leader of the most powerful regional grouping of Kuliabis, the President enjoys the might and support of its regional elite and armed forces (Abdullaev and Freizer, 2003: 22).

This strategy corresponded to the concept of state adopted by the Kuliabi elite: a presidential regime, a highly centralized «strong state» and clearly steered by the top (Seifert, 2002; Dudoignon, 2004).

If prior to the conflict the state was the source of most economic opportunities, and for this reason the control of the state was one of the main objectives of the conflict, the war has disrupted the control of central government over the economic resources of the country.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent civil war in Tajikistan provoked what certain experts call a «re-

gional feudalism», a situation characterised by the disruption of the previous economic links between different regions and markets, the emergence of several «appanage princes» (Avezov, 2004:34), extending their authority in specific territories and over resources of the country and being unwilling or unable to pay taxes to the state budget.

While the groups controlling the central government have tried to monopolize political and economic resources at central level, regional elites and groups have fought bitter battles for the control over regional and local economic resources and opportunities (most notably the Aluminium smelter, cotton production, markets and roads, hotels and restaurants etc.) (Seifert, 2002: 67)³.

This situation of loss of control over economic resources by the state has been further increased by the programme of privatisation of state property pushed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which has strengthened the economic basis of local and regional groups and elites (Seifert, 2002).

Polity is (still) the economy: and vice versa

The weak central state power, heavily dependent on cotton and aluminium for hard currency and on international loans for funding⁴, was unable

3 In many cases military commanders have transformed their military power over a certain region in economic and political power by transforming themselves into entrepreneurs, or by acquiring public office etc. (Seifert, 2002; 69)

4 In such a situation, where the central government has few available resources to be used for meeting the challenges of reconstructing the country and the state, it is important to note that the central authorities have usually a privileged access to an important source of funding: the external resources from international organisations such as the Bretton Woods Institutions, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development or the Asian Bank for Development. In this sense (especially after the September 11, 2001 events), the Tajik Government has been able in recent years to attract considerable, though often inconsistent, international financial support.

to avoid the economic fragmentation of the country or to efficiently collect taxes.

The elites controlling the central government are confronted with a situation where their model of highly centralised state has to deal with a decentralised economical power⁵. In this situation, they have to negotiate with other local and regional elites (Seifert, 2002). If political power gives access to economic resources (for example the control of the privatisation process), at the same time economic power is easily transferable into political power.

The yearly preparation of national and sub-national budgets is one major occasion for observing the negotiation process between centre and regional actors. The system of government financial management, inter-governmental distribution of revenue and capital spending still follows a highly bureaucratic but often unclear Soviet-era model. Intergovernmental transfers are organised according to a combination of differential tax-sharing rates and general fiscal-gap closing grants (Davis, Dunn and Nazirova, 2003). If on one hand the system is undesirable from the perspective of efficient and equitable public financial management (Davis, Dunn and Nazirova, 2003), on the other hand the system allows for a large space for political bargaining.

The lack of transparency of the sys-

tem permits that the distribution of tax revenues, offset revenues, of central government grants and transfers for budgetary support from the national budget to the oblast level and below, be the object of a behind-the-scenes negotiation process where differential regional political influence becomes a key significant factor affecting the distribution of funds. This situation is reinforced by the fact that the laws and processes regulating the budget formulation allow for year-to-year and inter-jurisdictional variation within a given year (Davis, Dunn and Nazirova, 2003).

Second Trend: Inclusion vs. Exclusion, Two forces at the heart of the political system

The war in Tajikistan has allowed a change of elites at the top of the state. These groups making the best use of networks of patronage have tried to monopolize political and economical power. Thanks to alliances in constant movement, this ruling elite has so far been able to marginalize the most dynamic and creative po-

⁵ Even though the Kuliabi elite has made sure that key enterprises in the South of the country would fall under their control (Seifert, 2002).

⁶ Maintaining power and cumulating economic resources seem still to be the main goals of the elites in place. The groups controlling the state institutions seem still to function without long-term perspectives, tactically reshaping alliances whenever needed, making best use of the vocabulary of democracy (and anti-terror war) to extract as many resources as possible from the international organisations.

litical opposition. This elite has been able to establish its control over the state and is able to use its structures and institutions as a tool to manage alliances, access resources and maintain power.⁶

This system is characterised by two forces, one striving for more centralisation (allowing increased control), but excluding the majority of political forces from power, and the other tending to integrate opposition forces in order to gain support and better control them. The potential for contradictions between these two forces is important, since the system can only integrate a fraction of those excluded from power.

According to Dudoignon (2004:123), «During the past six years, the higher personnel of former oppositional forces of the Perestroika and civil war periods - the Nahzat and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan - have been partly integrated into the state structures, whether political or economic. As to the newly founded parties (the Socialist Party and the Social-Democratic Party), they appeared until these very last months as mere think-tanks or reservoirs of young politicians for the PDP and the government, with a status analogous to that of the Komsomol (Communist Youth) for the former Communist Party».

The success of the «integration tac-

tic» is dependant probably on two main factors. Firstly, the existing political forces have been a relay for specific group interests (the IRP for the Tajik «Highlanders») or an «instrument for personal promotion of a leader or a limited group of people inside the state apparatus» (Dudoignon, 2004). As a consequence, none of the existing political forces has been able to federate the demands coming from the different groups and sectors of society. Secondly, the traumatic experience of the civil war combined with the exclusion from political life at the national level has produced disenchantment and a large disaffection from politics. After the civil war, the demands for access to economic resources, for increased political participation and representation seem not to have been systematically expressed in a political way. In the present situation, marked by an overwhelming domination of President Rahmonov's Popular-Democratic Party (PDP) and his clique, where the executive controls the legislative and the judiciary powers, the possibilities for an open political discussion on the redistribution of power are clearly limited. One hypothesis could be that in such a situation political demands are expressed through economic channels. The research carried out by Dudoignon (2003) on political culture in Tajikistan casts some light on these demands and their channels of ex-

pression, though more should be done in order to systematically map and assess them.

In summary, Sughd, the Uzbek communities and the entrepreneurs' networks seem to be the most vocal groups in terms of demanding economic and political reform of the relations between the state and the regions (at least devolution). According to Dudoignon (2004:159) «another key aspect of demanded reforms concerns sub-district local communities, *jamoats* and *mahallas*, both institutions with a strong past, a decisive economic and social role, but no political status of their own».⁷

In any case the «fragmentation» and «de-politization» of demands has contributed to the success of the ruling elite's tactics of exclusion and compensatory integration of specific opposition forces.

A practical example: The Case of «Decentralisation»

I would like now to illustrate some of the traits characterizing the functioning

7 At the same time, the government's ideology of Tajikistan as a unitary state with one language and no role for autonomous entities or national minorities will not be a factor facilitating the expression of such demands.

8 These reflections are based on the author's observations carried out as project director for a project funded by the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs aimed at proposing a platform at national level for informal political discussion on the topic of «regionalism» and «centre-regions relations».

of the political system on the basis of the example of «decentralisation»⁸. Since mid-2002 the Tajik Government has been speaking openly about «decentralisation», a topic previously a political taboo since it would put in question the vision of a unitary state with one language. Responding to pressure from the international organisations (in this case the World Bank, UNDP and USAID), Tajik authorities even launched several initiatives related to the relations between central government and regions. However these could be characterised as follows:

- There is no overall steering / coordinating body of the existing processes
- The initiatives are centralized in the Executive Office of the President though there is some openness to accept external actors in the discussion (international organisations and partly-political parties)
- There is no overall agreed vision of reform of the state structure
- Communication and co-ordination among the government initiatives and among international support is often problematic.

The processes within the

- groups mandated by the government are of juridical / administrative nature. This is not a major surprise given the nature of power and government in Tajikistan. The central power's internal struggles for the reinforcement of the President's position, combined with the secondary role of the parliament and of the political parties, a lack of consultation culture etc., all contributes to the predominance of the top-down, technical and juridical perspective.

Following the June 22 2003 constitutional referendum a new modification of the constitution is unlikely to happen in the coming years, so despite the openness of the government to initiate reform initiatives concerning «decentralisation», these aim chiefly at increasing the efficiency of the existing system without questioning the control of the centre on the different layers of government.

The Tajik authorities have been very proficient in negotiating the non-coordinated and often redundant offer of technical assistance by the international organisations (Dudoignon 2004:136). Having as a reference the experience of managing the demands of Moscow during the Soviet era, the Tajik authorities have developed an attitude of ambivalence to-

wards the international community. According to Dudoignon (2003, 27): «The redundant character of that offer, the dispersion of resources, the lack of coordination, the lack of knowledge of the institutional framework in Tajikistan, the weakness of these foreign organizations' local partners, whether governmental or non-governmental, have complicated local perceptions of foreign assistance, whence they were permitting the most conservative segments of the state apparatus and economic system to elaborate means of resistance to change, allowing numerous members of this new nomenclatura to use these new incoming resources for building fortunes - sometimes considerable.»⁹

Also in the case of the recent «decentralisation» initiatives, the Tajik officials have until now shown a cosmetic commitment to norms enunciated by international agencies, coupled with a total lack of political will for change (Dudoignon, 2004:138).

In a context where the process of political consolidation is far from complete and a high level of uncertainty permeates life in Tajikistan, allowing

9 Anvar KAMOLOV [pseud.], «Inostrannaia pomoshch': plusy i minusy [Foreign Assistance: Pluses and Minuses],» *Asia Plus* (2003/2/6): 5; the author, an economist, is a high ranking official who regularly writes, under pseudonyms, on the economic situation of Tajikistan in the local press. We unfortunately did not manage to identify this interesting figure during our stay in Tajikistan.

a structural reform of the present political system would currently be unacceptable to the ruling groups. The present system, where the centre controls inter alia the appointments of the heads of the executive (and legislative) down to the district, allows the team around the President to use these appointments as a means to reward its own supporters or as a channel to integrate opposition forces into the system. In this context, the state structures are thus an instrument in the hands of the ruling groups for consolidating their network of alliances and allegiances and «regionalism» becomes a rational and appropriate mode of functioning that allows groups and individuals to access resources (political and economical). In this sense, it is not surprising that the research conducted by the project indicates important support for this social and political phenomenon (Olimova, 2004).

Conclusion: The limits of the system

Following the signature of the peace agreement and taking advantage of a period of «stabilisation», the groups that came into power with the civil war are reinforcing their position and centralizing the real decision-making power in the hands of the Presidential administration. With the end of the armed conflict and thanks to in-

creased international support, the central government has put more and more effort into trying to become less «virtual», consolidating the state at central level and striving for a better control over its structures at all levels.

If during this period the combined effect of the above-mentioned trends and forces (centralisation vs. decentralisation and inclusion vs. exclusion) has allowed the Popular Democratic Party (PDP) to establish its domination, it is unclear what capacity the current regime has to continue with the tactic of integrating some opposition forces in compensation for the exclusion from power of the majority of the population.

The increasing distance between the government and the population¹⁰ seems to contribute to the development of opposition forces that cannot be easily integrated into the current system (see for example the Hiz-ut-Tahrir¹¹). The development of such forces would push the regime's tactic of integration to its limits.

The regime has no interest in reforming the current system and balance of power. In the past¹², it has shown capacity to use dialogue as a political means to solve disputes, though it has bargained power-sharing agreements with an opposition that had access to military forces or has integrated small parties with no mili-

tary or political base but that were useful as a pool for political personnel for the state apparatus.

However, in cases where the integration tactic cannot be applied, it seems that the government (at least at central level) has no other alternative methods of dealing with the eventual pressure put on it by a structured opposition (or does not have enough incentives to use such alternative methods). This situation would be likely to provoke a violent response from the regime.

In any case, the control of the state remains at the centre of the interests of the current ruling elites and their supporting (regional) networks. On the one hand the state is the key to the exercise of legitimate authority, the centre of the legitimate political space and, as in other Central Asian countries, is the motor of national construction (Petric, 2002: 235). On the other hand, controlled by specific groups operating with a network-based, patron-client rationality, the state and its institutions (at all levels) become tools for managing alliances, integrating opposition forc-

es and re-distributing resources. In this perspective and with the present political personnel, a strong and centralised control at the level of the Presidency seems the (only) strategy adopted by the ruling groups to ensure the reproduction of their power. In my view this situation is not likely to change significantly in the next five years.

All these factors seem to corroborate the hypothesis of a semi-institutionalisation of power struggles among different individuals and / or interest groups (Akiner, 2001: 88). This would produce constant trials of strength among groups with integration as the main tool to manage such crisis and a violent response for those situations where demands cannot be integrated without a structural change of the system.

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10 Including the incapacity of the government to respond to the demands of the population for a more evenly distributed economic development or for social justice.

11 Even though this party seems to have become the main relay for demands from the Uzbek communities

12 Especially up to the 2000 parliamentary elections, a moment that marked the formal conclusion of the peace process.

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ABOUT CIMERA

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- We engage in policy research and conduct programs to strengthen education systems to deal with conflict and social change;

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- We conduct collaborative research and in-depth analysis on the rapid and complex socio-political changes that societies in transition face.

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