

Who needs goodwill? An analysis of EU norm promotion in the Central Asian context

Inauguraldissertation
zur
Erlangung des Doktorgrades
der
Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät
der
Universität zu Köln
2015
vorgelegt
von
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aus
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Tag der Promotion: 08.06.2015

Abstract

This Ph.D. thesis analyses three EU norm promotion endeavours in the field of security, human rights and education. In doing so, it compares implementation levels in three Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan), which allows it to draw comparisons on norm adoption rates. The objective of this analysis is to identify the factors influencing norm adoption rates and to test Levitsky and Way's linkage, leverage and organisational power model in the Central Asian context.

This thesis sheds light on the forces behind norm adoption, thereby reflecting on the Europeanisation of countries beyond the direct neighbourhood. Such a study is important as Levitsky and Way originally omitted Central Asia from their analysis and thus no data was available for a region which has largely been neglected by Western scholarship. This research endeavour has remedied this shortcoming by carrying out an in-depth analysis of the case studies.

The findings support the main premise of Levitsky and Way's model but stress the importance of organisational power in the norm implementation process. It discovers that while norm adoption rates correlate with high linkage and leverage levels, these factors alone cannot account for the implementation of norms. It is organisational power that shapes a state's ability to carry out norm adoption processes and ultimately determines implementation rates.

It can thus be stated that in order to ensure greater norm adoption beyond the accession states, weak countries should be supported in the strengthening of their organisational power, provided that they have shown themselves to be of a liberal nature. This will make it possible to achieve better norm adoption rates across a spectrum of norms. In contrast, the EU should focus on raising linkage rates with authoritarian regimes so as to pave the way for greater goodwill and openness to normative cooperation.

Не спешите, постарайтесь выделить на Центральную Азию побольше времени - кто знает, когда вернетесь сюда в следующий раз?

Anton Krotov and Andrej Sapunov “Central Asia. A practical travel guide to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan”

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Abbreviations

AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BOMCA Border Management Programme for Central Asia

BOMNAF Border Management Northern Afghanistan

CA Central Asia

CADAP Central Asia Drug Action Programme

CAREC The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia

CAREN Central Asia Research and Education Network

CIS Commonwealth of Independent States

CRDF Collective Rapid Deployment Force

CSTO Collective Security Treaty Organization

DCI Development Cooperation Instrument

DfID Department for International Development

DEVCO Development Cooperation

EAPC Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

EBRD European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

ECO Economic Cooperation Organisation

EEAS European External Action Service

EC European Commission

ECTS European Credit Transfer System

EIDHR European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

ENP European Neighbourhood Policy

EPC European Political Cooperation

EU European Union

EUBAM EU Border Assistance Mission

EUCAM EU Central Asia Monitoring Project

EURASEC Eurasian Economic Community

FDI Foreign Direct Investment

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GIZ Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

GONGO Governmental Organisation

HEIs Higher Education Institutions

HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IBPP Institution Building Partnership Programme

IfS Instrument for Stability

IMU Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

ISAF International Security Assistance Force

IPAP Individual Partnership Action Plans

IPCP Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme

KNB Committee for National Security

MS Member State(s)

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

NPE Normative Power Europe

NSA-LA Non-State Actors- Local Authorities

HRD Human Rights Dialogues

OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OSCE Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

OST Opioid Substitution Therapy

PARP Planning and Review Process

PCA Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

PfP Partnership for Peace Programme
Ph.D. Doctor of Philosophy
PISA Programme for International Student Assessment
SCO Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SDPR Skills Development for Poverty Reduction
SITC Standard International Trade Classification
UK United Kingdom
UN United Nations
UNDP United Nations Drug Programme
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID United States Agency for International Development
US United States
USD United States Dollars
USSR United Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO World Health Organisation
WTO World Trade Organisation
ZIS Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Suchtforschung

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the product of a long-standing interest in the former Soviet Union, which was intensified in 2008 while completing my Master's degree at the College of Europe in Poland. Spending a year with students from all over the CIS reinforced my desire to better understand the former Soviet Union and pushed me to embark on a trip from Russia to the Caucasus, via Central Asia. I consider these initial interactions with the post-Communist space as the starting point of my PhD research.

I was extremely fortunate to receive a Marie Curie scholarship for my Ph.D. which allowed me to be supervised by both Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels from the University of Cologne and Dr. Jiri Vykoukal at Charles University, Prague. Having supervisors familiar with the European Union and Eastern Europe greatly enriched my research and provided me with the benefit of having impartial onlookers gazing at my work from different angles.

As the Marie Curie scholarship accompanied a group of fellows – together forming the EXACT programme- I had the pleasure of working with other Ph.D. students involved in the study of EU external relations. I am still amazed by the support shown in this network and the initiatives put forward to bring everyone to the finish line. Having such bright and competent scholars comment on my research was of immeasurable value.

Since I began my Eastern European adventure in 2007, I have met countless individuals in Bishkek, Astana, Dushanbe and Tashkent who have had a positive impact on my life and have shared a part of their world with me. They have helped me grow to love a region, which I originally rejected for its harshness and authoritarianism. I am eternally grateful to all the Central Asians who welcomed me with open arms and let me discover the delights of their region.

Special thanks must go to my parents who placed the idea of writing a Ph.D. in my head from a very young age and have consistently been my greatest fans. Without their support, I may have given up on what seemed an endless endeavour. Moreover, I am indebted to my closest friends, M. Ekizlaryan and C. Coerman, who never complained about my footnotes or having to accompany me to the copy shop.

Մերսի իմ հայրսն ջան

Bedankt mijn amoltje

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

In recent years, the European Union (EU) has sought to upgrade its role internationally by placing a range of norms on its foreign policy agenda (Panebianco, Rossi 2004:2). The EU's attempt to be a normative actor - namely to mould the international system in accordance with its own norms - has provoked a deluge of literature on the nature of the EU as a foreign policy actor, with references being made to the EU's "actorness" (Sjostedt 1977), "role" (Hill 1993, 1998: 305-328, 18-38), and "presence" (Allen, Smith 1998: 45-63). Moreover, the EU's civilian (Bull 1982), ethical (Aggestam 2008) and normative (Manners 2002) power potential has equally been at the forefront of debates, offering a range of shades to the EU's characterisation palette.

These developments are reflected in the main tenets of Manners' Normative Power Europe (NPE) which attributes the EU with the "ability to define what passes as 'normal' in world politics" through the force of attraction (Manners 2002: 235-258). This representation of the EU has been challenged by scholars who underline its realist intentions and criticise the EU's instrumentalisation of power asymmetries, employed with the end of coercing third states into adopting its norms (Hyde-Price 2006, Zielonka 2006). These contrasting interpretations can also be encountered in the scholarship on EU-Central Asian relations: on one hand, scholars note that the EU has championed a normative agenda to be pursued with its Central Asian counterparts, on the other, there are clear indications that strategic calculations such as the pursuit of hydrocarbons also shape its policies.

1.1 The EU and Central Asia

A body of literature - albeit nascent - has started to emerge on the EU's relations with Central Asia and its normative actorness in the region (Crawford 2008, Warkotsch 2008, Kavalski 2012). The states of Central Asia - composed of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan - only began to establish relations with the EU after gaining independence in 1991. These relations matured after the region was catapulted into the limelight following the rise of global

terrorism and the war in Afghanistan. The EU's attention was later also caught by the energy diversification potential that relations with a number of states in the region entailed.

Recognising the heightened importance of the Eurasian hinterland, the 2007 Central Asia Strategy served to mark an upgrade in relations.¹ While energy and security undeniably remained at the forefront of concerns, the EU set out ambitious goals for itself in its strategy, striving to promote "the development and consolidation of stable, just societies, adhering to international norms..." (Council of the European Union 2007:2). By expressing willingness to share expertise in the field of "good governance, the rule of law, human rights, democratization, education and training" the EU, at least on paper, acted in line with the principles identified in the original NPE framework (Council of the European Union 2007:2).

Nevertheless, evaluations of the EU's performance have been laced with scathing criticism emanating from NGOs and civil society at large. For example, EU-Central Asian relations have disparagingly been described as "a marriage of convenience", "based on the lowest common denominator" whilst "a convergence of values" have been deemed "a remote prospect" (Lobjakas 2008). To add insult to injury, the EU has been chided for pursuing "energy and security as its priorities" (Melvin, Boonstra 2008:3). It has also been noted that "although EU rhetoric poses democracy as complimentary to security objectives, it is evident that the reality entails a trade-off between 'hard security' concerns over 'soft' human rights and democracy issues." (Crawford 2008: 172-191) In consequence, the same scholar concluded that "the EU likes to present itself as a normative actor in the world, yet its actions are increasingly those of a realist power" (Crawford 2008: 172-191). Such criticism appears to apply to Central Asia in particular given its geopolitical assets.

1.2 The Central Asian Region as an Area of Geopolitical Interest

Central Asia was a region of marginal bearing to most Western countries after the five republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan

¹ Not only were a range of new issues added to the field of EU-Central Asian relations but financial allocations were almost doubled, reaching a total of 750 million euros.

gained independence in the wake of the fall of the Iron Curtain. Moreover, as the Central Asian states were heavily focused on state building in the early 1990s and did not have the necessary capacity to assert themselves internationally, they were deemed minor players in the global (geo)political landscape. This ceased to be the case after the world's attention was directed to the region following a number of events of great geopolitical significance for both Europe and the world at large.

Figure 1: Commonwealth of Independent States and Central Asia



Source: Yale University Library

While Central Asia was historically recognised for its strategic preponderance in the heartland theory "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island controls the world." (Mackinder: 1904), it largely disappeared off the world's radar when it fell under Russian control. This Soviet backwater then reappeared on the world map in 2001 due to the war in Afghanistan and the planned overthrow of Al Qaeda. Western governments actively looked for friendly partners who would endorse their fight against terrorism and became increasingly dependent on the goodwill of Central Asian countries to assist them in the logistical aspects of the war, making a rapprochement inevitable.

It is thus that the US government began funnelling aid into the region and tasked itself with preventing the spread of terrorism through the promotion of democracy. Soon, leaders which had previously been criticised for their ruthless policies were considered the harbingers of stability in Central Asia. At the same time, military ties deepened as the Northern Distribution Network² was put in place to transport equipment and supplies to Afghanistan from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. As most deliveries left Termez in Uzbekistan, this country enjoyed a key role in the mission Operation Enduring Freedom³ and benefitted from large transfers from both the US and Germany who were using the base in the south of the country.

The Eastern Enlargement of 2004 brought Central Asia geographically closer to Europe. By increasing the length of its borders beyond those of Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the European Union further exposed itself to threats emanating from its periphery such as drug trafficking. A security approach was thus pursued that would allow the EU to protect its borders from the outside. Such objectives could only be achieved by enhancing cooperation with those states surrounding Europe. It is thus that 15 of the EU's neighbours⁴ started taking part in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which promised them financial assistance in return for government reform in the political, economic, trade and human rights sphere. As cooperation intensified, there was soon the realisation that cooperation had to be extended to the "neighbours of our neighbours" (European Commission 2006: 11) with the aim of moving closer to the source of the problem. This raised the profile of the Central Asian region as one of the main routes for drug trafficking to Europe as well a potential source of organised crime.

Moreover, frequent spats between Russia and Ukraine from 2005 onwards over transit fees and gas prices encouraged the EU to consider alternative pipelines and gas providers. This need became particularly pronounced after gas shortages were

² The Northern Distribution Network is composed of numerous routes which ship equipment from Europe to Afghanistan via Central Asia.

³ Operation Enduring Freedom was the name given to the war in Afghanistan by the US government.

⁴ Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

felt in 18 EU countries in January 2009 as Russia cut off the gas that was to transit Ukraine on the way to Europe following a dispute about Ukraine's apparent theft of EU-destined gas (Hafner, Bigano 2009: 2). As the EU is still largely dependent on Russia for its gas supplies, this crisis highlighted its own vulnerability and incited it to seek out energy providers further afield. It is true that the Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and to a limited extent Uzbekistan have immense hydrocarbon resources that can be exported to European markets while circumventing Ukraine and Russia. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were thus key protagonists in a range of projects, which were to enhance Europe's energy security. The proposed Trans-Caspian pipeline⁵ and the Nabucco⁶ project would render them into coveted partners and raise the geopolitical significance of the region.

1.3 State of Scholarship on the Region to Date

Central Asia was fenced off from the world for decades and only few researchers were granted access to the region during Soviet times. In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union a body of literature gradually began to form on this geopolitical space although it still remains highly underdeveloped compared to the scholarship available on other regions. This partly stems from a lack of scholarly development within the countries themselves; the political context often does not spawn critical debate, consequently restricting publications to propaganda which do not qualify as scientific research. Moreover, in cases where scholarship is supported, findings do not penetrate the international market due to the fact that local scholars rarely speak English and lack resources (libraries, internet, conference travel assistance inter alia). Even those Central Asian scholars enjoying foreign funding and residing abroad, have generally avoided political topics lest they endanger their families or face persecution upon returning to their country of origin (Interview # 25).

A noticeable exception regarding the internationalisation of knowledge is Kazakhstan, which has begun backing English-language instruction and has encouraged exchanges through conferences inter alia (Schoeberlein 2013). Yet, in

⁵ The proposed trans-Caspian pipeline was to bring gas from Turkmenistan to Europe via Azerbaijan.

⁶ The Nabucco pipeline was to serve the purpose of transporting gas from Turkey to Austria, potentially of Turkmen origin.

the case of the other states, the situation is less bright either due to financial (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) or political constraints (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). Luckily, educational initiatives such as the American University of Central Asia and the Agha Khan Foundation will permit for isolated pockets of scholars to form who can subsequently feed into international debates. Still, it is the West which largely determines the research agenda on the region and thus enjoys a certain “monopoly on the right of initiative”.

Even the region’s traditional hegemon has not been enthralled by developments in its so-called “backyard”, with scant scholarship originating from Russia. There is thus limited debate on EU-Central Asian relations in Russian language journals and in academic discourse. Citizens of the CIS writing on Central Asia are chiefly Western backed and tend to have enjoyed a Western education. This inevitably gives their research agendas a Western hue as scientific investigation is not home-grown but shaped by external stimuli and incentives such as research grants. All the scholars cited in this Ph.D. thesis with names of Russian origin are cases in point - they have by and large been educated in the West. The publications of the think tank Central Eurasia are an exception to the rule as most of its contributors were educated in the former Soviet Union. Nevertheless, this source is not widely read in the West and remains largely unknown.

In terms of EU-produced scholarship on EU-Central Asian relations, a similar void can be noted which largely stems from European apathy towards the region. To date, most information on Central Asia comes from news sites such as Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty and Eurasianet.org. This gap has been partly filled by the European Union Central Asia Monitoring (EUCAM) project which has made the region the central focus of its publications. Still, there exist only a handful of texts looking at European norm promotion attempts in the region and these usually are of a general nature, solely scratching on the surface of project implementation in limited spheres of cooperation (Hoffmann 2010; Warkotsch 2008). US scholarship has provided insights into US-Central Asian relations but has refrained from touching on the EU angle. This Ph.D. thesis will thus concentrate on a largely unexplored area of international relations which has been neglected both regionally and internationally.

1.4 Thrust of Research

This Ph.D. thesis is situated in the field of EU foreign policy and norm promotion. More particularly, it focuses on EU norm promotion endeavours in Central Asia and is principally tasked with *identifying those factors which result in norm adoption*. The factors which form the backbone of the analysis are “linkage”, “leverage” and “organisational power”, in line with the model conceived of by Levitsky and Way, albeit in an adapted form. While linkage looks at the ties between states, leverage is concerned with power relations. Organisation power, in contrast, considers the internal structures of states and their ability to control their territory when faced with a threat.

At the same time, it explores the mitigating role that regime type plays in norm adoption which has not been addressed in academic debate on Levitsky and Way’s approach hitherto. This stems from the fact that previous research was restricted to competitive authoritarian regimes alone. With a view to answering the main question, a sub-question has also been formulated which strives to ascertain *how successful the EU is at spreading its norms in Central Asia*. It does this by analysing three EU projects in the field of education, human rights and security and comparing their implementation levels. Given the vastness of the topic and the desire to apply a case study design with a small N which caters for more detail, only three countries were selected (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan) from a total of 5 (Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have been omitted).

The thrust of this thesis is that norm promotion adoption is greatly facilitated by high linkage and leverage rates, but that organisational power is of crucial importance for determining whether states implement projects and adopt norms. The intervening variable, regime type - while by no means being extraneous - is of secondary importance, as goodwill alone, which generally goes hand in hand with liberal regime types and is facilitated through high linkage and leverage rates, does not suffice to ensure norm adoption. States may be willing to cooperate with the EU but lack the necessary competences to match rhetoric with action. In those instances, norm adoption rates may not reflect the eagerness of the EU’s partner and instead mirror its weaknesses. On the other hand, this thesis also brings forth nuances

between projects, illustrating that states differentiate between norms and that a tailor-made cooperation agenda that takes into account domestic differences, is essential.

1.5 Relevance of the Topic

The social relevance of this topic lies in the fact that Central Asia is increasingly influential in the global arena by virtue of its hydrocarbon reserves and strategic location next to Afghanistan. As the EU has a rational motive to advance stable regimes on its borders and to interact with likeminded states, its normative agenda cannot be discarded when cooperating with Central Asia. For this reason, better understanding of Central Asian societies and factors shaping norm adoption in these states is of central importance to the European Union. Moreover, from a moral perspective, if the EU is a normative power in Manners' sense, there should be sincere drive to ameliorate the governance structures in the region under study as all states rank either medium or low in terms of civil and political liberties (Freedom House).⁷

It is also an opportunity to move the focus of scholarly research away from the geopolitical preponderance of the region towards an examination of the political processes taking place within the countries in question. Scholarship has remained trapped in Great Game rhetoric which reduces political analysis to international competition instead of drawing attention to the political challenges inside of these states. Dariga Nazarbaeva - the daughter of the president of Kazakhstan and the leader of the Asar party - reproduced these discursive patterns when she stated that "All of us can witness how the Central Asian region is turning into a conflict zone with respect to the geopolitical interests of the great world leaders. It is turning into a private battle ground for global powers" (Nazarbaeva 2006:34). This draws attention away from key questions to be answered: "how are the states of the region developing politically?" and "in how far are they serving the needs of their people?" It is essential to gauge the performance of the leaders of these countries and the development of their states if EU policies are to support the development of just societies, as indicated in the EU's Central Asia Strategy.

⁷ See annex with Freedom House scores

From a theoretical point of view, this research undertaking sheds greater light on the role of authoritarianism in determining norm adoption, given that Levitsky and Way limited their research to competitive authoritarian regimes alone which tolerate a degree of liberty contrary to our case studies Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Moreover, this subject enjoys further relevance due to the fact that it explores the role of geographical proximity/distance in determining norm adoption and also seeks to employ the linkage, leverage and organisational power model to identify variation within regions, something that Levitsky and Way fail to do. It will thus be an extension of the Europeanisation literature and equally contribute to studies on norm promotion/democratisation with a view to rendering EU foreign policy more effective in hostile environments.

Such an approach is considered to be of particular value as negligible research has been conducted into the impact/success of EU policies in Central Asia and most appraisals have not included a comparison across several countries in the region. In fact, concrete data on how EU projects fare in different Central Asian countries has only started to take shape recently and there is still ample room for exploration (Bossuyt, Kubicek 2011:647). Such an appraisal should permit policy-makers to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of their policies and trigger thought about possible improvements, ultimately benefitting the peoples residing within the borders of the above-mentioned states.

1.6 Structure of the Ph.D. Thesis

The Ph.D. thesis is divided into four main parts which provide the background of the topic, develop the theoretical and empirical foundations of the thesis and then enable this research endeavour to draw conclusions on the EU's norm promotion potential. These parts are then divided into chapters which tackle specific aspects of the subject under study. There are a total of 10 chapters in the thesis including the introduction and the conclusion. At the end, a bibliography and an annex are provided, which serve the purpose of making all the necessary sources used for this thesis available.

The theoretical part begins with an overview of the main literature on the EU as a normative actor, outlining the work of Manners on Normative Power Europe and its critique by Laidi and Youngs. Subsequently, Levitsky and Way's research findings

are introduced with the aim of shedding light on regime outcomes in the post-Cold War era which makes it possible to build a link between the norm promotion and democratisation literature. Their model is then outlined which is composed of three key variables: linkage, leverage and organisational power. These variables are presented in the chapter that follows. The chapter on the operationalisation of the variables as well as the research questions leads the reader to the crux of this Ph.D. thesis. Finally, the methodology applied in this research endeavour is outlined as well as its shortcomings.

The empirical part of this Ph.D. largely focuses on matching the variables linkage, leverage and organisational power with specific data for each case study. The section opens with a brief outline of the region and its culture, moving on to each country, tracing its recent political path and its economic model of development. Subsequently, three projects are explored which the EU carries out in Central Asia: human rights, education and security. Their implementation levels are then compared in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Next, linkage levels are dissected, focusing on trade, intergovernmental, media and civil society links as well as the EU presence on the ground. After, leverage rates are identified, by scrutinising trade rates, competing foreign policy interests and competing powers. This is followed by organisational power, which is presented in the three countries. Finally, the regime type of the three countries is discussed.

The conclusion begins by answering both the sub-question and the principal research question of the Ph.D. thesis. It then subsequently compares the hypotheses with the findings and draws conclusions on the EU's norm adoption ability in Central Asia. In this part, it attests to the validity of the findings of Levitsky and Way, even if the role of the variable organisational power is presented in a more differentiated light. Next, it tackles those aspects which could have been altered in the study with the end of making it function more smoothly. These include the norm, case and regional selection, an intra-regional study as well as the transposition of the model, the operationalisation and the main theoretical approach. Finally, it opens a policy debate on the future of EU norm promotion in Central Asia and EU foreign policy towards

authoritarian states in general, highlighting the fragile context in which the EU is operating.

2. Conceptual Background

There has been a long-dated debate on the nature of the European Union as an international actor. This chapter will outline the essence of the discussion, covering both constructivist and rationalist accounts of the EU's international undertakings. In doing so, it will trace the development from Civilian to NPE, concluding with rationalist accounts, which depict the EU as a hegemonic power seeking to construct its own normative empire, thereby standing in juxtaposition to constructivist perspectives on the EU's role on the global stage. Such an overview allows for the theoretical debate behind the EU's norm promotion to be grasped and paves the way for a deeper theoretical analysis of the subject at hand.

2.1 An Overview of the Norms Debate

Manners traces the beginning of the debate on Europe's role in the world back to the seventies when "economic interdependence, superpower détente and changing European imperatives" resulted in the institutionalisation of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) and an upgrading of its international role. (Manners 2010:72-73). As part of this discourse, Europe was attributed with civilian power by dint of its economic resources, production capacities and trade turnover (Duchene 1972). These traits were deemed to confer it the ability "to uphold civilian ends such as the defence of human rights and the support for the consolidation of democracy or of an open global economy" without needing military power (Hill, Smith 2001: 35).

"A primarily civilian power on the scale of Western Europe, accounting for a fifth of world production and nearly a third of world trade, could play a very important and constructive role...endowed with resources and free of a load of military power which could give it great influence in a world where... interdependence seems to be growing at a rapid rate (Duchene 1972:43)."

Civilian Power Europe not only marks the beginning of the discourse on the EU's international role but also lays the building blocks for further discussions on the EU's norm promotion potential. It does this by leaning on two main assumptions: firstly, it asserts that the EPC had become a global actor in its own right and secondly, that it had the power to shape the international system and the behaviour of other states operating within that web of relations. However, Civilian Power Europe would soon

be replaced by another concept which would emphasise the EU's ideational strength and spawn countless scholarly work on the EU's norm promotion potential.

The EU and Norms

Manners' writings on NPE dominated discussions on EU foreign policy for several decades and sprang forth from the Civilian Power Europe concept (Merlington 2007:2). While Manners recognised that the EU did not require military force, he emphasised the power of its norms and thus embraced constructivist accounts of International Relations, typical of the post-Cold War era (Aggestam 2008:2). Manners maintained that the "EU promotes a series of normative principles that are generally acknowledged, within the United Nations system, to be universally applicable" (Manners 2008:46). In the same vein, he stated that "the ethics of the EU's normative power are located in the ability to normalize a more just, cosmopolitical world" (Manners 2008:47). Manners would add that the norms spread by the EU were sustainable peace, social freedom, consensual democracy, human rights, rule of law, equality, social solidarity, sustainable development and good governance (Manners 2008:48-55) and these were diffused by contagion, informational diffusion, procedural diffusion, transference, overt diffusion and cultural filters (Manners 2002:244-245) - unique tools at the EU's disposal.

European Identity

Manners' followers have argued that the presence of norms and values in EU foreign policy have been inextricably linked to its identity. This claim has nonetheless been challenged in scholarly literature on the subject. A recurrent theme in the critiques evoked by scholars is that Manner's concept is based on what the EU strives to be rather than what it actually is (Diez 2005: 616) and that projections of the EU as a normative force frequently employed by EU politicians are neither objective nor based on any universal benchmarks (Diez 2005:626). Instead, they maintain that the

function of such discourse is rather that of identity-creation whereby the EU creates an identity for itself and also for those actors it “others” (Diez 2005:626).⁸

The view that European norms are moral, superior and universal is in fact contested as there is a divide between those positing the universality (cosmopolitan conceptions) of EU values and those underlining their peculiarity (communitarian conceptions) (Aggestam 2008:6). Indeed, EU foreign policy could be depicted as communitarian provided that third states identify these norms as European rather than universal (Aggestam 2008:6). Be that as it may, by claiming that EU values are universal, Europeans “other” those who abide by diverging norms and thereby divide the world into “us” and “them” (Acharya, Buzan 2007: 300). In consequence, states that have failed to fit into the mould created by the West are classified as “weak” or “failed”, languishing on the margins of international society (Acharya, Buzan 2007: 300). This shows that Normative Power Europe has the potential to be an exclusive concept which draws boundaries between Europe and those residing beyond its confines.

Overlapping Normativity

Studies suggest that the EU is not alone in the world to act in line with its norms and that other states equally promote their own normative frameworks (Tocci et al 2008). In fact, while it is true that the EU’s norms are mirrored in the UN Charter, powers such as China and India focus on other principles also present in international law. Principles such as non-interference and respect for sovereignty could be considered equally lofty depending on the standpoint of the evaluator. The degree of normativity of an actor thereby seems to be a more appropriate way of framing the subject, rather than scrutinising whether actors have normative power in the first place (Tewes 1997: 353).

Moreover, regardless of its claims of being guided by norms, the EU has been criticised for its double standards and incoherence (Lerch, Schweltnus 2006:304-321). For instance, scholars have noted that EU foreign policy is governed by

⁸ Diez identifies 4 strategies of othering which are relevant here: the representation of the other as an existential threat, the representation of the other as inferior, the representation of the other as violating universal principles and the representation of the other as different.

strategic calculations which means that material interests frequently trump normative considerations when these are in conflict (Smith 2001: 85-204). Norms thus serve as a normative cloak which is employed to augment the effectiveness and legitimacy of other policies (Youngs 2004:421). In this context, “linking western strategic interests to the advancement of human right and political reform in other regions” is not uncommon (Youngs 2004:421). As a matter of fact, the statement that a “normative sphere without interests is in itself nonsensical” (Diez 2005:625), indicates that even if there is a normative, value-driven element in foreign policy, strategic interests do not tend to be ignored (Youngs 2004:2). It therefore appears futile to examine the EU’s foreign policy from a normative angle without regarding the EU’s strategic interests.

2.2 Combining Norms and Interests

Realist conceptions of the EU’s foreign policy focus on power and control. Hyde-Price’s critique has been among the most scathing in this regard, stating that “the EU used its most influential member states as an instrument for collectively exercising hegemonic power, shaping its ‘near abroad’ in ways amenable to the long-term strategic and economic interests of its member states” (Hyde-Price 2006:226). With this realist depiction of EU foreign policy, Hyde-Price is diametrically opposed to Manners.

There are further rationalist accounts which serve to decipher the EU’s norm promotion undertakings under the guise of its consensual enlargement policy. In Zielonka’s eyes, enlargement has allowed the EU to project its economic and political power onto other states and has been “an impressive exercise in empire building” (Zielonka 2006:44). This scholar notes that Brussels was able to impose its policies (export norms) on accession states coveting membership by dint of power asymmetries. The main motivation for the EU to undertake this endeavour was to ensure peace and stability at its borders while simultaneously pursuing an upgrade in its status on the global stage. In the same vein, Zielonka has concluded that “the EU is not a Westphalian centralised state; it is a sort of civilian rather than military power and offers economic help to its peripheries rather than trying to exploit them. Yet, when we look at the ever-further extension of EU borders and at the

‘aggressive’ export of EU rules to its neighbours we cannot but conclude that the EU is (or is becoming) an empire of some sort”(Zielonka 2006:13).

According to another realist scholar based at Sciences Po in Paris, Europe expresses a preference for norms since it has no other means at its disposal for competing with other world powers. (Laidi 2008: 2). This stems from the fact that it is not the guarantor of its own security and the potency of its power does not correspond to that of a nation-state (Laidi 2008: 2). Laidi consequently reasons that the EU advocates the constitutionalisation of the international system (the writing of rules for all domains of international interaction, the conferral of rights to citizens, the elimination of contradiction between norms, the setting up of international arbitration bodies, the codification of procedures for norm implementation and the prescription of legitimate conduct) as a survival strategy since *realpolitik* would bring about its demise (Laidi 2008: 114).

Moreover, Laidi highlights that while the EU may not possess traditional hard power, there are two key attributes which do grant it some tools to put pressure on states: the conditionality of market access and the conditionality of accession (Laidi 2008: 24). By applying these it can carry out “regulatory imperialism” and push for “the integration of a world order based on the legitimacy of rules, the predictability of behaviour and the enforceability of accepted principles” (Laidi 2008: 4). However, the fact that it is not a state raises its stakes in having a community governed by rules as this is the only way it can make its voice heard (Laidi 2008:5). Furthermore, Laidi maintains that in order for the EU to be a power in the first place, it must resort to using its “major political resource”, namely, its ability to construct a normative framework for international relations (Laidi:35).

The abovementioned scholars thus depict the EU as a rational actor which uses its power in the international system to compel other states to adopt its norms. This endeavour requires power asymmetries and highlights the importance of EU leverage vis-à-vis other actors. Conversely, the power of attraction appears to play a secondary role in the norm adoption process. Cynics would argue that the EU has used conditionality to build an empire based on asymmetrical relationships and has thus managed to shape the international system in line with its own conception of

“normal”. The democratisation of states in the post-Cold War period, which were heavily exposed to EU influence and pressure, illustrates this line of reasoning.

PART TWO: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

3. Norm Promotion

This chapter of the Ph.D. examines the EU as a norm promoter in the post-Cold War context and outlines Levitsky and Way's account of variation in regime outcomes in the former Communist space. Subsequently, it sketches the methodology used by the aforementioned scholars and their results. Finally, it introduces the application of the model to the case of Central Asia. In doing so, it strives to fill a research gap regarding the relationship between norm promotion on the one hand and linkage, leverage and organisational power on the other. As it scrutinises norm implementation in a range of authoritarian contexts, it equally contributes to the literature on democratisation in non-liberal environments, EU foreign policy and to the field of Central Asian Studies as a whole.

3.1 Norm Adoption in the Former Communist Space

With the end of the Cold War, Europe's attention gradually shifted in the direction of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, the governments of these countries, which had been ambivalent about Western European integration during Communist times, were eager to "return to Europe" and join NATO. As eight Central and Eastern European countries joined the EU in 2004, the former Soviet territory simultaneously moved closer to Europe. These developments affected those states lingering on the edge of the EU as the relations with their neighbours were increasingly dictated by the newly-adopted *acquis communautaire*.

The two Eastern Enlargements gave the EU first-hand experience at dealing with post-Communist states and also resulted in greater attentiveness concerning developments in the East. The EU would design the ENP and the Eastern Partnership in order to play a more pronounced role in the Eastern part of the continent. Moreover, while the EU sought to heighten the level of contact between the EU and the states in question, it equally strove to spread its norms and standards beyond its neighbourhood to Central Asia by formulating the Central Asia Strategy.

Despite its intent, a post-Communist divide can be noted in terms of receptiveness to European norms and standards. A large part of the Central and Southern European

states became consolidated democracies from independence onwards. The former Soviet Union, in turn, still harbours some of the most autocratic nations on earth, with democracy levels steadily declining after the initial opening in the wake of independence.⁹ The result has been a heterogeneous collection of post-Communist states which radically diverge in terms of their political openness. The section which follows further analyses this variation and outlines different approaches seeking to explain this peculiar development.

Variation in Outcomes

Political scientists have attributed variation to different factors depending on the approach they have adopted. These can generally be clustered into four groups, namely socioeconomic, institutional, leadership and structuralist accounts. These will briefly be sketched below in order to help the reader situate this thesis in the correct theoretical context and to grasp contrasting explanations of the phenomenon at hand. As this thesis will adopt Levitsky and Way's model, it will be heavily influenced by structuralist accounts.

Those concerned with socioeconomic variables have stressed the importance of modernisation, inequality and economic performance. Scholars speaking in favour of modernisation-centred accounts argue that development and democracy are interlinked (Lipset 1959/1981; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992; Boix and Stokes 2003). This means that more developed countries are more likely to be democratic. According to another group of scholars, income inequality is of crucial importance when explaining democratisation. They argue that the rich withhold freedom from the poor in order to avoid a loss of wealth (Boix 2003). Therefore, democracy is more likely in equal societies as there is less repression. Finally, those looking at economic performance stress the importance of prosperity in halting democratisation as wealth helps sustain patronage networks or buy the loyalty of the security services (Przeworski et al 2000). This strand thus clashes with the supporters of modernisation accounts of democratisation even though it also pertains to the group studying socioeconomic variables.

⁹Uzbekistan is an excellent example to illustrate this point as it has consistently ranked "not free" in the Freedom House Index.

Another strand in the literature puts forward institutional design as a key determinant, looking at the link between presidential regimes and authoritarianism (Linz 1990; Fish 2005: 248-250). Similarly, scholars belonging to this group have examined the role of constitutional courts and electoral commissions as well as other formal institutions in upholding democracy (Ganev 2001: 194-196; Horowitz 2006). Related to this are leadership accounts. These stress the importance of leadership and look at the decisions taken by elites and their political choices (O' Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Fish 1998). Such decisions are deemed key to understanding outcomes at national level.

A final strand reflects on the role of structure in determining regime outcomes. Scholars pertaining to this group argue that structuralist factors such as changes in the international or domestic system explain why some regimes democratise and others do not (Levitsky and Way 2010). The fall of the Soviet Union has been deemed a key event for structuralists as it radically changed the structure of the international system. This approach will now be scrutinised in the section that follows given that it constitutes the crux of Levitsky and Way's work.

Structuralist Approaches in the Post-Cold War Context

Levitsky and Way sought to underline the validity of their approach by challenging the first three approaches outlined above. They argued that outcomes in the post-Cold War context could not be explained by looking at socioeconomic, institutional and leadership variables (Levitsky and Way 2010: 74-83) but that linkage and leverage rates, as well as the organisational power of incumbents determined whether states democratised or stayed authoritarian (Levitsky and Way 2010: 23). In their eyes, the post-Cold War shift in the global balance of power towards the West eliminated credible alternatives in military, economic and ideological terms and pushed autocrats to adopt EU norms as a means of attracting funds. Autocrats thus reasoned instrumentally and were driven by the need to ensure their political survival.

To test their hypotheses, the aforementioned scholars examined variation in regime outcomes among a group of states termed "competitive authoritarian" which

employed “electoral competition with varying degrees of authoritarianism” (Levitsky and Way 2010: 3) In these systems, opposition forces were able to compete in elections even though these failed to be democratic due to “electoral manipulation, unfair media access, abuse of state resources, and varying degrees of harassment” which resulted in candidates competing on an uneven playing field vis-à-vis the incumbents (Levitsky and Way 2010:3).

They applied their model to 35 regimes which either were or became competitive authoritarian between 1990 and 1995. They did not include hybrid regimes where the conditions for competitive authoritarianism were not met¹⁰ and also discarded “illiberal regimes” in which there were large-scale human rights violations (Levitsky and Way 2010: 32). Furthermore, cases in which competitive authoritarian regimes failed to complete a single presidential/parliamentary term or the state collapsed were also excluded. The line between democratic¹¹ and competitive authoritarian regimes was drawn in those cases, where the following were recorded: electoral manipulation, widespread abuses of civil liberties and the presence of an uneven playing field. Similarly, a regime crossed the line from competitive to fully authoritarian when parties could not rely on elections and democratic institutions to access power, being hindered from competing by a range of legal, administrative, security and financial obstacles or electoral fraud.

3.2 Levitsky and Way’s research findings

Levitsky and Way’s theory - after having been applied to 35 cases - correctly predicted 28 regime outcomes (Levitsky and Way 2010: 340). Of those outcomes that were unexpected, 5 were borderline cases, with Ghana remaining the sole example which could not be accounted for by the theory.¹² The role of linkage - rather than economic (under)development as stipulated by modernisation theory - is

¹⁰ Countries where leading executive offices are not elected, there is military constraint or foreign occupation.

¹¹ It is important to note that Levitsky and Way conceive of democracy in a procedural way, emphasising the need for: (1) free, fair and competitive elections, (2) full adult suffrage, (3) broad protection of civil liberties such as freedom of speech, press and association and (4) absence of restrictions on officials’ powers by non-elected authorities such as the military, a monarch or religious bodies as well as (5) the existence of a reasonably level playing field between the opposition and those in power. See Levitsky and Way (2010) pages 5-6

¹² The case of Ghana is explained by looking at the role of leadership as well as the growth of the opposition movement.

important to note in this context: in 9 out of 10 high linkage countries of low and middle income, democracy was adopted, whereas this political development only took place in only 5 of 24 low linkage countries falling into the same development category (Levitsky and Way 2010:346). Incumbents' ability to stay in power is also deemed to have been heavily influenced by organisational power. Levitsky and Way noted that in cases of low organisational power, in 9 out of 35 cases, leaders were ousted. In contrast, this only happened in only 2 out of 30 cases in countries with high organisational power (Levitsky and Way 2010:346).

Results in High Linkage States

Levitsky and Way examined the trajectories of 6 competitive authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe which were exposed to extensive linkage and leverage and thus the most likely success stories in terms of democratisation. When starting membership negotiations in 1998, the leaders of these Eastern European states had great incentives to implement reform and liberalise (Levitsky and Way 2010:88). Nevertheless, initial conditions for democratisation after independence were considered unfavourable due to the legacy of Communism. Still, the EU was in a position to apply conditionality in a coherent manner and to push for norm compliance, which explains the "restrained" nature of Eastern European leaders compared to their Central Asian counterparts (Levitsky and Way 2010:90). As propping up authoritarian regimes became too costly for Eastern European autocrats, they were compelled to change their behaviour, subsequently liberalising their regimes (Levitsky and Way 2010:42).

Levitsky and Way link the democratisation of Eastern Europe to linkage rates as these allowed the EU to effectively implement conditionality. They note that social, economic, political, technocratic and communication networks "*increased the salience of abuse; encouraged Western intervention; enhanced the utility, organisation, self-confidence, and even prestige of operations; and, crucially, gave elites- and, in some cases, voters- a greater stake in integration.*" (Levitsky and Way 2010:129) The results are convincing; in total, 5 out of 6 competitive authoritarian regimes democratised.

The Americas are another relevant case to illustrate the role of linkage as well as the interplay between the other variables. The domestic context in the Americas was also considered unfavourable but democracy took root in all but one country in spite of underdevelopment, social inequality and presidentialist systems (Levitsky and Way 2010:130). This stems from the fact that the US reacted to abuse more frequently due to high linkage rates and elites in the countries concerned were more aware of the potential consequences sanctions would entail. In fact, in all cases with high linkage, democracy prevailed. However, in the case of Mexico for instance (high linkage, low leverage), domestic factors played a far greater role due to the fact that US leverage over Mexico was low (Levitsky and Way 2010:132). Moreover, state and party weakness accounted for regime change in Peru and Haiti instead of external factors, which illustrates the growing importance of the domestic context once linkage levels decrease (Levitsky and Way 2010:132).

Results in Low Linkage States

The above mentioned states- which can largely be qualified as democratisers - stand in stark contrast to countries in the former Soviet Union, Africa and Asia, where linkage levels were lower and democracy often failed to take root. In these examples, the interplay between leverage and organisational power further came to the fore in the absence of high linkage levels. Moreover, democracy as an outcome was far rarer, giving weight to Levitsky and Way's theory.

In the case of the former Soviet Union, 6 countries qualified as "competitive authoritarian" and democratisation was largely absent across the board apart from the case of Ukraine.¹³ Linkage levels had been low during Communism as the Soviet Union isolated itself from the West and ties had to be established once these countries gained independence (Levitsky and Way 2010:185). Since relations never reached the same depth as with Eastern European states and EU membership was not on the table at any point during the period studied by Levitsky and Way, it is unsurprising that the same democratising outcome could not be noted. Another factor to be taken into account is the role that Russia played as a counterweight in a number

¹³ Since their study was conducted, Ukraine has swayed back and forth from liberalism to greater authoritarianism.

of these states, which limited EU leverage compared to the Eastern European case. Organisational power also ultimately determined the stability of regimes in this principally low linkage, low leverage environment, highlighting the relevance of this variable in determining regime sustainability (Levitsky and Way 2010:186).

The case of Africa is illustrative of outcomes in environments of low linkage and high leverage where domestic conditions are unfavourable due to great poverty and income inequality. In this example, the strength of parties as well as counterweight support were fundamental to ensuring authoritarian stability. Still, contrary to the predictions of the theory, democratisation did occur in a number of cases where leadership and opposition strength proved critical (Levitsky and Way 2010:307) which hints at a gap in Levitsky and Way's model to be covered in future research.

Finally, in Asia, outcomes of competitive authoritarian regimes greatly diverged. The cases studied (Malaysia, Taiwan and Cambodia) highlighted that linkage and organisational power are key to explaining regime outcomes (Levitsky and Way 2010:37) as democratisation won over certain Asian countries even when leverage was absent. However, this only occurred when extensive ties to the West were upheld as was the case of Taiwan. The above examples give weight to Levitsky and Way's structuralist model and show that it can apply around the globe.

3.3 Levitsky and Way and Central Asia

Having taken a medium N sample, Levitsky and Way cannot make general claims about the role of linkage, leverage and organisational power outside of the context of competitive authoritarianism and do not have a wide-ranging theory on regime change (Levitsky and Way 2010:34). The theory is also limited in time as it focuses on the post-Cold War context of Western hegemony which is gradually being replaced by multipolarity. On a positive note, the fact of focusing on 35 cases confers the study greater measurement validity as in-depth analysis is facilitated, allowing to better trace the causal mechanisms at play (Levitsky and Way 2010:35). The above must be borne in mind when building on Levitsky and Way's empirical study.

The states of Central Asia were not included in the analysis as they were qualified as hegemonic or excessively unstable competitive authoritarian regimes. Hegemonic

cases were discarded as “elections are so marred by repression, candidate restrictions, and/or fraud that there is no uncertainty about their outcome” (Levitsky and Way 2010:7). In the case of unstable regimes like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, these countries were excluded as they were considered too precarious. Notwithstanding, Levitsky and Way do note that their theory should equally explain outcomes in these cases and this is the gap this research endeavour seeks to address by analysing both fragile and hegemonic regimes in Central Asia (Levitsky and Way 2010:343). In doing so, this thesis will contribute to the literature on democratisation and on the causal mechanisms pushing autocrats to adopt liberal norms. Thus far, no study has been conducted on the role of linkage, leverage and organisational power in changing autocratic behaviour in non-competitive authoritarian regimes. This thesis will thus fill a major theoretical and empirical gap that is to benefit practitioners active in the field of EU-Central Asian relations.

4. Designing a Framework for Central Asia

This section will start by outlining the research questions, which guided the researcher throughout this research endeavour. Then, rational institutionalism will be introduced as a theory and subsequently incorporated into the linkage, leverage and organisational power model. The chapter then finishes by presenting the main variables and the hypotheses. In doing so, it provides the main theoretical framework of the thesis, which has been inspired by rationalist institutionalism and the abovementioned model of Levitsky and Way. Using this model to analyse norm promotion allows this thesis to contribute to research on rational explanations for norm adoption and to understand the factors which result in higher adoption rates. The model will be employed with the end of answering the main research question of this thesis “what factors determine the EU’s ability to be a norm promoter in Central Asia” as well as the sub-question “how successful is the EU at promoting its norms in Central Asia?”.

While the model originally looks at democratisation and does not explicitly focus on norm promotion, it will be adapted so that it can cater for norm adoption outcomes, which is of principal interest to this thesis. As the norms promoted by the EU in Central Asia make it possible for democratic societies to gain ground (equal access to education, respect for human rights etc.), the use of Levitsky and Way’s democracy-centred model is appropriate in this context. Such an adaptation also allows us to understand which causal mechanisms are at play in the norm adoption process. This can consequently enrich our understanding of the phenomenon and contribute to more effective policies.

4.1 Research Questions

The main research question “what factors determine the EU’s norm promotion ability in Central Asia” can be answered by looking at linkage and leverage rates in the countries in question and equally by examining the organisational power of incumbents as stated in Levitsky and Way’s model. However, in order to address the main research question, a sub-question is needed to assess *how successful the EU is at spreading its norms*. Such a sub-question seeks to ascertain the success rates of the EU’s norm promotion attempts by looking at a number of norm promotion endeavours as to understand whether states are prone to adopting certain types of

norms and whether they distinguish between norms. Their selection will be discussed in the following chapter on the operationalisation of the variables.

4.2 Theoretical Background: Rational Institutionalism

This thesis is inspired by rational institutionalism as it shares its key assumption that actors are rational beings and that behaviour is motivated by utility maximisation (Peters 2005:47). In this context, cost-benefit calculations guide decisions rather than conviction about what is appropriate or morally right. Rational institutionalists frame their theory in the institutional context - despite emphasising the importance of the rational, egoistic individual - as this is the focal point of political life (Tsebelis 1990). Institutions are consequently understood as “collections of rules and incentives that establish the conditions for bounded rationality, and therefore establish a ‘political space’ within which political actors can function” (Peters 2005:48). Such entities constrain the behaviour of actors and shape their actions (Peters 2005:48).

In general, rational choice institutionalists argue that actors have fixed preferences and act in an instrumental fashion by applying calculations with the hope of maximising their access to these preferences (Shepsle, Weingast 1987: 85-104). Not only do actors behave in a rational way, they are also driven by their expectations of how others will act. These calculations take place within the structure of institutions which directly reduce uncertainty about the behaviour of others and lead to more positive social outcomes. Institutions generally serve the ends of actors - allowing them to benefit from cooperation - and enable them to maximise their preferences (Hall, Taylor 1996). Individuals, while acting inside of institutions, are affected by external stimuli. Rational institutionalists thus posit that the EU attempts to interfere with the cost-benefit calculations of actors through the application of conditionality or other punitive measures (Sedelmeier 2011).

EU effectiveness is deemed to vary depending on a number of factors which influence the quality of its conditionality. Examples of such factors are depicted in the table below which summarises the main scholarly findings on the EU’s conditionality strategy in the rational choice context. They are broader than the approach adopted by Levitsky and Way and more EU-specific. However, as this

thesis aims to fine-tune the linkage, leverage and organisational power model to the EU context, these findings should also be considered.¹⁴

Table 1: Contextual factors influencing the quality of conditionality

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| International factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of EU demands • Credibility of conditionality (including consistency of application, and intra-EU consensus on rewarding compliance) • Size of rewards and power asymmetry • Linkages to Western Europe • Monitoring capacity |
| Domestic factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic costs of adopting rules for governments (for political conditions) • Constellation of party system (liberal/illiberal) • Quality of political competition at moment of regime change • Societal mobilisation |

Source: Sedelmeier (2011)

A rational institutionalist approach to norm adoption: Linkage, Leverage and Organisational Power

Like in the works above, Levitsky and Way’s linkage and leverage model considers the rationality of actors in the context of norm adoption. They state that the logic of consequences – decisions based on rationality - determines the behaviour of actors. More concretely, they posit that three main variables shape the cost-benefit calculations of actors, namely linkage, leverage and organisational power. While linkage and leverage rates enable external actors to influence the decision-making process of the recipient state, organisational power factors in the extent to which actors can resist change through domestic control. For norm adoption to be achieved, the EU must manipulate these calculations through incentives and mechanisms of

¹⁴ The international contextual factors mentioned are later included in the variables “linkage” and “leverage”, whereas “organisational power” and “regime type” correspond to domestic contextual factors. The aspects “clarity of EU demands” and “credibility of conditionality” are specifically addressed in the leverage variable on competing MS foreign policies in the operationalisation section of the Ph.D. thesis. In turn, “regime type” incorporates the domestic costs of norm adoption, the constellation of the system, the amount of competition and societal mobilisation, thereby adding further nuances to Levitsky and Way’s initial approach.

punishment.¹⁵ As recipients are inherently rational and utility maximisers, they implement those decisions which benefit them most, depending on their organisational capacity. The right combination of the three variables allows for successful norm adoption, whereas failure to do so results in inconsistent norm adoption.

Leverage

In Levitsky and Way’s model, leverage is defined as “(1) regimes’ bargaining power vis-à-vis the West, or their ability to avoid Western action aimed at punishing autocratic abuse or encouraging political liberalization; and (2) the potential economic, security or other impact of Western action on target states”(Levitsky, Way 2007:50). It thus focuses on a state’s vulnerability to external pressure which can take the shape of political conditionality, punitive sanctions, diplomatic pressure, and military intervention (Levitsky, Way 2005: 21). The effect of leverage is depicted in the table below (Levitsky and Way: 2007:50):

Table 2: The effects of leverage

| | High | Low |
|-------------|--|--|
| EU Leverage | A state is heavily affected by EU punitive action and lacks bargaining power | A state enjoys substantial bargaining power vis-à-vis the EU and is not greatly affected by EU punitive action |

Source: Based on Levitsky and Way 2007

More specifically, Levitsky and Way identify three factors which determine the extent of Western¹⁶ leverage, namely (1) the size and strength of a country’s state and economy, (2) competing Western foreign policy objectives and (3) the presence of countervailing powers. Of these three, the size of a country as well as its economic strength is considered the most significant factor in determining leverage levels. In practice, this means that states with weak (aid-dependent) economies and

¹⁵ Linkage and Leverage’s rationalist stance thus stands in stark contrast to approaches following the logic of persuasion and legitimacy of norms. For example Warkotsch (2008) argues that an actor “is more likely to be successful in the socialization process if the target society has only a few prior beliefs and cultural traits that are inconsistent with the socialization message. i.e. the parties involved act within the framework of a Habermasian ‘common lifeworld’, consisting of collective interpretations of the world and a common system of rules perceived as legitimate.” He thus moves away from cost-benefit calculations and instead emphasizes common values.

¹⁶ The West is taken as the US, the EU and Western-dominated multilateral institutions.

small territories are most susceptible to external pressure. In turn, measures in the form of sanctions, threats or brute military force are more likely to prove futile in countries with international clout as they have a stronger bargaining position and will not incur as great damages as a consequence of punitive action compared to weaker states. At the same time, interrupting relations with such powerful states is equally more likely to hurt the “castigator” and is therefore a less attractive option.

The presence of competing Western economic or security interests strengthens the bargaining position of autocratic governments and enables them to reject Western demands to democratise or in the context of this thesis “to adopt norms”. For example, autocrats may argue that democratisation would fundamentally destabilise their countries and thereby place Western assets in jeopardy, consequently abating Western zeal for change. Moreover, limited consensus in Western states on how to deal with these strategic partners further undermines the effectiveness of any potential demands as contradictory policies are adopted.

Finally, the role of competing powers cannot be downplayed as these “provide alternative sources of economic, military, and/or diplomatic support, thereby mitigating the impact of U.S or European pressure” (Levitsky, Way 2007: 51). Examples of such counterweight states in the post-Cold war period are Russia, China, Japan, France and South Africa who have all undermined the effectiveness of external democratisation pressure by condoning the practices of authoritarian governments. In this context, Levitsky and Way refer to Hufbauer et al’s “black knights”, highlighting their ability to reduce the democratising impact of either the EU or the US.¹⁷

What are the effects of leverage? In countries where the West enjoys great leverage, autocrats are generally subjected to democratisation pressure. Economic sanctions or the withdrawal of aid can trigger regime collapse as governments potentially face fiscal crises and can no longer afford to uphold patronage networks (Levitsky, Way 2010: 42). However, Western leverage alone is considered insufficient to bring about democratisation beyond the EU enlargement process as the incentives for change are

¹⁷ This term is discussed in Hufbauer, Schott, Elliott, (1990) page 12

too weak.¹⁸ Levitsky and Way are thus adamant that for states to democratise further afield, linkage is essential.

Linkage

Linkage is considered key to understanding why international pressure has solely resulted in the adoption of democratic norms in a number of selected cases. It is split into “the density of ties (economic, geographic, political, diplomatic, social and organisational) and cross-border flows (of capital, goods and services, people, and information) between particular countries and the United States, the European Union, and Western-dominated multilateral institutions”(Levitsky, Way 2007:53). As a multidimensional concept, linkage is composed of “networks of interdependence that connect individual polities, economies, and societies to Western democratic communities” (Levitsky, Way 2010:43). It is clear that globalisation directly fosters higher linkage rates and that those states most active in the world economy are simultaneously likely to have closer ties to the West.

Still, the most important factor influencing the potency of linkage is geographical proximity to the West as it creates windows of opportunity for cooperation and interaction. Levitsky and Way reason that “countries in regions that are geographically proximate to the United States and the European Union, such as Latin America and Central Europe, generally have closer economic ties; more extensive diplomatic contact; and higher cross-border flows of people, organisations, and information than countries in less proximate areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa or the former Soviet Union” (Levitsky, Way 2010:44). In addition, linkage rates are heavily affected by historical factors such as colonialism, military presence or traditional geopolitical alliances which render it a difficult variable to influence (Levitsky, Way 2010:44).

¹⁸ The determining factor they point to in understanding different outcomes in the post-Communist space is the membership prospect that Central and Eastern European countries enjoyed, which increased Western leverage over the region. This was due to the fact that both the masses and the elites of the countries concerned were willing to make extensive concessions in order to reap both the real and perceived benefits of accession. In contrast, autocrats in post-Soviet states had far fewer constraints on their behaviour as the West had lower leverage.

Levitsky and Way identify six dimensions of linkages which are illustrated in the following excerpt (Levitsky, Way 2010:43-44):

- *economic linkage*, or flows of trade, investment, and credit;
- *intergovernmental linkage*, which includes both bilateral diplomatic and military ties and participation in Western-led alliances, treaties, and international organizations;
- *technocratic linkage*, or the extent to which the local elite has been educated in Western countries/ has ties to Western universities or Western-led institutions.
- *social linkage*, or flows of people across borders, including immigration, exile and refugee flows, diaspora communities, and tourism;
- *information linkage*, or flows of information across borders, via telecommunications, Internet connections, and Western media penetration;
- *civil society linkage*, or local ties to Western-based NGOs, international religious and party organizations, and other transnational networks;

Represented as a “transmitter of international influence” (Levitsky, Way 2007: 54), linkage manifests itself in the following ways: it reinforces the international response to abuse, spawns constituencies at the local level that advocate respect for democratic norms and influences power distribution structures, which in turn isolate dictators and reinforce democratic movements (Levitsky, Way 2010:44). In this way, linkage can influence the interests, incentives and capabilities of actors and thereby have a material effect on autocrats.

How do these causal mechanisms function? In the first case, linkage raises the potential cost of abuse as news of violations are likely to surface in Western capitals and result in a scandal. Having greater ties and a media presence on the ground engenders information exchange and closer monitoring of developments. Moreover, Western governments are more likely to take action in regions with high linkage as they perceive their interests as being at stake and fear the possibility of instability seeping over into their own countries through organised crime and migration. Levitsky and Way use the example of the Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan and the war in Chechnya to illustrate this - both provoked few reactions in the West despite

the magnitude of the human rights violations, simply because linkage rates are low with the countries in question (Levitsky, Way 2010:46).

In the second case, linkage is deemed to augment the number of firms, organisations and individuals benefitting from ties with the West, who in turn are loath to provoke punitive action lest it hurt their vital interests (Levitsky, Way 2010:47). The same reasoning applies to technocrats with links to the West, as these are likely to protect their ties and put pressure on their governments to abide by Western norms, in order not to jeopardise their professional standing (Levitsky, Way 2010:47). Levitsky and Way thus reason that “by heightening domestic actors’ sensitivity to shifts in a regime’s image abroad, linkage blurs international and domestic politics, transforming international norms into domestic demands”(Levitsky, Way 2010:48).

In the third and final case - the influence on domestic power structures -, it is believed that opposition leaders are increasingly protected through Western backing and media attention which can result in power shifts (Levitsky, Way 2010:49). Moreover, domestically, citizens may become more aware of opposition movements through Western acceptance and also shun incumbents if these are deemed to be hurting the country’s international standing. Also within ruling parties, reformist elements may emerge when faced with the effects of great Western linkage as they are prone to believe that they can begin to exist beyond conventional political frameworks.

Linkage and Leverage compared

Linkage has been described as a soft power tool, having effects that are “diffuse, indirect, and often difficult to detect” (Levitsky, Way 2007:25). However, once it is intensive, its forces can exert substantial pressure on autocrats and it is deemed more pervasive than the pressure generated by leverage. It was thus found that “the more subtle and diffuse effects of linkage contributed more consistently to democratization” (Levitsky, Way 2007:21). This is because leverage alone results in sporadic monitoring and sanctioning, according leaders greater room for manoeuvre. Nonetheless, when leverage is combined with linkage, information flows rise and governments are subjected to greater scrutiny. Furthermore, in such contexts Western

governments feel compelled to act while local awareness of abuses sharpens, heightening domestic opposition (Levitsky, Way 2010: 51).

The expected effect in variation in linkage and leverage rates is depicted in the table below (Levitsky, Way 2010:53):

Table 3: The effects of linkage and leverage combined

| | High Linkage | Low Linkage |
|---------------|--|--|
| High Leverage | Consistent and intense democratising pressure | Often strong, but intermittent and "electoralist" pressure |
| Low Leverage | Consistent but diffuse and indirect democratising pressure | Weak external pressure |

Source: Levitsky and Way 2010

Organisational power

Organisational power is the final variable that Levitsky and Way conceived of in their framework on democratisation in the post-Cold War context. By incorporating this variable into their model, Levitsky and Way recognise the role of domestic factors in shaping political outcomes. Notwithstanding, they concentrate on the capacity of incumbents to undermine the opposition, rather than the strength of the opposition per se, arguing that "where states and governing parties are strong, autocrats are often able to survive despite vigorous opposition challenges. Where they are weak, incumbents fall in the face of relatively weak opposition movements" (Levitsky, Way 2010:56).

Levitsky and Way see state coercive capacity as a key determinant of regime outcomes. They note that strong coercive capacities can reinforce autocratic stability and undermine the rise of an opposition, thereby potentially cutting off democratising processes. In their work, coercion can take different forms: both high intensity coercion and low intensity coercion can be used. In the former case, a large group of people/high-profile individuals are targeted and in the latter it takes the form of surveillance or deprivation of certain benefits to uphold the status quo (Levitsky, Way 2010:57-58). The former is instrumentalised in contexts of great regime threat, whereas the latter is a preventative measure, used to forestall the former.

Levitsky and Way incorporate scope and cohesion into “coercive capacity”. Scope is understood as “the effective reach of the state’s coercive apparatus”, which entails the size and quality of those bodies responsible for national security (Levitsky, Way 2010:58). An example of a high scope case is that of Russia where “the state possesses a large and effective internal security sector - usually equipped with extensive intelligence networks and specialised police and paramilitary units - which is capable of engaging society across the national territory.”(Levitsky, Way 2010:59) Scope is deemed central to low-intensity coercion as the necessary infrastructure is needed to gain control over the whole territory. High-intensity coercion is largely resorted to in a context where the low-intensity variant has failed (Levitsky, Way 2010:59). Cohesion in turn, is concerned with the strength of the glue uniting entities within the state and consequent loyalty. Cohesion is deemed central to the carrying out of high-intensity coercion. In cases where states are not cohesive, repression may not be carried out despite incumbent orders to silence critics violently (Levitsky, Way 2010:60). Finally, cohesion is greatest when there is a shared ethnic identity, a common nationalist/revolutionary ideology or a shared history in a liberation movement/war/revolution (Levitsky, Way 2010:60).

Party strength is also key to upholding authoritarianism as it is a means of effectively distributing patronage and ensuring cooperation among elites instead of defection (Levitsky, Way 2010:61). Levitsky and Way note that the legislature is also more likely to stay loyal to the incumbent and succession issues are easier to resolve if the party is strong (Levitsky, Way 2010:64). Party strength can also be measured in terms of scope and cohesion: scope on one hand entails the size of a given party’s infrastructure and the extent of its reach over its territory, cohesion on the other comprises local political participation at the government, legislature and local levels (Levitsky, Way 2010:65).

It is worth noting that state economic control can act as a substitute for both coercive and party organisation provided that resources are concentrated in the hands of the incumbent (Levitsky, Way 2010:67). Such a phenomenon is especially wide-spread in Communist and post-Communist societies, where the state traditionally had total control over the economy. This is also integrated into Levitsky and Way’s model

which will be discussed in greater detail in the section on the operationalisation of the variables.

4.3 Main Variables

In this thesis, linkage, leverage and organisational power are the independent variables (IV) and norm adoption is the dependent variable (DV). The regime type of each country is the intervening variable (Int V). This means that linkage, leverage and organisational power have an impact on norm adoption. Still, this influence can be mitigated by the regime type of a country. This intervening variable was not present in Levitsky and Way's initial model as they solely dealt with one type of regime - the competitive authoritarian variant. However, as no such restrictions have been made in this thesis, a broader range of regimes will be analysed. Be that as it may, regime type is deemed to play a lesser role than the independent variables in determining norm adoption and has thus been allocated the position of the intervening variable.

4.4 Linkage and Leverage beyond the Enlargement Process: Central Asia

As outlined in the conceptual chapter, this thesis is guided by the assumption that the EU is an international actor which seeks to spread its norms as to mould the international system in accordance with its own normative design. For the EU to have this ability it relies on power asymmetries (leverage) and transnational ties (linkage) while it interacts with political actors in the context of institutions (organisational power). These factors are deemed relevant for the case of EU-Central Asian relations. This thesis posits that the EU is a rational actor which relies on changes in the cost-benefit calculations of third countries - in this case the Central Asian states - to spread its norms. Domestic actors - Central Asian governments and state structures functioning in the context of institutions - in turn, adopt European norms for rational reasons as their opportunity structures are altered through European systems of incentives and punishment (Seidelmeier 2011:11). Rewards such as investment, aid, trade flows and prestige serve as a carrot which encourages actors to bring about domestic change. In the same vein, the withholding of such benefits, combined with the prospect of sanctions, military invasion and other forms of aggression compel actors not to take certain decisions.

The ability of the EU to provide such incentives to Central Asian actors flows from its status in the international system which confers it substantial bargaining power. EU influence in the international system is primarily based on its economic clout as the world's largest economy which enables it to pressure third states into adopting its norms through either leverage (for example the EU's economic size vis-à-vis another economy) or linkage (development aid inter alia). This status also empowers it to punish states by withdrawing aid, imposing sanctions and blocking investments as has been the case with EU sanctions on Uzbekistan. In order for norm adoption to take place, there must be domestic actors who can benefit from such change or do not incur painfully high costs as a consequence of implementation. Linkage, leverage and organisational power regulate this cost-benefit calculation and push the incumbent to adopt norms. However, the incumbent is equally affected by the regime context in which he operates and this will influence how strongly he reacts to the factors of linkage, leverage and organisational power.

While studies can incorporate logic of consequences and logic of appropriateness into their framework (Börzel, Risse 2012:7), this thesis will not look at how legitimacy and perceptions of what is appropriate guide actors' behaviour. Such an approach was rejected due to the nature of the region under study: given the local political culture and regimes in Central Asian states, there is limited room for change based on persuasion and conviction of EU norms. This is because these are diametrically opposed to the "rules of the game" in these states where hierarchy, patronage and personalism characterise political structures (Collins 2009). In addition, the authoritarian contexts of the states in the region place great hurdles in the way of any analysis of constructivist concepts such as identity or political culture.

4.5 Variation

The author of this research endeavour expects to find variation among Central Asian states in terms of norm promotion success, stemming from the national differences in linkage and leverage rates in relation to the EU as well as the organisational power of incumbents. Moreover, the regime types of the case studies also vary which should also have an impact on the outcome. While this latter aspect was not explored in Levitsky and Way's research, other studies on Central Asia (Bossuyt, Kubicek 2011)

hint at substantial differences within the region. In fact, great variation can be noted across all variables from country to country. Just to note a few differences: living conditions in Kyrgyzstan are characterised by poverty, relative political openness and instability whereas Kazakhstan is rich, authoritarian and stable (Warkotsch 2011). Uzbekistan in contrast, is far more repressive than the latter, entirely hermetic and less affluent (Warkotsch 2011). While these classifications are simplistic, they do enable the reader to grasp the contrasting nature of the regional environment in which these states cohabit.

Hypotheses

Flowing from the above, this thesis puts forward numerous hypotheses which reflect the causal processes identified by Levitsky and Way. These causal processes all posit that there is interaction between a rational actor, external stimuli and a decision-making process. In the case of leverage, the process is as follows: the incumbent is put under pressure by the EU due to a power relationship in the EU's favour, which compels the actor to consider the EU's demand. The rational actor carries out a cost-benefit calculation and decides whether to adopt a norm, based on the potential consequences of disregard. This is directly connected to the first hypothesis which states that:

H1: the higher the leverage levels between the EU and a country, the higher the adoption rates

Linkage follows the same logic - the incumbent is put under pressure by transnational groups (businesses, media, tourists inter alia) and carries out a cost-benefit calculation. Again he decides whether to adopt a norm or not, based on the consequences of disregard. However, as linkage is supposed to strengthen leverage beyond the accession states the second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: the higher the linkage levels between the EU and a country, the higher the adoption rates

In the case of organisational power, it is the domestic capacities of the state which determine how the rational incumbent reacts to the external stimuli which interfere with his cost-benefit calculation. The process is linked to the following hypothesis:

H3: the higher the organisational power of a country, the higher the adoption rates due to implementation potential

Finally, regime type is deemed to shape the cost-benefit calculation of actors and influence the way they respond to linkage and leverage or employ their organisational power. The result is the final hypothesis:

H4: the more authoritarian a regime, the less likely it is to adopt EU norms.

Null hypothesis: there is no link between norm promotion ability and linkage, leverage and organisational capacity. Regime type has no influence on the independent variables and consequently on norm adoption outcomes.

Linkage, leverage and organisational power are thus the cause, and norm adoption is the effect. The reasoning behind the mechanism linking the cause with the effect is that of the rational actor who weighs his options through cost-benefit calculations. As linkage and leverage levels rise, norm rejection becomes too painful (loss of trade, loss of aid, public discontentment etc.) and thus is not contemplated by a rational, utility maximising actor. This relationship is deemed to be positive and hence the higher the linkage and leverage rates, the greater the EU's norm promotion ability will be. Organisational power equally affects outcomes as it defines the scope in which incumbents can act. The higher the organisational power, the greater the degree to which the decision the incumbent has decided on will be implemented. Finally, regime type will influence how the autocrat will react to the factors inherent in the independent variables. These concepts will now be operationalised in order to equip the researcher with appropriate measurement tools.

5. Operationalising Norm Adoption

This chapter is concerned with the operationalisation of the key concepts discussed in this thesis and thus will also present instruments which enable the measurement of the variables under study - linkage, leverage and organisational power - with the aim of comparing their levels from one case study to another. It will also seek to define regime type as this plays a mediating role between the independent and the dependent variables. Moreover, it will endeavour to operationalise norm promotion ability so as to firstly, gauge the extent of the EU's capacity to spread its norms in Central Asia and secondly, assess whether linkage, leverage and organisational power lead to greater norm promotion ability.

5.1 Defining and Operationalising the Concepts in the Sub-question

The sub-question question "how successful is the EU at spreading its norms in Central Asia" is concerned with the concepts "ability", "EU", "spread" and "norms". These will now be dissected and defined in order to add to the robustness of the thesis. This thesis equates "the ability for an actor to do something" with power. The power of an actor is determined by its material capabilities which results in A's ability to make B do something that B would otherwise refrain from doing" (Dahl 1957). It is thus supposed that a boost in material capabilities will result in the strengthening of power and thereby enhance the EU's ability to make a Central Asian state behave in a way it would not usually freely behave in. In the context of this thesis, this refers to norm adoption which can happen at various levels.

The EU is perceived as an international actor which is intent on spreading its norms with the ambition of ensuring greater predictability in the international system while relying on power asymmetries to achieve this end. At the same time, the EU is not portrayed as a unitary actor as the policies of the individual member states are taken into account, which is also reflected in the variable "leverage" and its subcomponent "competing EU foreign policy objectives". However, while the EU has great power potential by dint of its market, it must speak with one voice and be credible in order for the norm promotion process to be successful.

In terms of the spreading of norms, the exact process to be analysed here is that of the sender promoting a number of norms (input) and the recipient's reaction to those

norms (output). This reaction can be traced by looking at norm adoption rates. This is discussed in more detail in the section *measuring impact* below. However, it is important to bear in mind that the main premise of this thesis is that the interaction between the two is guided by cost-benefit calculations.

Laidi identifies three types of norms: “technical norms”, “market norms” and “social and political norms” (Laidi). This thesis is largely concerned with “social and political norms”. Norms are understood according to Laidi’s definition as “a standard of behaviour which is sanctioned in case of non-compliance” (Laidi). It thus stands in contrast to a habit which does not lead to sanctions when non-compliance takes place. Norms also entail certain rights and obligations which are to be met by actors but also empower them. In addition, Laidi states that a norm must meet 6 conditions: 1) a standard of behaviour which is identifiable, 2) it is constant over time, 3) it is recognised as a norm by others, 4) international organisations have conferred it legitimacy and it is generally binding 5) it prescribes behaviour 6) it leads to expectations about specific outcomes. Still, Laidi does concede that even if they are accepted internationally “norms express a certain number of social preferences embedded in European societies. Norms are rarely neutral” (Laidi). This latter point is important to bear in mind given the fact that this thesis examines norm adoption in a non-Western environment where resistance is not uncommon.

In this analysis the dependent variable is the ability of the EU to be a norm promoter, it is therefore concerned with testing the EU’s ability to effect norm adoption in a target state. By collecting data on the EU’s norm promotion endeavours in Central Asia and looking at their implementation one can answer the question of *how successful is the EU at spreading its norms*. This is essential in order to later go onto the main research question, which addresses the relationship between the different variables. In this Ph.D. thesis, the definition of success is guided by Tocci et al and thus seeks to identify a traceable path between the EU’s actions and the outcome at the recipient’s end (Tocci 2007:7). The analysis will be guided by questions such as: has the country refused to participate in a project? (lack of success), has the country agreed to a project but failed to implement it by limiting itself to superficial adjustments? (minor success), can policy change be noted or active project

implementation? (reasonable success), to what extent can institutional change as well as extensive implementation be observed? (outstanding success).

While this aspect is difficult to ascertain, there are certain indicators attached to the EU's projects which shed some light on this matter. The main indicator for refusal is the declaration by a state that it does not wish to participate for any given reason (frequently due to sovereignty and national security concerns). Next, the level of implementation can be judged by looking at the measures the project proposed and what was undertaken. Superficial change is characterised by participation in a project coupled with the failure to get involved in its activities. Policy change is evident when an aspect of the EU's project or a norm has been integrated into a policy; the implementation of a large number of elements pertaining to the project also falls into the category. Finally, institutional change is understood as "the transposition of EU legislation into domestic law, the restructuring of domestic institutions according to EU rules, or the change of domestic political practices according to EU standards" (Schimmelfennig 2004:670). It can also incorporate extensive participation in a given project as it is unrealistic to expect institutional change after every project in the context this thesis is situated in.

The table below reflects these questions and outcomes:

Table 4: Assessment of impact

| Assessment | No Impact | Low Impact | Medium Impact | High Impact |
|------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Degree | Lack of success | Minor Success | Reasonable success | Outstanding Success |
| Indicator | Country refuses to carry out project | Country accepts but fails to implement project beyond superficial change such as buying new books | Policy change noted or a large number of project elements implemented | Institutional change noted or extensive participation in project |
| Points | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Source: Own compilation

States can score between 0-3 points in order to provide for a measurable indicator for the success rate of the EU in spreading a given norm. In order to allow for comparability across norms and countries, these points will be added up and divided by the total number of components or norms. This will permit for relatively different projects and programmes to be compared. In the end, this should equip the researcher

with the necessary tools to draw conclusions about what norms have been easiest to champion and where adoption has been most extensive among the three countries.

These criteria have been adapted to the Central Asian context where the prospects of norm adoption are bleak due to the political regimes in question as well as relatively low linkage and leverage rates. However, as we are guided by the main assumptions of the linkage, leverage and organisational power model, some norm adoption is expected when power asymmetries are in the EU's favour provided that there are linkages, even if the magnitude will not be equal to that of the ENP or accession states. Therefore, the benchmarks for assessing norm success such as full democratisation which are applied to the latter states are not appropriate for the Central Asian context.

There is one caveat regarding this framework: it does not accurately represent the capacities of each partner and presumes they are equal. However, the case studies do not have the same financial or organisational means at their disposal and this must be reflected in the assessment. A similar performance by two countries with different capabilities will consequently not be evaluated equally as these do not have the same tools at their disposal. This especially applies when poor and rich countries are compared. The goodwill of a country will consequently be taken into account through the symbol *, which is to highlight its particular efforts despite internal difficulties.

In this study, the criterion "norm internalisation" has been omitted as this thesis is guided by the assumption that norms are adopted for opportunist reasons (cost-benefit calculations) and not out of conviction. Moreover, such an analysis is beyond the scope of this Ph.D. thesis as it would require spending extensive periods of time in Central Asia in order to closely follow the targets of each EU project and also interview them so as to measure in how far they absorbed the norms concerned. This is not considered feasible due to time constraints and the political environment in the countries in question.

This Ph.D. thesis also encounters the problem of determining the confines of EU impact and identifying where EU impact starts and another actor's impact stops. The

author of this research endeavour has sought to rectify this problem by focusing on specific EU projects and tracing the path from norm diffusion to norm adoption. Similar projects by Western actors will also be mentioned in this context if these are believed to interfere with or supplement the EU's impact.

5.2 Defining and Operationalising the Main Research Question

The main research question “what factors determine EU norm promotion ability in Central Asia?” can be dissected by defining linkage, leverage and organisational power as well as the intervening variable regime type. The section which follows will discuss the operationalisation of the key variables identified in the main research question after having been adjusted to the Central Asian context.

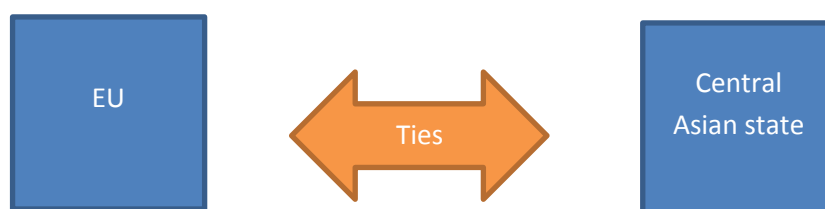
Linkage

Linkage encompasses:

- Economic linkage (flows of trade)
- Intergovernmental linkage, in terms of diplomatic contacts to EU-led organizations;
- Information linkage or flows of information across borders, Internet connections, and Western media penetration;
- Civil society linkage or local ties to EU-based NGOs.
- Physical presence of the EU on the ground

From the above, it becomes clear that linkage is a multi-faceted concept, which can be composed of a wide variety of elements. Moreover, linkage in general is concerned with multidirectional flows which take shape in the form of greater contact between individuals and thus affect cost-benefit calculations in a more subtle way. The process - which entails an exchange - is depicted below:

Box 1: Linkage flows



Source: Own compilation

Moreover, it is a slow-moving variable; its strength does not change abruptly but generally is built up over time. It is thus not a variable which is endogenous to a regime: this is to say, liberal regimes do not per se have higher linkage rates to the West and high linkage levels are not necessarily excluded with non-liberal regimes (Levitsky, Way 2010:72) .

Linkage is deemed to have a cluster effect which means that its cumulative impact is significant rather than solely the strength of one element. In consequence, high linkage rates in all dimensions are preferable for it to reach its full potential. It is also worth noting that linkage can be counterbalanced by non-Western linkage, which weakens Western influence. Another important point to bear in mind is that once both linkage and leverage are high, they overlap as high linkage can be interpreted as a form of leverage.

Adaptation and Operationalisation of Linkage

By focusing on these indicators, a change to Levitsky and Way's original model has been made. The omission of social ties (flows of people across borders, including immigration, exile and refugee flows, diaspora communities and tourism) was decided upon due to the fact that this component is not of great relevance to the Central Asian context. While migratory flows are large from Central Asia to Russia, the number of Central Asian migrants in the EU is limited. The same principle applies to exile and refugee flows, with solely a number of Uzbeks currently living in Sweden forming a small minority (Interview #32). Tourism flows also remained low as a consequence of limited income, expensive flights and visa regimes.

Technocratic linkage (the extent to which the local elite has been educated in Western countries/has ties to Western universities or Western-led institutions) has also been deleted from the list of linkage components as limited data was found on this subject. While it is probable that Kazakhstan would be most represented at EU universities among the three countries due to its relative economic wealth and the

government's scholarship scheme, no data has been found on the total number of students from all three countries. Furthermore, as a range of countries equally attracts Central Asian students, namely, Japan, South Korea, India, Turkey and Russia, it would be difficult to judge the weight of the students going to the EU compared to other countries without undertaking an immense data collection exercise, which is beyond the scope of the thesis.

In addition, geographic distance to the EU was omitted. This stems from the fact that all the countries of Central Asia are distant from the EU and there is little variation in this regard. Moreover, the transport networks of the states in question are underdeveloped and the region remains landlocked, further complicating the picture. Instead, the physical presence of the EU on the ground will be regarded as there is large variation from one Central Asian country to another. This difference stems from the fact that some states were keen to deepen relations with the EU while others were loath to accept a greater presence in their countries. This in turn affected visibility levels and general awareness about the EU as an actor on both the political and economic level.

Regarding the operationalisation of the chosen components the following elements must be borne in mind: economic linkage can be measured by collecting data on trade flows between the EU and Central Asian countries. It is important to ask "How much does the EU trade with a given country?" When analysing economic linkage, it is essential to focus on what percentage of the countries' trade flows are with the EU. This is because trade ties directly implicate businesses and other stakeholders who have a stake in relations being upheld and in turn put pressure on their governments not to jeopardise their relations through violations/norm rejection. For this reason it is of central importance to any analysis of linkage levels.

Intergovernmental linkage comprises the ties that exist between the EU and a third state on both the diplomatic and military level as well as the latter's participation in Western-led alliances and international organizations. The reasoning is the same as outlined above: contact between people raises awareness about abuses and also pushes leaders to reconsider their actions as they may directly be exposed to pressure. For instance, if the EU member states and Kazakhstan cooperate closely in

the OSCE, Kazakhstan is more likely to reconsider possible actions which could lead to a disruption of relations. At the same time, Europeans will be more aware of abuses and more likely to react due to the maintenance of closer relations. In the context of Central Asia, the OSCE and NATO are the most relevant organisations. The extent of linkage can be measured by identifying the role of each Central Asian country in each organisation as well as the number of initiatives carried out by each respective organisation in each Central Asian country. It will be especially important to assess whether a particular country has sought to show leadership in any given organisation as this will be indicative of greater linkages.

Information linkage examines the number of internet connections in a given country as well as media penetration levels in light of the fact that this is a precondition for information reaching the West. It equally scrutinises local media development and the ease at which it can function. This is important as it directly influences the monitoring capacities of the EU through information exchanges - the EU cannot condemn human rights abuses if it does not know about them. It is thus essential for reporting to be allowed and for sufficient linkages to exist for relevant information to leave the country. This component does not take into account local access to telephones or television as the internet and journalists have been identified as the key protagonists in the information relay process. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that while telephone connections tend to be widely available (and tapped if need be), television channels tend to be government-controlled.

Civil society linkage hinges on the existence of local NGOs which can interact with EU-based civil society. It also considers the ease at which European NGOs perform their activities in the country. As many NGOs are of an international nature and work both in the US and the EU, these will not be differentiated between. Instead, the focus will fall on Western NGOs promoting values which are frequently defended by the EU. At the same time, this thesis will strive to shed light on home-grown movements and their agendas with the aim of giving a fuller picture of Central Asian civil society.

Participation in international religious and party organizations - which was a key component in the original model - will not be considered in the Central Asian context

as these ties are limited given the fact that the region is largely Muslim with a Russian orthodox hue and political movements are weak in light of the repressive conditions on the ground. If this component were to be included it would reveal that Turkey plays a key role in both contexts as well as Russia. Nevertheless, the role of the West is negligible in these spheres.

The physical presence of the EU locally is the final component to be examined in the assessment of linkage. In this context, the number of EU staff working at a delegation will be regarded as well as the period of time the delegation has been functioning. These components were selected as they are indicative of the influence the EU can exert and the amount of time it has had to have an impact on the partner country. This data will be weighed up in relation to the size of the country in order to fully appreciate the significance of the delegation's capacity. Only administrative and technical staff will be included in this comparison.

Each country is given a score from 1-3 depending on whether the score for the subcomponent was 3 (high linkage), 2 (medium linkage) and 1 (low) linkage. This will be indicative of which country enjoys the highest linkage rates with the EU. For a country to score 3 points, linkage levels must be so high that they positively encourage norm adoption by strongly manipulating cost-benefit calculations. When this effect is of a medium level so that an actor is not compelled to adopt EU norms but may be inclined to do so, it is ranked as being equal to 2 points. Finally, for one point to be accorded, levels must be so low that no incentive structures exist to push the actor to adopt EU norms. Consequently, states scoring 5-7 were qualified as low linkage cases, 8-11 were medium linkage cases and 12-15 were high linkage cases.

Leverage

Leverage is composed of:

- The EU's economic power relative to that of another entity in terms of size and strength as well as trade, aid and investment asymmetries.
- Competing EU foreign policy objectives among member states being pursued in Brussels within the EU and outside of Brussels by embassies in the countries concerned, usually linked to strategic interests.

- The presence of countervailing powers, so-called “black knights” which in the Central Asian context refer to China and Russia. However, the role of India, Turkey and Iran will also be considered briefly as well as Korea and Japan.

Leverage is thus composed of fewer elements than linkage but requires a deeper, more contextual analysis of political relations, which cannot be reduced to numbers as easily as the criteria for linkage. In addition, leverage works in a different way to linkage as its force is unidirectional, going from the sender to the recipient. This process - which is not based on interaction per se - is depicted below:

Box 2: Leverage flows



Source: Own compilation

Adapting the criteria

While leverage has not been adapted to the Central Asian context to the same extent as linkage, a few changes have been made. Great adjustments were not deemed necessary because the model was very much in line with the Great Game context in which we are operating. The main changes are to be found in the first component on economic power while the other two have largely kept their original form.

Firstly, the first component in the adapted model takes into account power asymmetries rather than solely the potential of a state as such. It is not solely important to understand whether the EU is powerful compared to another country but also the role it plays in a given state. Secondly, it equally considers trade, investments and aid in an asymmetrical context. While the size and strength of an economy can be regarded by looking at GDP and PPP rates, the weight of

investments/aid/trade in the local economy can be examined by looking at their volumes in relation to total volumes or compared to neighbouring states.

The reasoning behind incorporating trade, aid and investments into the analysis stems from the fact that they are generally essential for regime survival in Central Asia. In all of the countries under study, there is a high ratio between trade and GDP, making these states very dependent on their key partners (Mogilevskii 2012). The analysis of investments is also important in this context because Central Asian states often do not have the necessary capital to develop their own markets and resources, thereby depending on foreign direct investment (FDI) to develop their economies. In the same vein, aid is equally an important component to be taken into account in the study of economic leverage especially for the region's poorer countries. This follows the same logic as in the examples above: credit/aid allocations result in dependence and consequently power asymmetries. At the same time, such asymmetries are usually indicative of what a country has to offer to another weaker state in terms of rewards for "good" behaviour.

Competing EU foreign policy objectives can be operationalised by looking at the key priorities of the member states in Central Asia and their compatibility. Moreover, this thesis will seek to assess whether the EU's threats are credible and its demands are clear with a view to gauging the credibility of the EU's normative messages as this is a factor which also affects its leverage. This can be done through the analysis of foreign policy documents and related articles. In the context of this Ph.D. thesis, strategic interests revolve around access to military bases and energy resources.

The influence of countervailing powers can be measured by considering their allocations and economic weight vis-à-vis the Central Asian states and the EU. Moreover, the magnitude of their investments, trade relations and aid allocations can be compared to give a fuller picture. Given the dominance of Russia and China in this field, only data on the latter two will be provided in detail while other "second-rate" actors will only briefly be touched upon in order not to overload the thesis with data of secondary importance.

In order for countries to be compared, each sub-component will be weighed as one, and given a score from 1-3, thereby quantifying the extent to which the EU enjoys leverage over the country in that field. While the highest form of leverage will be allocated three points, medium levels will receive two and low solely one point. High leverage signifies that the EU has the ability to greatly manipulate cost-benefit calculations, medium leverage suggests that this is a possibility but its force is not compelling, whereas low leverage speaks in favour of there being an absence of such a strength on the part of the EU. For EU leverage to be high states need to rank between 14-18 points, for medium 10-14 and for low 6-10 points.

Organisational Power

The capacity of incumbents to keep control when faced with internal resistance is operationalised in the section that follows. Organisational power is - like linkage - also deemed a slow-moving variable as states generally inherit their “strength” in the form of a coercive apparatus/party power or gradually build it up instead of it being created overnight (Levitsky, Way 2010:376).

The criteria for the measurement of different elements of organisational power will be presented in the boxes that follow.

Box 3: State coercive and administrative capacity (scope)

High: large, well-trained and well-equipped internal security apparatus, covering the entire national territory. Opposition is monitored and repressed at the local level.

Medium: security forces minimally effective in controlling territory with no lack in equipment etc.

Low: underdeveloped/limited security apparatus which cannot control its territory.

Source: Based on Levitsky and Way 2010

Box 4: State coercive capacity (cohesion)

High: Non-material sources of cohesion (military conflict/ethnic ties/ ideology)

Medium: material sources of cohesion plus no wage arrears/insubordination.

Low: no non-material sources of cohesion, plus insubordination/military defeat/wage arrears.

Source: Based on Levitsky and Way 2010

In terms of party strength the following criteria has been drawn up, based on Levitsky and Way's model (Levitsky, Way 2010:377):

Box 5: Party strength (scope)

High: mass organisation incorporating almost the entire population along with grass-root activity or presidential figure with wide-ranging political support.

Medium: organisation can hold campaigns and recruit candidates across the entire national territory.

Low: no party/no penetration beyond capital.

Source: Based on Levitsky and Way 2010

Box 6: Party strength cohesion

High: single party gained power through conflict or struggle/shared ideology/ethnicity in context of ethnic cleavage.

Medium: single party not meeting the above criteria/ new party in context of ethnic or ideological cleavage.

Low: incumbent rules with no party/ supported by multiple and competing parties/ new party with material sources of cohesion

Source: Based on Levitsky and Way 2010

As discussed in the theory section, Levitsky and Way also leave room for discretionary state control of the economy as a factor that can mitigate the effects of low party and coercive state capacity (Levitsky, Way 2010:378). This allows states to control their territories and reach high organisational power despite these weaknesses. A state is deemed to enjoy such a status when:

Box 7: Discretionary state control

1. Hydrocarbon sectors are controlled by the state.
2. There is no large-scale privatisation and most assets are in state hands.

Source: Based on Levitsky and Way 2010

These criteria have been adjusted to the case of Central Asia as Levitsky and Way previously focused on mineral sectors rather than hydrocarbons specifically and equally deemed a centrally planned economy a principal criterion. Even if there is

great interference in some of the markets of the Central Asian states, these are no longer centrally planned in the Soviet sense of the term, making this component redundant.

Regime types

The regime types of the countries will be assessed by relying on Freedom House's ranking from 2007-2013, the years which this thesis focuses on. Respect for civil and political liberties will thus be observed in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, relying on a scale from 1-7, with 7 being the least free. Moreover, the regime logic of the three case studies will be outlined to depict how these states function beyond the numerical information provided by the Freedom House ranking. This should contribute to a more differentiated understanding of the case studies and highlight their idiosyncrasies. This data will be collected with the aim of assessing the domestic costs of adopting rules, the constellation of the party system, the amount of competition and the level of societal mobilisation. The impact of the intervening variable can be qualified by reflecting on whether its effect is "enhancing", "ambiguous" or "mitigating" for the independent variables. Enhancing indicates that the regime type strengthens the variables linkage, leverage and organisational power. Ambiguous in turn, hints at an unclear relationship between the regime type and linkage, leverage and organisational power. Finally, in the case of mitigating, the regime type weakens the effect of the independent variables.

6. Methodological Tools

This chapter will present the methodology used for the collection and analysis of data necessary for answering both the sub and the main question. It begins by examining the main sources of evidence, namely documentation and interviews. Then it scrutinises the case study method, the case study design and the selection of Central Asia as a region. Finally, the selection of norms and the period of study are documented in order to lay the spine of the thesis bare.

6.1 Sources of Evidence

This thesis relies on documentation and interviews as its main source of evidence since the field of study is situated in the present and requires an in-depth analysis of social relations in order to answer both the sub and main research question. There are numerous strengths and weaknesses associated with both of these sources of evidence, which will be explored below.

Table 5: Sources of evidence

| Source of evidence | Strength | Weakness |
|---|---|---|
| Documentation (letters, progress reports, internal records, newspaper clippings and evaluations of the same case, among others) | <p>Stable- can be reviewed repeatedly</p> <p>Unobtrusive- not created as a result of the case study</p> <p>Exact- contains exact names, references and details of an event</p> <p>Broad coverage- long span of time, many events, and many settings</p> | <p>Retrievability- can be difficult to find</p> <p>Biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete</p> <p>Reporting bias - reflects(unknown) bias of author</p> <p>Access - may be deliberately withheld.</p> <p>Documents may be propaganda and not reflect reality</p> |
| Interviews (can either be in-depth or focused) | <p>Targeted- focuses directly on case study topics</p> <p>Insightful- provides perceived causal inferences and explanations</p> | <p>Interviewer affects process</p> <p>Bias due to poorly articulated questions</p> <p>Problems generalising due to limited sample</p> <p>Response bias as interviewer shapes debate and cannot stay aloof</p> <p>Inaccuracies due to poor recall</p> <p>Reflexivity- interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear</p> <p>Self-censorship due to fear of reprisals</p> <p>Concerns regarding the recording of interviews</p> |

Source: Based on Yin 2008

Documentation

This thesis relies on EU documents, analyses by consultants implementing EU-funded projects and foreign policy publications of the Central Asian states to shed light on the policy interaction process between both counterparts. Examples of this are the EU's *Progress Report on the Implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia*, the CADAP newsletters available on the CADAP website¹⁹ and Kazakhstan's "Path to Europe". As noted above, there are some problems inherent in this method: in Central Asia documents are often withheld and those which are released generally reflect "government propaganda" rather than information truly depicting the situation in the country. Even in cases where the creation of propaganda is not intended, documents ooze the author's own worldview. This also applies to the EU and the reports of its consultants. EU publications rarely point out the EU's failing in the Central Asian context but instead stress what progress has been made. Notwithstanding, documentation reveals what projects are being carried out and also shed light on the government's response to a certain extent. Such information can then be supplemented through interviews with high-level stakeholders. This thesis has equally incorporated data made available by international organisations such as the United Nations with a view to completing the picture of the EU's norm promotion endeavours in Central Asia.

The European Union Central Asia Monitoring project has greatly facilitated the data collection process as it is one of the few initiatives to track the implementation of the EU Central Asia Strategy and to make information on EU-Central Asian relations publicly available. This endeavour was very much needed as the EU has largely failed to be transparent on its projects and policies, preferring to hide away from scrutiny. EUCAM's factsheets and policy briefs have frequently been used in the data collection process for the variables linkage, leverage and organisational power

¹⁹ A major shortcoming was that the website was no longer maintained between the Phases 5 and 6 which meant that numerous documents were no longer accessible at the time when this thesis was being finalised.

and proved to be of great assistance. Be that as it may, there is no denying that EUCAM's publications tend to be overly normative and serve the purpose of human rights advocacy, thereby occasionally looking at the ideal rather than reality. Notwithstanding, it has been key to ensuring that greater information on EU-Central Asian relations reaches academia and the general public.

Interviews

As stated above, interviews have been selected as a key source of evidence for this thesis. There are both advantages and disadvantages to interviews as indicated in the table above. It is true that the interviewer participates in the conversation and thus directly influences its outcome. In consequence, the results are not free from bias and can be manipulated. In addition, depending on the sensitivity of the topic, the interviewer must create feelings of trust in the interviewee and cannot remain aloof and distant. At the same time, he must formulate his questions in such a way as to obtain the necessary information without appearing threatening or forceful. This makes interviewing challenging and begs for great sensitivity from the interviewer. On the other hand, too much informality may give the impression that the interviewer lacks professionalism and may result in him not being taken seriously. Successful interviews are thus a careful balancing act and require preparation.

Another issue to bear in mind is that the researcher is not an objective onlooker and his interpretations are likely to influence the analysis. In fact, the interviewer could be considered part and parcel of the analysis as he has to interpret his findings and these interpretations remain highly subjective and can vary from person to person. This brings us to a related challenge: the writer of this thesis does not form part of the Central Asian cultural context and may decipher certain information incorrectly due to insufficient cultural awareness. The Ph.D. researcher may not grasp more subtle pieces of information and know how to read social codes. At the same time, this distance may confer the ability to analyse data more objectively given that there will be no prior prejudices. A Central Asian researcher for instance, may be more inclined to have stereotypes about certain ethnic groups or nationalities, which would affect the way in which answers would be interpreted.

There are not only hurdles the interviewer has to overcome. Interviewees face problems such as the inability to recall events accurately, difficulty articulating thoughts and general bias. Also, due to the fact that interviews are generally limited to a small group of people, it is difficult to generalise about the validity of the impressions of an interviewee. Given that interviewees want to appear professional and knowledgeable, they may exaggerate or portray information in a positive light. For example, for interviews of which the main objective is to obtain data on the implementation of projects, interviewees are likely to present their outcomes favourably, omitting shortcomings for fear that their funding may discontinue. In the same vein, interviewees may wish to please the interviewer by answering in the way they believe is expected of them.

The hampering effect of cultural factors also needs to be taken into account. For instance, interviewing is generally problematic in dictatorships as respondents are more hesitant to express their opinion and more suspicious of strangers (Rivera, Kozyreva, Sarovskii 2002: 683-8). They are aware of the consequences negative utterances may have on their safety and thus refrain from speaking openly. At the same time, NGOs operating in such environments may be particularly willing to talk to interviewers so as to make their voices heard. This stems from the fact that this right is generally not granted in authoritarian regimes and the local population equally tends to isolate civil society, viewing them with suspicion. This especially applies to the post-Soviet context where non-governmental organisations function on the margins of society.

Another decision to be taken during interviews is whether to record the interviewee or not. It is unethical to record interviewees in secret without their consent and consequently this must be discussed at the outset of the interview. The main benefit of recording interviewees is that it gives the researcher a complete record of the meeting while notes may at times be unclear. The researcher may struggle to follow the thread of the interviewee's answers while jotting these down simultaneously. On the other hand, it is reasonable to presume that interviewees will be unwilling to be recorded when disclosing sensitive information and may even refuse to respond to questions if these are to be registered in some form.

This experience was made in Central Asia where many interviews were conducted discreetly and in a secretive manner as interviewees feared reprisals in case information was to be leaked. Such concerns were even visible when interviewing EU officials who were afraid of later encountering problems in the implementation of their projects. These insecurities were not limited to those living in Central Asia: a fellow Western researcher was equally fearful during her short-term stay in Uzbekistan and refused to discuss any of her activities, pretending to be in the country for the sole purpose of travel. This illustrates to what extent conducting interviews in dictatorships can be challenging and how difficult it is to obtain information on issues related to politics. Even if this is discouraging, it is a means of delving into largely unexplored fields of research and positively contributing to the understanding of EU-Central Asian relations.

Interview sample

This thesis employs elite interviewing as the principal means of data collection. The sample of interviewees in this Ph.D. thesis is consequently restricted to those actors directly involved in the making of EU-Central Asian relations, namely, EU officials, Central Asian officials, NGO activists and journalists. The list of interviewees can be found in the annex. While elite interviewing provides the researcher with specific information, it is also a very time-consuming exercise as interviews need to be planned, arranged, carried out, reported on and analysed. It is thus only a method that should be used when the information needed cannot be acquired in a simpler way. With the aim of saving time, interviews were planned prior to embarking on fieldtrips. Unfortunately, as limited information was available on the subject under study, 43 interviews had to be conducted in order for primary data to be collected. This was made possible through the asking of open-ended questions and informal probing. On top of these official interviews, countless informal conversations were held with stakeholders and citizens of the countries concerned.

The snowball method was utilised for the interview process in Central Asia. This stems from the fact that the target environment is rather closed and personal contacts are deemed very important for any kind of social relationship to be established. This is further reinforced by the political environment in which potential interviewees

work as they are often restricted in what they can say. In order to protect the rights of the interviewees, informed consent was collected prior to each interview. It is also important to take into account the safety and wellbeing of interviewees, especially if these are vulnerable groups. In the case of this research project, politically critical figures were interviewed who were at risk. Their anonymity must thus be guaranteed for reprisals to be prevented and hence only limited information is provided on their identity in the annex.

In some ways the researcher's task was facilitated by the fact that she had spent a substantial amount of time in the region and thus had access to a number of contacts in the area of inquiry. By contacting her former colleagues at the European Union Delegation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, she could rely on a support network which provided her with the necessary contacts and information. Without this assistance, it would have been far more difficult to conduct the planned number of interviews in the allotted time. Furthermore, by conducting fieldwork while being based at a hosting institution - the American University of Central Asia - further contacts could be made through the university. Obtaining the assistance of experts already settled in the countries concerned substantially sped up the interview process. In addition, the organisation of a research seminar allowed the researcher to obtain feedback from experts who were very familiar with the topic under study and who could recommend other experts as interview targets.

6.2 Case Study Method

Given that this Ph.D. thesis requires a meticulous analysis of a small number of cases, the case study method was deemed appropriate (Yin 2008:18). Yin identifies three criteria which must be met for such an approach to be adopted: firstly, a "how" or "why" question is to be answered, secondly, the researcher has to have limited control over events and finally, the area being examined has to be taking place in a real-life context in the present (Yin 2008:2). As this Ph.D. thesis meets all three criteria, it was deemed an appropriate approach for tackling the topic of EU norm promotion in Central Asia. With regard to the first criterion, it is worth noting that the sub-question of this thesis examines *how successful the EU is at spreading its norms*. Applying the case study method to this question is key to acquiring an in-

depth picture of what is happening in the region and should provide sufficient insight to test for the existence of the hypothesised causal mechanisms. The question *what factors determine the EU's ability to be a norm promoter in Central Asia*, logically builds on the results of the sub-question which will have provided us with the foundation of the answer to the question. This question can also be rephrased to “how do linkage, leverage and organisational power determine the EU's ability to be a norm promoter in Central Asia”, further underlining the appropriateness of the case-study approach for this endeavour. The criteria for point two are met as norm promotion success occurs independently of the research project and cannot be influenced by the researcher in any way. In the same vein, variation cannot be produced by the researcher, it either exists or it does not. Finally, as this thesis examined the period of 2007-2013, it was clearly situated in the present and was contemporary at the time of writing.

The purpose of the case study method in this thesis is to shed light on the interaction process between the EU's norm promotion agenda and the Central Asian states. The EU's policies will thus be analysed as well as the outcome of these attempts in terms of the espousing of EU norms. As there is limited information available on the topic under study, the case studies hinge on the collection of primary data and are therefore exploratory. At the same time, they are guided by the main measurement criteria of the original model, which narrows down their scope even if these have had to have been adjusted to the Central Asian context.

To enable the researcher to safeguard the validity of the case study, clear operational measures for the concepts under study have been created to quantify them (Yin 2008:40-45). The researcher has also reflected on the generalisability of the results and strives to give further weight to Levitsky and Way's theory on linkage, leverage and organisational power, with a view to explaining norm adoption in hostile environments (authoritarian regimes beyond the accession countries). By taking three case studies, a certain replication process has been carried out which should add to the generalisability of the research project and help to draw conclusions on norm promotion outcomes in general.

While the case method enables a researcher to observe variables in their natural context without the artificialness that experiments entail (Yin 2008:18), it is criticised for its lack of rigor due the absence of systematic procedures (Yin 2008:14). In order to rectify this shortcoming, multiple sources of information have been used to allow for triangulation (Yin 2008:41). Examples of triangulation are the interviewing of a number of actors inside and outside of the EU on the issue at hand as well as the use of both EU and non-EU sources when evaluating EU norm promotion policies. Triangulation is very important when collecting case study information as this ensures greater validity and paves the way for converging lines of enquiry (Yin 2008:115). Nevertheless, in some cases it can prove challenging due to time constraints and the unwillingness of certain stakeholders to give interviews. This was frequently the case in Central Asia where a general reluctance to engage with researchers was noted.

Case study design

Both a within-case and cross-case analysis will be carried out in the research process. The within-case analysis will be performed first as the selected countries need to be examined with the end of identifying the relationship between the dependent and the independent variable. This will be done through the collection of data on EU policies, their outcomes (success rates) and the linkage and leverage rates as well as the organisational power of each respective country. Finally, the regime type will be analysed as part of the data needed for the intervening variable. The next step will be composed of a cross-case analysis, whereby the results in the selected countries will be compared as to ascertain if the variables have played the role initially predicted.

Case Study Selection

Central Asia has been selected for the analysis as limited prior research has been conducted on this region and its relationship with the European Union. This stems from the fact that EU concern about this part of the world is recent and largely dates back to the post-September 11th era. Due to its geographical isolation and distance from Europe, it is also an appealing case study to observe the influence of distance - and by inference - proximity on norm promotion success rates. Moreover, it sheds light on the challenges encountered in hostile environments and thus stands in stark

contrast to the analyses on norm promotion in the EU's neighbourhood and in the accession states.

The region is also of interest because its states are diverse despite their common historical background. This was illustrated by Ilkhamov who noted that (Ilkhamov 2005:297):

“Within Central Asia itself one can witness significant differences in terms of social, economic and political progress. In Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan the situation proved to be much more liberal than in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan where the soviet style, state-centric political and civic culture was rooted much deeper than elsewhere in the post-communist world”

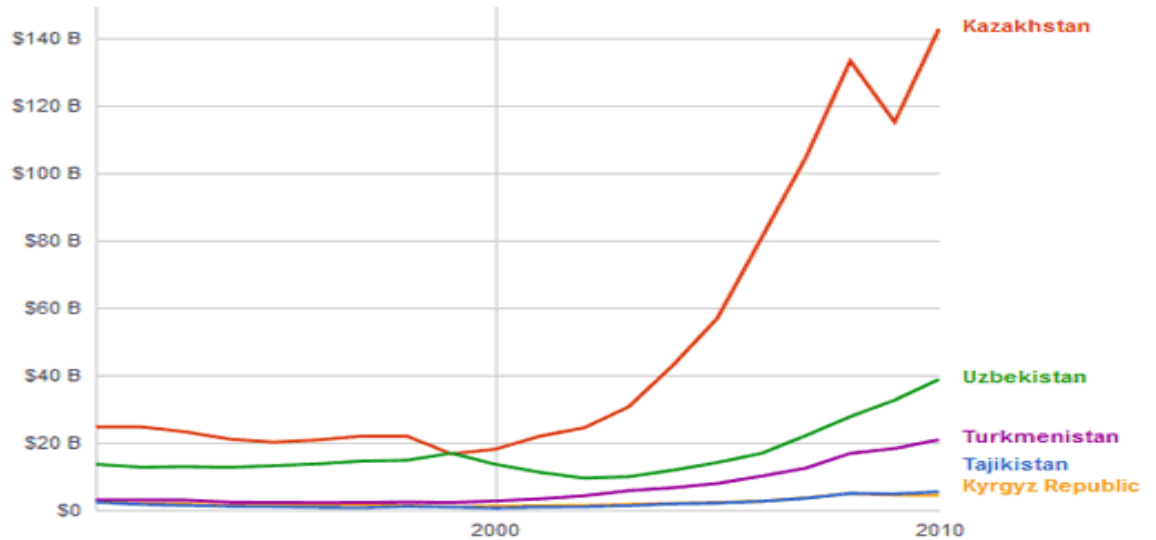
As stated above, a multiple-case design was adopted to study the unit of analysis: states. Three states were selected (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) from a *population* of 5 potential cases (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan). The selection of the cases for the small N sample was based on the principle of the “method of difference”, whereby there is great similarity between cases and only the degree of the strength of the variables differs. This applies to the countries in question as they pertain to one geographical region and have a common history.

Small N research enjoys a number of advantages: it is conducive to closely observing causal-processes, thus enabling us to directly trace the causal mechanisms at play (Gschwend, Schimmelfennig 2007:153). It therefore sacrifices breadth as in the case of large N samples in return for depth. Given that limited information is publicly available on the region and the EU's norm promotion endeavours, such an in-depth study is of great benefit to political scientists and practitioners alike as it allows for a deeper understanding of a largely unexplored field of international relations.

The selection process below was carried out so as to avoid both selection bias and cherry picking, thereby adding to the generalisability of the findings. Firstly, all five Central Asian states were compared in terms of GDP levels. As Levitsky and Way deem the size of an economy a major indicator of leverage, this was considered an appropriate way of grouping the different Central Asian states together (Satrapia 2012). Kazakhstan is by far the richest country in the region; Uzbekistan and

Turkmenistan rank similarly²⁰, whereas Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan can also be placed in the same category. One state was thus selected from each of the three groups, divided along the lines of GDP.

Figure 2: GDP of Central Asian countries



Source: Satrapia

In order to assess linkage levels and compare them between countries, total EU aid and assistance allocations to the states of Central Asia from the years 2007-2013 were analysed. When regarding the table below, it is clear that Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan both fare the same with regard to their assistance allocations and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan can also be placed in the same group, whereas Kazakhstan lies in the middle. Based on this data, the states could once more be split into three different groups and a selection could be made based on this.

Table 6: EU assistance

| Country | Total EU assistance 2007-2013 |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Kazakhstan | 62,71 million |
| Tajikistan | 124,50 million |
| Kyrgyzstan | 146, 45 million |
| Uzbekistan | 38,6 million |
| Turkmenistan | 28,46 million |

²⁰ It is worth noting that Turkmenistan's PPP is higher than Uzbekistan's which stems from the fact that this graph does not take into account population size relative to GDP.

Source: Tsertsvadze and Boonstra 2013

Trade volumes between the EU and a given country as a part of total volumes were also scrutinised during the selection process. The data below indicates that the countries in question once again fall into three groups: Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are on a similar footing as well as Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Kazakhstan is the relative outlier as its trade with the EU is significantly higher, which indicates high linkage levels in terms of trade.

Table 7: Economic ties with the EU

| | Economic ties in percent with EU in 2012 |
|--------------|---|
| Uzbekistan | 0,107 |
| Kazakhstan | 0,481 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 0,054 |
| Tajikistan | 0,054 |
| Turkmenistan | 0,126 |

Source: European Commission 2013a/b/c/d/e

With regard to organisational power, both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are weak states with limited control over their territory, which manifests itself through paltry military capacities and frequent internal strife (Gorenburg 2014). Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in contrast have a robust secret police structure and extensive control over their territories (Gorenburg 2014). However, the extent to which the latter two are oppressive and use these capacities to control the population is far greater. Kazakhstan's use of its organisational power is thus relatively tame which permits it to be placed in a different category to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

It can thus be concluded that:

Table 8: Grouping of countries according to variables

| Component | Grouping |
|----------------------|--|
| Leverage | 1.Kazakhstan 2. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan 3. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan |
| Linkage | 1.Kazakhstan 2.Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan 3. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan |
| Organisational Power | 1.Kazakhstan 2.Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan 3. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan |

Source: Own compilation

The selection within each group was based on practical concerns such as the openness of the country, the ease with which interviews could be conducted, transportation links and visa regulations. It is worth noting that Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan fare best in terms of openness in the region, making it easier to access data and conduct interviews. Still, as Kazakhstan was guaranteed its selection by virtue of the fact that it stood in its own category, this was only a decisive factor in the selection between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. As Tajikistan is more authoritarian than Kyrgyzstan, less westernised²¹ and a visa regime still exists for EU citizens, Kyrgyzstan was preferred. When comparing Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the former was selected as visas for Turkmenistan are burdensome to obtain, whereas Uzbekistan hosts many tourists and thus is more accommodating to foreigners. Notwithstanding, research in Uzbekistan still entails a number of hurdles which render the latter a more challenging case study than the other countries from the other groups. For a researcher these manifest themselves in the arduous procedure

²¹ This has two implications: firstly, female researchers may feel uncomfortable travelling alone in such environments when conducting fieldwork and secondly, there are fewer experts on the ground to be interviewed as there is less Western interest in the country. For instance, Bishkek boasts the American University of Central Asia which is a hub for local and international researchers following developments in the region.

associated with applying for an Uzbek visa and the unwillingness of interviewees to respond to questions which are considered sensitive.

6.3 Norm selection

The Central Asia Strategy highlighted several priority areas which are indicative of its norm promotion agenda. The strategy generally speaks of “common goals” such as “achieving stability and prosperity by means of peaceful inter-action” and offers assistance in the fields of “good governance, the rule of law, human rights, democratisation, education and training” as well as regional integration (General Secretariat of the Council 2009:1). The table below depicts the key normative cooperation areas proposed in the Central Asia Strategy (General Secretariat of the Council 2009:1):

Table 9: Key areas of EU cooperation

| Norm Promotion area | Component | Goal |
|--|--|---|
| Human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratization | human rights dialogues (discussing abuses), Rule of Law Initiative (legal reform) | Stable political framework and functioning economic structures |
| Building bridges: inter-cultural dialogue | Dialogue with civil society. | Freedom of religion |
| Combating common threats and challenges | Modern border management through BOMCA, CADAP. | Open and secure borders, preventing drugs trade and organised crime. Migration management. |
| Environmental sustainability and water | Forestry management, water management policy, EU-Central Asia environmental dialogue, EU Water Initiative, hydropower development, pollution prevention mechanisms. | Protection of the environment, preventing natural disasters. |
| Strengthening energy and transport links | Hydro-power and general energy management, investment, development and transportation of resources, Energy Dialogue in the framework of the Baku Initiative, exploration, upgrading infrastructure, public-private partnerships, promotion of the “Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative”. | Promotion of stability and prosperity. Diversifying export routes, demand and supply structures and energy sources. |
| Promotion of economic development, trade and investment | WTO accession support, INOGATE and TRACECA (regional infrastructure), public-private partnerships, training and assistance programmes, reform of the financial system. | The creation of regulatory and institutional frameworks in order to improve the business and investment environment as well as buttressing economic diversification |
| Investing in the future: youth and education | European Education Initiative (educational programmes to adapt to globalised world), scholarships, European Training Foundation (vocational training), e-silk highway (long distance learning). | Invest in the younger generation and thereby foster economic development |

Source: General Secretariat of the Council 2009

Given that the EU itself has divided its projects according to different norms, a number of these were singled out for the purpose of this Ph.D. research project. The norms, which have been selected, fall into the categories of “Human Rights, Rule of Law, Good Governance and Democratization”, “Investing in the future: Youth and

Education” and “Combating common threats and challenges”. More specifically, the Education Initiative, EIDHR/Human Rights Dialogues/Development Cooperation Instrument and the Central Asian Drug Action Programme (CADAP) will be analysed. These projects were chosen as they represent a spectrum of norms (education, human rights and security norms) and vary in their level of sensitivity ranging from relatively “neutral’ subjects such as education to the more problematic sphere of human rights.

Differences in perceptions surrounding EU norms are explained in the section which follows. It is generally recognised that the education system in most EU countries is of a high standard and that this is a domain where know-how should be acquired (EUCAM 2013:4). Moreover, education is not an area of “high politics” and thus does not threaten the security of the state or place regime survival in jeopardy. Questioning human rights in turn is seen as an attack on the government and its legitimacy while it could potentially endanger the position of those in power. In fact, authoritarian regimes, in spite of frequently perpetrating human rights abuses, still aim to uphold a façade which allows them to appear respectful of human rights. However, respect for human rights goes hand in hand with the safeguarding of civil liberties, which cannot be guaranteed lest this usher in regime change. In terms of drug management, while CADAP looks at public health policies, it is not as sensitive as border management for instance. Moreover, as governments are not directly responsible for HIV rates stemming from drug abuse which are most prevalent among marginalised segments of society, they are generally more ready to accept criticism about any shortcomings in this domain (Interview #2).

Table 10: Norm promotion case studies

| Normative Sphere | Norm | Means |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Education policies | Transfer of EU education norms (limiting corruption, greater access, transparency, better quality education) | Education Initiative, Bologna, Tempus |
| Human Rights policies in governance | Transfer of EU human rights norms (respect for individual rights, promotion of civil rights and political rights. | European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), Human Rights Dialogues, Development Cooperation Instrument backed projects (DCI) |
| Health and Security Policies | Transfer of EU policy, legal and technical advice in order to galvanise support for the human rights of drug addicts in the Central Asian republics through the creation of “clean zones” in prisons and opiate substitution treatment. | Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP) |

Source: Own compilation

6.4 Period of Study

As these projects were proposed as part of the Central Asia Strategy, the period of study will span the years 2007 to 2013, which marks the timeframe initially set for greater economic and physical engagement by the EU with the region. This period should be sufficient to judge whether the projects have had some noticeable effects and for concrete achievements to be traced in the evaluation process. Prior to the introduction of the Central Asia Strategy, the EU's presence on the ground was far sparser while allocations were half of what they were in 2007 (Kassenova 2008:2). In light of this, it appears logical to focus on that period of greater interaction in EU-Central Asian relations. However, some exceptions have been made when information was insufficient to judge the effects of the entire period. This decision was taken in the case of CADAP as the phases prior to 2010 are largely undocumented, unlike the phase spanning 2010-2013. The empirical analysis which follows shall shed greater light on the utility of the selected timeframe and the chosen norms.

PART THREE: EMPIRICAL RESULTS

7. Norm Promotion in Central Asia

The Central Asia Strategy marked a turning point in EU-Central Asia relations as a number of bilateral and regional initiatives were added to the agenda as part of the so-called “New Ostpolitik” which was spearheaded by the German Council Presidency and was characterised by an intensification of relations between the EU and the former Soviet Union (Kempe 2007). This development was the direct consequence of a “reappraisal of security and economic interests” of the EU in Central Asia which was also to cater for lofty governance-related objectives such as the promotion of democracy and human rights (Hoffmann 2010:87).

The excerpt below illustrates the EU’s main priorities for the region as well as its *modus operandi*:

The development and consolidation of stable, just and open societies, adhering to international norms, is essential to bring the partnership between the European Union and Central Asian States to full fruition. Good governance, the rule of law, human rights, democratisation, education and training are key areas where the EU is willing to share experience and expertise. The EU can offer experience in regional integration leading to political stability and prosperity. Lessons learnt from the political and economic transformation of Central and Eastern Europe can also be offered. With their rich traditions and centuries-old exchanges, the EU and Central Asia can contribute actively to the dialogue between civilisations. (Council of the European Union 2007:2, 3)

The strategy introduced a number of accompanying initiatives: a regular regional political dialogue at foreign minister level, a European education initiative, an e-silk-highway, a rule of law initiative, a human rights dialogue and an energy dialogue. These were all to contribute to the pursuit of the EU’s goals in the region related to its normative and strategic interests in the energy, governance, human rights and educational sector. The emphasis lay heavily on dialogue and interaction as a means of fostering change rather than pressure and coercion.

This range of cooperation areas was deemed (over)ambitious by some scholars in light of the unfavourable conditions on the ground (Melvin, Boonstra 2008). In fact, a number of issues have stood in the way of the EU's norm promotion agenda in Central Asia (Warkotsch 2011: 2). Central Asia constitutes a problematic partner for the European Union due its authoritarianism which directly clashes with Western views on political governance. In fact, Central Asian governments on the whole have resented EU critique and have generally pointed to their different historical backgrounds and political culture. It is thus unsurprising that no Central Asian country has qualified as a democracy and the EU's prospects at norm promotion success have been considered bleak due to the socio-cultural idiosyncrasies of the countries concerned (Warkotsch 2008:240). On the other hand, all states of the region have been enthusiastic about maintaining relations with the European Union to varying degrees which has left some room for optimism.

It is also important to bear in mind that Central Asian states are largely resistant to cooperating at a regional level which directly impedes the implementation of a number of EU projects as these focus on regional integration/cooperation. Thus far, economic integration has been limited and transport routes are entirely underdeveloped, which leaves much to be done in terms of regional relation building (Mogilevskii 2012). The reason why cooperation at the regional level has generally failed is because the states in question are relatively young and wish to assert themselves as sovereign nations. Technical cooperation thus tends to be easier as old ties remain from the Soviet times, but once the realm of politics is involved, most projects stall as the egos of leaders prevail over national interests (Charrié 2013).

7.1 Political Culture in Central Asia

The Central Asian states went through similar trajectories in the past centuries, having been part of the Russian Empire and subsequently the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, it has been noted that political trends in the five Central Asian states have manifested greater diversity than uniformity due to varying levels of authoritarianism and diverging governance logics (Matveeva 1999:32). At the same time, certain features are shared such as the extension of presidential powers, the removal of presidential term limits and the harassment of civil society. These traits

are prevalent in all five Central Asian republics, even if their magnitude varies from the authoritarian Turkmenistan to the relatively liberal Kyrgyzstan.

After gaining independence, all Central Asian states adopted democratic institutions and espoused liberal values on paper, yet, in practice, democratic freedoms were systematically violated (Abazov 2003). Embracing constitutional and legal statutes to protect the rights of individuals and minorities did not herald the democratisation of the region, instead it only taught leaders how to manipulate the system (Akerman 2002). Built on fundamentally different political and social values, Western democratic models are considered incompatible with the local political culture (Gleason 1997: 36-39). For instance, it is peculiar for Westerners that tribal identities and clans play a greater role in political life than political parties (Abazov 2003:51).

Personalism is prevalent in the whole of Central Asia and dates back to the feudal times of Khanates and Tsarist dominance (Warkotsch 2011:3). However, it is in the formerly nomadic societies of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan that such loyalty structures are most developed. The consequence is that “leaders create personality-based patron-client networks that consolidate power through the dispensing and withholding of political and material incentives to followers.” (Warkotsch 2011:3) Members of parliament subsequently vote in favour of their clan members with the aim of funnelling the state’s resources into their networks, rather than considering the broader concerns of society.

All these factors cast doubt on Central Asia’s suitability for democracy. In the region itself, democracy is frequently portrayed as premature (Uzbekistan), dangerous (Tajikistan) or likely to reduce governability (Kyrgyzstan) (Matveeva 1999: 31). In fact, authoritarianism has garnered legitimacy as it serves to counter a gangster economy and corrupt networks, thereby ensuring law and order. Thus, regime legitimacy is based on distribution and justice rather than democratic governance (Matveeva 1999: 37). In consequence, “the political legitimacy of the regimes in Central Asia is weakened not so much by the dubious means by which they acquired power, marginalized their parliaments and suppressed dissent, but by the fact that they are seen as corrupt and their policies as benefiting narrow interests”(Matveeva 1999:38).

This is a point in which European and Central Asian culture are diametrically opposed as the former is concerned with the individual right of the citizen and his voice in the political system and the latter emphasises the importance of stability, albeit at the expense of the individual. It is thus unsurprising that those governments, which succeeded in upholding stability, are frequently lauded (Matveeva 1999:38). Nazarbaev for instance is eulogised for building a strong and independent Kazakhstan which boasts high growth rates and no ethnic strife (Seguillon 2010). Karimov has prided himself in ensuring relative stability and providing electricity and natural gas to local communities (Pannier 2009). The Kyrgyz state in contrast has been mocked for failing to meet the basic needs of its citizens, hence violating the social contract between the government and the people (Pannier 2009). These accounts illustrate the fundamental differences between Western and Central Asian societies in terms of government discourse and citizens' expectations.

Nation Building

It is crucial to note that all countries have undergone a similar process of nation building. The Central Asian states gained sovereignty unexpectedly, having never had strong voices in favour of independence (Laruelle 2009:83). Instead, national demands were largely limited to the linguistic sphere as Central Asians desired a greater role for their national languages in day-to-day bureaucracy (Laruelle 2009:83). Independence would bring with it a period of nation building, whereby old symbols would be eliminated and replaced with new ones, stressing the glories of the nation and its rebirth after a period of Russian oppression.

In the discourses of the leaders, Russia had blighted the national cultures and the nations that existed before by imposing its language and customs. This attitude ignored the fact that Central Asia in its current form is a Soviet invention as no such statal boundaries existed before. Still, as leaders of the current states sought to cling on to power, they opted for a selective memory of their histories and focused on the ancientness of their nations. The pursuit of this national identity has gone hand in hand with political oppression as any critics of the current approach are deemed traitors and see their careers sullied.

In all three states, leaders have written books describing the glories of the nation, praising the bravery of their national heroes. Moreover, they have not refrained from writing about their vision of the nation, painting a bright picture of its future (Laruelle 2009:92). Similarly, history books have been published widely, which stress the greatness of the nation and edit Russian versions of history. The ultimate aim of this discourse is to give the leader the role of the protector of the nation and the father of the people. This can particularly be observed in Uzbekistan and to a lesser extent in Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan, despite its attachment to the Manas myth²², has not seen a similar personality cult take root in the country, which is likely to be a consequence of frequent regime change as well as political liberalism.

Growing nationalism is ironic in this context as the national delimitation of Central Asia only took place in the 1920s and while each republic is supposed to be the homeland of the titular nationality, in reality settlement patterns are not in line with these boundaries (Akbarzadeh 2004:690). The means that large minorities live outside their official homelands which frequently results in ethnic tension as illustrated by the recurring clashes between Uzbeks, Kyrgyz and Tajiks (Akbarzadeh 2004:693). The table below proves that Central Asia is an ethnically diverse region:

Table 11: Ethnic composition of Central Asian states

| Ethnic Group | Kazakhstan (2009) | Kyrgyzstan (1999) | Tajikistan (2000) | Turkmenistan (2003) | Uzbekistan (1996) |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Russians | 23,70% | 13,80% | 1,10% | 4% | 5,50% |
| Kazakhs | 63,10% | - | - | - | 3% |
| Kyrgyz | - | 64,90% | 1,10% | - | - |
| Tajiks | - | - | 79,90% | - | 5% |
| Turkmen | - | - | - | 85% | - |
| Uzbeks | 2,90% | 12,50% | 15,30% | 5% | 80% |

Source: CIA World Factbook

The Role of Religion

Religiosity has intensified in all countries of Central Asia since the fall of the Soviet Union. In the post-independence period, it has formed part of the national identity and has served to fill the ideological vacuum left by Marxism-Leninism (Hiro

²² Manas is a mythical figure who is believed to have carried out heroic feats in the 16th and 17th century.

2009:401). For regional standards, Uzbeks are especially pious as Islam already laid its roots in Uzbekistan and the Fergana Valley a thousand years ago. In contrast, it was only in the 18th and 19th century that Islam was widely adopted in northern Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (McGlinchey 2011:13). Moreover, as Russian influence was more noticeable in the latter regions, religion did not permeate all levels of society to the same extent.

During Soviet times, religion was considered a remnant of the feudal system and incompatible with fraternity among the peoples of the USSR. Accordingly, attempts were made to stamp it out and the open practice of religion was condemned. Not only was anti-Islamic education introduced but the vast religious networks of mosques and theological institutions were dismantled (Hiro 2009:392). Even when the political leadership loosened its grip on religion in Central Asia by permitting regional Muslim Spiritual Directorates to function from 1943 onwards, religion largely developed underground and in parallel to the state (Hiro 2009:395-397).

While leaders of the Central Asian Republics have always sought to keep the state secular and separate state and religion, radical elements advocating political Islam have surfaced in Eurasia (Hiro 2009:401). This increased islamisation is linked to the socioeconomic situation of the inhabitants of these countries, who often live in poverty and rely on religion as a source of “social security, personal honour and dignity” (Seifert 2013). The predicament of the citizens of post-Soviet Central Asia is illustrated in the following excerpt:

The majority of the population was at the mercy of a development-not only in an economic but also in a political sense- that they could not influence. They were given no opportunity to have a democratic say in the decisions about the sociopolitical orientation of their young state, about the character of its political order or about other reforms. The political control of the transformation process lay with powers which did not aim at a more just society either from a social or from a political perspective. The new political power, like its Soviet predecessor, remained undemocratic (Seifert 2013).

It is thus unsurprising that Islam has taken up a more important role in the lives of Central Asians in the post-independence period. Moreover, traditional gender roles are increasingly gaining ground despite Soviet attempts to impose the equality of the sexes (Commercio 2013). These trends attest to the re-traditionalisation of Central Asia and a return to national culture which also has implications for foreign actors and their norm promotion activities.

7.2 Political Context

Kyrgyzstan

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan's political history has been turbulent. After declaring independence on August 30, 1991, Akayev became the first president of Kyrgyzstan. Originally declared a democrat, Akayev would gradually grow increasingly authoritarian in an attempt to cling onto power. Notwithstanding, rising defection within the elite and popular disgruntlement resulted in his overthrow in 2005 in what was known as the Tulip Revolution. Bakiev would take over and govern the country until a revolution would chase him away in 2010. His successor, Otumbaeva would rule with greater transparency but would only serve as president until December 2011. Atambaev who was the incumbent from 2011 until the present day has been criticised for being both weak and corrupt (Interview #34).

Kyrgyzstan is a low income country and has heavily depended on foreign aid. This fact has influenced its political system as international actors have had more room for manoeuvre than in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Cynics insist that the country's relative democraticness is an act of necessity, rather than being linked to conviction. For instance, Matveeva notes that "the desire to cooperate with the West, however, was determined by large part by the need to secure financial assistance and investment in order to develop the natural resources." (Matveeva 1999:30). Notwithstanding, the ruling group has known how to exploit the few assets it has. For example, the regime did not hesitate to profit from the country's strategic location, inviting the US to use the Manas airbase as a fuelling hub for flights to Afghanistan. At the same time, it offered another airbase to the Russians just 20 km

outside of Bishkek, highlighting its ability to balance different powers and employ a multi-vectoral foreign policy.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's political landscape has chiefly been characterised by stability and continuity. Since its independence, Kazakhstan has been run by Nursultan Nazarbaev who has been the head of state for over three decades. Hydrocarbon-fuelled economic growth has enabled Nazarbaev to clamp down on the opposition and concentrate power in his hands. Political parties have remained weak, while clan notables have sought to secure their share of the country's wealth through elections. Kazakhstan has historically been divided into 3 hoards as well as smaller clan lineages, all of which the president has sought to balance. Nonetheless, his clan has been favoured and controls most power and resources which has led to competition and resentment, sowing the seeds for potential conflict (Collins 2006:257). Moreover, Kazakhstan is a multi-ethnic nation and its leadership has had to cater for all ethnic groups while equally ensuring the promotion of Kazakhness. In fact, the state has actively fostered Kazakh pre-eminence in the corridors of power, increasingly sealing off the political sphere to non-Kazakhs.

Kazakhstan has been open to relations with foreign countries, seeking to attract investments and modernise its economy. Interest in Europe and the desire for deepened ties in the energy, transport, trade and technology sector were clearly spelled out in Kazakhstan's 2008 "Path to Europe" document (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2008). Nevertheless, affluence has also gone hand in hand with greater assertiveness which has resulted in disputes between energy companies and the government. Government-sponsored public relations campaigns have sought to limit the damage that such spats have caused and have aimed to establish economic relations with a range of actors as part of its multi-vector foreign policy. To date, these attempts have been relatively successful as Kazakh hydrocarbon reserves remain coveted and the country has succeeded in attracting further investments.

Uzbekistan

The political structures of Uzbekistan have been rigid and robust, even if there has been internal resistance which has sent tremors through the country. Since its independence, Uzbekistan has been run by Islom Karimov who groomed it into one of the world's most authoritarian regimes. Although Karimov feigned a certain level of liberalism at independence with the intent of ensuring IMF and World Bank loans, he soon tightened his grip on the opposition, first targeting those with an Islamic tint and then the secular cohort (Hiro 2009:145-7). While Islam has been considered an indelible part of Uzbek culture, it was to be kept separate from the realm of politics. Thus all political groups rooted in Islam were banned and puppet parties surrounded the ruling People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan in Parliament. Karimov's anti-Islamic stance allowed him to curry favour in Washington and Moscow, presenting his regime as the only alternative to an Islamic state. Combined with his commitment to secularism, Karimov stressed the need for gradualism in the democratisation process given that Uzbekistan had only just begun building a sovereign nation state (Hiro 2009:156).

Nevertheless, the foreign relations of Uzbekistan have been characterised by frequent spats with both neighbouring countries and global powers. Seeking to carve out a role for itself as the regional leader, Tashkent provoked the wrath of the other Central Asian states. Similarly, Karimov has vacillated between Moscow and the US, unable to decide which partner to favour: in the first decade after independence, it sought to rid itself of any influence of Moscow, largely rejecting any cooperation projects in the framework of the CIS and striking up relations with Iran, the US, the EU and Turkey (Anceschi 2010:149). The following decade, Tashkent developed very close relations with the US which was largely fuelled by Western desire to have allies in the Muslim world in its fight against global terrorism. Nevertheless, demands relating to the respect for human rights following the Andijan massacre would push Tashkent back into the arms of the Kremlin. Most recently, an improvement of relations with the West could be noted again as sanctions were lifted and attempts were made to reengage with the Uzbek elite.

7.3. Economic Models of Central Asian States

The five states of Central Asia followed divergent economic development paths despite sharing the same characteristics in terms of culture, history, geography and economic structure (Pomfret 2010:1). This resulted in vastly diverse economic regimes as states such as Kyrgyzstan carried out extensive reform and Turkmenistan largely stayed loyal to the communist system. These decisions had a profound impact on their long-term growth and how they responded to the global economic crisis in 2008-9 (Pomfret 2009:1). Moreover, contrary to predictions by international financial institutions, the non-reformers were not punished for their resistance to change whereas Kyrgyzstan was not blessed with the economic success it was promised.

Having laid their financial management in Moscow's hands, the Central Asian states had no experience in formulating economic policy before independence. Furthermore, since the fall of the Soviet Union and the consequent loosening of economic ties were unexpected, governments had little time to plan their post-independence economic models. In 1991, the governments of the five Central Asian states acted as sovereign entities for the first time in their histories, facing great challenges without the assistance of their former patron. The republics were heavily hit by the dissolution of the USSR as demand and supply networks collapsed with subsidies being cut simultaneously. While the shift to world prices theoretically benefited the energy exporting nations of Central Asia, their reliance on Russian pipelines limited their potential gains and reined them in politically (Pomfret 2010:1). As output fell and prices rose, Central Asians also had to face hyperinflation combined with a drop in living standards. The independence years were thus tainted with great economic hardship and suffering, as citizens struggled to acclimatize to the new system.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan has few natural resources and since its economy was closely tied to that of the USSR, it was heavily hit by the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In the wake of the collapse, the government liberalized prices, made the national currency convertible and reduced trade tariffs, thereby becoming the most liberal economic

regime in the region (Pomfret 2010:10). In 1998, Kyrgyzstan joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the first state in the CIS, marking its openness to the globalised world. Its performance in economic reform was however mixed: according to economic indicators, it fared well in the categories “large” and “small-scale privatisation”, “price liberalization” and “trade and forex system”, but disappointed onlookers with its banking sector and in infrastructure reform (Pomfret 2010:4). At the same time, the government’s deficit was very large which made it dependent on external sources of finance and raised its debt level. Kyrgyzstan would thus face the most economic challenges of the three states under study, a fact which would greatly shape its foreign policy.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan’s economic situation was diametrically opposed to Kyrgyzstan’s as its per capita income was the highest of all Central Asian Republics and it was also considered richer in terms of human capital (Pomfret 2010:4). Moreover, given that new oil reserves were gradually being discovered in the years that followed independence, its future looked bright. Still, while Kazakhstan carried out extensive price reforms similar to those of Russia, the process of privatization brought about the creation of powerful interest groups (Pomfret 2010:4). This resulted in greater corruption and autocracy as ruling elites sought to cling onto their assets at all costs. Kazakhstan thus fared badly in “infrastructure reform”, “financial institutions”, “enterprise restructuring” and “competitive policy” (Pomfret 2010:4). Its “trade liberalization” and “privatization” and “trade and forex system” indicators in turn were good (Pomfret 2010:4). This largely mirrors the attitudes of the ruling elite who wanted to integrate into the international economy but simultaneously strove to safeguard its vested interests.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan took a different approach to the above-mentioned states as has often been the case in the political sphere. It adopted a gradualist approach and was initially rewarded with the best growth rates of all the Central Asian countries in the 1990s (Pomfret 2009:2). It fared well in small-scale privatization but implemented little

reform in other sectors, showing its adversity to change. In consequence, Uzbekistan was reluctant to listen to external advice which resulted in poor relations between Tashkent and international financial institutions. A major point of disagreement between the two was the failure to introduce currency convertibility and instead rely on forex controls to deal with falling cotton prices from 1996 onwards (Pomfret 2010:13). The result was as follows: as the official exchange rate was overvalued and the state could earn on the price difference between the world and the domestic price for cotton, Uzbek producers were protected from imports and those with foreign currencies could reap dividends from black market sales. Uzbekistan's policies - while less reformist - were considered more effective than in other countries (Pomfret 2010:5). This partly stems from the fact that it "inherited the most effective administrators in the region", potentially due to its role as the Central Asian leader during Communism. (Pomfret 2010:13). Added to this, were lower corruption levels and higher feelings of public service which also contributed to growth (Pomfret 2010:13). Uzbekistan's citizens thus enjoyed better living standards than those residing in the neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, despite having defied the West in its choice of economic policies.

8. Answering the Sub-Question

This section will look at the EU's norm promotion success in Central Asia and thereby strive to answer the sub-question of this thesis. As outlined in the methodological part, the Education Initiative, CADAP and the EU's human rights policy will be analysed. Within each sub-part, the relevant programme(s) will be introduced, background will be provided on the national context and an evaluation of the level of implementation will follow. The analysis in the field of education will focus on the Tempus and the Bologna programme from 2007-2013. With regard to human rights, the projects implemented in the framework of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, DCI as well as the human rights dialogues will be scrutinised on top of a few associated endeavours. In the case of CADAP, the results of CADAP 5 (2010-2013) will be concentrated on as the prior stages are not well documented and the information available online is patchy. Within the CADAP framework, the MEDISSA, DAMOS and TREAT components will stand at the centre of the analysis. This will cater for the informational requirements of the sub-question and makes it possible to proceed to the main research question.

8.1. Education Norms

EU Education Policy

The EU has actively targeted education as a sphere of cooperation and norm promotion as it is a means of facilitating economic development and stability. This can be explained by applying the following logic: in the Central Asian context, half of the population is under 30 and thus a potential source of social upheaval if adequate opportunities are not provided (Axyonova 2013). Furthermore, Central Asian governments are generally willing to obtain know-how and modernise their education systems, viewing European education as being of a high standard. This renders education a fruitful sector for engagement between both actors and one that does not endanger the sovereignty of the case study countries.

As the majority of donors had already focused on primary and secondary education in the region, higher education was prioritised by the EU, more specifically, integration into the Bologna process as well as academic mobility for local students.

Creating a uniform system in which diplomas would have an equal status across the continent was supposed to enable Central Asians to integrate into the Eurasian labour market. It was also seen as a means of rendering them more competitive and fostering linkages between the EU and Central Asia through flows in the sphere of education.

The European Education Initiative for Central Asia was drawn up in 2007 to facilitate the modernisation of the education and training sector of the region as part of the Central Asia Strategy. The Initiative envelopes existing programmes (Tempus, Erasmus Mundus) as well as new components such as the EU-Central Asia Education Platform. The latter largely centred around dialogue and thus will not be elaborated on in the section that follows (Jones 2010:7). However, in order to allow the reader to grasp the key components of the EU’s educational agenda, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, the Bologna Process, the European Training Foundation and CAREN will be dissected below.

Table 12: The Education Initiative

| EU-Central Asia Education Platform | Specific Activities |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-level meetings - Technical Working Groups - National Level dialogue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tempus Erasmus Mundus The Bologna Process The European Training Foundation (ETF) CAREN |

Source: Jones 2010

The Bologna Process

The driving force behind the Bologna Process was a handful of minister-level meetings which aimed at establishing a European Higher Education Area by 2010. The process began with the Sorbonne Declaration (1998) which put forward the “gradual convergence towards a common framework of qualifications and cycles of study”, while, “facilitating the mobility of students and teachers” and “designing a common degree level system for undergraduates (Bachelor degree) and graduates (Master and Doctoral degrees)”(European Commission 2010:49).

The subsequent Bologna Declaration (1999) was signed by 29 education ministers of European countries who pledged to modernise higher education and reform the European higher education system in what would be known as the Bologna Process (European Commission 2012:111). Ministers equally vouched to stimulate the attractiveness of the European education system internationally and raise its competitiveness. The Bologna Declaration further underlined their commitment to the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees; the implementation of a two cycle system; the establishment of a system of credits; increased mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff; European cooperation in the field of quality assurance and common curricula development at the European level (European Commission 2012:112).

Ensuing declarations helped to define the main priorities of the EU's education policy both within the EU and beyond (Jones 2010:8):

- Establishing a three-cycle system of higher education within a qualifications' framework;
- Promoting mobility;
- Developing quality assurance;
- Increasing employability;
- Developing the European Higher Education Area in a global context;
- Developing joint degrees;
- Recognising qualifications;
- Including a social dimension; and
- Promoting lifelong learning.

In this framework, a number of European norms have been championed such as transparency in debates and discussions, monitoring and evaluation of reform, cooperation between supranational and national agencies as well as less top down interaction between students and staff (Jones 2010:9). These are practices which are rarely applied in the partner countries as authoritarian governance structures prevail and most reform is pushed through directly from above without prior consultation at the grass root levels. Education has thus become a key area for norm promotion even though its forces are more latent in this sector.

Tempus

The Tempus programme aims to usher in the modernisation of higher education and to establish an area of cooperation spanning the EU and its neighbours. By forming consortia with EU and non-EU partners, this programme strives to internationalise higher education and connect institutions with each other. Having access to financial allocations via the Development and Cooperation Instrument, both joint projects²³ and structural measures²⁴ can be endorsed with a view to facilitating curricula and governance reform as well as cooperation between enterprises and universities (Axyonova 2013).

The Tempus programme includes a range of countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. Central Asia began to partake in Tempus activities in 1995 and has benefited from the training of academics and reform assistance. In total, 130 universities in the region have taken part in 230 projects over a time span of 15 years. Approximately 5,000 students from the EU and Central Asia have been directly involved in related activities (European Commission a).

In Central Asia, Tempus has sought to assist the drawing up of new curricula at Bachelor's and Master's level as well as the creation of joint degrees with EU universities. At the same time, it has endorsed the establishment of quality assessment systems at universities in order to track progress and identify weaknesses. Finally, it has contributed to the overall improvement of facilities, the updating of materials and the provision of equipment in those countries where national educational budgets are scant.

²³ These entail “multilateral partnerships between higher education institutions in the EU and the partner countries” and serve to “develop, modernise and disseminate new curricula, teaching methods or materials, boost a quality assurance culture, and modernise the management and governance of higher education institutions.” See Eurodesk (2013)

²⁴ These focus on “the development and reform of higher education institutions and systems in partner countries, to enhance their quality and relevance, and increase their convergence with EU developments.” See Eurodesk (2013)

Erasmus Mundus

Erasmus Mundus offers students and scholars the possibility of attending European educational institutions, with the aim of enhancing cooperation and capacity building (Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:120). It also enables the establishment of consortia and entails joint European Master's qualifications (Jones 2010:10). Mobility has been encouraged in Central Asia since 2007, the year the region was included in the programme and local scholars could partake in exchanges. Between the years of 2009-2013, 3 main actions were carried out: (1) joint master and doctoral programmes, (2) international partnerships with higher education bodies and (3) projects which develop Europe's attractiveness as a destination for education (EEAS).

The programme has been deemed very successful as many scholars have participated in it, thus allowing skilled labour to return to the region and at least in principle facilitate transformation there. However, one major critique of the programme is that it remains unsustainable without EU funding as Central Asian countries have not made resources available (Osborn 2010). Another complication linked to the programme is the fact that it mainly reaches out to the privileged and not those most in need of assistance. Finally, the movement of people has been unidirectional with flows going from Central Asia to Europe which does not foster brain circulation but rather brain drain, especially as students try to remain in the EU (Jones 2010:10). Be that as it may, the value of educational exchanges cannot be denied in the norm promotion process.

Vocational Training

In terms of vocational education and training, the EU has tried to spur the modernisation of policy frameworks and has provided professional development programmes for local officials. Brussels has thereby attempted to simulate poverty reduction through skills development, seeking to offer career perspectives to those who cannot pursue university education. Such support can be seen as being of added value as vocational education in the region generally lacks funds and is of low quality, therefore desperately requiring donor support (Axyonova 2013). In this

context it is relevant to mention that the European Training Foundation - which is in charge of the EU's vocational agenda - also carries out a project named Skills Development for Poverty Reduction (SDPR) which has been implemented in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan (European Training Foundation). This project directly targets the rural poor who are most susceptible to lack of employment opportunities and seeks to smooth out disparities within countries.

The Central Asia Research and Education network (CAREN)

CAREN strives to facilitate collaboration between researchers and students around the world by helping to set up a high speed data-communication network. One million students and researchers in over 200 universities and research institutions in the Central Asian Republics are scheduled to benefit from this and will be able to join the international research community (Jones 2010:10). Moreover, a connection is to be built between the region and the high-speed pan-European GEANT network, thereby reinforcing communication ties between the two geographical areas.

Scholars reviewing the EU Education Strategy deemed this component the most successful as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have actively participated in it and not shied away from cooperation (Jones 2010:10). Nevertheless, the Uzbek government has been a thorn in the side of the project as it has refused to provide the funds it originally agreed to. This is despite the fact that the EU's share lay at 5 million and that of each Central Asian state at a symbolic 200,000 euros (Jones 2010:10). Such examples illustrate the difficulties the EU faces when trying to initiate reform and stimulate modernisation in Central Asia.

8.2. Education in Central Asia

During Soviet times, education levels were high in Central Asia as access to free education was guaranteed. Since independence, spending cuts, corruption and mismanagement have marred the reform process and have led to the disintegration of the education system (Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:116). Education has increasingly become a luxury good as government spending per student is insufficient and few scholarships are available for less affluent students (Somma 2011:15). In addition, education is not kept separate from politics with governments controlling educational activities and curricula, especially in the more authoritarian states. This greatly

lowers the quality of education and hinders critical thinking as students are not encouraged to criticise current practices or question governmental decisions.

While education has become more accessible in recent years due to the opening of private institutes, the standard at these institutions is deemed sub-par (Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:127). In general, teachers are underpaid, underqualified and in many cases do not shy away from accepting bribes in return for pass grades. Moreover, quality assessment and assurance remain problematic as organisations are not independent and are usually an extension of the state (Active Asia 2010:11). Finally, wide-spread educational practices in Western countries such as the study of academic journals or e-learning are not in place in Central Asia due to a lack of equipment and resources. The consequence is that Central Asian students are out of touch with international debates and scientific developments.

Table 13: Computer usage in Central Asia

| Do you use a computer at least occasionally? | Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 29,1 | 27,7 | 22,3 |
| No | 70,9 | 72,3 | 77,8 |

Source: Washington University (2007)

It must however be borne in mind that Central Asia finds itself at an entirely different stage of its educational development. The countries of the region had to single-handedly undertake radical educational reform with the fall of the Soviet Union. Whereas education had previously been controlled by Moscow, Russian had been the lingua franca and syllabi were adjusted to the Soviet economic model, independence brought with it the challenge of forming a new education system tailored to the local context. This entailed moving away from the previous 5 year degree structure with a rigid system of specialisation, to the Bachelor and Master degree division (Abdurahmanova:2001).

Table 14: Educational reform

| Traditional System | Duration | Multi-Level System | Duration |
|-----------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| Specialist Diploma | 5 years | Bachelor's Degree | 4 years |
| Candidate of Sciences | 3 years | Master's Degree | 2 years |
| Doctorate | Thesis | Ph.D. | Thesis |

Source: Own compilation

Still, Central Asia boasts high literacy rates and enrolment in tertiary education is above-average for global standards (Somma 2011:15). For its system to further improve the OECD highlights that “policy makers in the region need to collect and report educational data, to develop strategies for raising the quality of tertiary education, improve graduation rates, and reduce state control” (Somma 2011:15). Not only would this render its economies more competitive, it would also enable it to change its status from a net importer of educational services to an exporter, thus attracting students from outside Central Asia (Wilmoth 2012:2).

Education in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is deemed one of the front-runners in terms of educational reform in Central Asia. Not only did the number of higher education institutions mushroom from 39 to 177 between 1992 and 2006, the number of students attending these bodies doubled when compared to 1999 (OECD 2007:19). Moreover, Kazakhstan has extended the length of primary and secondary education from 11 to 12 years, introduced new standards for tertiary education and equally drawn up a “Unified National Test” for all of those wishing to enter university (Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:116). The standards demanded for teaching staff were also raised, with requirements being introduced such as that Ph.D. programmes had to include foreign researchers with a Ph.D. degree (European Commission 2012:11). Establishing specialised schools, ameliorating the standards of textbooks, intensified monitoring and teacher training are also examples of steps taken to improve teaching standards (European Commission 2012:11).

Proportionately, Kazakhstan has a very large number of private institutions which is deemed a reflection of the low level of investment by the government in education (Sabzalieva 2012). In fact, Kazakhstan had the second lowest expenditure per tertiary

student in the world in relation to its GDP in 2011 (Klein 2011). For instance, only 20% of students receive grants while the rest pay tuition fees (European Commission 2012:18). Grants are usually merit-based and largely reserved for those following courses, which have been prioritised by the government. The downside of this approach is that the poor are circumscribed in their access to education.

Kazakhstan has a diverse educational landscape: at the start of the academic year 2011/2012 a total of 146 HEIs were functioning of which 9 were national, one international, 33 state-run, 16 joint stock companies, one special status institution, 73 private and 13 non-civic academies (European Commission 2012:12). The distribution of students between state and private universities was as follows: of 610 000 students at HEIs, 48% were at private and 52% at state institutions which signifies that a high proportion of students do not benefit from state structures for their education (European Commission 2012:12).

However, the state plays an important role in education in general. The Kazakh education system is regulated by the government which makes it responsible for “the development and implementation of state education policy, strategic plans, development of state programmes, regular monitoring of labour market needs, approval of rules on state licensing of education institutions, qualification requirements in education, state compulsory education standards”, inter alia (European Commission 2012:13). This reflects the extent to which education is centralised and the power of the state as the latter ultimately shapes curricula.

In consequence, Kazakhstan has been criticised for granting insufficient power to its universities. In 2014, plans were announced to render education more democratic through the introduction of collegial management in universities with the hope of preventing access to posts through contacts. Oversight councils were to be made up of “representatives of local governments, the public, and the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs” who would have the power to “appoint the university’s rector, coordinate its development and monitor its finances” (Pavlovskaya: 2012). Despite these efforts, the Kazakh education system has generally been deemed corrupt, with students frequently bribing their professors to pass classes (Bartlett 2014). This stems

from the fact that salaries tend to be inadequate and teachers have to supplement their incomes through bribes (Lillis 2008).

There are some positive trends nonetheless: the Nazarbaev University - a scholarship-based English language university - is soon to lead in national research activities and compete internationally. The university maintains close contacts with other academic institutions around the world and invests heavily in technology and science. Moreover, it is deemed the only autonomous university in the country and functions with limited government interference (Pavlovskaya: 2012). Foreign professors are frequently invited to teach at the university in order to bring expertise and a first class education to Kazakhstan. It is hoped that similar institutions will flourish in the country so that a larger segment of the population can benefit from the university's model.

In general, some steps have been undertaken to internationalise Kazakhstan's education system. Legislative provisions, organisation of events, academic exchanges and most notably the government's Bolashak programme - which has permitted 10,000 students to study abroad - have all served this end. (Radio Free Europe 2014b). Furthermore, Kazakhstan is committed to becoming a trilingual nation (Kazakh, English and Russian) by 2050 and thus has invested heavily in 36 specialised language schools. This is in line with its broader objective of being among the world's 50 most competitive economies.

Such ambitions have triggered hikes in spending: the national education budget ballooned six-fold between 2005 and 2012 (Milovanovitch 2014). This is also a reflection of the elevated prosperity of the country. Thanks to growing petroleum wealth the government can afford to create elite universities such as Nazarbaev University and attract scholars from abroad with competitive salaries. Such strategies are not available to Central Asia's poorer countries, which are entirely dependent on foreign grants for education projects of a similar scale.

Education in Kyrgyzstan

After independence, significant reform was carried out in Kyrgyzstan which aimed to modernise the education sector - quality, efficiency and accessibility were placed at

the top of the list of objectives to be achieved (European Commission 2012:35). Still, while Kyrgyzstan is generally open to reform, its efforts have been undermined by a lack of resources and widespread poverty (Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:116). In consequence, its education system is characterised by “relatively weak national and institutional higher education governance, high reliance on fee-paying places and a proliferation of low-quality HEIs” (Wilmoth 2012:6).

Currently 245,000 students attend the country’s 54 higher education institutions, of which 30% are deemed to be inadequate (Trend 2009). Great differences can be noted in tuition fee levels between private and state universities, with the former usually charging 25% more (European Commission 2012). Nevertheless, private universities are becoming increasingly attractive as they often offer new and innovative programmes as well as more modern equipment. Still, only 12.5% of students are enrolled at private universities (European Commission 2012).

HEIs enjoy extensive autonomy in setting their programmes, the teaching methods to be adopted and the direction of international collaboration. This is not surprising given that Kyrgyzstan is a relatively liberal state for Central Asian standards. It is worth noting that eight universities collaborate directly with different states and are of an inter-governmental nature: the Kyrgyz-Russian University, the Kyrgyz-Uzbek University, the Kyrgyz-Turkish University, the American University of Central Asia, Kyrgyz-Russian Academy of Education, the Kyrgyz-Kuwait University, the International University Alatoo and the University Agakhana. These connections highlight the openness of the country to foreign influence and its willingness to cooperate in the educational sphere.

Notwithstanding, the state fails to cater for the needs of its citizens: only 13, 5% of Kyrgyz students receive scholarships from the government, despite the fact that poverty rates are alarmingly high in the country and higher education is a luxury for many (European Commission 2012:39). In fact, Kyrgyzstan had one of the lowest state contribution rates for education in the world according to a 2008 OECD study. However, government allocations have steadily risen since the country’s independence which gives reason for optimism and attests to a general willingness to invest in education (European Commission 2012:39).

Another positive development is the introduction of a systematised university admission process which is to reduce corruption in education (Smith 2012). Currently, scholarships are frequently sold to the highest bidder instead of being granted to those performing best as “wealth and personal connections replaced merit as the essential pre-requisites to enrolment to most universities with state scholarship funding” (Smith 2012). With the introduction of an independent entry system, scholarships should be granted to the most talented which will help promote meritocracy and make the education system fairer.

Kyrgyzstan is generally presented as a cooperative partner and is the only Central Asian country to have taken part in the PISA Assessment (2006) (Sabzalieva 2011). Still, despite its willingness to improve, the study revealed a large performance gap in the country between rural and urban communities, which needs to be tackled if there is to be greater equity in the education system (Yefimov 2010). Besides these disparities, the Kyrgyz system is plagued by numerous other difficulties: there are not enough teachers as these migrate to Russia, exchange students often fail to return to Kyrgyzstan and staff is normally underqualified. While all Central Asian states face these hurdles, these challenges appear to be especially pronounced in Kyrgyzstan.

Education in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is Central Asia’s most populous nation and also the most authoritarian of the countries under study. While there are 63 institutions offering higher education, all of these are either run by the state or have received the latter’s blessing (Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:117). Education has been closely linked with politics in Uzbekistan as well as the foreign policy of the government. For instance, while private universities were tolerated between 1995 and 1998, they were shut down following an assassination attempt on the president (Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:117). In 2002, non-state institutions were legalised again as Uzbekistan deepened its relations with the United States: the Westminster International University in Tashkent, the affiliate of the Russian Plekhanov University of Economics, Moscow State University named after Lomonosov, the Russia University of Oil and Gas named after Gubkin, Turin Politechnic University and the Management Development Institute of Singapore

began to function soon after. Recently, negotiations for the opening of Korean branch campuses also started which reflect the close ties between Korea and Uzbekistan (Sabzalieva 2014).

Currently there are 75 HEIs in Uzbekistan of which 11 are situated in rural areas, despite the fact that the majority of the population lives outside of cities. Uzbekistan has on average allocated 10-12% of its budget to education which is the greatest proportion in the region. It is important to note that students either pay for their studies or receive scholarships depending on their entry level exam grades. Moreover, a stipend is generally provided to all students as well as monthly transportation cards. 34% of students received grants for their studies in 2011 which illustrates the strength of the welfare system (European Commission 2012:96). In spite of governmental support, higher education is chiefly considered a luxury as tuition fees are out of reach for most citizens. Enrolment rates have thus declined substantially compared to the Soviet period (from 14% in 1991 to 6.4% in 2000) (Islamov 2008). This can also be seen through the lens of traditional gender roles which discourage married women from going to university and have re-emerged since independence.

Since the year 2007 tangible educational reform has taken place in Uzbekistan. This can be explained by the fact that education is a key issue that cannot be ignored as approximately 35% of the total population is under the age of 16 and over 62% of all Uzbekistanis under the age of 30 (European Commission 2012:91). Leaving this part of the population with inadequate education would risk provoking instability and hampering economic growth. The reforms carried out in the system resulted in the switching to a four-year Bachelor programme and a two-year Master programme (European Commission 2012:91). This rendered the Uzbek system more similar to that in place in Europe and facilitated greater cooperation in the education sector.

One of the main weaknesses of the Uzbek education system is that it does not correspond to market needs. However, there is hope that it will gradually adjust and modernise. In fact, it was the first country in Central Asia to adopt the Bachelors' and the Master's system in 1997 which hints at a degree of flexibility (Interview #25). Nevertheless, it has created its own credit system and is not deemed Bologna

compliant. A major hurdle in the way of education in the country is the fact that school children are forced to pick cotton in the harvest period and thus see their studies interrupted (Cottoncampaign.org). This has long-term educational repercussions for cotton pickers and alienates Uzbekistan on the international stage.

8.3. Evaluation of Education Projects

Kazakhstan decided to adopt the Bologna model with the aim of facilitating the internationalisation of its education system. It thus became the first state in Central Asia to sign and ratify the Lisbon Convention, and in March 2010 it became the 47th state to join the Bologna Process. This has resulted in double diplomas, joint education projects, international accreditation and mutual recognition. Currently 37 HEIs offer double diplomas and in 2011, 1500 foreign professors visited Kazakhstan to give lectures (European Commission 2012:24). The adaptation has thus been deemed “extensive but gradual” while it is recognised that 75% of institutions use the ECTS system (European Commission 2012:25). Curricula reform was also carried out so as to make Kazakh and European diplomas comparable, thus rendering the Kazakh labour force more competitive internationally.

Within the framework of Tempus, Kazakhstan has taken part in joint projects and structural and complementary measures (European Commission 2011:27). The following results can be noted: curricula have been modernised and greater involvement of stakeholders, business, students and the population at large has been facilitated (European Commission 2011:28). Quality management has also been targeted as well as assessment systems thereby encouraging an improvement in the current standards. Given the above, it can be stated that the Bologna and Tempus programmes have had a medium to high impact on Kazakhstan as both policy change and institutional change can be noted. The degree of success has been scaled down to reasonable as Kazakhstan has not fully completed the ECTS implementation process despite having the means to do so.

While Kyrgyzstan is not a signatory country of the Bologna Process, there have been some Tempus-funded pilot projects seeking to implement ECTS in numerous institutions since 2004. Furthermore, laws have been amended as part of the Tempus project which resulted in the introduction of the Bachelor’s and Master’s system

(Bologna Process) in 2012. In 2012, this was piloted with 23/51 universities introducing this new degree system (Interview # 43). Moreover, Kyrgyzstan has declared the adoption of the Bologna model a national priority so greater reform is to be expected in the future (Jones 2010:9).

One of the main problems in the education system is that the Bachelor's and Master's system is not known on the labour market. Moreover, quality assurance mechanisms are not implemented properly and there is no independent accreditation institute to assess higher education standards (European Commission 2012:45). The EU has sought to reduce corruption in education by introducing anonymous assessment sheets, however, there is no study into the effectiveness of this measure and there is reason to believe that such practices continue as teachers depend on bribes to supplement their income.

Despite these weaknesses, it is clear that Tempus has not only expedited the introduction of ECTS but has equally facilitated the restructuring of syllabi and trainings for teachers. A further result of the Tempus programme is that a legal basis for national quality assessment has been created while Bachelor and Master's curricula have also been drawn up. In terms of project outcome, the Bologna Process and Tempus would thus lie in the category of reasonable success as policy change has been noted but not fully institutionalised. Nevertheless, Kyrgyzstan has shown its willingness to implement the project while seeing its hands tied due to financial constraints.

Uzbekistan is not a signatory country of the Bologna process and there is no particular mechanism which guides its implementation. The system in place is similar to the Bologna structure but represents another three-cycle model with a different credit system (European Commission 2011:105). Be that as it may, Tempus is regarded as having had a considerable impact on the education system due to the fact that it was a long-term project which allowed for deeper trust to develop between both partners (European Commission 2011:105). Tempus was involved in curricula development/modernisation and endorsed the introduction of the two-level higher education system. At the same time, it sought to involve different stakeholders in the process with the hope of better meeting market needs. Quality assurance

centres have also been opened at a number of universities as well as a range of other centres related to the development of skills. Furthermore, new materials and books have been provided as well as computers and laboratory equipment (European Commission 2011:106).

At the same time regional cooperation has been facilitated in the field of energy, water resource management, social economics and tourism, food safety and agrarian aviation (European Commission 2011:107). Moreover, in the recent Tempus IV projects, 24 Uzbek HEIs were involved in regional projects with 110 universities from other Tempus partner countries and EU member states (European Commission 2011:107). According to the Tempus office in Uzbekistan, standards of education could be improved through assessment and accreditation structures as well as capacity building of staff. The introduction of the internet, modern teaching methodologies, new materials as well as the upgrading of skills of teachers should equally foster such developments. Again, this says little about the adoption of European standards or norms. It can thus be stated that the EU has had minor success in its policy in Uzbekistan due to the fact that comparatively little seems to have been achieved beyond window dressing. Nevertheless, there has been an impact as superficial changes can be noted which is commendable given the local political context.

The table below sheds light on the project applications (Tempus IV) of the three countries (Tiberi, *A Personal Communication* 04.12. 2012). In absolute terms, Kazakhstan submitted the most applications (356), while Uzbekistan (237) and Kyrgyzstan (235) almost tie. The data below however indicates that Kyrgyzstan is the most active in the application process, having submitted 42.7 applications per million inhabitants whereas in Kazakhstan it was 21.2 and 7.9 in Uzbekistan. This comparison is important as it helps to relativise the data in relation to population size. The Kyrgyz population thus also benefited the most, having 5 successful applications per every million inhabitants, compared to 2.5 in Kazakhstan and 1 in Uzbekistan. Yet, it is equally striking that the success rate relative to applications is similar in all three countries, ranging from 11.7% to 12.6% which suggests that the quality of applications hardly varies from one country to another. On the other hand, this could

solely indicate that an active effort has been made to spread out the number of successful applications evenly across the three countries.

Table 15: Tempus applications

| | Total applications | Applications per million inhabitants | Successful applications/population | % of applications successful/total application |
|-------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| KAZ | 356 | 356/ 16.8 = 21.2 | 42/ 16.8= 2.5 | 11,70% |
| KYRGZ | 235 | 235/5.5= 42.7 | 28/5.5= 5 | 11,90% |
| UZB | 237 | 237/30= 7.9 | 30/30= 1 | 12,60% |

Source: Tiberi, A *Personal Communication* 04.12. 2012).

Evaluation of EU Policy

As education is not deemed a sensitive sector, it has been one of the most successful project areas in the field of EU-Central Asian relations. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have generally not been reluctant to take part in education projects and reform has been implemented. In fact, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have been deemed “leaders for emulation, policy learning or even competitive copying” in Central Asia (Jones 2010:9), which has boosted educational transformation. On a bilateral level this is also fostered by linguistic similarities, relatively positive government ties and visa free travel possibilities. Be that as it may, rivalries between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan over regional leadership as well as spats between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan combined with Turkmenistan’s neutrality, make higher education cooperation at the regional level more problematic.

There are further shortcomings to the policy. Firstly, states which are very active in the Central Asian education sector - such as Russia and Turkey - have not been involved in the implementation of the EU’s strategy (Melvin, Boonstra 2008:3). Secondly, the projects have been deemed out of line with the principal objective of the Central Asia Strategy - ensuring stability - as they are rather “export-driven, that is, based on what the EU would like to present, rather than based on assessment of needs in Central Asia”(Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:126). Critics also maintain that the Initiative fails to mitigate the difficulties the rural poor face and instead principally exports the Bologna Process and cushions the elite. Thirdly, projects fail to address a number of burning issues such as low salaries, corruption and faculty development

(Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:127). The EU has therefore been criticised for lacking a plan or a strategy in its education policy as well as for only engaging a limited number of actors and universities (Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:118).

Some differences can also be noted in terms of how the EU treats its partners. While projects in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan focus on the reform of the higher education system with the aim of grooming it for the Bologna Process, more pragmatic spheres of cooperation were preferred with Uzbekistan such as the field of agriculture (Merrill, Dukenbaev 2011:118). Notwithstanding, this initiative has been considered a success in light of the number of projects carried out even if Central Asian universities tended to be “passive partners” and projects were generally managed by their European counterparts (Axyonova 2013). For the future, a more dynamic role should be allocated to Central Asian universities in order to raise levels of ownership and make cooperation more balanced.

8.4. Human Rights Norms

EU Human Rights Policy

As human rights, good governance and democratisation are considered core values of the EU, these are actively promoted in Central Asia and around the world. In fact, in 1999, the European Commission declared that the promotion of democracy and human rights would be both an objective and condition for development assistance. Ensuing documents and declarations have further reinforced the weight of these elements in European Union foreign policy. This stance is also reflected in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) signed with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan which note that “respect for democracy, principles of international law and human rights as well as the principles of a market economy underpin the internal and external policies of the Parties and constitute an essential element of partnership of this Agreement” (European Union).

The EU has sought to foster these norms by financing projects in the countries in question and by engaging in dialogue. Not only has the EU met national ministers and thus tried to strengthen ties, it has also embraced civil society through its NSA-

LA, IBPP, DCI, IfS and EIDHR programmes. In this regard, the EU has shown itself more lenient with Central Asia, largely refraining from using conditionality to coerce its partners into human rights norm adoption. Instead, dialogue and grassroots activities, combined with attempts to change institutional power distribution systems have been key to the EU's human rights and democratisation policy. These instruments will now be presented in turn as to provide the reader with a clear overview of the tools at the EU's disposal.

Human Rights Dialogues (HRD)

Human rights dialogues are held with over 30 non-EU countries around the globe and in the case of Central Asia, they have been organised with every single country in the region. Dialogues are moulded in accordance with the EU Guidelines on human rights dialogues although the topics to be discussed are tailor-made and adapted to the domestic context. Human rights dialogues mainly serve the aim of discussing pressing issues in the field of human rights and finding out about the specific needs of each country in order to gather ideas for potential projects to be funded via the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

The following themes tend to be integrated into all dialogues regardless of the location (European Union External Action 2014):

- The signing, ratification and implementation of international human rights instruments,
- Cooperation with international human rights procedures and mechanisms,
- combating torture as well as eliminating all forms of discrimination,
- Rights of children and women,
- Freedom of expression
- The role of civil society.

Usually human rights dialogues involve senior officials on both sides, specifically those dealing with human rights in a direct (ombudsmen) or indirect (prison authorities) form. It is also worth noting that the location of the dialogue alternates between the partner country and Brussels which symbolises the equality between both partners. The EU equally tries to engage civil society in these dialogues through civil society seminars, frequently meeting them beforehand to collect

recommendations for topics to be addressed. This is an opportunity for local civil society to make its voice heard and raise its concerns at the intergovernmental level. International NGOs are consulted in Brussels prior to the dialogue and they are debriefed after to make them aware of the action being taken. Such an approach serves the purpose of harnessing the strength of all parties involved, be they in Central Asia or the EU, and bringing about tangible improvements.

European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

Launched in 2006, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) replaced and built upon the European Initiative (2000-2006). More specifically, this instrument tends to be employed to firstly, counter torture, xenophobia, ethnic discrimination, secondly, promote human rights and finally, endorse democratic processes. The main beneficiaries are NGOs although individuals can also receive support as well as intergovernmental organisations. All in all, it had a total budget of € 1.104 million for 2007-2013 which was distributed through calls for proposals. Projects tend to be managed by the EU delegation in the recipient country but can also fall into hands of the Commission in Brussels if they are of a large-scale nature and beyond the country delegation's capacity.

Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)

The main purpose of DCI is to foster economic, political and social progress in developing countries. Programmes are either of a geographical (bilateral) or thematic nature while their key targets are civil society organisations and local authorities. DCI has typically been reserved for those countries where the EU hopes to have the greatest impact, thereby rewarding regional "goodies" and punishing the "baddies" by withholding aid. Nevertheless, some change can be noted in this regard as calculations are increasingly based on the GDP and population size of countries (Interview #38). It is worth noting that DCI also tends to be concentrated in a limited number of sectors, reflecting the principle of aid effectiveness. In consequence, the partner country selects the sectors to be prioritised and the EU in turn makes funding available accordingly. This reflects the decision to confer recipient countries greater ownership and stimulate commitment to projects. It also turns national governments

into agenda-setters instead of having a donor-driven agenda, which may be applied with less zeal by local implementers.

Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development (NSA-LA)

This instrument mainly targets non-state actors who seek to develop countries and regions, spread awareness about development and encourage coordination between civil society and local bodies (Europa 2007). The advantage of this instrument is that it grants authorities greater autonomy from the state and allows them to utilise their local expert knowledge. Its main objective is to spawn good governance and human rights as well as eliminating poverty in countries where the domestic context is particularly unfavourable (Europa 2007). It caters for a gamut of sectors including health, education and rural development.

Institution Building and Partnership Programme (IBPP)

This instrument seeks to improve the living standards of vulnerable groups in Uzbekistan while principally focusing on enhancing the capacity of civil society organisations and local authorities. IBPP simultaneously serves to encourage grass-root initiatives, and strengthen ties between local communities and local authorities (DEVEX). At the same time, human resources and organisational development are also key objectives which the instrument pursues (DEVEX). In reality, it is a softer version of EIDHR which has been adapted to the Uzbek context, but nonetheless, has been created to protect human rights.

Instrument for Stability (IfS)

This instrument was launched in 2007 in an attempt to foster conflict prevention, crisis management and peace building (European Union External Action). Possible actions to be financed with this instrument relate to mediation, confidence building, interim administrations, the rule of law, transitional justice and the role of natural resources in conflict (European Union External Action). These activities are usually financed during times of crisis when there is great urgency to unlock funds swiftly. Only Kyrgyzstan was entitled to aid under the IfS and thus this instrument will not be

analysed in more detail due to the fact its link with human rights is too tenuous and there is no equivalent in the other countries.

8.5. Human Rights in Central Asia

Kazakhstan

The human rights situation in Kazakhstan is characterised by a lack of participation in public life which manifests itself through limited freedom of press, assembly, speech, religion and association (European Parliament 2014:9). In addition, the judiciary is under state control and biased, whereas corruption is pervasive and basic infringements on citizens' privacy rights are commonplace (European Parliament 2014:9). Although Kazakhstan committed to improving its human rights record during the OSCE chairmanship, no real changes could be noted. In fact, the President - Nursultan Nazarbaev - continues to enjoy absolute control over all organs of power (European Parliament 2014:9). Those who have attempted to undermine his position of pre-eminence have frequently been persecuted and harassed. As the government sees civil society as a threat, it has increasingly sought to co-opt independent organisations and has tried to dictate their agendas (Hoffmann 2010:91).

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan has typically been seen as the most open Central Asian republic, boasting the freest media in the region and the most active civil society. However, it is also the most unstable of the 5 countries, having experienced two revolutions in 2005 and 2010, while freedom has ebbed and flowed depending on the political leader in power. Human rights abuses are principally linked to the ethnic conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the south in connection with the bloodshed of 2010 (European Parliament 2014:10). NGO activists have equally not been immune to pressure although this has not taken the same proportions as in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, the beating of journalists is not unheard of and political figures have not shied away from highlighting the potential danger that NGOs present to national security (Radio Free Europe 2014a).

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan ranks as one of the most closed and repressive regimes on earth, having eliminated almost all civil society and political opposition. Repression peaked after the Andijan massacre which took place in 2005 and resulted in the death of hundreds of civilians. Basic rights are violated in the country - there is no freedom of speech or assembly and religious minorities are frequently harassed. Moreover, children's rights are disrespected as minors are forced to pick cotton in order to meet Uzbekistan's cotton export commitments. The legal system is corrupt and provides no protection, whereas security officials tend to act with complete impunity regardless of the abuses they carry out. Moreover, the incumbent has not groomed a successor. While social conflict has largely taken a religious taint, hostility between different ethnic groups could also be a source of potential tension.

8.6. Evaluation of Human Rights Projects

Human rights dialogues in Central Asia

The EU began conducting human rights dialogues in 2007 and every country has taken part in these even if they have not been held with the same frequency. The dialogues started in Uzbekistan in 2007 and followed in the four other countries in 2008 (Axyonova 2011:2). To date, a total of four rounds have been organised in Kyrgyzstan; five in Kazakhstan and seven in Uzbekistan (European Parliament 2014:13). The EU has also organised civil society seminars in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Nonetheless, these have been discontinued in Uzbekistan due to the unpropitious climate for open dialogue with genuine civil society.

The agenda of the human rights dialogues tend to cover eight to ten issues related to human rights (European Parliament 2014: 13). They can be of a general nature or relate to specific cases of concern. When comparing the countries of Central Asia, topics do not vary greatly due to the fact that guidelines define the scope of the discussion (Interview # 31). However, the focus has frequently fallen on international cooperation and political rights. There are also some differences in terms of the seniority/rank of attendees which could be indicative of the importance accorded to

the event. From the EU side, either Heads of Unit tend to attend the meetings or senior officials from the EEAS. On the partner side, it is usually a high level official such as the deputy Minister of Justice, Foreign or Internal Affairs – alternatively, in the case of Kazakhstan it is the Deputy Prosecutor General.

Substantial differences have been noted with regard to the openness of the dialogue. The Kyrgyz have been deemed the most willing to cooperate, listening to criticism and seeking to find solutions to rectify human rights violations. With this counterpart, engagement has been deemed “a real dialogue” (Interview #42) as the EU’s interlocutors are realistic and acknowledge that they have difficulties with implementation due to financial limitations (Interview #43). Civil society seminars also take place without much difficulty and have borne some fruit in terms of legislative change even if implementation remains wanting. For instance, a civil society seminar dedicated to the topic of torture was convened in Kyrgyzstan in 2012 and resulted in the adoption of a relevant law, the opening of the National Centre for the Prevention of Torture and a Coordination Council for the Prevention of Torture (European Parliament 2014:14).

This contrasts greatly with Uzbekistan where only one civil society dialogue was organised in 2008 and the participants were “traumatised” due to a clash between government organised non-governmental organization (GONGO) and international NGOs (Interview #42). The topic of the civil society seminar was freedom of the media which was later evaluated as too sensitive for the Uzbek context (Interview #42). With regard to the human rights dialogues, these are usually characterised by a tense atmosphere and defensiveness on the Uzbek part. Typically, Uzbekistan also raises human-rights related issues in EU countries as the Uzbek delegation demands it be a dialogue among equals (Axyonova 2011:2). Still, as the government has sent high level delegations and put forward proposals for cooperation, EU officials have had the impression that the exercise has been taken seriously (Interview #43). Some positive developments have also been noted in that the International Labour Organisation conventions on child labour were adopted and the Uzbeks seem to be more favourably inclined towards the EU than before (Interview #43). Nevertheless, as no independent monitoring was allowed in this case, it is questionable whether the

government has truly changed its practices relating to forced cotton picking (Boonstra, Tsertsvadze 2014:2).

In comparison to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan has been deemed less engaged, giving the impression that its participation is more about box ticking than real dialogue (Interview #43). Still, it has been noted that Kazakh officials are generally well prepared and discuss relevant issues (Interview #43). Nevertheless, the EU is careful in the selection of its topics, having focused on disabled people and gender in 2011 (European Parliament 2014:15). This was despite the fact that there was an oil workers' strike spiralling out of control at the same time which would have deadly consequences. In the following year, judicial reform was discussed but no government officials attended, highlighting Kazakh detachment from the event and their aloofness (European Parliament 2014:15).

It is unsurprising that the reaction of civil society to the EU's dialogue with Central Asian governments has been mixed. In general, international NGOs have been very critical of human rights dialogues, even if they have been deemed a useful exercise (Interview #42). On the whole, NGOs expect the EU to be stricter and raise the bar in terms of what is deemed progress. In extreme cases, they advocate for their suspension stating that HRD legitimise authoritarian governments. In other cases, they demand the setting of benchmarks even if the EU is seen as having insufficient leverage over the states in question to impose any form of conditionality (Axyonova 2011:4).

It appears more realistic to view HRD as a tool for "information exchange and confidence building with the final aim of the human rights norm diffusion" (Axyonova 2011:4). Regrettably, Kyrgyzstan is the only country where the dialogues have had some visible impact on the human rights situation in the country thanks to the law adopted on torture (European Parliament 2014:14). However, the EU was not the sole actor to advocate for this law and therefore not the only norm promoter as this issue had been discussed in UN fora previously (European Parliament 2014:14). Moreover, adoption does not always result in implementation in the Central Asian context: while the Kyrgyz government is open to reform, change often fails to take place at the grass-root level (European Parliament 2014:15). For instance, torture

remains commonplace in the country despite the introduction of the abovementioned mechanism.

In other countries, the impact has been deemed extremely limited and rather an exercise in box ticking, permitting for human rights to be separated from more important issues such as energy and trade (European Parliament 2014:15). Furthermore, while the EU may be applying a “quiet diplomacy” approach, it risks giving the impression that it is not committed to safeguarding human rights in the region. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Central Asian governments are on the whole loath to discussing problems openly and would refuse to continue a dialogue with the EU if it were to become too pushy. It can thus be argued that such a form of interaction is a necessary evil to establish ties with those figures which enjoy enough influence to foster change. Some positive trends can be noted in that direction: bridges have been built between both sides by having Russian speaking EU representatives at the meetings while repeated gatherings have also resulted in an easing of interaction (Interview #42). Regrettably, the EU is cutting funds for dialogues due to the financial crisis and thus only three civil society seminars will most likely take place in Central Asia in 2015 which will inevitably undermine previous efforts (Interview #42).

EIDHR

Table 16: EIDHR allocations (2008-2011)

| | EIDHR allocations (2008-2011) |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Kazakhstan | 2.400.000 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 2.700.000 |
| Uzbekistan | not active |

Source: Axyonova 2012

As depicted above, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have been the main recipients of EIDHR as Uzbekistan received no aid in the years under study. Still, it was involved in regional projects financed by EIDHR and may benefit from EIDHR from 2014 onwards (Interview #38). Kyrgyzstan was granted the largest allocation of the three due to the relatively favourable climate in place which allows for ample interaction

with civil society. It is interesting to note that different spheres were prioritised in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In the Kazakh case, government transparency and accountability were targeted for EIDHR funding as well as labour rights, mass media and human rights awareness and monitoring (European Parliament 2014:26). In fact, 52% of funds went for the latter field, whereas 19% was allocated for vulnerable groups and 13% for transparency. The remaining funds were split for labour rights (12%) and mass media (4%) (European Parliament 2014:27). In Kyrgyzstan, funds were spread more broadly covering minorities (12%), torture prevention (21%), gender equality (9%), vulnerable groups (10%) disability (10%), children's rights (13%) and other issues (25%) (European Parliament 2014:27). This suggests that there were fewer strategic priorities compared to Kazakhstan perhaps because Kyrgyzstan is in a weaker position regarding its ability to finance similar projects.

As the EU does not provide a list of its projects and their outcomes, it is very difficult to evaluate them independently. It can thus be stated that while EIDHR projects are implemented, their concrete impact cannot be traced. This lack of transparency not only reduces EU visibility but also prevents others from learning from the EU's successes and mistakes. Creating a database with relevant information would help alleviate this shortcoming and also circumvent the duplication of efforts. Moreover, monitoring and evaluation reports should be published online in order to enable scholars to better grasp the difficulties encountered on the ground and to tailor their recommendations accordingly. It would also be useful if consultancies made greater efforts to disseminate information regarding their projects and their outcomes.

DCI

The EU has been channelling aid into Central Asia through the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programme since the countries' independence. In 2007, this was replaced by the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) which aims to reduce poverty, promote governance and assist in post-conflict contexts (Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013:6). For the periods of 2007-2010 and 2011-2013, 314 million euros and 321 million euros were allocated to Central Asia respectively (Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013:6). The aid delivery methods

adopted by the EU can be split into sector budget support, technical assistance and civil society/non-state actor assistance (Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013:6).

The tables below depict the funds allocated to each sector in the region for regional cooperation projects from 2007-2013, reaching a total of 206.2 million under the DCI instrument. As illustrated below, the education sector benefitted most from DCI regional aid followed by energy in the years 2007-2010. Transport, environment and border management were not far behind however. Subsequently, in 2011-2013, sustainable regional development was granted a more prominent position, standing on an equal footing to education.

Table 17: Regional cooperation funds 2007-2010

| Sector | Millions of euros |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Education | 25 |
| Energy | 22 |
| Transport | 15 |
| Environment | 16,2 |
| Border Management | 16 |
| Total | 94,2 |

Source: Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013

Table 18: Regional cooperation 2011-2013

| Sector | Millions of euros |
|--|--------------------------|
| Sustainable Regional Development | 50 |
| Education, Science and People-to-People Activities | 45 |
| Rule of Law, Border Management, & Organised Crime. | 10 |
| Nuclear Safety | 7 |
| Total | 112 |

Source: Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013

The table below sheds light on the country allocations for the DCI at the national level. It is evident that of the 3 countries studied, Kyrgyzstan receives the most aid through DCI, given the high poverty rates in the country. However, it is striking that Kazakhstan's allocation was relatively high compared to

Uzbekistan's in spite of its economic wealth and small population. This is a direct consequence of the government's resistance to international cooperation as Uzbekistan is in far greater need of assistance but more reticent to cooperate.

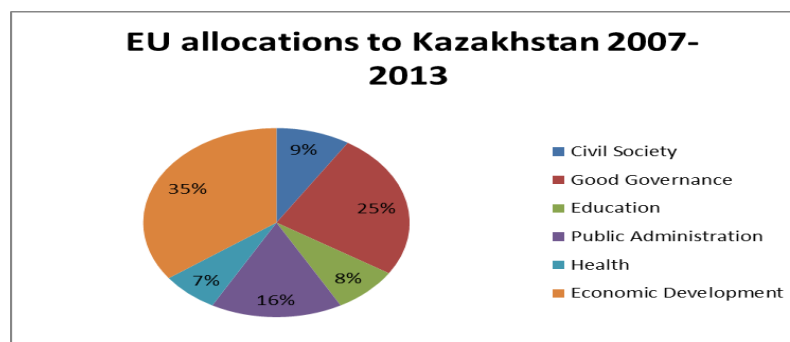
Table 19: Comparison country allocations 2007-2012

| Programme | Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| DCI | 56.70 million | 106.15 million | 38.6 million |

Source: Tsertsvadze, Boonstra (2013)

In Kazakhstan, the focus in the above-mentioned period lay on good governance and economic development as well as public administration reform. In contrast, health, education and civil society were neglected in terms of financing. For that period, Kazakh government agencies received 91% of funds whereas 9% were channelled to civil society organisations in the form of grants (Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013:8). This indicates that the government is the EU's main interlocutor and that Brussels may have some reservations about engaging with civil society without the government's blessing.

Figure 3: EU allocations to Kazakhstan



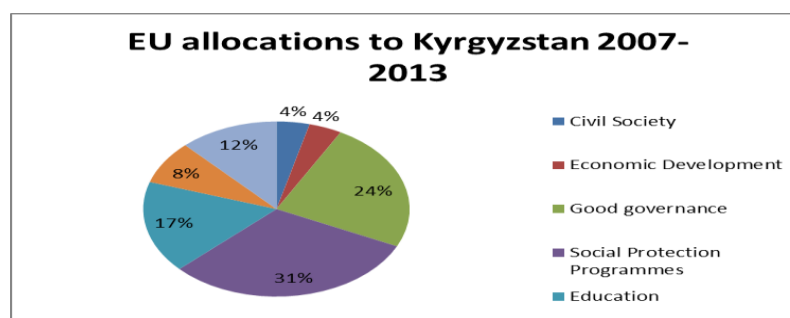
Source: based on Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013

An example of a DCI project actively seeking to promote EU norms is the support for judicial reform project which was allocated 12 million in order to foster an independent judiciary and allow the country to integrate fully into the global economy (European Parliament 2014: 22) It sought to do this by backing the implementation of the national policy on the humanisation of the justice system and facilitating approximation towards European standards. Judging by the frequency of

continuing human rights abuses in the justice system, there is reason to suspect that this project largely failed to meet its objectives.

In Kyrgyzstan, the focus lay on good governance and social protection. It is unsurprising that the latter sector was selected as Kyrgyzstan struggles to finance its own social programmes but has large segments of its population living below the poverty line. As stated above, Kyrgyzstan was the largest beneficiary of DCI aid, receiving 146.45 million of which 61 million was disbursed in the form of budget support (Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013:9). Transferring funds directly to the coffers of the government has been heavily criticised by some, given the high corruption rates in the country and the lack of accountability in terms of tracking. On the other hand, it does increase ownership and pushes the government to take responsibility.

Figure 4: EU allocations to Kyrgyzstan



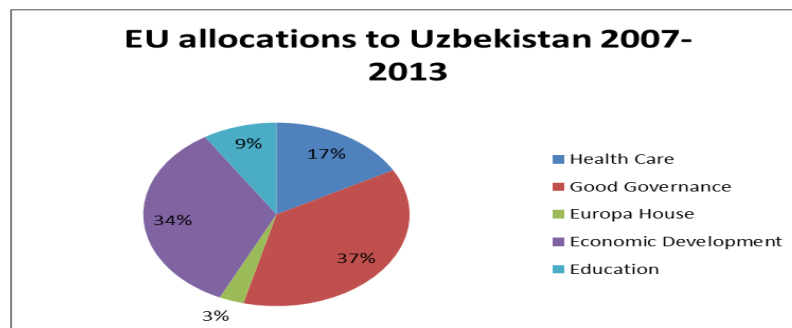
Source: based on Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013

DCI funds were used to undertake prison reform in Kyrgyzstan, with a total of 2.5 million being allocated for this end. The aim of the project was to upgrade the institutional capacity of the prison administration and to maintain healthier living environments inside prisons. As will be discussed in the section on CADAP, such projects are very much needed given that prison conditions continue to be sub-par in Kyrgyzstan. Unfortunately, tangible improvement depends on long-term commitment coming from inside the country (European Parliament 2014:23).

In Uzbekistan, the emphasis lay on good governance and economic development (European Parliament 2014: 24). When looking at the case of Uzbekistan, it becomes evident that the political climate in the country has had an influence on allocations as

these are the lowest of the three countries despite having the largest population in the region. This is likely to stem from the fact that the EU saw little hope for its projects and thus decided to limit its cooperation with Uzbekistan.

Figure 5: EU allocations to Uzbekistan



Source: based on Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013

Of the total 38.6 million disbursed, 10 million was allocated for criminal justice reform with the aim of strengthening the separation of powers, adapting legislation to international standards, fostering judicial independence and providing legal advice to the public (European Parliament 2014:25) In an interview with an international expert, this project was subjected to scathing criticism due to the Uzbek refusal to cooperate meaningfully and to limit all reform to window dressing (Interview #24).

Although good governance projects are carried out in all countries, once one digs deeper it becomes apparent that many projects centre around the provision of equipment and training rather than reform. It is thus questionable in how far this instrument has served the purposes of human rights promotion. Nevertheless, it has targeted underfinanced areas such as education and health which is laudable as it benefits society as a whole, thereby laying the foundations for greater equity inside of countries.

NSA-LA

Table 20: NSA-LA allocations 200-2011

| | NSA-LA allocations 2000-2011 |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Kazakhstan | 2.300.000 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 1.950.000 |
| Uzbekistan | not active |

Source: based on Axyonova 2012

Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan took part in the Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development programme and implemented projects related to development rather than human rights. In Kazakhstan, this instrument funded capacity building for civil society organisations, assistance for individuals with HIV or disabilities and poverty reduction (European Parliament 2014:28). In Kyrgyzstan in contrast, farmers were assisted through capacity building measures, as well as civil society and women support initiatives (European Parliament 2014:28). Differences in allocations between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in this context can be accounted for by looking at the institutional capacity of both actors which varies substantially due to the relative poverty of Kyrgyzstan. These projects are likely to have benefitted those directly targeted by the measures but most probably did not allow for great change far beyond the reach of the recipient.

IBPP

The projects implemented in Uzbekistan to date have largely focused on capacity building through small-scale projects including grants from 100,000 euros to 200,000 euros (Axyonova 2012:2). A total of 2,200,000 was made available from 2008 to 2011 under this instrument (Axyonova 2012:2) Projects have generally been deemed a success as GONGOs are very efficient and face few difficulties in the implementation process (Interview #38). However, as all projects need to be approved by the government, they tend to be apolitical and in line with the official government policy. This means that sensitive areas are frequently neglected and cast aside. For instance, migration and malnutrition have not been acknowledged as problematic and the government has not approved such projects (Interview #38). In consequence, a local migration project under IBPP failed and the partner organisation was closed down.

Still, as Uzbekistan is concerned with meeting basic social needs, cooperation projects can be nurtured in government endorsed domains such as literacy and rural development. The Uzbeks have also been deemed very willing to cooperate in fields permitting the transfer of technology and equipment (Interview #38). However, it

goes without saying that such endeavours do little in terms of norm promotion. It seems that the EU has had to balance between Uzbek demands and Brussels-based expectations. The fact that a pro-government NGO headed by the President's daughter received an IBPP grant of 15500 euros in 2008 and another grant for 3.7 million euros in 2011 was heavily criticised and seen as an indicator of the EU's desperation over dispensing grants, regardless of who the recipient was (Axyonova 2012:3). This highlights the careful balancing act required by the EU and the challenges of working with authoritarian governments.

Evaluation of EU Policy

Given the governance styles of the leaders of the Central Asian states, it is unsurprising that norm promotion in the field of human rights and democracy promotion has been particularly demanding. Onlookers have concluded that "probably being pessimistic in expecting real political reforms in Central Asian countries...they resort to the concept of "Development" that has been adopted in respect to the Third World and presumes a long-term approach focused on politically "neutral" issues like economic development, poverty alleviation, conflict prevention and avoiding any attempts to challenge the political regimes" (Ilkhamov 2005:310). This has clearly been the case in Uzbekistan and to a certain extent in Kazakhstan. In the Kyrgyz case, shortcomings are likely to flow from lack of capacity rather than authoritarianism.

EU effectiveness could be enhanced through a simplification of its instruments, namely an easing of the grant application process. Frequently these are not provided in Russian and are overwhelming for small NGOs with limited capacity. Furthermore as EIDHR and NSA/LA require a 10% contribution of the total project costs, only large and chiefly international NGOs can accumulate such sums (Axyonova 2012:3). Making mini grants available which do not require any self-financing could be a solution to this problem and make EU aid more accessible. This is of great importance as NGOs have few sources of funding in hostile environments and rely on external support to stay afloat. Moreover, they often meet basic social needs

which governments have failed to cater for and thus serve the wellbeing of the population as a whole.

Greater coordination at Brussels level would also magnify the impact of EU action. For instance, there is no coordination between EIDHR projects and human rights dialogue priorities even though this would be a way of reinforcing the EU's attempts at tackling the most burning issues in each country (Axyonova 2012:3). This highlights the division between the EEAS and DEVCO which results in insufficient coordination of policy pursuits (Axyonova 2012:3). A simple coordination mechanism between Delegations, the Commission and the EEAS could rectify this problem and lead to greater coherence. Although this will not eliminate the problems posed by working in authoritarian contexts, it will enhance the efficacy of the EU's already limited funds to a region in dire need of reform.

8.7 Security Norms

EU Security Policy

The EU strives to see stable countries on its borders and to be spared the effects of transnational threats such as terrorism and drug trafficking. In consequence, it has approved projects in border management, thereby aiming to secure its frontiers as well as those of its neighbours. Moreover, it has sought to address structural problems within societies in order to reduce the demand for narcotics. Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus have been part of the EUBAM/BUMAD project, the South Caucasus countries have enjoyed support via the SCIBM/ SCAD programme and Afghanistan has been targeted through BOMNAF. Central Asia in turn has been involved in the Border Management Programme for Central Asia (BOMCA) and Central Asian Drug Action Programme (CADAP). The latter initiatives overlap as both are concerned with reducing the presence of drugs on the Central Asia market. However, BOMCA focuses on supply reduction whereas CADAP strives to foster demand reduction of drugs. They can therefore be deemed complementary measures which pursue similar ends. CADAP will now be analysed in greater detail as this has been selected as the final case study for this Ph.D. research undertaking.

CADAP

CADAP is a long-running project - to date, 5 phases have been completed, the 6th phase officially beginning in 2014 (European Commission c).²⁵ CADAP 5 enjoyed substantial member state assistance and was complementary to the BOMCA project, as well as the Prison reform project in Kyrgyzstan, the Rule of Law project in Uzbekistan and the regional Rule of Law project for Central Asia (CADAP 2010:29). For phase 5, 4.9 million euros was allocated via DCI regional funding (CADAP Central Asia Drug Action Programme Brochure 2011). It is worth noting that besides the EU, actors such as the US, Japan, Russia and Turkey provide technical assistance in the domain concerned. From the EU side, the member states Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic and the UK are the most active in the drug-related sphere (Action Fiche for Central Asia:3). CADAP is equally considered complimentary to a number of drug demand reduction endeavours, chiefly those of UNODC, UNAIDS, UNDP, Global Fund, DfID and USAID (Action Fiche for Central Asia: 4).

The programme incorporates the main principles of the EU Drug Strategy (2007-2012) and EU Central Asia Drug Action Plan (2009-2013), with the objective of “preventing and reducing drug use, dependence, and drug-related harms to health and society” (European Commission 2013:1). In this context, the EU attempts to “transfer applicable EU best practices and assist adoption of international standards and norms” (Hristov 2013). Part of this includes endorsing initiatives which aim to scale up opioid substitution therapy, first introduced to the region in 2002. In addition, another objective is to permit prisoners to overcome their drug addictions while serving their terms. Concomitantly, the EU seeks to spread awareness about the fact that drug addicts should be seen as patients rather than criminals, contrary to Soviet perceptions.

In consequence, the initiative not only relates to security but also to public health, which has suffered severe neglect since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Moreover, this endeavour is intertwined with social factors that cannot be ignored in the

²⁵ It is worth noting that the start of the programme has been delayed to 2015.

implementation process. The GIZ CADAP Project Leader Dr Ingo Ilja Michels illustrates the multi-faceted nature of the field in the following quote:

“Drug addiction is an extremely serious disease. Drug addicts not only suffer from the physical pain of their disease, but also from stigmatisation and discrimination. Drug addicts are threatened by other infectious diseases, such as HIV, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis. Thus drug prevention, treatment and harm reduction activities necessarily must go hand in hand” (Central Asia Drug Action Programme 2011)

CADAP attempts to reflect the complexity of the issue by adopting a four-pronged approach to drug demand reduction. The table below depicts the main components (OCAN, DAMOS, TREAT and MEDISSA), the responsible body under CADAP 5 (2010-2013), as well as the respective objective to be achieved (European Commission c):

Table 21: CADAP components

| Component | Responsible body | Objective |
|-----------|--|---|
| OCAN | GIZ | Project management, partner coordination as well as project monitoring and implementation. |
| DAMOS | ResAd (Czech Republic) | Develop a better understanding of the drug trafficking, drug use, misuse and abuse in the Central Asian region, as well as its consequences. |
| TREAT | The Centre for Interdisciplinary Addiction Research (ZIS) at the University of Hamburg | Introduction of modern drug addiction treatment methods within the public health system and the prison system. Promotion of comprehensive and integrated treatment methods. |
| MEDISSA | The National Bureau for Drug Prevention KBPN (Poland) | Prevention of potential new drug users and reduction of the number of current drug addicts |

Source: European Commission c

It is important to note that from 2014 onwards, these components will be amended slightly. In CADAP 6 (2014-2017) the main implementers will be the Federal Ministry of Health (DE), Trimbos Institute (NL), Frankfurt University (DE), KBPN (PL) and ResAd (Cz). The emphasis will also move away from “preventing and reducing dependence and drug related harms to health and society” to strengthening “the capacity in the five Central Asian countries to fight the drug phenomenon in the region in a comprehensive, integrative, sustainable manner” (Hristov 2013). However, the start of the implementation of this phase could not be tracked as

CADAP 6 was only scheduled to begin in 2015 following numerous difficulties associated with the project (Interview #38).

8.8 Drug use in Central Asia

Central Asia cannot escape the pressures of Afghan drug flows as Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan directly border on Afghanistan, which is currently the greatest producer of illicit drugs in the world. Moreover, it is on the main drug route (heroin and opium) from Afghanistan to Europe and is greatly exposed to collateral criminality and addiction. Drug consumption has risen steadily in Central Asia since the 1990s due to rising poverty rates. Furthermore, as the use of opium has historically been tolerated by society as an alternative to medicine, it remains embedded in societal practices nowadays.

Burgeoning production in Afghanistan combined with greater flows have facilitated access to drugs in the countries under study. The consequence has been a dramatic rise in HIV rates and other infections linked to the use of syringes - in fact, Central Asia is the only region in the world where HIV rates are still rising (Parsons, Burrows, Bolotbaeva 2014:1). On the other hand, Central Asia currently lacks effective drug prevention measures as well as treatment methods for drug addicts (Kubisch 2012:7). Contrasting political attitudes at the national level also results in divergent treatment approaches, especially with regard to Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) which remains controversial.

The withdrawal of ISAF forces from Afghanistan in 2014 could lead to a further aggravation of the current drug consumption trend in the region. Moreover, as drug use is associated with terrorism and organised crime, greater instability is to be expected in the future. For drug control to be rendered more effective, politicians and law enforcement bodies, who are often in cahoots with drug traffickers, would have to be replaced or reprimanded. In addition, a change in mentality would be needed, as there is still great resistance to helping addicts overcome their illness.

The tables below portray a) the number of registered and estimated addicts in each Central Asian country and b) the number of injecting addicts and HIV infection rates. The data reveals that the number of drug users is higher in Kazakhstan than in the

other Central Asian states and HIV is also more widespread there. Nevertheless, in light of the fact that the Kyrgyz state does not have the financial means to deal with drug demand reduction, there is equally great reason for concern in this country. In both cases, injection rates and HIV infection rates are worrisome and pose a serious public health concern.

Table 22: Registered and estimated drug users

| Country | Registered | Estimated |
|------------|------------|-----------|
| Kazakhstan | 34000 | 120000 |
| Kyrgyzstan | No data | 26000 |
| Uzbekistan | 21000 | 80000 |

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011

Table 23: Injecting drug users and HIV infection rates

| Country | Number of registered addicts who are injecting | HIV infection and drug dependency |
|------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Kazakhstan | 91,70% | 67,90% |
| Kyrgyzstan | 96,10% | 62,90% |
| Uzbekistan | 64,00% | 41,10% |

Source: Kubisch 2012

It is a well-known fact that the health systems of the former USSR suffered substantially after the collapse of the Soviet Union which resulted in certain medical progress being lost due to patient neglect. Nowadays, one of the main problems is that facilities lack funds which results in insufficient therapeutic appliances and diagnostic devices inter alia (CADAP 2011b:4) Even in Kazakhstan - the richest of the three - a lack of equipment has been recorded as well as medical practitioner shortages in prisons (CADAP 2011/2012:2). Moreover, most drug users do not have access to treatment facilities and OST is solely made available to a limited number of individuals in those countries where it is currently legal (CADAP 2011c:1).

Kazakhstan

By virtue of its geographical location, Kazakhstan is situated on the major drug route from Afghanistan to Russia. Despite large drug flows traversing through the country, local officials solely manage to seize approximately 1% of the 70-75 tonnes of heroin crossing their terrain due to insufficient institutional capacities (US Department of State 2013a). As Kazakhstan has large porous borders and immense expanses of land

which are not patrolled, it provides a safe haven for drug smugglers who can move relatively freely throughout the Kazakh territory.

Kazakhstan not only serves as a transit country, but is equally a producer and a major consumer of narcotics (Drogenmachtweltschmerz.de Kasachstan). In 2012, registered drug addicts reached 41,614 according to official statistics, although unofficial numbers are approximately four times higher (US Department of State 2013a). In fact, Kazakhstan has seen the greatest hike in registered HIV cases in Central Asia (EU Central Asia Drug Action Plan: 6). The government has responded to the crisis by launching several prevention campaigns and extending methadone therapy to HIV-infected drug users reaching a total of 10 sites treating 276 patients (Boltaev et al 2013:1). Be that as it may, Kazakhstan was the last of the three countries under study to start the programme in 2008 despite its superior financial and technical capacities, while the breadth of the programme is limited (Parsons, Burrows, and Bolotbaeva 2014:2). On the other hand, it is striking that Kazakhstan provides financial backing for NGOs to carry out certain tasks in the field of health care provision. This shows that the government is increasingly willing to cooperate with civil society and involve it in the administration of services (Global Health Advocates 2014).

Kyrgyzstan

As Kyrgyzstan has a weak law enforcement system and there is rampant corruption, drugs cross its territory from Tajikistan unhindered. It is estimated that 75-80 tonnes of heroin and 18-20 metric tons of opium passed through the country in 2012 (Drogenmachtweltschmerz.de Kirgistan). Moreover, Kyrgyzstan has started to become a producer of marijuana and cannabis as well as being a consumer of heroin and cannabis. The smuggling of drugs is undertaken by drug cartels and organised crime groups who take advantage of the structural weaknesses of the country (Venysavsky 2011). In addition, these frequently enjoy the blessing of the ruling elite who benefit from the narcotics trade.

Kyrgyz data on drug seizures is unreliable as drug weighing and identification techniques are rudimentary. However, according to government statistics between

three and seven metric tonnes of drugs were confiscated in 2011(US Department of State 2013a). While local experts do not agree on the number of drug users, estimates lie between 20,000 and 50,000 with large proportions residing in the impoverished south of the country (US Department of State 2013a). The prospects of accessing high quality services are bleak: treatment, detoxification and methadone clinics are operational but suffer from a lack of staff and equipment (US Department of State 2013a). In spite of this, Kyrgyzstan was the first country to start OST in Central Asia and currently runs 20 OST institutions, hosting a total of 1000 opioid dependent patients. Nevertheless, methadone treatment continues to be controversial and there has been some resistance from parliamentarians who advocated the closure of institutions providing methadone (US Department of State 2013a).

Uzbekistan

The geographical location of Uzbekistan renders it an attractive transit country for drug smugglers as it shares a 136 km frontier with Afghanistan and equally borders on the rest of the Central Asian republics (US Department of State 2013b). Moreover, the Uzbek terrain is rugged and thus difficult for police to patrol, thereby facilitating such illegal practices. Furthermore, as it boasts more developed infrastructure than the neighbouring states and corruption is rampant, Uzbekistan has become a popular transit point along the Afghan drug route to Europe. The government has been very committed to reducing drug smuggling and the criminal activity associated therewith, boasting the highest seizure rates of narcotics in the region. Part of this success does flow from its robust police force, its sturdy customs, and omnipresent national security service, all of which lead regionally (US Department of State 2013b). Still, as corruption is widespread, smuggling continues to take place through the bribing of law enforcement personnel which allows for the security sector to be circumvented.

It must also be added that the data on drug use made available by the government is generally deemed unreliable. In 2011, 18,179 illegal drug users were recorded in the country (US Department of State 2013b). While the amount of drugs seized in Uzbekistan in 2012 was half of that seized the year before, there is no concrete evidence to attest to a fall in drug smuggling (Drogenmachtweltschmerz.de

Uzbekistan). Nevertheless, studies affirm that Uzbekistan is not a producer of drugs, unlike its neighbours Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Despite the worrying trend of increased drug use in the country, methadone programmes were suspended in 2009 after a three year running period during which 142 individuals received this form of treatment (CADAP 2010:37). This decision was driven by national resistance to the injecting of substitutes which is deemed unislamic. The government prefers to rely on more traditional means of intervention such as financing health projects at the mahalla level²⁶ (Human Rights Watch 2003).

8.9 Evaluation of the Project

Before beginning, it is worth highlighting that the assessment of CADAP proved challenging. This stems from the fact that limited information is available on the project and there have been few external publications, thereby necessitating follow up interviews in order to access missing data. Moreover, the technical nature of the project renders it difficult for a lay person to understand the technicalities behind the different CADAP components, especially TREAT. This was a major hurdle which had to be overcome before any analysis could take place.

In addition, while it is evident that Kyrgyzstan has been a willing partner, it is questionable to what extent Uzbekistan truly has been cooperative in the context of this project. This stems from the fact that project managers tend to avoid criticism lest partners discontinue the implementation of initiatives. Moreover, there has been no independent evaluation of the CADAP project and all reports were either written by the EU or consultancies. The EU continues to place great hurdles in the ways of those seeking to evaluate its policies, publishing insufficient information and failing to share project shortcomings.

In order to take stock of the outcome of CADAP 5, all components save OCAN will be analysed. As the latter was tasked with coordination and monitoring rather than concrete project activities related to EU security norms, it is not deemed indicative of norm promotion success. DAMOS, TREAT and MEDISSA will be scrutinised in each country in the section that follows, allowing for a regional comparison that will later be used to answer the sub-research question.

²⁶ A mahalla is a community governance unit in Uzbekistan.

The first component - DAMOS - was deemed a “breakthrough” as it paved the way for greater data sharing and transparency in the region (CADAP 2012d:5). A token of its success was a DAMOS conference in Turkmenistan in June 2012, which all 5 countries attended and used as a venue to share their national data (CADAP 2012b). This is an achievement given the fact that great distrust characterises the relationship between Central Asian leaders, frequently resulting in the failure of regional initiatives. Sharing relatively sensitive information on drug abuse is thus a major step in the direction of greater regional cooperation and marks greater trust.

In terms of data collection, the country overviews of Drug Situation/Country Situation Summaries were deemed to be of “a quality both in formal aspects and content that is unprecedented in the previous phases of the CADAP programme and considered comparable with certain of the EU candidate states” (CADAP 2011a:5). Uzbekistan in particular was lauded for its efforts (CADAP 2011/2012: 3), although this achievement is undermined by the fact that there is no means of checking the data externally and verifying its validity due to the closed nature of the country. While the quality of the Kazakh report was also noted, suspicions were articulated regarding the possible falsification of data in an attempt to save face (Interview #35). In contrast, Kyrgyzstan’s report was not of the same calibre as the other two, largely stemming from capacity limitations in the country (Interview #35).

With regard to TREAT, positive results have also been noted although future phases of CADAP will shed more light on the magnitude of these. During CADAP 5, the Atlantis model²⁷ was applied in women’s prisons in both Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (Action Fiche Central Asia: 10). The application of this model allowed for more humane treatment for drug addicts as a range of social and psychological services were provided to help them overcome their addiction. In its CADAP 6 plan, the EU aims to further reproduce the Atlantis structure in all partner countries and to establish more “clean zones”²⁸ in Central Asian prisons (Action Fiche Central

²⁷ Atlantis is based on a twelve-step approach which has the final aim of ending drug addiction. The programme lasts for 8 weeks and is based around 7 meetings per week. The Atlantis model originates from Poland and entails therapy and psychological training in prisons for drug addicts.

²⁸ Clean Zones refer to separate areas in prisons which offer better living conditions, educational and vocational training. Prisoners are entitled to live in clean zones provided that they agree to regular drug tests and commit to fighting their addiction.

Asia:8). Apart from the added comfort of sleeping in dorm of 12 and not 100, inmates are simultaneously sheltered from the pressure of drug dealers which also eases their recovery (Kubisch 2012:9). Unfortunately, prisoners are usually returned to their former surroundings upon having completed their treatment which raises the chances of relapsing.

Kyrgyzstan has been deemed the Central Asian leader regarding the level of drug treatment available for drug addicts in prisons (Kubisch 2012:9). The country boasts 8 units modelled on the Polish prison system where there are Drug Dependency Units staffed with therapists and social workers (Kubisch 2012:7). In Kazakhstan there are 2 centres of this kind, in Uzbekistan only one (Kubisch 2012:9). These numbers are set to multiply under CADAP 6 in accordance with the project's main targets for the 6th phase (CADAP Action Fiche:8).

TREAT has organised numerous trainings on methadone treatment and OST. Currently Kyrgyzstan is the only country to be running a methadone treatment programme in prison settings whereas in Kazakhstan there are pilot studies (Parsons, Burrows, Bolotbaeva 2014:2). OST has gained traction as it is significantly cheaper than non-prescribed psychoactive substances (CADAP 2013d:6). In those countries where it is permitted, the EU has actively contributed to the scaling up of OST through the carrying out of capacity building measures and improvement of methadone dispensing systems (CADAP 2012c:5). The main problem facing OST in the region is that its scope remains very limited, being accessible to solely a few addicts as funds are lacking and public opinion remains hostile.

Undeniably, there has been substantial resistance in the region with Russia being a major opponent of methadone, waging a so-called "misinformation campaign" (Parsons, Burrows, Bolotbaeva 2014:2). This has unsurprisingly had a negative impact on attitudes in Central Asia given the interconnectedness of the two. For example, Uzbekistan suspended OST in 2009 stating that it is "counter to the national interests and mentality of the Uzbek people" (Universalnewswires.com 2012). In Kazakhstan there has also been heavy criticism of the project as it was deemed a waste of tax payers' money and ineffective (Zakon 2011). In Kyrgyzstan

there was public outcry following the release of a film on OST which described methadone as a trap (Boltaev 2013:1).

These reactions ignore the fact that the World Health Organisation recorded a decline in crime rates and imprisonment as well as a decrease in needle and syringe sharing following OST (Subata et al 2011). Moreover, a study funded by Columbia University's International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Program (ICAP) revealed that OST was both financially viable and effective in the Central Asian context (Boltaev et al 2012). A change in attitude has been observed since, with greater enthusiasm being expressed by both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to adopt OST. While Uzbekistan especially had generally resisted - despite support from Uzbek medical bodies- , it did change its attitude over time showing greater willingness to cooperate after seeing the benefits of the project (Interview #35). According to an interviewee, this was largely linked to Kazakhstan's decision to switch to OST, which had been nonchalant for financial reasons (Interview #35).²⁹

With regard to MEDISSA, it must be noted that all countries implemented drug campaigns and thus this can be deemed a success. Yet, cultural differences became apparent in the implementation of this component and proved to be a substantial barrier. A CADAP team member reported substantial resistance among the police force to supplying clean syringes to drug addicts as it was interpreted as encouraging drug use and spreading AIDS (Interview #8). Instead, the police advocated imprisoning drug addicts as a means of reducing infections. This stance is directly opposed to the alteration in conception the EU is striving to achieve, where addicts are treated as patients rather than criminals. However, according to the local coordinator of Kyrgyzstan, there was a gradual change in attitude as the public health services were increasingly seen as an appropriate way of dealing with addiction by the police force (Interview #1).

The overall impact of CADAP is believed to be magnified over time as the EU will be included in the country strategy writing process of each Central Asian country, thus potentially influencing policy making at the national level (Interview #35). If

²⁹ It is believed that Kazakhstan was purchasing a similar product from Russia and wanted to uphold these commercial ties.

project coordinators manage to utilise this influence, great progress could be made in terms of pushing through OST in the region and enhancing regional cooperation. It also marks greater trust between the EU and its partners, which is of considerable significance for norm promotion activities. This gives reason for optimism regarding the prospects of CADAP 6 reaching its targets and being the most successful phase to date.

When comparing the three countries, it becomes clear that Kyrgyzstan has been the most active CADAP member even if it has lacked the capacity to implement all necessary measures and its report was of poor quality. Kazakhstan in contrast, has shown that it has the ability to implement the measures the way it sees fit - manipulating data if need be. Uzbekistan was rated similarly to Kazakhstan as it is selective and performs well when it is determined to do so. This comparison gives a taste for the variation in terms of norm promotion from one Central Asian countries to another.

Evaluation of the EU's policy

It is undeniable that project participants generally benefited from interaction on a regional level through conferences and trainings. Still, as there was a large staff turnover, the effectiveness of these measures was jeopardised (Interview #8). Nevertheless, study trips and conferences enable Central Asians to compare impressions and methods which fosters knowledge sharing. This is not to be underestimated as it is usually impossible for such exchanges to take place due to the hostile political relations present at intergovernmental level. On the other hand, local enthusiasm for participating in such events could also stem from the fact that travel is expensive and a luxury few can afford. Learning and innovation are consequently not guaranteed even if such exchanges provide a forum for interaction and transformation.

CADAP is unlikely to have a great long-term impact unless there is serious commitment in the target countries and policies are institutionalised. It is questionable to what extent all the governments of Central Asia are committed to the project given that they frequently pay lip service to proposals but stall during the

implementation process (Action Fiche Central Asia:2). Maintenance problems have also been noted, with governments struggling to provide necessary care to ensure the long-term usability of the equipment provided (Action Fiche Central Asia: 3). It is worth considering whether the EU's approach should be equipment-focused or rather look at capacity development.

As CADAP 6 is scheduled to start at the end of 2015, the fruits of the 6th phase remain to be seen. However, if the EU's objective of establishing clean zones in all partner countries is met, the project will already be able to boast some success. Such projects not only lay the foundation for regional cooperation, they also enable foreigners to enter local prisons and police stations. This permits them to monitor conditions first hand and track practices such as torture. Greater cooperation in this field should thus be viewed positively and is likely to have a trickle-down effect, benefiting the public health situation of the population at large.

8.10 Evaluation of EU Norm Promotion Success

The model described in the operationalisation chapter will be applied to the results of the three endeavours in order to shed light on the norm promotion success of the EU. It thereby seeks to answer the sub-question of the Ph.D. thesis "how successful is the EU at spreading its norms in Central Asia?" It relies on a scale from 0-3 to assess the level of impact of the EU's policy and the extent of its success. While 0 is equal to no impact/ lack of success, 3 points is equated with high impact/ outstanding success. The score is then divided by the number of sub-components in order to be left with an average.

The evaluation shows that **education** has generally been a successful project in all of the three countries under study which is directly linked to the fact that Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan recognise shortcomings in their education system and are keen to obtain knowhow. As all three want to raise their competitiveness in the global economy and foster social stability by providing their youth with employment opportunities, this is a safe domain for cooperation. In consequence, the EU's education policy has been deemed a reasonable success in two out of three countries even if their levels of implementation are not identical. Both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were granted two points for their Bologna Process and Tempus

participation as policy change could be noted. Neither qualify for three points – outstanding success- as implementation levels either do not match the abilities of the country or when they do, are still incomplete. Uzbekistan, while being more passive, agrees to educational cooperation, which is indicative of a certain degree of success. For this reason, the EU's success has been deemed minor in the case of Uzbekistan with one point being awarded for Tempus and for the Bologna Process. However, given the context in the country, this is a positive outcome as some involvement could be noted. Education is consequently deemed a positive area for cooperation with all three states.

With regard to the **human rights** sphere, a more varied picture appears. In general, human rights dialogues seemed to have had a low impact in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and a high impact in Kyrgyzstan. Insufficient information is available on EIDHR and NSA-LA although the lack of funding for Uzbekistan can be deemed as no impact in that case. For the other two cases medium impact can be declared as a large number of projects were implemented but too little is known about their impact. The same conclusion applies for DCI where impact was deemed medium, besides the Uzbek context where an evaluation indicated the failure of one major DCI project, therefore resulting in low impact. For IBPP, Uzbekistan also received the evaluation low impact as the projects approved via this instrument only engender superficial change in the country and ignore the crux of the matter, namely social inequality and lack of opportunities due to repression.

In consequence, the EU's human rights policy in Kyrgyzstan has been a reasonable/outstanding success as the country actively takes part in the human rights dialogues and implements EIDHR and DCI projects, consequently scoring an average of 2.25.³⁰ It should be borne in mind that a lack of information potentially skews the picture, as Kyrgyzstan is generally considered a willing partner. There is thus reason to believe that the implementation of projects could have been successful but that this has not been recorded. This is far less likely for Kazakhstan which received fewer funds and is more reticent to adopt liberal norms. Nevertheless, with

³⁰ Neither Kyrgyzstan nor Kazakhstan can obtain IBPP funding as they already spent it, thus the total number of eligible projects is 4 making the max score 12. In the case of Uzbekistan, IBPP replaces EIDHR but not NSA-LA.

1.75 points on average, Kazakhstan was deemed an example of minor/reasonable success as projects are being carried out and the human rights dialogues are attended, even if it is solely a box ticking exercise. Finally, the case of Uzbekistan which scored 0.75 is an example of a lack of/minor success as projects are often not implemented, there is limited DCI funding and IBPP projects do not tackle human rights issues.³¹ Moreover, Uzbekistan's defensive attitude in human rights dialogues is not deemed conducive to improving the human rights situation in the country.

Finally, **CADAP** can be considered a successful project across the board due to the fact that all three countries partook in seminars and trainings. This is already a substantial achievement in the case of Uzbekistan, which has frequently refused to participate in similar programmes funded by other donors. As it was lauded for its report which was deemed to have been very professional, it was granted three points for DAMOS. Unfortunately, TREAT cooperation has hovered around low impact which means that only one point is allocated as no policy change can be noted. For the case of MEDISSA, two points were allocated as no specific information is available on the Uzbek campaign which portrays it in a negative light. Overall, the EU's project has thus been deemed to be a reasonable success in the country, averaging two points. In the same vein, the case of Kazakhstan is considered a reasonable success as it partook in OST initiatives and trainings as part of TREAT without implementing institutional change (two points), but failed to provide accurate data in its DAMOS report (One point). Again as little is known about MEDISSA, Kazakhstan received 2 points for its campaign. Finally, Kyrgyzstan has equally been placed in the same category -reasonable success-, despite its greater willingness to cooperate. This stems from the fact that it lacked the capacity to reach the standards of the other two countries, ultimately handing in a low quality DAMOS report (one point). Due to the fact that it showed itself very open to the OST programme and other TREAT initiatives, it ranked highly for this component (3 points). Again, as little is known about MEDISSA, Kyrgyzstan also received two points for this initiative.

³¹ EIDHR is considered equal to IBPP.

The results do however show that authoritarian regimes are willing to cooperate and adopt norms provided that these norms are not seen as a threat. Moreover, projects can be moulded in such a way as to permit the endeavour to be neutral or harmless, thereby winning over governments and participants. As the EU enjoys substantial financial means and is a coveted travel destination, participation rates are likely to be high in any sphere, provided that it entails study trips/financial backing and does not shake up authoritarian structures. This explains Uzbekistan’s participation in the IBPP programme which allows it fulfil its social goals without engaging in risky human rights related activities.

In the interviews with EU project managers, the economic status of a country was often mentioned as a defining factor in determining norm adoption rates. This clearly highlights the importance of leverage as poorer countries such as Kyrgyzstan depend on external funding. At the same time, the study shows that implementation levels may not always be higher in these states as they lack the necessary means to reach their objectives and ensure sustainability. Moreover, poor countries are likely to be more affected by migration which results in brain drain and insufficient staff numbers to carry out projects in an adequate manner.

Table 24: Norm adoption outcome

| Country | Outcome: Education | Outcome: Human rights | Outcome: Security Norms | Average |
|------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------|
| Kazakhstan | Reasonable success 2 | Low/ Reasonable success 1.5 | Reasonable success 2 | 1,83 |
| Kyrgyzstan | Reasonable success* 2 | Reasonable success/ outstanding success* 2.5 | Reasonable success* 2 | 2,16 |
| Uzbekistan | Minor success 1 | Lack of success/ Low success 0.5 | Reasonable success 2 | 1,16 |

Source: Own compilation

Again, these outcomes can be compared across the board by applying the same point system and adding up the scores for each component. It can therefore be stated that norm promotion has been highest in Kyrgyzstan, with 6.5 points, followed by Kazakhstan with 5.5. Uzbekistan lags behind with 3.5 points, therefore qualifying as the most EU-norm adverse state. One can conclude that the EU has only been

reasonably successful in Kyrgyzstan in its norm promotion endeavours, despite the goodwill of the national implementers. Its success rate in Kazakhstan is slightly lower, making Kazakhstan a case of minor/reasonable success. Finally, Uzbekistan fares the worst hovering around the bottom of the low success category. In consequence, the sub-question can be answered with the following response “The EU enjoys minor/reasonable success when promoting its norms in Central Asia”. Having addressed the sub-question of this Ph.D. thesis, we can now proceed to address the main question.

9. Answering the Main Question

In order to answer the main research question of this Ph.D. thesis, linkage, leverage and organisational power will now be scrutinised in the Central Asian context. This will allow us to collect the necessary empirical data on the case studies and draw parallels between the abovementioned variables and the outcomes in the preceding section. The chapter will end with an analysis of the intervening variable - regime type - which is also deemed to have an impact on the norm adoption process.

9.1 Linkage

This section will look at EU ties with Central Asia, focusing on economic linkages via trade, intergovernmental linkages with EU-led organisations, information linkages and subsequently, civil society linkages as well as linkages created through the EU's presence on the ground. Finally, it will end with an overall evaluation of the linkage levels between the EU and the three case studies by aggregating the results for each component. This will provide part of the information needed to answer the main research question.

Economic Linkages in Terms of Trade

The EU relishes a prominent role in the region's trade balance: in 2007, 29.1% of Central Asia's trade was carried out with the EU (European Commission b). The relationship has largely centred on the import of Central Asian crude oil, gas, metals and cotton and the export of machinery (European Commission b). Despite these exchanges, economic linkages from the EU perspective have remained comparatively weak. For instance, in terms of volume, Central Asia only accounts for 0.7% of total EU trade, of which 85% is with Kazakhstan (European Commission b). The pre-eminence of Kazakhstan is reflected in the negotiations for an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement which builds on the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) (Tsertsvadze, Axyonova 2013:2). Kazakhstan's initial insistence on the signing of the agreement is indicative of its image-consciousness as well as of the importance it accords to trade relations with the EU. Indeed, such an upgrade in relations should allow for greater trade and investment flows between both partners, thereby stimulating greater economic linkages.

The comparative analysis of the trade relationship between the EU on one hand and the case studies on the other, reveals that trade linkages are most extensive with Kazakhstan, while being low with both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. However, even if most EU trade is carried out with Kazakhstan, the latter only represented 1.4% of the share of total EU imports in 2013 whereas 35.6% of Kazakh exports went to the European Union in that same year (European Commission 2013a) resulting in a trade imbalance. While this signifies that the European Union's share of imports is greater than Kazakhstan's, this is not deemed to negatively affect EU leverage rates. Imports from Kazakhstan are concentrated in the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) of minerals, fuels, lubricants and related materials at 93.4% while 51.4% of exports to Kazakhstan are in the SITC section of machinery and transport equipment (European Commission 2013a). Comparative data over the years also reveals that the depth of relations has been growing with the trade balance going from 23,562 million euros in 2008 to 29,101 million euros in 2013 (European Commission 2013a), which gives grounds for optimism.

The trade linkages between Kyrgyzstan and the EU differ substantially. In terms of trade, Kyrgyzstan presented 0.0% of EU imports and 0.0% of EU exports in 2013 (European Commission 2013b). Conversely, 5.1% of Kyrgyz imports came from the EU and 4.8 % of Kyrgyz exports went to the EU (European Commission 2013b). In total the EU imported 77 million euros worth of products (largely chemicals, crude materials, food and live animals and manufactured goods) from the country whereas it exported 400 million euros worth of products (machinery and transport equipment, mineral fuels, chemicals, manufactured goods and food) to Kyrgyzstan (European Commission 2013b). Over the years, trade between the EU and Kyrgyzstan has also flourished from 269 million euros in 2008 to 478 million euros in 2013 (European Commission 2013b). Still, it is evident that trade linkages remain very limited, especially when the data is compared with Kazakhstan's trade turnover with the EU.

In comparison, trade volumes between the EU and Uzbekistan have been more copious when viewed in absolute terms. In terms of trade, Uzbekistan made up 0.0% of EU imports and 0.1% of EU exports in 2013 (European Commission 2013c). In turn, the EU accounted for 14.4 % of Uzbekistan's total imports and 2.4% of its

exports (European Commission 2013c). The EU largely imports chemicals, crude materials, manufactured goods and mineral fuels from Uzbekistan and exports machinery, chemicals, manufactured goods and food to the country. Overall EU trade with Uzbekistan fell from 1.762 million euros in 2008 to 1,655 million euros in 2013(European Commission 2013c). Considering the population size of Uzbekistan and the fact that its industry is far more developed than that of Kyrgyzstan, it is evident that economic linkages are extremely low even if trade volumes exceed those of Kyrgyzstan.

In light of the above, Kazakhstan was allocated three points for having high economic linkage with the EU, whereas both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan received one point as their linkages were low. Given that only Kazakhstan has negotiated an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, it is likely that trade flows will continue to grow, while little change is expected in terms of trade with the other two countries. Nevertheless, one cannot exclude that trade flows could suffer due to integration projects in the former Soviet Union or be nurtured through WTO accession.

Intergovernmental Linkage in Terms of Diplomatic Contacts to EU-led Organisations.

Upon gaining independence, the Central Asian states were motivated to join international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in order to affirm their sovereignty (Pomfret 2010:18). The same fervour could later be observed on the part of Kazakhstan regarding its potential OSCE chairmanship, which was seen as Nazarbaev's chance to leave his mark globally and stand out regionally. At the same time, varying levels of zeal have been noted regarding the engagement of the Central Asian states with NATO which is the other chiefly EU-led organization in the region.

The OSCE began to take a more active role in Central Asia in the late 1990s, after having previously focused its efforts on the Balkans (Lewis 2012: 1221). Then in 2010, Kazakhstan was granted the OSCE chairmanship which primarily served as a public relations exercise despite Kazakh promises that it would spur democratic reform in the country (The Economist 2009). In fact, although all five Central Asian

states are members of the OSCE, the promotion of human rights norms has been fraught with difficulties due to elite indifference and the absence of incentive structures to push through reform (Lewis 2012:1222). Lewis thus concludes that “the record of the OSCE in the region as a promoter of ‘comprehensive security’, inculcating ideas of democratic political order and human rights, must be viewed as a failure”(Lewis 2012:1223). Irrespective of this poor record, there is little doubt that the OSCE has managed to foster greater intergovernmental linkages, especially with Kazakhstan, which perceived its chairmanship as being of the utmost importance.

Central Asian participation in NATO dates back to the mid-1990s, when the latter states acceded to NATO’s Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and its bilateral cooperation programme named Partnership for Peace (PfP) (Dunn 2012). They also all became members of the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) which funds reform in a variety of sectors including defence, civil emergency planning, cooperation on science and environmental affairs inter alia (EUCAM 2012:2). Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have equally partaken in the Planning and Review Process (PARP) which allows troops to prepare for peacekeeping operations at the international level (EUCAM 2012:2). In addition, an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) has been agreed on with Kazakhstan, which caters for deeper cooperation and substantial assistance in the reform process.

Despite this engagement, “concrete cooperation remains limited and is mostly oriented towards maintaining a dialogue” (EUCAM 2012:1). NATO relations are considered most developed with Kazakhstan with which it carries out anti-terrorist exercises and the above-mentioned initiatives. Similarly, NATO’s relationship with Kyrgyzstan has the potential to receive a boost through new project proposals in the security sector. Uzbekistan in contrast has shied away from active participation in NATO’s programmes (Dunn 2012). On the other hand, Uzbekistan has played a key role in ensuring provisions reach Afghanistan during the NATO war effort. With 80% of supplies passing through its territory, there is no denying that its importance for NATO has grown dramatically since the outset of the war (EUCAM 2012:4).

The Central Asian states are members of different regional organisations including the CIS, GUUAM, the Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasec), the SCO, the

Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation.³² These organisations can be seen as a counterweight to Western linkages especially as the norms they promote are usually categorically opposed to those of the EU, NATO and the OSCE. In fact, while Western organisations seek to diffuse liberal norms, non-Western structures focus on the role of sovereignty in international relations (Lewis 2012:1227).

Having taken into account the above, both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan were awarded 2 points as linkages were medium. In Uzbekistan, this stems from the relatively important links created through the NATO war effort but weak OSCE engagement whereas in the Kyrgyz case this was based on medium interaction with both organisations. In light of Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship and its active participation in NATO, linkage levels were deemed high and Kazakhstan was allocated 3 points.

Information linkage in terms of internet access and media penetration

Information linkages between the EU and Central Asia are weak due to scant internet access and low media penetration rates. As a direct result far less is known about human rights abuses in Central Asia than in North Africa and the Middle East (Boonstra, Tsertsvadze 2014:1). Nevertheless, there is room for optimism as internet cafes have begun to mushroom in the region and a clear rise in usage can be noted. Recent studies suggest that 45% of Kazakhs had access to the internet in 2012 (Iport 2012), while rates reached 20% and 30.2% in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan respectively in the same year (Total 2012). Given that economic growth has constantly been recorded in Kazakhstan, penetration is likely to rise in this country in particular in the years to come. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan should equally see rising levels, especially outside of rural areas. This suggests that information linkages are likely to increase between the EU and Central Asia. Nevertheless, this has not always been the case: the table below contains the results of a study

³² It is worth noting that many of these organisations overlap and repeat themselves. For instance, there is duplication between Eurasec and the CIS as both entail a customs union, a free trade zone as well as a range of transport projects. The same can be said for the Single Economic Space which Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan are to be a part of.

involving 1000 respondents per country from 2007 which shows negligent internet usage across the three countries (Active Asia: 28).

Table 25: Internet usage

| Do you ever use the internet? | Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 9,9 | 13,3 | 4,2 |
| No, never | 86,9 | 83 | 94,1 |
| Yes, but no longer | 3 | 2,8 | 1 |

Source: Active Asia

In terms of media penetration, substantial differences can be noted from one country to another, closely linked to the respective regime type. In the case of Uzbekistan, the media has been heavily circumscribed and all broadcasting outlets as well as publications have to be registered with the Interior Ministry. In addition, they have to state the source and planned means of dissemination, thus greatly limiting their room for manoeuvre (Hiro 2009:178). Moreover, the BBC World Service, the Eurasia Foundation, Freedom House, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and the Uzbek branch of the UN High Commission for Refugees were all forced to leave as a consequence of their reports on the Andijan massacre in which hundreds of protesters were killed (Hiro 2009:191). There is thus no independent media and any critical journalists wishing to report on domestic events have continued their work from abroad, having feared for their lives (Freedomhouse.org c 2013). Moreover, websites are frequently blocked, especially those portraying the government in a negative light (Uznews.net 2013). It can therefore be stated that in the Uzbek case, media linkages with the EU are very limited as little information leaves the country.

Kyrgyzstan, in contrast, has a liberal media environment as it is largely unbridled even if newspapers refrain from openly criticising the president (Freedomhouse.org b 2013). Officially, content is only controlled if it is considered to be promoting extremism - in reality, this clause can easily be abused. For example, in July 2012, the journalist Vladimir Farafonov was charged and fined for spreading ethnic hatred through his publications. However, these accusations were believed to have been politically motivated as the latter expressed critique of the politics of the country (Committee to Protect Journalists 2012). Finally, differences can be noted in media

penetration between rural and urban areas as internet access is most prevalent in the capital Bishkek and the second largest city Osh (Freedomhouse.org b 2013). Overall, it could be stated that in the Kyrgyz case, ties are relatively developed, with information reaching Europe with ease provided that those wishing to report are not based in remote areas.

In Kazakhstan, in contrast, the media is chiefly controlled by powerful business groups which surround the regime. Television frequently contains propaganda and opposition voices are often muted (Freedomhouse.org a 2013). In 2012, approximately 40 independent media outlets - funded by opposition figures - were banned because of their supposed extremist activities. Critique of the president is equated with a criminal offense, although the government actively tries to uphold a positive image of itself by hiring communication firms to run pro-government campaigns depicting Kazakhstan as a place of harmony (Freedomhouse.org a 2013). In consequence, one can conclude that in the Kazakh case, there is a reasonable amount of media penetration but clear challenges remain. For example, even if locals widely have access to media sources, they are subjected to control and self-censorship which prevents accurate information from leaving the country (Freedomhouse.org a 2013).

In conclusion, Uzbekistan was allocated one point based on the fact that its media penetration is close to non-existent and its internet access rate - while not being low - does not allow for independent information to circulate. Kyrgyzstan, in contrast, was granted two points as its media penetration levels are relatively high and its internet penetration, although lower, is not under direct control of the government. Kazakhstan fared the same as Kyrgyzstan and thus also gained two points. This decision was based on the fact that internet is readily available but the media is controlled by powerful interest groups, filtering the information available to the public.

Civil Society Linkage in Terms of Access to Support by EU-led NGOs

All Western donors based in Central Asia have sought to promote civil society as a means of enhancing the prospects of democracy taking root in these countries. In

general, this has been easier in spheres touching on social welfare rather than political rights (Abdusalyamova 2002). Disparities from one country to another in the number of NGOs were evident early on: in 2002, Kyrgyzstan harboured about 1001 NGOs, while in Kazakhstan it was 699 and in Uzbekistan 465 (Abdusalyamova 2002). These divergences have only been accentuated over time, resulting in varying NGO environments in the different Central Asian states.

Kyrgyzstan's civil society is very active and diverse, playing an important role in political life, including the monitoring of elections (Freedomhouse.org b 2013). Moreover, it is the only country in the region where an independent NGO community exists which does not solely represent a Western agenda. This testifies to its sustainability and strength, making it unique in the region by dint of its locally "grown" NGOs. In fact, the registration of civil society groups is not challenging neither is the organisation of campaigns. However, there is still distrust between civil society and the state as is the case in all Central Asian countries where NGOs are viewed as competitors rather than allies (Abdusalyamova 2002). Another hurdle is that Kyrgyzstan's civil society greatly depends on foreign donors and grants from the international community to stay afloat. Nevertheless, domestic financing provided by Kyrgyz business is growing for NGOs based in the capital, which also reflects local commitment to civil society (Freedomhouse.org b 2013). It is clear that EU NGOs face few hurdles when seeking to engage with Kyrgyz NGOs.

In contrast, civil society activities have consistently been restricted in Kazakhstan, especially in the field of civil liberties, workers' rights and political reform. The government has typically sought to co-opt organizations and make their agendas pro-regime and as most NGOs in Kazakhstan depend on aid from the government, they follow the government's official policy (Hiro 2009:154). Citizens enjoy limited rights in terms of public gatherings, having to apply for permission ten days prior to the planned event. Moreover, according to Nations in Transit, solely 200 of the 5000 NGOs registered in 2003 positively shaped developments in the country and these tended to receive support from abroad (Freedomhouse.org a 2013). These same NGOs have been closely watched by the secret police (KNB) and the Office of the Prosecutor General, frequently being exposed to threats and intimidation for their

activities. Kazakh NGOs are on the whole consequently unlikely to interact with EU NGOs in a meaningful way.

The situation in Uzbekistan is far bleaker still. After Uzbek independence, NGOs began to mushroom although these were largely inactive or under government control. At the same time, the honeymoon period of US-Uzbek relations permitted for some Western organisations to work without too many difficulties. As the colour revolutions swept the CIS, Tashkent began to increasingly worry about the harmful effects of entities such as the Soros Foundation on its soil. The Uzbek leadership thus obliged all international organisations to re-register in 2004 and refused registration to the Open Society Institute *inter alia*. Recognising the flagrant hostility of the Uzbek government, international donors adopted two diverging, albeit largely unsuccessful, approaches in Uzbekistan - they either focused on promoting civil society or targeted specific issues such as health and relied on local government-controlled NGOs to implement their programmes (Ilkhamov 2005:308).

One of the main problems that Uzbek NGOs face is that they rely almost entirely on external funds and are not self-sufficient as local businesses do not support them. Furthermore, even when NGOs enjoy international assistance, they continue to depend on the goodwill of the government to implement their projects with the assistance of the relevant ministries (Ilkhamov 2005:304). Many NGOs - so-called DONGOs (donor-organised NGOs) - were also created due to foreign demand rather than being guided by local needs and enjoying local support. GONGOs in turn, are NGOs entirely controlled by the state and an extension of the latter. These currently dominate the Uzbek civil society scene and are the most accessible partners for international donors. It is thus difficult for EU NGOs to establish ties with their Uzbek counterparts as these do not exist in the same form.

Given the accounts above, Kyrgyzstan was granted 3 points as its civil society movement is relatively free and independent, resulting in high civil society linkages. In contrast, Kazakhstan was allocated 2 points as the national context harbours some restrictions for civil society, undermining civil society linkages with EU NGOs. Finally, Uzbekistan was accorded one point due to the fact that Uzbek civil society is greatly circumscribed and NGO ties cannot flourish with EU civil society.

Linkages Created through EU Presence in the Country

When looking at the data on the opening years of EU delegations in each of the Central Asian countries, some disparities can be noted. The EU tried to make its presence felt in the region by opening a delegation in Kazakhstan in 1994, followed by Kyrgyzstan in 2009 and Uzbekistan in 2012 (Rule of Law Platform Central Asia 2013). Greater presence on the ground allowed for the management of projects and cooperation with donors. At the same time, it enabled the EU to enhance its visibility. The fact that Kazakhstan was the first country to host a delegation is most likely a reflection of its strategic importance. Similarly, the decision to upgrade EU-Kyrgyz relations by granting it its own delegation shows the EU's commitment to its norm promotion agenda in the "Switzerland of Central Asia". Finally, Uzbekistan being the last of the three is indicative of the hostility which tainted EU-Uzbek relations after the Andijan massacre.

Regarding the size of the delegations, differences are also apparent. Kyrgyzstan has the largest delegation relative to its population size. Considering the fact that the Uzbek population is almost 6 times larger than that of Kyrgyzstan, it is peculiar to see that its delegation is only staffed with 9 Europeans, compared with 14 in Kyrgyzstan. However, this can be explained by the fact that many projects are carried out in Kyrgyzstan while Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are recipients of far smaller sums of development assistance. Nevertheless, Uzbekistan's delegation is disproportionately small which is likely to stem from the difficulties encountered in getting projects approved. In Kazakhstan a similar number of Europeans are working as in the Kyrgyz delegation, although the country is three times larger and is of greater geopolitical interest. This stems from the fact that projects are increasingly being stopped with Kazakhstan as it is a middle income country.

Table 26: Number of staff at EU delegations

| Country | Number of EU staff | Total staff | Population Size |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Kazakhstan* | 15 | 43 | 16,8 million |
| Kyrgyzstan* | 14 | 31 | 5,58 million |
| Uzbekistan** | 9 | 15 | 29,78 million |

Source: EU Delegation, Private Communication, 2012*, 2014**

Given the statistics above, it can be concluded that EU presence is high (3 points) in Kyrgyzstan relative to its population size. In turn, it was medium in Kazakhstan (2 points) as it has a far smaller EU presence relative to the population size of the country. Even if the total staff number was substantially greater, this is not deemed to influence linkages meaningfully as this represents local staff. Finally, Uzbekistan ranked low and was accorded one point as its delegation is modest in scale and it only opened in 2012.

9.2 Linkage Evaluation

Having taken the five components of linkage and aggregated them, it becomes evident that both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan enjoy relatively high linkage rates with the EU, having scored 12 and 11 points respectively. This similarity appears despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan - contrary to Kazakhstan - is almost unconditionally open to Western ties. Notwithstanding, the analysis reveals that its economic capacities limit the linkages it can generate in the fields of trade and diplomatic relations where Kazakhstan leads. This finding is not surprising in light of Kazakhstan's foreign policy doctrine which prioritises international prominence, ties to the West and economic development.

As linkage has a cluster effect and overall linkage rates are higher in all categories with Kazakhstan, its effects are most likely to be felt there even if the numerical difference with Kyrgyzstan is minor. However, for both, relatively high linkage levels are likely to influence the overall leverage levels, as discussed in the section on the operationalisation of linkage. It must be pointed out that Kyrgyzstan has been classified as medium/high as it scored very highly in those linkage components directly related to democracy promotion (large EU presence and civil society links).

In the Uzbek case, linkages were deemed low as it only attained 6 points. In fact, the only area where Uzbekistan did not score low was in intergovernmental linkage due to its ties with NATO which are likely to fade once the ISAF troops withdraw from Afghanistan. On the other hand, it must be noted that as linkage is a slow-moving variable, the levels of linkage between the EU and Uzbekistan may potentially rise in other fields once enough time has passed for the effects of the EU's sanctions on Uzbekistan to have been countered.

The table below summarises the points allocated to each country for each component³³:

Table 27: Overall linkage score

| | Trade | Intergovern. | Information | Civil Society | EU presence | Score | Total |
|--------|-------|--------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| KAZ | H | H | M | M | M | 12 | H |
| KYRGYZ | L | M | M | H | H | 11 | M/H |
| UZB | L | M | L | L | L | 6 | L |

Source: Own compilation

Finally, it was noted before that EU linkage can be counterbalanced through the existence of non-EU linkages. This is a factor to be taken into account with all of the three case studies as both Russia and China are active in all areas mentioned above apart from “civil society”, which they consciously try to undermine. Indeed, China especially is a real competitor in the field of trade, while Russia dominates in terms of informational linkages. Thus, even if countries rank “high” in linkage levels such as Kazakhstan, these linkages are greatly weakened by competing ties with other powers engaging with the Central Asian states.

9.2 Leverage

This section will explore the EU’s leverage vis-à-vis the three case studies and thereby collect the necessary data for the linkage, leverage and organisational power model. It will begin by comparing the three countries to the EU in terms of their size and economic strength. Subsequently, it will consider EU aid allocations and investments. Next, it will focus on competing MS policies and the role of competing powers, namely China and Russia. Finally, it will evaluate the leverage levels of the EU vis-à-vis each country in order to move one step closer towards answering the main research question of this Ph.D. thesis.

The Size and Strength of the Country’s Economy

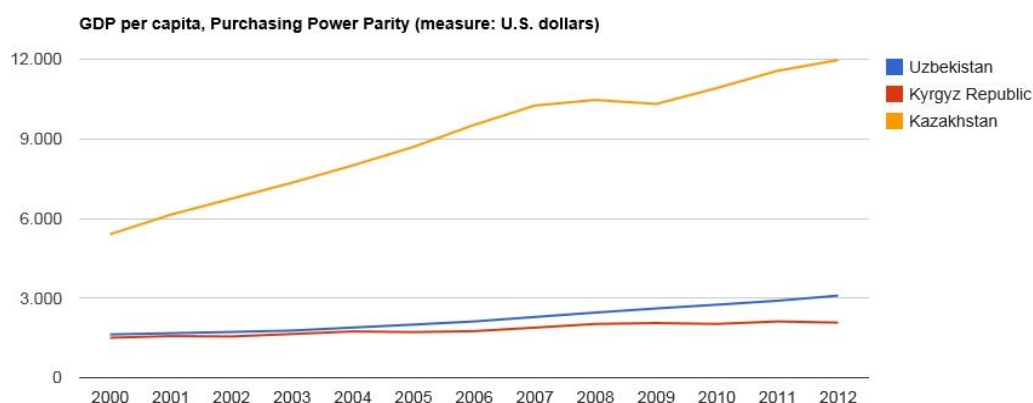
Generally speaking, all Central Asian states were heavily hit by the collapse of the Soviet Union and thus saw substantial drops in their GDPs. Nevertheless, internal economic policies and the presence of hydrocarbons in some of the countries in

³³ H= high, M= medium, L= low.

question, resulted in great disparities in GDP levels. Kazakhstan became the leader of the region in terms of output and also with regard to the standard of living of its citizens. Kyrgyzstan especially and Uzbekistan to some extent, remained poor although the latter enjoyed more weight internationally due to the size of its market.

The graph below indicates Kazakhstan’s regional pre-eminence in terms of GDP per capita, Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). This shows that the citizens of Kazakhstan are significantly wealthier than those of the neighbouring countries, while Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan rank similarly low. However, poverty is more widespread in Kyrgyzstan, with 33.7% of the population living below the poverty line in 2012 compared to 26% in Uzbekistan in the same year (Index Mundi).

Figure 6: GDP per capita



Source: TheGlobalEconomy.com, The World Bank

This picture changes to some extent when GDP is aggregated. In 2012, the GDP of Kyrgyzstan was 6, 4 billion USD, that of Uzbekistan was 51 billion USD and Kazakhstan’s hovered over the rest at 201 billion USD (World Bank 2012). From a regional perspective, Kazakhstan’s economy can thus be deemed large, whereas that of Uzbekistan is medium sized and Kyrgyzstan’s is small. The disparity between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan can partly be accounted for by looking at population size, as Uzbekistan is six times more populous than Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, Uzbekistan boasts a far more robust industrial complex than Kyrgyzstan, which equally fuels its economy.

The EU is an economic giant compared to the abovementioned three countries. As the largest economic bloc on earth, presenting the most voluminous single market, the EU has substantial economic clout over the states of the region (Zielonka 2006:91). It is thus evident that the EU enjoys substantial leverage vis-à-vis all three states when GDP is aggregated. Nevertheless, differences are greatest between the EU and Kyrgyzstan, followed by Uzbekistan and then Kazakhstan. As Kazakhstan has boasted impressive growth rates since gaining independence, it is probable that the GDP gap between the EU and Astana will shrink, even if it is unrealistic to see a real reversal in the current leverage balance. In relative terms, the EU has the least leverage over Kazakhstan of the three countries, followed by Uzbekistan and then Kyrgyzstan.

Trade flows as a means of leverage

The table below sheds light on EU trade flows between the EU and Central Asia and highlights that the EU only enjoys a position of “dominance” in the case of Kazakhstan. Notwithstanding, as it only ranks first in the “exports to the EU” category, the EU is presented with a trade deficit. It is debatable whether this enhances or undermines EU leverage. On the one hand, the Kazakh government is put in a position where it is more dependent on EU funds to fill its budget. On the other hand, refusal to sell hydrocarbons to the EU would also hurt the buyer in the short-term. As a large proportion of the Kazakh budget is financed through hydrocarbon exports, it is however reasonable to presume that a disruption of trade relations would hit Astana more heavily than Brussels, hinting at greater EU leverage. This reasoning explains why EU leverage is deemed high. In the case of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, trade relations with the EU are of lesser weight, especially in the former case. Trade flows are thus qualified as low and medium respectively.

Table 28: Trade relations with the EU

| | Imports from the EU | Rank | Exports to the EU | Rank | Trade total | Rank |
|--------------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------|------|
| Kazakhstan | 23,80% | 2 | 37,80% | 1 | 32,40% | 1 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 4,10% | 4 | 1,70% | 8 | 3,80% | 5 |
| Tajikistan | 9,80% | 3 | 3,70% | 6 | 7,90% | 5 |
| Turkmenistan | 17,90% | 2 | 13,10% | 2 | 16,10% | 3 |
| Uzbekistan | 20,50% | 2 | 8,20% | 5 | 15,60% | 3 |

Source: European Commission 2013a/b/c/d/e

Investments

FDI inflows to Central Asia expanded from \$3 billion to \$19 billion between 2005 and 2009, highlighting the growing attractiveness of the region, especially the hydrocarbon sector (Sholk 2011). Central Asian states on the whole are very dependent on FDI as local investments are rare (Borispolec, K and Babadznov, A 2007). The largest flow of FDI is typically directed to Kazakhstan, with 80% of all FDI reaching this market in 2013 (Kazakhstan Energy Newswire). Moreover, the EU remains the largest investor in Kazakhstan and had a 60% FDI share with USD 11.869 billion in 2011 (Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan). In contrast, the EU is believed to have only made up 14% of FDI in Uzbekistan in 2012 (Witherspoon 2012). There is no data available of aggregated EU investments in Kyrgyzstan. However, it is known that Canada is by far the greatest investor in Kyrgyzstan, covering 48% of total investments, followed by the UK at 16%, China at 12% and Russia at 10% in 2010 (US Department of State 2012). This leaves little room for other investments from the EU. It can thus be concluded that the EU has significant leverage over Kazakhstan thanks to its investments in the country, whereas rates are far less voluminous in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, thereby reducing EU leverage to a negligible level.

European financial institutions provide assistance to Central Asian countries in order to finance projects. For example the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) started investing in the Central Asian republics in 1991 and has played an important role in Kazakhstan, where it has been the main investor outside the energy sector (Boonstra,Hale 2010: 6) . The table below illustrates this clear preference as Kazakhstan received 532 million euros and Uzbekistan solely 15

million euros in 2007. This stems from the fact that it has severely limited funds to Uzbekistan due to its human rights and governance record (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2008:3). In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the allocations are likely to have been determined by domestic absorption capacity and industrial investment potential. This shows that leverage through this source of financing is high in Kazakhstan and low in both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Table 29: Total EU assistance from financial institutions

| Country | 2007 | 2008 |
|------------|------|------|
| Kazakhstan | 532 | 434 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 12 | 12 |
| Uzbekistan | 15 | 33 |

Source: Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013

Assistance/Aid

The EU has been channelling aid into Central Asia through numerous programmes, as touched upon before. What is of principal importance in this context is the total allocations flowing to a country relative to its economic wealth. The table below highlights that Kyrgyzstan is the greatest beneficiary of EU aid and also most exposed to EU leverage in light of the high poverty rates of the country. In contrast, as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are less dependent on external sources of revenue due to their relative affluence, the EU is conferred negligible leverage through its modest aid. As Kazakhstan graduated from DCI in 2014, EU allocations are destined to further dwindle making the EU's financing redundant for Astana in the years to come. Given the limited allocations in all cases but Kyrgyzstan as well as the relative wealth of Kazakhstan, it can consequently be concluded that the EU enjoys no leverage in any of the cases apart from Kyrgyzstan.³⁴

³⁴ This explains why the EU has refrained from imposing conditionality on countries refusing to cooperate and instead has focused on engagement where possible, which has been deemed problematic in the case of Uzbekistan as the government has not targeted real development needs but has instead requested assistance in less sensitive areas, ignoring burning issues such as child labour inter alia. Moreover, close cooperation with governments and their GONGOs risks legitimising these while ultimately bringing about little change on the ground, thereby failing to assist the EU's development agenda in the long run.

Table 30: Comparison country allocations 2007-2012

| Programme | Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| DCI | 56.70 million | 106.15 million | 38.6 million |
| DCI thematic instruments | | 21.11 million | |
| EIDHR | 2.36 million | 2.7 million | |
| Instrument for Stability | 0.5 million | 15.13 million | |
| Nuclear Safety Instrument | 2.4 million | | |
| Total | 62.71 million | 146.45 million | 38.6 million |

Source: Tsertsvadze, Boonstra 2013

Competing Western foreign policy objectives

Due to the nature of EU foreign policy, EU and bilateral MS programmes frequently coexist in Central Asian countries in the priority spheres outlined in the EU's strategy. This fact can lead to policy incoherence as MS tend to push for human rights at the EU level but focus on their strategic interests at the bilateral level (Gower 2011:35). Such behaviour inevitably sends mixed messages and undermines the EU's attempt to pose as a normative actor in international relations.

Divergences in MS attitudes at the EU level were most pronounced during the Uzbek sanction review process and the negotiations for the Kazakh OSCE chairmanship when a common course of action was required. Berlin, as well as Madrid, Warsaw and Paris actively lobbied for the lifting of the sanctions, claiming they were ineffective (Dura 2008:37). In contrast, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Finland advocated for them to stay in place (Dura 2008:37). In the OSCE chairmanship case, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Poland were in favour of Kazakhstan's candidature and deemed this an incentive for the country to undertake reform; they were pragmatic and continued to pursue their energy interests (Rettman 2012). By upholding this stance, they clashed with the UK, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia who were hesitant about granting the chairmanship to Kazakhstan given its poor human rights record.

It is clear that there are member states which pursue a more interest-based foreign policy which mainly centres on energy and security and others which emphasise the importance of values (Graubner 2008). Despite these cleavages, realpolitik is deemed to have prevailed as relations tend to deepen despite an absence of improvements in

the human rights situation in all the countries in question and conditionality is not employed by the EU despite its rhetoric. Pragmatic MS such as Germany justify this by stating that isolation does not work and that engagement is to be pursued instead as a means of building ties (Gower 2011:37). However, more idealistic MS retort that such incoherence ultimately legitimises autocrats and consolidates their regimes, thus harming the EU’s normative agenda. It is unsurprising that the governments of the most coveted states have not shown any reticence about exploiting these divergences, targeting the pragmatic MS for cooperation. Such “divide and rule” tactics have also been employed by Russia and China in their relations with the EU and its member states.

The table below depicts the priorities of the EU member states in the region and illustrates the potential for incoherence in MS policies due to a wide range of contrasting objectives. For instance, there is no doubt that it is challenging to promote energy cooperation, economic development and human rights in Uzbekistan, which is what Germany purports to have committed to. In a similar vein, France vows to promote human rights but simultaneously wishes to fight common threats, which often involves close cooperation with Uzbekistan’s security sector. The UK faces similar challenges by simultaneously targeting energy and transport as well as human rights.

Table 31: Member states in Central Asia and their interests

| Priorities | KAZ | KYRG | UZB | REGIONAL |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Human rights and democracy | BG, SK, SE, IE | NL, FI, SE, AT, IE, DE, FR | FR,DE | DE, FR, NL, UK, IE, SE |
| Education | DE, LU, UK | DE,FR,AT,IT,CY,LV | DE,UK,NL | DE, FI, AT,IT |
| Economic Development | DE, SK, IT | DE,LV,SE | DE,LU,LV, AT | DE,LV, UK |
| Energy and Transport | DE, FR, UK | DE,CZ | DE | UK |
| Environment and Water | FR, SK | SE, SK, CZ | FR,UK, CZ | DE,FI |
| Common threats | FR,DE,CZ,PL | FR, LV | DE, FR | FI, IT, UK, NL, DE, CZ, LV |

Source: Gower (2011)

Generally speaking, the energy rich countries of the region have enjoyed the deepest relations with the EU and the MS on the economic level. Kazakhstan leads in this

regard while Uzbekistan has also become more involved in the sphere of EU-Central Asian relations in the post-sanctions period, attracting investments from the UK and Germany. Turkmenistan has forged deep relations with France through its construction and telecommunication projects. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan remain the main recipients of aid and this forms the backbone of their bilateral relationships with the EU MS. It can thus be stated that the 5 states are differentiated between, as MS pander to the energy-rich and prefer to act as Samaritans with the poorest of the lot.

The section that follows will sketch an outline of the relations between the EU member states in the region and their Central Asian counterparts. Germany's relations with the region date back to the early 1990s and Berlin has since been the most active MS in the region (Gower 2011:35). It is also the largest donor, providing around 60 million euros of aid a year (European Commission 2007:38). In addition, it has embassies in all republics and its agencies - the German International Cooperation, the former German Development Service and German Development Bank - have financed local development programmes. One of the reasons why Germany is active is that it has minorities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which it supports through cultural, social and educational assistance (Dura 2008:37). However, Germany's interests in the region largely lie in the economic sphere while it also keeps an eye on energy, security, investments and minority rights (Dura 2008:37). Having reinforced NATO efforts in Afghanistan, Germany upheld a special relationship with Uzbekistan where it had a base in Termez. Moreover, the region is also of importance to Berlin as it represents "a bulwark against the more fundamentalist forms of Islam present in neighbouring states (Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan)" (Dura 2008:37). In consequence, cooperation has frequently been placed before human rights concerns, an attitude which is likely to have ensured Germany's access to the base in Termez during the visa ban and arms embargo on Uzbekistan. In this insistence, Germany can be considered to have severely undermined the EU's policy towards Central Asia.

France equally has a dominant position in the region, concentrating its efforts on security and energy. This entails great concern over flight rights and the provision of

logistical assistance to its forces in Afghanistan via Tajikistan. France - like Germany - has embassies in all five Central Asian countries, highlighting the importance it confers to the region (Peyrouse 2012:1). Moreover, both these countries have jointly been implementing the Rule of Law Initiative of the EU, with France seeking to spawn defence rights in criminal proceedings (Peyrouse 2012:2). It is important to note that Kazakhstan is France's principal partner in Central Asia, as French companies have stakes in energy and transport projects. The second principal interlocutor for the French in the region is Turkmenistan which has opened its doors to French companies, earning Paris scathing critique. In consequence, France is deemed to be a bedfellow of Germany in light of its attitude towards Central Asian dictators. In fact, both reason that problems can only be solved through dialogue and not through lecturing, hence why economic relations have flourish regardless of domestic political bones of contention (Gower 2011:40).

The UK is also represented in all five of the Central Asian republics. It has deep trade and economic relations with Kazakhstan, investing heavily in the energy sector (Gower 2011:37) and is equally involved in a number of endeavours in the security and military sphere (Dura 2008:38). Interestingly, the UK was very outspoken about the Andijan sanctions and suspended all its aid in the wake of the massacre. It thus stood in steep contrast to Germany with its idealism. Be that as it may, it is active in the Uzbek education sector, having opened the Westminster University in Tashkent despite the atrocious human rights record of the government. Through the Department for International Development (DFID), the UK has provided substantial aid to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and thus sought to alleviate poverty in the region (Walker 2012:3). It is therefore a key partner for the Central Asian countries even if it is not on par with France and Germany.

Subsequently, there are a range of MS which also play a role in the region, albeit not as a significant one as Germany, France and the UK. Poland has been active in Central Asia, as part of its strategy of greater involvement in the CIS as a whole. It has sought to protect the rights of Polish minorities, uphold a security dialogue and share its experiences on the transition from communism to democracy in order to foster similar changes in Central Asia. The Netherlands has made norm promotion a

priority and has consistently upheld its commitment to human rights despite being the number one foreign investor in Kazakhstan through its energy investments (Hartog, Kettle 2012:2). Sweden has also been very outspoken about the Uzbek sanctions issue, standing side by side with the UK and the Netherlands (Gower 2011:41). Finland, the Czech Republic and Ireland fund a number of norm promotion endeavours and have limited economic assets in the region. In contrast, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and the Baltic states are deemed to be eager to deepen energy ties so as to facilitate greater energy independence from Russia. In addition, it is worth noting that Greece has a substantial minority in Central Asia which benefits from aid allocations. Finally, in the case of Italy, the Kashagan oil field in Kazakhstan is a key priority, guiding Rome's Central Asia policy.

It can thus be concluded that energy is a reoccurring priority for the majority of the member states depending on the geopolitical interests of each state. Human rights on the other hand, have not enjoyed the same weight in foreign policy priorities, even if a score of member states have tried to stand firm and insist on improvements. In general, it can be stated that the credibility of EU conditionality is limited due to diverging MS priorities and EU apathy. Moreover, the EU frequently fails to articulate clear demands and when it does, the fact that the MS refuse to speak with one voice and some MS go against the official EU policy further gnaws at the EU's credibility. The role of energy and the consequent competition between different powers will be explored in the section which follows, moving the focus beyond the EU member state level to incorporate Russia, the US and China among other more minor actors.

Competing powers

This section will explore an issue central to EU-Central Asian relations and to the study of Central Asia as a region, namely the presence of competing powers. Energy reserves as well as strategic landmarks have principally turned Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan into coveted partners, which can freely choose to deepen relations with China, Russia, the US and the EU. In addition, Turkey, Iran and India hover in the background, seeking to establish deeper ties with their neighbours. Japan

and Korea are also present in the countries concerned but are not typically portrayed as partaking in the New Great Game. This complex scenario will be represented below as well as its implications for EU leverage.

Energy reserves

Central Asia is a resource-rich region and especially enticing for global actors due to the saturation of existing energy markets. The table below sheds light on the proven oil and gas reserves in each country. It is clear that Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan are particularly tempting in this context although the other three states equally have natural resources on offer, although these require greater investments in terms of research and exploration.

Table 32: Energy reserves

| Country | Proven oil reserves | Proven gas reserves |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Kazakhstan | 30,00 billion bbls | 85 trillion cubic feet |
| Turkmenistan | 0,60 billion bbls | 265 trillion cubic feet |
| Uzbekistan | 0,59 billion bbls | 65 trillion cubic feet |
| Kyrgyzstan | 0,04 billion bbls | 0,200 trillion cubic feet |
| Tajikistan | 0,01 billion bbls | 0,200 trillion cubic feet |

Source: US Energy Information Agency 2012a/b/c

Kazakhstan has the 11th largest proven oil reserves in the world, second only to Russia in the CIS (The Business Year 2012). Hydrocarbon exports have permitted Astana to be positioned among the fastest growing economies in the former Soviet Union, while simultaneously rendering it resource-dependent as oil revenues have presented its main source of income. In contrast, Turkmenistan ranks 6th in the world in terms of proven gas reserves while estimates of its potential reserves are far higher. Uzbekistan has recently reported a hike in gas production and exploration work is under way, which means that it may have greater export potential in the future. Kyrgyzstan in turn, has substantial uranium, gold, coal, lead, zinc and antimony deposits while in Tajikistan the mining and the gas sectors are currently being developed.

Central Asia only opened its doors to the global market after the fall of the Soviet Union. Once this occurred, there was great eagerness to attract foreign investors in order to develop fields which had previously been deemed too complex by the

Kremlin. On top of demanding conditions at energy sites, the region was equally challenging from an infrastructural point of view. Being entirely landlocked, sea routes could not be used for transportation and transport networks were - and largely remain - underdeveloped. In addition, all major routes led to Russia, cutting the Central Asian market off from global hubs. Investments by international companies have gradually alleviated this problem, even if road and rail networks still largely place Russia as a key cog in the Central Asian transportation wheel.

Great Game

The modern day competition taking place between the US, the EU, Russia, China, Iran and Turkey, is referred to as the New Great Game. It is an extension of the Great Game which developed in the 19th century and was characterised by competition between the British and Russian Empire over influence in Central Asia. The “New Great Game” in contrast, revolves around access to the region’s energy reserves of which the main protagonists are Russia and China. Nevertheless, a range of actors eagerly watch at the fringes such as Korea, India, Japan, Turkey and Iran.

Be that as it may, there has been a change in the power dynamic since the collapse of the Soviet Union. While the states of Central Asia were previously “pawns on the chessboard of great powers”, they have steadily developed into assertive sovereign nations which increasingly write the rules for cooperation with third states. This has especially been the case for the energy rich Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan which have gradually gained in confidence and strengthened their bargaining position. The weaker states of the region in turn have emphasised their “failed state” status in international negotiations, highlighting the danger the collapse of their regimes would present for international security. This has allowed them to obtain grants and credits despite failing to meet their reform commitments (Cooley 2012:11).

The states of the region have benefited from the competition between the above mentioned actors in another way: prices have generally been inflated and governments have been able to select the highest bidder. This has reinforced their level of assertiveness and confidence. It is also worth noting that the dynamics of

competition have changed in the region over time: China has taken over a substantial part of Russia's trade share and the EU has also made its presence felt. This changing dynamic is illustrated in the tables below since it depicts the role of each actor in the region's trade balance:

Table 33: Central Asian imports and exports from abroad

| Imports | Billion US \$ (2000) | % of total imports (2000) | Billion US \$ (2010) | % of total imports (2010) |
|----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Russia | 3,1 | 27,2 | 17,2 | 27,3 |
| European Union | 2,2 | 19 | 11,1 | 17,5 |
| China | 0,28 | 2,4 | 6,8 | 10,7 |
| Exports | Billions US \$ (2000) | % of total exports (2000) | Billions US \$ (2010) | % of total exports (2010) |
| European Union | 3,7 | 23,8 | 31,9 | 37,7 |
| Russia | 3,6 | 23,3 | 13,8 | 16,4 |
| China | 0,7 | 4,8 | 12,4 | 14,6 |

Source: Mogilevskii (2012)

EU interests

Generally speaking, the EU as a whole is dependent on fossil fuel imports from abroad: around 80% of crude oil, 60% of natural gas and 40% of coal is shipped in from beyond the EU's borders. As Central Asia has great oil and gas reserves, it is seen as central to the EU's energy security strategy (Warkotsch 2011:148). This explains the EU's attempts to secure the construction of the Trans-Caspian pipeline as well as shipments of oil from Kazakhstan, both of which are to allow for greater diversification of sources away from unreliable partners.

The EU is criticised for not sufficiently engaging with those actors who historically have a stronger role in Eurasia. This is despite the fact that Russia, China and the EU have overlapping interests in terms of security and stability. Moreover, as the EU generally lacks visibility due to the nature of its relations with local governments³⁵, it would benefit from closer cooperation (Peyrouse 2014:5). Those who do interact with the EU maintain that it is excessively complex as a being, its rules are unnecessarily cumbersome and it does not engage local partners sufficiently, preferring to rely on European consultancies (Peyrouse 2014:6). In contrast, its cultural appeal is high, which makes the EU's model attractive and renders it a coveted destination for tourism (Peyrouse 2014:5). At the same time, it is clear that

³⁵ In the poorer countries, the EU has been a donor rather than an implementer, whereas in the richer ones, investment and energy negotiations have usually been carried out with the MS.

EU democracy promotion is regarded with suspicion as well as its attempts to change the status quo. This became most evident in the wake of the Andijan massacre when the EU and the US froze relations with Tashkent and Russia chose to deepen them as a sign of solidarity (Warkotsch 2011:65).

China

China has gradually become an active actor in Central Asia as a consequence of its insatiable energy appetite, which is a by-product of its growth spurt, averaging 9.2% in the years between 1989 and 2013 (Trading Economics 2014). As China cannot cover its own energy needs, it has increasingly gazed in the direction of Central Asia with the end of satisfying its hydrocarbon requirements. This relationship is likely to grow as 65% of total Chinese crude oil consumption is to be covered by foreign imports by 2015 (Malhotra 2012). In consequence, Beijing has established budding relations with all five states, although it is especially keen on the energy-rich hydrocarbon exporters. This explains why it is increasingly considered as a rival to Russia which equally desires Central Asia's reserves.

During President Xi's September 2013 visit to the region, 48 billion USD were pledged in investments in the hydrocarbon sector, indicating that Chinese influence is destined to grow (Mashrab 2013) - currently, 10% of Chinese oil and gas imports stem from Central Asia (Mariani 2013). Plans to build a railway network, connecting China to Europe via Central Asia, will only make the region more coveted through its growing accessibility (Mashrab 2013). Moreover, Beijing has aspired to upgrade the existing Central Asia - China gas pipeline (crossing Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and Xinjiang), by extending it to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through the so-called D line (Lelyveld 2014), as well as expanding sections of the Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline in order to augment its capacity from 12 to 20 million mt/year by 2015 (Mason 2013).

It must be borne in mind that from the Chinese point of view, Central Asia has a distinct competitive advantage over other hydrocarbon producing regions: not only are its markets relatively new, but they are also adjacent to China. This allows it to avoid risky transportation by sea as the region is accessible by land. To date, this

remains a major concern of the Chinese leadership as the latter feels vulnerable to supply disruptions via the US-controlled straits of Malacca in case of a disagreement over Taiwan or similar political upheaval. This fact is one of the main motors of Chinese economic expansion in the region and directly linked to its internal political stability.

By winning over the Central Asian states as partners, China equally strives to silence its Uighur minority which currently relishes informal backing in the Central Asian republics. Sharing common linguistic and cultural ties, China fears that its Muslim minority would receive assistance from its 300,000 brethren residing across the border and thus finance its battle for independence (Peyrouse, Boonstra, Laruelle 2012:12). Recently, China has been able to rely on governmental support in Central Asia to dismantle all Uighur associations advocating autonomy in their respective states, thus partially reducing the threat (Peyrouse, Boonstra, Laruelle 2012:12). Deepening economic and political links with the region serves as a guarantee that rebellious forces will be kept in check in the years to come.

In terms of loans and credits, all governments of the region have profited from Chinese “largesse”, thereby upgrading their infrastructural and hydrocarbon sectors. Trade has also exploded with the region as Central Asians import cheap Chinese goods and China purchases iron, copper and titanium along with oil and gas from Central Asia. This explains the gradual deepening of Sino-Central Asian relations in all spheres in recent years and the growing presence of China in its neighbourhood. China is either the first or second trade partner for all Central Asian countries.

Table 34: Trade relations with China

| | Imports from China | Rank | Exports to China | Rank | Trade total | Rank |
|--------------|--------------------|------|------------------|------|-------------|------|
| Kazakhstan | 34,10% | 1 | 21,10% | 2 | 26,10% | 2 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 62,70% | 1 | 5,70% | 4 | 55,00% | 1 |
| Tajikistan | 9,00% | 4 | 37,30% | 1 | 17,80% | 2 |
| Turkmenistan | 10,20% | 4 | 28,40% | 1 | 17,00% | 2 |
| Uzbekistan | 15,20% | 4 | 20,50% | 2 | 17,30% | 2 |

Source: European Commission 2013a/b/c/d/e

Of the three countries under study, relations are particularly developed with Kazakhstan. Currently a 2,798 km long pipeline transports crude oil from Western Kazakhstan to China's Xinjiang province while the Chinese have gained stakes in a number of Kazakh hydrocarbon companies and fields (Hydrocarbons Technology). In the case of Uzbekistan, numerous joint ventures have been started between Uzbek and Chinese companies and China has provided credits to enable the government to purchase Chinese goods (Central Eurasia 2011a). In 2007, Uzbekistan joined the Chinese pipeline project including Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and committed to supplying 10 of the total 40 billion cubic metres (bcm), further deepening Sino-Uzbek relations (Central Eurasia 2011a). Turkmenistan is also heavily involved in this endeavour, providing the bulk of the gas while having vouched to supply 65 bcm to China by 2020 (Platts 2013).

Sino-Kyrgyz relations centre on trade, especially as Kyrgyzstan is a hub for Chinese products to be exported to the Central Asian region. As Kyrgyzstan is also directly connected to China's Xinjiang province it is equally seen as the principal entry point to the region. In consequence, China has heavily invested in Kyrgyz infrastructure, constructing a network of motorways and pushing for railway development. Beijing has provided Bishkek with numerous loans with no strings attached which have willingly been accepted by the government. As these include amounts as large as \$ 3 billion dollars, serious concerns about a loss of Kyrgyz sovereignty have been articulated (Kostenko 2013). In light of the fact that relations with Tajikistan have taken a similar form - loans, infrastructural projects and the re-export of Chinese goods - similar worries have been voiced in Central Asia's poorest country (Sattori 2013).

However, significant levels of Sinophobia in certain parts of Central Asia could undermine Chinese endeavours as local populations resist the Chinese presence. Attacks on Chinese businessmen do occur occasionally, although these do not suffice to discourage them from investing in Central Asia (Ng 2014). Chinese companies do not relish a good reputation: they are frequently criticised for providing bad working conditions and not hiring locals, preferring to bring their own employees and equipment (Peyrouse, Boonstra, Laruelle 2012). This provokes scathing criticism

from locals who battle with high unemployment rates and feel excluded. Finally, there is some resistance to growing Chinese dependence, which has largely resulted in Central Asian governments counterbalancing Chinese influence through relations with other actors.

Russia

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Moscow has attempted to uphold its status as the traditional hegemon in the region as well as its pre-eminence in the field of politics, security and energy. As Central Asia was deemed its exclusive sphere of influence, the arrival of other powers was regarded with suspicion and openly resisted. Generally speaking, Moscow has strongly favoured pro-Russian presidents as this has permitted it to pursue its regional objectives, even if the Kremlin has never meddled in domestic Central Asian politics to the same extent as in Ukraine and Belarus. In this regard it is no different to the majority of actors on the global stage who seek to uphold positive relations with neighbouring states. However, Russia's presence in the region is not only seen as an indicator of its standing internationally, it equally cares to protect its minorities and promote the Russian language.³⁶

Central Asia is of major importance to Russia's security calculation as it serves as a buffer against threats stemming from the volatile south, namely Afghanistan and Pakistan. Rising drug abuse and consequent HIV infections have highlighted Russia's vulnerability to drug flows emanating from Afghanistan (Jonson 1998:18). This is not its only sore point: extremist elements can easily pass through Russia's permeable borders and carry out terrorist attacks, which is a major concern among Russian elites (Peyrouse, Boonstra, Laruelle 2012:7). Islamic insurgencies and

³⁶ Russians in Central Asia constituted 19.5% of the total population during Soviet times while their language enjoyed a privileged status. At the same time, Russians were also at the upper echelons of society, frequently represented in senior positions in political, administrative and scientific spheres. Local elites were equally socialised in the Soviet cultural system and largely secular. This legacy was then brought to the post-independence period where the same leaders stayed in power in all cases but Kyrgyzstan. However, over time the influence of Russian began to wane as local elites sought to revive their indigenous cultures and languages. Moreover, ethnic Russians left for Russia en masse. The result was the re-indigenisation of Central Asia with the role of religion growing in society. When compared, it is evident that Kazakhstan remains the region's most russified country. It was historically closely linked to Russia, with deep infrastructural and industrial ties uniting the northern part of the country with Siberia.

interethnic conflict in Central Asia have made Russians increasingly self-conscious about their soft underbelly.

In order to mitigate the effects of these threats, Russia cooperates with Central Asia in the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). Both anti-narcotic and anti-terrorist operations are on the programme annually. Moreover, it includes the Collective Rapid Deployment Force (CRDF) which is composed of Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian and Tajik units (Peyrouse 2012). Bilaterally, Russia provides military equipment and trains soldiers and officers in a number of Central Asian countries. Furthermore, it has bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on top of a radar station and firing ranges in Kazakhstan (Peyrouse, Boonstra, Laruelle 2012:8).

The five states of Central Asia must however be differentiated between at this point as substantial differences in attitude towards Russia exist: while Kazakhstan is generally pro-Russian and active in a number of Russian-led initiatives largely for the reasons outlined above, it has equally sought to uphold its sovereignty through multi-vectorism. Uzbekistan as well as Turkmenistan in contrast, have been hesitant to cooperate with Moscow, frequently reaffirming their independence. Both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have tended to partake in Russian-led projects as they have a weaker bargaining position due to their economic plight.

Despite these disparities, it must be borne in mind that all of these countries are linked to Russia through migratory flows, which in the case of the region's poorer countries actually provides a sizeable proportion of their government's budget and country's GDP. This fact gives Russia potential leverage over the region, especially if it were to restrict labour access to migrants. Such tactics would no doubt bring about economic crises and provoke political instability. Unsurprisingly, attacks on migrant workers in Russian cities have also been a source of concern and triggered tension between the governments of Central Asia and Moscow as non-Slavic workers are frequently discriminated against and see their rights violated.

Trade between Central Asia and Russia has largely entailed transfers of energy products and raw materials (Sinitsina 2012:11). The resources imported from the region are necessary for Russia to supplement its commitments to Europe, as

Moscow has insufficient capacity otherwise. This is the principal reason why Moscow has vehemently sought to ensure access to Central Asian reserves and opposes the presence of other actors. After these countries gained independence, Moscow attempted to affirm its position on the local market by pushing out foreign investors (Jonson 1998:60). In the end, this increasingly led to a struggle between the Kremlin and the elites in the region, with the latter seeking greater room for manoeuvre in their foreign relations and adopting multi-vector foreign policies.

In this phase of their relations, Kazakhstan began employing trans-Caspian tankers and constructed a pipeline to China in order to magnify its leverage vis-à-vis its neighbour. In Turkmenistan, frequent spats with Moscow over prices resulted in Ashgabat establishing deeper ties with China and Iran (Central Eurasia 2011b). Recently, Uzbekistan has committed to sending gas to China, even if the majority continues to be reserved for the Russian market. In the same vein, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have also welcomed Chinese investments with the hope of reducing their dependence on Russian oil. This reflects the fact that Russian dominance is by no means uncontroversial and unproblematic.

Having noted the advance of China in the realm of trade, Russia has sought to counter this influence by involving the Central Asian republics in a range of integration initiatives. Russia's proposed Customs Union and the Eurasian Union are both integration projects in the economic sphere that ultimately serve the aim of ensuring Russian political influence.³⁷ As the leaders of the Central Asian countries are aware of this, there has been some reluctance to join such projects, although Kazakhstan has consistently been the Central Asian frontrunner in Russian-led endeavours.

Kazakhstan has generally been pragmatic and has avoided confronting Russia given the close ties between both states. Economic integration with Russia has partly sheltered the Kazakh market from Chinese goods and consolidated its bargaining position in negotiations with China. Membership has also brought with it certain

³⁷ A single customs tariff began to be applied to Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus on January 1st 2010 which also resulted in Russian WTO commitments becoming binding for the other two states. This Customs Union was then supposed to gradually develop into the Eurasian Economic Union and see the other Central Asian states joining.

benefits such as greater access to the Russian market, rising exports and FDI. Nevertheless, while there is willingness to integrate economically, Astana has sought to keep its political autonomy and to base its partnership with Russia on the principle of equality.

Both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have swayed between membership and exclusion, due to the weak nature of their economies. In addition, both are heavily dependent on the re-export of Chinese goods, a practice which would no longer be economically viable with the joining of the Customs Union (BBC.com 2014). However, for Moscow these countries permit it to assert itself in Central Asia and to secure its border against a potential Afghan threat, which explains why it has continued to advocate the accession of these economically weak countries, bordering on becoming “failed states”. In the case of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, Russia-led integration has been viewed with scepticism. These countries are reluctant to depend on Russia with Turkmenistan especially underlining its neutrality. Although Uzbekistan has contemplated joining on several occasions, such behavioural inconsistency is unlikely to result in serious commitment (Sadykov 2013).

The future of Russia’s position in the region is thus deemed to vary from country to country. While it continues to play an important role in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as well as to some extent in Tajikistan, its influence will increasingly be watered down in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Peyrouse, Boonstra, Laruelle 2012:7). The table below sheds light on Russia’s position in each country’s trade balance. It highlights that while it was the most important partner for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in 2010, it is fourth for Turkmenistan, second for Kyrgyzstan and third for Kazakhstan (Peyrouse, Boonstra, Laruelle 2012:8). This hints at its gradual retreat from the region and the arrival of other powers.

Table 35: Trade relations with Russia

| | Imports from Russia | Rank | Exports to Russia | Rank | Total Trade | Rank |
|--------------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------|------|
| Kazakhstan | 18,70% | 3 | 4,90% | 3 | 10,30% | 3 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 15,00% | 2 | 32,10% | 1 | 17,30% | 2 |
| Tajikistan | 32,20% | 1 | 76,90% | 3 | 24,90% | 1 |
| Turkmenistan | 14,20% | 3 | 4,00% | 8 | 10,30% | 4 |
| Uzbekistan | 24,40% | 1 | 24,10% | 1 | 22,50% | 1 |

Source: European Commission 2013a/b/c/d/e

It is important to note that Russia has recently begun donor activities and has also provided aid to Central Asia, albeit in small quantities. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have been the main beneficiaries in this context and have been granted a reduction of their debts, foodstuffs, agricultural assistance and relief aid (Peyrouse, Boonstra, Laruelle 2012:10). This appears not to have been a selfless act as the abovementioned countries were required to agree to Russia maintaining its military presence on their territory (Peyrouse, Boonstra, Laruelle 2012:10). Moscow is therefore unlikely to become a popular and welcomed donor in the region.

Great Game Cooperation

Even though Russia has lost part of its influence due to China's inroads in Central Asia, their relations have also deepened via the region. This stems from the fact that both are concerned about ensuring the stability of a potentially volatile common neighbourhood. Having invested into infrastructural, business and energy projects, they recognise that regional conflict and terrorism could jeopardise these undertakings. Beijing and Moscow are thus keen on ensuring that their backyard remains stable and free from war. In addition, both are motivated by an anti-hegemonic consensus, desiring to push the US out of Central Asia and ending its dominance internationally (Ambrosio 2008:1326).

Be that as it may, Beijing and Moscow have clashed over their respective integration projects, as these are contrary to the prerogatives of the other. China is principally concerned with ensuring its access to the Central Asian market and gaining investment facilitation, whereas Russia is keen on protecting its strategic interests and staying competitive. To date, Beijing has not openly expressed its distaste for Russia's attempts to limit its room for manoeuvre; this is in line with the image of a peaceful power undertaking a non-threatening rise to global power status, which it has consistently sought to promote. Such passiveness may however subside once China strengthens its position both in the region and internationally, although this partly depends on how Sino-Russian relations develop outside of Central Asia.

The concerns of China and Russia are currently balanced in the framework of the SCO which is a forum for both actors, allowing them to cohabit in Central Asia. The SCO dates back to the rapprochement between the USSR and China in the late 1980s and to the border demarcation period following Russian independence (Ambrosio 2008:1326). This cooperation framework deepened in 1996 when the leaders of the now independent Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan convened with the aim of working towards the amelioration of their military relations (Ambrosio 2008:1326).

The scope of activities of the Shanghai Five later expanded to include the realms of politics and economics as well as security and diplomacy (Ambrosio 2008:1326). It was finally officialised in June 2001 which enabled it to upgrade its international standing. Moreover, by granting Mongolia, India, Iran and Pakistan observer status in the years that followed, the organisation continued to expand (Ambrosio 2008:1327). Despite their cultural differences, these were united by their commitment to “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for multi-civilisations and striving for common development” (Ambrosio 2008:1327).

The SCO is China-driven and its main vehicle for cooperation with Russia in Central Asia. It also serves to lessen Central Asian fears of planned Chinese hegemony in the region while ensuring stability next to its borders. As Xinjiang remains amongst the least developed Chinese provinces, infrastructural and energy provision projects within the framework of the SCO are to boost the wellbeing of the region’s citizens and thus buy their loyalty, thereby preventing political turmoil and threats to China’s territorial integrity. Yet, several ethnic riots in Xinjiang from 2007 onwards seem to testify to the fact that this strategy is not working (Peyrouse 2011).

The SCO is of great importance when regarding the normative development of the region. To date, it has been stated that “the SCO isthe embodiment of a new set of values and norms governing the future development of Central Asia. The content of these values and norms sets the contours of what is appropriate and legitimate within the region, and since the SCO appears to be operating in opposition to the principles of democratisation and human rights, it is less likely that we will see meaningful political change in Central Asia in the foreseeable future” (Ambrosio 2008:1322). An

example of such SCO-fostered authoritarianism can be seen in the creation of black lists which currently contain the names of one thousand people and forty “terrorist organisations” as well as the existence of an extradition treaty between all member states (Peyourse 2012:12). This is problematic as opposition figures *inter alia* are being placed on these lists despite the fact that they have no ties to extremist groups (Interview #10). The SCO thus risks reinforcing authoritarian practices in Central Asia’s more liberal states like Kyrgyzstan.

Moreover, it is feared that Central Asian states - keen on resisting democratic trends and pressure - find support at the intergovernmental level through their membership in the SCO (Ambrosio 2008:1322). The SCO could even be seen as open resistance to Western norms, as a parallel organisation to the OSCE in the region (Ambrosio 2008:1322). In fact, while the SCO concedes that members should “promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the international obligations of the member states and their national legislation”, this should be done while taking into account “national legislation”, “historical traditions” and “national features”(Lewis 2012:1224). These are core tenets of Chinese foreign policy and stand in stark contrast with Western approaches which at least theoretically either impose economic (the World Bank and the IMF), or political and human rights related conditionality (NATO, OSCE) (Cooley 2012:78).

Moreover, even if Central Asian states pay lip service to democracy, norms championed by the SCO such as non-interference in domestic events, allow its members to maintain authoritarian governance structures by rendering critique illegitimate (Ambrosio 2008:1325). In fact, in SCO discourses, stability is advocated over evolution, leading to an equation of democracy with regime change and chaos. As both Russia and China are eager to maintain the status quo, these states are critical of regional norm transformation and lessen the potential impact of Western endeavours (Ambrosio 2008:1326).

The US

The US’ relationship with Central Asia greatly intensified after September 11th due to the government’s desire to find allies for its “War on Terror”. Prior to that, the US

had encouraged the building of trade routes through the region and the resolution of the non-proliferation issue. With the growing threat of terrorism, the US became increasingly keen on obtaining access to military bases and transit rights for supplies for its mission Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. As a consequence, the countries of Central Asia appeared on the US radar and were upgraded in their importance; 4000 US troops were stationed in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan during the war with Afghanistan (Akbarzadeh 2004:689)

Uzbekistan soon became an indispensable partner for the US as it opened up its military facilities and airspace to it. In return, Uzbekistan received approximately \$160 million in assistance from Washington in 2002 alone (McGlinchey 2011:141). Moreover, Karimov was seen as the guarantor of stability in the region by keeping down the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Hizb-ut-Tahir (Warkotsch 2011:68). Nevertheless, this honeymoon period abruptly ended after the Andijan massacre when the US was expelled from Termez.

At the same time, the US continued to propagate democracy in the region. In this context the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute were active, funding human rights and democratisation programmes. In addition, Freedom House, the International research & Exchanges Board, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Counterpart Consortium were and continue to be represented in Central Asia (McGlinchey 2011:33).

Nevertheless, US foreign policy has been deemed rather pragmatic in its relations with Central Asia and thus distinguishes itself from EU foreign policy to a certain extent as some MS have actively fought for democracy and human rights. This difference stems from the fact that the US has high stakes in a positive outcome of the war in Afghanistan and thus sees Central Asia through this lens (EUCAM 2012:1). In contrast, only a small number of MS are active in Afghanistan which reduces its relevance at the EU level.

Other actors

Turkey has been very active in the construction and educational spheres in the region. For instance, it is common to meet Turkish speaking students in Bishkek and

to shop at Turkish-financed shopping malls, which house the city's most expensive shops. However, there is no indication that Turkey is taking a dominant role in the region. While Turkish pretensions were high when independence was declared by the states of Central Asia, the newly independent republics showed themselves resistant to a potential Turkish takeover. Having been under the Russian yoke, a Turkish Commonwealth which was to be led from Ankara was of limited appeal to the countries in question (Warkotsch 2011:69). Thus, Turkey has not developed into the new big brother of the region but continues to be a distant cousin. Nevertheless, common cultural ties partly facilitate cooperation and support Turkey's ambition to re-orient itself away from Europe.

In the case of Iran, it also sought to make inroads in the region but has largely failed due to religious differences and lack of economic potential. Notwithstanding, it has attempted to finance religious schools and has become an important economic partner for Turkmenistan. Moreover, it has developed deep cultural ties with Tajikistan by virtue of their common Persian heritage and linguistic similarities, which facilitate communication.

India's regard for Central Asia is more recent and largely dates back to the rise of the Taliban in 1996 as Indians feared that terrorism and extremism would spread south (Patnaik 2010). A change in the degree of Indian involvement in Central Asia was evidenced by two major events - the upgrade of the Ayni airbase in Tajikistan and the acquisition of energy assets in Kazakhstan by ONGC Mittal Energy Limited (Patnaik 2010). Even so, Indian trade with all Central Asian states is insignificant when compared to China or even Iran.³⁸ India is therefore no real competitor for Russia, China, the EU or the US in Central Asia.

Two other actors remain who originate from East Asia and recently became more present. Both Japan and Korea have played an important role in Central Asia in the educational and cultural sphere, providing scholarships to Central Asian students. At the same time, they have also made development aid available and have sought to

³⁸ According to IMF statistics, India's trade turnover was \$366.73 million with Central Asia in 2008, Iran's was nearly \$1.8 billion and China's more than \$28.18 billion

provide technical expertise. As neither appear as competitors in the region, they are largely omitted from analyses on Great Game competition.

Cost-benefit calculations

The main competitors have different strengths and weaknesses in the eyes of Central Asian governments which also affect the unfolding of energy relations as these factors influence the cost-benefit calculations of the countries under study. Multi-vectorism requires a delicate balance between these actors and also the weighing up of advantages and disadvantages of cooperation in order to maximise actor preferences.

One of the main advantages associated with working with China is that it attaches no political conditions to its loans and investments while it freely cooperates with dictators. It does not voice criticism over human rights violations and it does not seek to change the status quo. This is because it does not have to justify its policies to domestic constituencies who may refuse to re-elect the government for neglecting human rights in its foreign relations, as may be the case in Western nations.

From an economic point of view, China is also more flexible than other actors since it is frequently willing to overpay for resources as it is guided by long-term objectives. Given that funds are provided by Chinese state-owned banks, capital is easily made available when state objectives are being pursued. Finally, the Chinese support infrastructural projects in the countries where they are operating, which is popular among governments as these tend to be costly.

Its culture and language is however entirely alien to the Central Asian states. Moreover, given the population size and land scarcity of their neighbour, the countries of Central Asia have generally been apprehensive about a potential Chinese takeover of their lands. This fear has been at the root of popular protests and attacks on Chinese businessmen. Growing Chinese influence in the future is likely to amplify feelings of hostility and stand in the way of Chinese projects.

Russia's relationship with the Central Asian states is of an entirely different nature. Having lived so closely together for decades and having shared common institutions,

there is great familiarity between the Kremlin and its former vassals. Moreover, the Central Asian elite largely remains Russian speaking and a substantial Russian minority is to be found in most of the republics. For instance, in 2007 there were approximately 4 million Russians living in Kazakhstan, half a million in Kyrgyzstan and 800,000 in Uzbekistan (Peyrouse 2008:4). This forms a common cultural and linguistic basis which fosters trust and understanding.

On the other hand, Moscow tries to shape domestic politics in Central Asian countries and is seen as a potential threat to national sovereignty as the Russian leadership increasingly strives to assert itself in its near abroad and internationally. Such feelings are all the more pertinent in light of the clashes in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea. From an economic point of view, Russia does not have the investment potential of the US, the EU or China and thus inevitably cannot compete in energy negotiations. Its main strategy is thus to cling on to its vital interests rather than consolidating its presence in the region.

Working with Western actors has different implications for the local elite. In general, some basic conditions are attached to loans and aid, which push governments to keep up a façade of political liberalism even if sweeping change is rarely noted. In reality, Western powers have largely made concessions for geopolitical reasons, turning a blind eye to violations and authoritarian backsliding. Western actors also tend to react to human rights relations erratically and with little predictability, making relations with them risky.

On the other hand, successful cooperation does give leaders domestic legitimacy as well as prestige. Finally, neither China nor Russia can compete with the EU and the US in terms of capital, technology and know-how. Such assets ensure successful business relations and greater profit for national governments, provided that Western actors do not impose sanctions or meddle in the internal affairs of the Central Asian states.

With regard to Turkey, Iran and India they can be deemed valuable partners which help to supplement the activities of other actors and make room for deeper cooperation in specific spheres such as culture and education. Nevertheless, they are

neither a threat nor a real alternative to the actors considered above. In the case of Korea and Japan, they are closer to being Western allies than competitors and thus do not beg for greater attention in this context.

9.4 Evaluation of Leverage

The evaluation for leverage is based on the three components, namely, economic leverage, competing foreign policy interests and competing powers. The overall outcome of this assessment will now be presented in the section that follows and thus will provide another puzzle piece for our analysis on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

In terms of trade, the greatest dependence can be seen between the EU and Kazakhstan. It can be argued that although the EU imports more than it exports, the EU is a far larger actor and Kazakhstan solely presents a minute part of its trade balance. In consequence, it seems reasonable to ascribe greater leverage to the EU than to Kazakhstan. With regard to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, less leverage can be attributed to the EU as neither country upholds deep trade relations with the EU. In the former case it has been deemed medium, in the latter - low.

In the same vein, Kazakhstan enjoys substantial investments from the EU, it being its largest investor, and thus leverage can be deemed high in this instance. Such an assessment neither applies to Kyrgyzstan nor Uzbekistan. This stems from the fact that Kyrgyzstan's industry is largely nascent and Uzbekistan imposes harsh investment laws which scare away foreign investors. A change in leadership in Tashkent could reverse this trend and would likely result in a flock of investors being drawn to the country's sizeable market.

This picture changes when aid is regarded. Given Kyrgyzstan's dependence on external sources, high EU leverage can be accorded in this context. This is not the case for either Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan. While Uzbekistan benefits from limited allocations in proportion to its population size, it also blocks initiatives, highlighting its relative disinterest in cooperation. Kazakhstan in contrast, is no longer eligible for DCI funding and was also the recipient receiving the least aid prior to the

discontinuation of the aforementioned instrument. Aid leverage is thus low for both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and high for Kyrgyzstan.

In contrast, Kazakhstan has benefited from allocations from European financial institutions - this is a source of leverage, which is neither attributable to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. It is unsurprising that these bodies have targeted this country due to its openness to foreign investors. Kyrgyz revolutions combined with fragile industry as well as Uzbek government control are probable causes for lower allocation rates. In consequence, the EU scored high for EU leverage in Kazakhstan but low for both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

In terms of competitive EU foreign policy objectives, it cannot be denied that the division within the EU between pragmatic and idealistic member states weakens EU foreign policy. This was clearly illustrated in the case of the post-Andijan sanctions when the EU failed to speak with one voice, thereby undermining both the clarity of its message and its credibility. It seems reasonable to conclude that due to varying levels of strategic interests, the EU would be most coherent with Kyrgyzstan and least coherent with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This means that EU leverage over Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan would be low while it is likely to be medium over Kyrgyzstan.

Finally, the role of competing powers cannot be ignored. China and Russia are alternatives to the EU in the energy and security sphere. Continued economic growth will reinforce this trend, with China becoming the most influential actor in the region. As Beijing does not advocate regime change or a liberal world order, its presence hampers EU normative advances in all three countries. Russia has the same disruptive potential on the political level while its voice is partly muted in the economic sphere. Given that Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are of particular interest to these actors, the EU's leverage was reduced to low in these cases and to medium in the case of the Kyrgyz Republic.

As described in the operationalisation section, each criterion is evaluated according to whether it grants the EU low, medium or high leverage. In order to facilitate comparison, points are allotted to these definitions: low (1), medium (2) and high (3).

For EU leverage to be high states need to rank 14-18, for medium 10-14 and for low 6-10 points. The general outcome on EU leverage vis-à-vis each Central Asian state can thus be depicted as follows below:

Table 36: EU leverage rating

| Country | Status | Trade | Investments + Banks | Aid | MS policies | Powers | Score | Evaluation |
|---------|--------|-------|------------------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|------------|
| KAZ | L | H | H | L | L | L | 11 | Medium |
| KYRGZ | H | L | L | H | H | M | 13 | Medium |
| UZB | M | M | L | L | L | L | 8 | Low |

Source: Own Compilation

Kyrgyzstan was ranked most vulnerable to EU leverage levels due to its aid dependence and the relative geopolitical disinterest of the EU and international actors in the country. Kazakhstan scored second most sensitive in terms of EU leverage due to the trade and investment relations between the EU and Astana. Still, the fact that a number of states both within and outside the EU crave Kazakhstan's natural resources limits its leverage. It thus scored a total of 11 points from a maximum of 18. Finally, Uzbekistan has the most leverage vis-à-vis the EU with 8 points as all forms of economic relations are underdeveloped and a range of actors are anxious to interact with the regime in Tashkent. Inferring from the above, norm promotion should be most successful in Kyrgyzstan, followed by Kazakhstan and then Uzbekistan.

9.5 Organisational Power

Organisational Power is the last independent variable to be analysed in this thesis and is split along the state and the party level, looking at the coercive capacity of both in each of the case studies. This part will begin by outlining the situation in Kazakhstan, followed by Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and then assess their respective organisational power levels in order to collect the missing pieces of information for the linkage, leverage and organisational power model.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan inherited substantial military capacity from the Soviet Union which left it in an advantageous position once it became a sovereign state (Gorenburg 2014:2).

Since independence, Kazakhstan has fine-tuned its national security and defence legislation while equally establishing a professional contract-based army with the ultimate aim of developing a modern military (Peyrouse 2010:20). All in all, its armed forces are composed of 30 000-45 000 troops, backed by a further 30 000 men under the Ministry of the Interior and the Border Service (Gorenburg 2014:4). Given its economic wealth, Kazakhstan can afford to equip its security personnel sufficiently and does not face the same limitations as Kyrgyzstan for instance (Gorenburg 2014:2). In fact, its defence budget reached \$2.4 billion in 2012, the most substantial in the region (Gorenburg 2014:4). Nevertheless, the army is believed to have been heavily undermined by a number of factors including corruption, violence against conscripts and poor quality of life (Peyrouse 2010:20).

In 2011, it embraced a new military doctrine and equally remoulded its intelligence services (Boonstra, J and Marat, E and Axyonova, V 2013:7). This reform was headed by the president of the country, with no public involvement or oversight. The newly reformed Syrbar – the national security agency- is said to serve the aim of intimidating political opponents and unruly businessmen (Peyrouse 2010:25). In Kazakhstan, like in the other countries, the police force remains a tool for the state to cling on to power rather than having the purpose of reducing crime. Lack of reform in this sector is believed to stem from patronage networks which do not provoke change lest their lucrative positions be jeopardised. (Boonstra, J and Marat, E and Axyonova, V 2013:8) Kazakhstan has a border extending over 12,000 km which is controlled by the Border Guard Service (Peyrouse 2010:21). Its borders are relatively well equipped as are its security forces (Boonstra, Laruelle 2014:4). Yet, there is no denying that it is challenging to control such long borders and thus drug traffickers/terrorists can pass through unnoticed. In consequence, this aspect of state coercive capacity is wanting as the police and Border Guard Service cannot control the entire territory of Kazakhstan with ease.

On the political level, the following can be noted: the president enjoys almost complete power, while the parliament is largely passive. Moreover, the political elite surrounding Nazarbaev has been deemed united (McGlinchey 2011:147). There is opposition and critique, albeit rather limited for European standards. Critics are

generally co-opted by the regime or obliterated. The Nur Otan Party has dominated the government since its creation in 2006 and is also the principal force in parliament (Carnegieendowment.org 2012). While it shares seats with two other parties, these are also pro-governmental. The Kazakh ruling elite is fortunate because it has access to substantial resources to fund social projects and thus appease the population at large. Cynics state that Nazarbaev lined his pockets to such an extent, that he could start diverting funds to other endeavours which did not concern the wellbeing of his family alone (McGlinchey 2011:147).

It is interesting to note that political structures have partly moved away from a clan-dominated system. Traditionally, Kazakhstan was split into three clans, the Great Horde (Uly Zhuz), the Middle Horde (Orta Zhuz) and the small Horde (Kishi Zhuz)-the president pertains to the first of the three (Fjaestad, Overland 2012:6). Instead, business, energy and political elites coexist in the country as the president seeks to balance all three, especially the younger energy and business elite. Currently half of the energy elite have strong ties with the ruling party, but business circles do not. This highlights the close links between energy and politics, while the business sector enjoys greater autonomy (Fjaestad, Overland 2012:7) Another trait typical of Central Asian governance practices is the appointment of family members to high positions which is to ensure loyalty to the president - a phenomenon also witnessed in Kazakhstan.

Nevertheless, Kazakhstan may soon approach a succession crisis as the incumbent turned 74 in 2014 and no viable candidate has been publicly identified. Moreover, a real competitor for the presidential elections in 2016 is also lacking. The question of leadership succession has become all the more pressing in recent years as the previous successor, his son-in-law Aliev, has fallen from grace and no alternative has publicly been identified (McGlinchey 2011:158). The uncertainty of Kazakhstan's political future is a key concern to international investors who fear inter-ethnic strife in the country and tension over the division of key industries. Instead of considering democratisation, their priority lies in safeguarding their investments and ensuring the flow of hydrocarbons to Europe. By adopting such an approach, they indirectly foster instability in the medium-term.

There are numerous oligarchs which are currently tolerated by Nazarbaev and part of the power structure. Still, a change in regime may lead to conflict between these traditional groups and new ones, wishing to have part of the nation's share. While Nazarbaev has managed to keep Kazakhstan stable, it is a multi-ethnic state and houses numerous competing identities which could clash, resulting in a division by ethnic group, clan or regional grouping (McGlinchey 2011:164). This would not be surprising as Kazakhstan has increasingly become a nation for Kazakhs with the large Russian minority being pushed out of strategic sectors.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan's military infrastructure was relatively underdeveloped when it gained independence. In the years that followed, military strength was not seen as a national priority as political and economic reforms were first on the agenda. However, incursions by armed guerrillas at the Kyrgyz-Tajik border sparked a debate on the need for robust military structures (Marat 2010:27). Political turmoil, which resulted in the instrumentalisation of the security sector for political ends, undermined any attempts at reform. For instance, it is reported that Bakiyev turned the security sector into a domain which served his political survival, placing his supporters on vital posts in the security and military service. This made it possible for him to gain protection and simultaneously harass those who jeopardised his standing. Bakiyev is by no means an exception. In general, Kyrgyz national security structures and influential ministries have stood behind the ruling elite and have been members of the ruling party (Marat 2010:27). This makes it easy for political figures to instrumentalise the security sector as its forces are employed in order to maintain the status quo rather than ensuring the safeguarding of civic rights.

Given the country's poverty levels, it is unsurprising that Kyrgyzstan largely depends on foreign assistance for military equipment, especially as its military budget barely lies over \$100 million (Gorenburg 2014:17). The country has a 15,000-troop army as well as numerous contract-based special force units which serve the end of anti-terrorism, protection of the president and drug trafficking prevention (Boonstra, Marat, and Axyonova 2013:8) Corruption is widespread among law enforcement and border troops, especially in the south of the country where drug trafficking and

organised crime flourish. To date, police reform has borne limited fruits, failing to eliminate ethnic bias against Uzbeks, with police harassment being frequent as well as arbitrary detentions (Boonstra, Marat, and Axyonova 2013:9). It is thus unsurprising that Kyrgyzstani armed forces have been qualified as weak, manifesting gaps in terms of command and control, training and discipline (Gorenburg 2014:17). Kyrgyzstan has received a similar verdict for its border guard service which is equipped with “5000 poorly trained conscripts to guard a long and complex border” (Gorenburg 2014:17), which also affects its capacity to stop illegal activities as depicted in the subchapter on CADAP.

Kyrgyzstan is considered politically unstable due to the limited cohesiveness of its elite and its tendency to defect. This is illustrated by the case of president Akayev who was ousted after having lined his pockets with foreign aid without redistributing it to the ruling elite (McGlinchey 2011:81). In this case in point, aid flows to the country had ballooned following September 11th as Bishkek became a strategic partner in the US’ “War on Terror” (McGlinchey 2011:81). As rents were paid for US access to the Manas base, the incumbent no longer relied on international donors and the concomitant transparency of funds, to obtain currency. The decision to appropriate these funds, rather than distributing them, resulted in the hijacking of the state by challengers (McGlinchey 2011:81). In fact, “disgruntled elites, knowing they could defect from the Kyrgyz executive and be rewarded for this defection in subsequent governments, did defect and indeed defected repeatedly. Kyrgyz political elites who were once members of Akayev’s ruling coalition defected and became members of Bakiev’s ruling coalition. They then defected again and became leading members in Kyrgyzstan’s new interim government” (McGlinchey 2011:109). This lack of loyalty and cohesiveness greatly undermines the country’s stability and investor confidence.

The Osh events - in which ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz clashed - most recently illustrated the weak foundations on which the political regime and the state stand. Moreover, it highlighted the incompetence of the police and armed forces to protect civilians and ease tensions. Kyrgyzstan remains heavily divided between north and south, with leaders usually being loyal to one of the two camps, which further

contributes to political fragmentation. The statement that President Otunbaeva “enjoyed neither regional nor familiar networks necessary for projecting power in Kyrgyzstan’s restive southern cities” further testifies to the fragile foundations on which the state is built (McGlinchey 2011:113). For greater national cohesiveness to be achieved, linguistic, ethnic and regional tensions must be overcome. Moreover, regional favouritism at government level has to be minimised so that voters can see beyond regional affiliation when selecting their preferred candidates.

Uzbekistan

Nowadays, Uzbekistan’s security apparatus is ranked the strongest in Central Asia due to the fact that its armed forces and intelligence services are relatively adept (Boonstra, Laruelle 2014:2). The following data illustrates this: its armed forces total approximately 40 000 men whereas its defence budget lies at around \$2 billion (Gorenburg 2014:10). Moreover, the state is highly centralised with the ability to crush dissent and to absorb private businesses, which greatly disempowers the opposition (Boonstra, Laruelle 2014:2). This can largely be explained by the fact that the building of security institutions was a key priority for Uzbekistan upon gaining independence. While Uzbekistan had inherited sizeable military infrastructure from the Soviet Union by dint of its status as the regional hub of Central Asia, Tashkent was keen to upgrade its materiel with the objective of remaining a regional leader and fending off any external attacks (Schoerberlein 2010:55). At the same time, Krimov placed great emphasis on grooming the internal security services as these were essential for obliterating domestic threats (Gorenburg 2014:2).

The result is that Uzbekistan has the greatest stranglehold over its people of the three countries under study. In fact, government control over the population has been pervasive. Political pluralism has been wiped out, with the state dominating all spheres of life. Repression has been justified by equating social apathy with internal stability. In fact, it is presented as a necessary means of preventing a civil war similar to that in the neighbouring Tajikistan (Schoerberlein 2010:56). The president’s clutch over the country has only tightened over time: internal security structures have been reinforced and become more visible. For example, checkpoints have mushroomed along the country’s main roadways, resulting in the frequent searching and detention

of citizens (Schoerberlein 2010:56). While this is to purportedly serve the interests of the country's citizens - by reducing the risks of terrorism and illegal activities - it is another masked form of control.

The army has played a key role in state repression and regime deference. After Uzbekistan gained independence it removed all Russian elements from its National Security Service as to ensure complete loyalty. Mandatory universal conscription for men has served the end of strengthening ties to the state and linking individuals to the nation (Schoerberlein 2010:56). The army would later be infamously used to uphold national security at the expense of human security as hundreds of peaceful protesters were massacred by security forces in Andijan in 2005. By crushing resistance, the army and by extension the state sent the following message to its people: any challenge to the status quo will be viewed as a direct attack on the state and eliminated accordingly. While this has worked well in the past, President Karimov's power base is gradually being eroded as his inner circle passes away and a new generation of younger Uzbekistanis rise to positions of influence (McGlinchey 2011:114). It remains to be seen how this will affect government policies and the behaviour of the security services.

To date, the ruling family has succeeded in amassing great wealth without provoking a revolution, contrary to the Kyrgyz case. This is likely to stem from the fact that the elite base in Uzbekistan is far more consolidated and robust than that of its Kyrgyz counterpart. Despite the fact that Uzbekistan appears politically stable from the outside and perestroika elites have been deferential, there are some weaknesses in the state structure once one digs deeper (McGlinchey 2011:114). The most salient threat to the reign of the incumbent is Islamic civil society which has far greater legitimacy among the population than the ruling elite. This stems from the fact that the former caters for the interests of the people whereas the ruling elite is out of touch with societal needs (McGlinchey 2011:114). For example, Islamic civil society frequently provides basic social services whereas the government appears to be more concerned with protecting its vested interests through currency restrictions and red tape.

Religious entities are perceived as a threat to regime strength as a direct consequence of their popularity (McGlinchey 2011:166). In fact, Islamic civil society has been the

main target of two bloody acts by the ruling elite following the uprisings in Namangan in 1991 and in Andijan in 2005. Moreover, Namagan is believed to have been at the root of the Uzbek Islamic militancy which would later manifest itself through bombings in 1999 and 2004 (McGlinchey 2011:121). After Andijan, Muslim leaders would begin disappearing in Uzbekistan and clergy would start facing increasing harassment (McGlinchey 2011:121). The Andijan massacre also resulted in all foreign organisations being expelled, following public outcry over the killing of hundreds of civilians. This reaction would further discredit the government in the eyes of the people who had largely incorporated religious institutions into their social structures. As a matter of fact, even if only a minority of the population embraces the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the ease at which it moves from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan, at least suggests some degree of tolerance on the part of the local population (McGlinchey 2011:5).

Potential instability emanating from a succession crisis is one of the principal fears of analysts of the Uzbek governance system (Boonstra, Laruelle 2014:1). President Karimov has been the head of state since 1989, having thus seen the independence of his country and averted the rise of any opponents, despite having reached the age of 76 in January 2014. Even though elections have been scheduled for March 2015, it is uncertain who could replace Karimov, especially as his daughter Gulnara has fallen from grace and was placed under house arrest at the beginning of 2014 (Walker 2014). While little is known about the origins of this estrangement, observers have noted that those closely linked to the President's daughter and her former business empire, are increasingly being persecuted (Interview #25). On top of family connections, geographical ties are also significant in identifying elite networks of loyalty (Fjaestad, Overland 2012:9). This reaches all spheres of social life including marriage, with families typically picking spouses based on their regional affiliations (Interview #25). Karimov, who is a native of Samarkand, was originally viewed as an honest broker and was consequently selected as president. During his time in power, Karimov has attempted to balance regional interests and rotated officials with the aim of forestalling dominance by one single group (Fjaestad, Overland 2012:9), thus promoting stability.

It is interesting to note that the business and energy elites are not members of the ruling party, despite the omnipresent nature of the state (Fjaestad, Overland 2012:10). Resources for maintaining elite loyalty have usually come from the cotton industry, even if production has fallen substantially and thus removed necessary funds from the president's coffer. Post-Karimov Uzbekistan will inevitably result in a power shift in which the current elite may engage in a battle over the country's limited resources, with Karimov's daughter - previously a popular candidate - making substantial losses. As Uzbekistan stops benefiting from Northern Distribution Network and Termez airbase fees, the situation may become even tenser as resources become scarcer(Boonstra, Laruelle 2014:3). Karimov's successor may consequently attempt to attract funds by liberalising the market and opening it to foreign investors, thus changing the balance of power in the country. For Uzbekistan to exit from the succession process peacefully, an intra-elite agreement will be necessary in which dominant factions are allocated a part of Uzbekistan's shrinking fortunes. This function is likely to be carried out by the National Security Service which is the most influential institution in the country (Boonstra, Tsertsdavze 2014:3).

9.6 Evaluation of Organisational Capacity

The state coercive capacity of Kazakhstan has been deemed medium/high in terms of scope and medium in terms of cohesion. This stems from the fact that the state has substantial control over its territory - despite its porous borders - and can control the opposition. However, it solely ranked medium in cohesion due to the fact that solidarity is largely motivated by material concerns rather than ideological identification with the president. As the state is rich it can afford to pay its employees sufficiently and thus defection is not considered worthwhile. With regard to party strength, it has been evaluated as being of high scope as there is no opposition movement and all layers of society embrace the ruling party for promoting stability and greater social wellbeing. In terms of cohesion, it has been ranked as medium in light of the fact that the unifying force behind the party is control over the country's resources rather than ethnicity and ideology. Nevertheless, opposition and defection are rare as government loyalty is deemed beneficial due to the fact that no real alternative exists. It is also worth noting that ethnic cleavages are strong in the

country although the incumbent has succeeded in including different minorities with a view to ensuring peace. Separatism is thus no longer a salient concern, contrary to the 1990s. Kazakhstan has vast hydrocarbon reserves which are under state control and subject to state interference. This also applies to foreign investments in Kazakh oil fields. Thus, it can also be stated that the regime enjoys discretionary power, thereby intensifying the strength of the other variables and reaching *high organisational power* overall. This means that the Kazakh state has the capacity to implement or prevent change on its territory if it wishes to do so.

The picture in Kyrgyzstan is diametrically opposed. It is clear that the state coercive capacity is low in scope in Kyrgyzstan due to the fact that the security apparatus is underdeveloped and badly equipped, as a direct consequence of high poverty rates. In terms of cohesion, there are no non-material sources of cohesion, especially as the state is divided between north and south. Furthermore, wage arrears are common which gnaws away at cohesion rates. In terms of party strength, it can be deemed medium as parties are usually divided by clans or regions but can recruit across the territory. However, a closer look at the political landscape reveals that unlike in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, leadership change is very frequent. In terms of cohesion, this is also deemed medium as there are ethnic and ideological cleavages between north and south. Moreover, loyalty is largely determined by clan membership rather than political affiliation or ideology. The Kyrgyz state does not have control over mineral sectors and thus does not enjoy discretionary powers, which lowers its overall organisational power. Kyrgyzstan therefore scores *low in organisational power* which means that the state does not have the power to implement or prevent the implementation of policies as it sees fit.

Finally, in the case of Uzbekistan, state coercive capacity can be qualified as high in terms of scope and medium in terms of cohesion. In the former case, this stems from the fact that the security apparatus is large and well-equipped. It is thus capable of controlling its territory and oppressing the local population if need be. Opposition movements therefore take a radical form in order to voice their discontent as all other channels of communication are blocked. In the latter case, cohesion is medium because even if the regime is greatly opposed to Moscow and guided by Uzbek

nationalism, material sources of cohesion appear to be dominant nowadays as the state's riches are still divided between different interest groups. In case of party strength, the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan is deemed strong as it has no real opposition and all other parties are under control of the president. It is high in scope as there is no alternative and campaigns do not need to be held as political debate is largely a farce and the outcome of elections is already pre-determined. In terms of cohesion, it is rated as medium because there is no unifying ideology apart from Uzbek nationalism and the main motivation for party solidarity is rents. As was the case with Kazakhstan, the Uzbek regime also enjoys discretionary state control of the economy in almost all industries which enables it to strengthen its overall organisational capacity. It thus has *high organisational power* over all which means that it does not struggle to either incite or prevent the implementation of policies.

These results are summarised in the table below:

Table 37: Organisational power rating

| Country | Organisational Power |
|------------|----------------------|
| Kazakhstan | High |
| Kyrgyzstan | Low |
| Uzbekistan | High |

Source: Own Compilation

9.7 Regime type

This section will look at the intervening variable “regime type” which purportedly influences the independent variables, linkage, leverage and organisational power. It will begin by presenting the results of Freedom House with regard to the ranking of Central Asian states in terms of civil liberties and political rights. Subsequently, this section shall outline the regime profiles and the regime logics of the three case studies. Finally, it will sketch some of the main accounts of political development in popular culture and assess the effect of the respective regime types on the independent variables.

Regime types

Freedom House has been recording the political rights and civil liberty levels in Central Asian countries since their independence. The table below depicts the scores

from 2008 to 2013 and paints a rather negative picture of the case studies. In fact, Central Asia ranks among the most authoritarian regions on earth:

Table 38: Freedom House ratings

| Year(s) covered | 2008 | | | 2009 | | | 2010 | | |
|-----------------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|
| | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status |
| Kazakhstan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Kyrgyzstan | 5 | 4 | PF | 6 | 5 | NF | 5 | 5 | PF |
| Uzbekistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |
| Year(s) covered | 2011 | | | 2013 | | | 2013 | | |
| | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status |
| Kazakhstan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Kyrgyzstan | 5 | 5 | PF | 5 | 5 | PF | 5 | 5 | PF |
| Uzbekistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |

Source: Freedom House (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013)

According to the above, Kyrgyzstan has generally been situated in the category of partly free, whereas Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have consistently been ranked as not free. In the period under study, Kazakhstan scored 6 for political liberties, whereas Uzbekistan was allocated 7 points for both political and civil liberties. Kyrgyzstan thus stands out next to both states for being relatively free for regional standards with a score of 5. Moreover, while Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have been deemed “consolidated authoritarian regimes”, Kyrgyzstan was the sole Central Asian country to fall into the category of “semi-consolidated authoritarian regime” (Boonstra, Tsertsdavze 2014:1), which makes it an outlier in its regional context and has earned it the name of “the Switzerland of Central Asia”.

Added to these differences in political liberties, large disparities can be noted in the region in terms of stability - while Kyrgyzstan is politically chaotic, Uzbekistan is stable even if the latter has been “secured through horrific human cost” (McGlinchey 2011:3). In contrast, Kazakhstan has boasted similar stability without the same degree of violence. Moreover, contrary to Kyrgyzstan and to some extent Uzbekistan, the main source of instability in the country is not protesters but succession politics. When Freedom House’s ranking is taken from independence to the present, it indicates that Kazakhstan has been consistent in its rank since 1994 with a score around 5.5, Uzbekistan since 2005 with 7, whereas Kyrgyzstan has gone

from very liberal, to less liberal and more liberal again, reaching 3 in 1992 and peaking at 5.5 in 2010. This hints at stability in the first two cases and chaos in the latter. It also sheds light on differences in regime types - while protests are frequent in Kyrgyzstan and occur in Kazakhstan, these are not recorded in Uzbekistan where no expression of public disgruntlement is tolerated (McGlinchey 2011:6).

As touched upon in the previous section on organisational power, Central Asian political parties play a minor role in political life, with power structures being vertical and most decisions being made by the president and his ruling elite, without taking into account any other institutions. Opposition parties consequently vote for the incumbents as do presidential candidates. The exception in Central Asia is the case of Kyrgyzstan. In Kyrgyzstan, a parliamentary system was adopted which was to reduce the power of the president and thereby foster oversight by the parliament as a means of preventing authoritarianism (European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity 2014). Nevertheless, the breakdown of coalitions has strongly undermined its position in the political system (The Economist 2012). This is further aggravated by the fact that citizens tend to vote for parties based on the personalities of leaders rather than their political programmes (European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity 2014).

The current systems in place have been heavily shaped by Communism in both the political and economic spheres. This has been reinforced by the fact that the same elites are still in power in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. As stated previously, the political regimes in the region manifest traits of neo-patrimonialism such as personalised power, regime control of national resources, restricted access to political power as well as the dominance of informal institutions (Eisenstadt 1973). Examples to illustrate this are the practice of appointing relatives to positions of power, silencing the opposition by closing down alternative media sources and using elections as a tool to feign democracy alone without allowing any real competition.

Regime Profiles

Central Asian regimes maintained many traits from the Soviet system despite affirmations that independence had ushered in a new era. In Uzbekistan, political

structures remained largely untouched as the first secretary of the Communist Party, Islam Karimov, became president with 86% of the vote in December 2011 (Kubicek 1998:31) In the years that followed, the president would shape the Uzbek system in such a way as to confer him supreme power through an authoritarian presidential system. Kubicek eloquently illustrates this by recounting that “as president Karimov has the power to issue presidential decrees with the force of law, in effect circumventing the other branches of government or any check on his power, he appoints regional governors (hokims), and regularly shuffles them to prevent any individual from acquiring a powerbase to challenge his authority” (Kubicek 1998:31).

The Kazakh regime in contrast has been referred to as a “delegative democracy” as it meets the formal requirements of a democracy but in reality, practices continue to be authoritarian. For instance while the president has been re-elected by the people he has shown total disregard for the other institutions of the political system (Kubicek 1998:34). It is he who makes all major decisions even if these fall under the remit of the parliament for instance. Although the president enjoys real popularity among his people, there is no doubt that Nazarbaev has manipulated the system with the objective of staying in power and consolidating his stranglehold. For instance, in April 1995 he extended his term to the year 2000 by a referendum and in 2011 the president tried to make his rule “for life” (Lillis 2011). While these attempts have not always been successful, they highlight the president’s unwillingness to renounce power.

Kyrgyzstan’s system has typically been more open although frequent regime change has not allowed for the consolidation of any structures. Thus, even when presidents sought to usurp power, they were quickly ousted and replaced by their opponents. Nevertheless, the separation of powers between the legislature and the executive has largely been respected even if leaders have tried to tamper with these barriers in moments of crisis (Kubicek 1998:37). As stated above, Kyrgyzstan has recently tried to strengthen the powers of the parliament in order to prevent the rise of an overly powerful president. This move appears to have paid off: the 2015 Kyrgyzstani

parliamentary elections were considered the freest to date, with true political competition taking place (Leonard 2015).

Regime logic

The main paradox that can be noted in developments in Central Asia is that countries such as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have liberalized their economies but still remain politically authoritarian. This contradicts those who equate economic openness with liberalisation in the political domain. According to Rustemova, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan carry the traits of “Authoritarian Liberalism”, being marked by highly centralised and authoritarian political systems which rely on the economic market to cope with the challenges that the Post-modern world entails (Rustemova 2009). In both cases, these models are embraced as a means of fending off political and economic instability on the one hand, and social and economic inequality on the other.

Consequently, the Kazakh regime can be portrayed as the guarantor of economic growth and security for the population - democratisation is equated with instability and poverty. Instead, the role of the government is that of a manager, someone who administers the country’s economy on behalf of people (Rustemova 2009:88). The aforementioned scholar notes that the Kazakh state regulates the economy indirectly through incentives and competition in order to foster a liberal market economy which is moulded around the principles of efficiency and utility (Rustemova 2009:89). A liberal democratic regime is however not upheld as redistribution and representation are not issues open for discussion: elections are seen as a threat to the economic system, as they magnify the risk for investors. President Nazarbaeyev thus performs the role of the “enlightened dictator” who guides his people to prosperity and allows for a system in which the state’s resources are siphoned off to appease different factions and tribes in an attempt to safeguard the status quo and ensure peace (Belafatti 2012).

This contrasts with the Uzbek case, where the state has taken on the role of a strong and domineering paternal figure, interfering in all spheres of life. Economic and political liberalism are thus used to suit the state’s ends and are not given free rein.

Any attempts to veer away from the “collective good” are brutally suppressed, much in line with the Soviet blueprint. Within this system, democracy is linked with redistributive justice, which inevitably fosters an omnipresent state with a bureaucratic colossus, bringing with it the dependence of the population on the latter. As Uzbekistan pursues the path of a “paternalistic redistributive state”, it seeks to firstly, set out a vision for development that everyone has to comply with and secondly, hinder its citizens from risking their well-being on the open market (Rustemova 2009:88).

It is thus unsurprising that the Uzbek government deems liberal democracy unjust due to its failure to provide physical security as well as social protection to its citizens. Karimov therefore argues that only with a strong executive branch can laws be implemented and economic and political reforms pushed through. Welfare is thus a central concern of the state as it fights against the individualistic nature of democracy. Rustemova consequently posits that “by supporting a strong state that provides for the people who work for the benefit of a common good and social justice, authoritarian Uzbekistan legitimizes policies as being morally superior to Western values and policies (Rustemova 2009:88)”. This pride clearly penetrates the discourse of officials working for the Uzbek state who highlight the virtues of the Uzbek system (Interview #40)

In the Kyrgyz case, the state largely fails on the economic front due to immense poverty and consequently tries to attract donor payments to prop up social services. It has succeeded in doing this to some extent by portraying itself as the most liberal state of Central Asia. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the population still struggles to cover its basic living expenses. Kyrgyz leaders have attempted to appease the population at large by highlighting the liberties its citizens enjoy, although these arguments tend to be ignored. The state is weak and practices limited control over its territories whereas the local regime is easily shaken by the population in the form of revolutions. The Kyrgyz state does not protect its citizens and instead requires them to fend for themselves in a country characterised by poverty and crime. In consequence, it can be stated that while there is a distinct logic guiding the Uzbek

and the Kazakh system, the Kyrgyz system of governance is characterised by a lack of control, which borders on anarchy.

Accounts in popular culture

It is intriguing to note that differences between the regimes in the region are popularly accounted for by the varying geographical conditions (Interview #8). Central Asia hosts a variety of geographical sceneries, including desert, mountains and steppe. According to popular culture, these have shaped the political practices of the people. It is stated that nomads are generally difficult to oppress as they roam freely. This feature is further reinforced through cattle breeding which does not make them dependent on a specific plot of land. In contrast, sedentary people are more sensitive to pressure as their plantations are not transferable - they are tied to their land. The same applies to people living in the desert who are more dependent on oases and unable to move spontaneously (interview #8). Such reasoning would account for why Uzbekistan is less liberal than Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In addition, one could further extrapolate that greater russification of the nomadic tribes in Central Asia is linked to their greater adaptability and openness to new social mores.

Differences between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been explained in a similar way: while both had the bai system of governance (leader), in Kyrgyzstan this figure was elected and in Kazakhstan the title was passed from father to son (Interview #8). Moreover, legend has it that by dint of geographic divergences, Kazakh leaders would be able to follow their fleeing tribe for days, whereas Kyrgyz leaders would lose their tribe due to the mountainous landscape, thus having to govern more justly. These accounts of Kyrgyz democracy are portrayed in national films and reinforce local beliefs about the unique Kyrgyz democratic character.

This reasoning has been challenged by political scientists who refer to the capacities of each state in understanding varying regime outcomes in the region. Moreover, the role and the personality of the leader have frequently been put forward as alternative explanations to why Kyrgyzstan is relatively open compared to its two other neighbours. Finally, economic wealth, geostrategic importance and hydrocarbons are

deemed to have shaped outcomes. Indeed, Matveeva noted that “a cynical assumption might be that those countries (such as Turkmenistan) which were confident in their attractiveness to foreign capital could show almost total disregard for democratic values and practices if it suited them, while resource-poor countries (such as Kyrgyzstan) had to demonstrate some additional appeal” (Matveeva 1999:30). In fact, external factors such as financial allocations are suspected to have altered local political culture, serving as an incentive for reform as leaders sought to attract funds as to ensure their political survival (Matveeva 1999:54).

9.8 Evaluation of Regime Types

Given the above it should come as no surprise that Central Asian regimes do not present fertile “breeding ground” for liberal norms or democratisation. As mentioned at the beginning of this Ph.D. thesis, a number of criteria can be looked at when evaluating the compatibility of a regime type with EU norm adoption, namely, the domestic costs of adopting rules for governments, the constellation of the party system (liberal/illiberal), the quality of political competition at the moment of regime change and the level of societal mobilisation. These criteria will now be applied to our three case studies.

In the case of Kazakhstan, the picture is rather bleak as domestic costs are high given that hydrocarbon resources are under the president’s control, the party system is not liberal, there is little competition and limited societal mobilisation. In the case of Uzbekistan, prospects are even gloomier given that the main source of revenue is controlled by the president and his family (cotton and currency exchange), the political system is very repressive, competition is not tolerated and there is no societal mobilisation, rendering domestic costs for norm adoption even higher. Finally, Kyrgyzstan gives reason for optimism even if this judgement is laced with ambivalence. The domestic costs are not high for the government as they hold on to fewer assets compared to the leaders of the other countries; the party system is far freer and there is greater competition as well as societal mobilisation. This can be negative however as it paves the way for instability, as illustrated through two revolutions in Kyrgyzstan. Of all the three, prospects remain best in Kyrgyzstan, followed by Kazakhstan and then at the very end, Uzbekistan.

Having gathered this information, it could be concluded that the effect of the regime type on the other variables is “mitigating” in the case of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and “ambiguous” for Kyrgyzstan. This means that the Uzbek and Kazakh regime types weaken the variables linkage, leverage and organisational power while the Kyrgyz regime type has an undefined impact on our independent variables.

Table 39: Effect of regime type on other variables

| Country | Impact on other variables |
|------------|---------------------------|
| Kazakhstan | Mitigating |
| Uzbekistan | Mitigating |
| Kyrgyzstan | Ambiguous |

Source: Own compilation

9.9 Evaluation of Main Factors Determining Norm Promotion Ability

Having analysed all the components outlined in the operationalisation section (linkage, leverage, organisational power, regime type) we are now equipped with sufficient information to evaluate the main factors determining norm promotion ability and to answer our main research question “what factors determine the EU’s norm promotion ability in Central Asia?”

Considering the data presented in the previous sections, it was found that all three variables played a significant role in the norm promotion process. However, both linkage and leverage were deemed crucial since norm adoption was higher in those states where those variables dominated. Still, the empirical data made it clear that organisational power - which is closely intertwined with regime type - determined the level of project implementation. The significance of this finding will now be developed on in the conclusion which follows.

PART FOUR: CONCLUSION

10. Conclusion

This Ph.D. thesis began with the intention of bringing greater information about a largely unknown region to Western scholarship. As Central Asia only recently appeared on the EU's radar, few works have been written regarding the EU's norm promotion policy in the region. Besides filling this gap, this thesis also sought to contribute to Levitsky and Way's research on the democratisation of competitive authoritarian regimes with the end of understanding why norms are adopted by autocrats. However, as this research endeavour focused on EU norm promotion in Central Asia, it modified the original model and adjusted it to the given context and purpose, thereby accounting for informational deficits. In doing so, it aimed to explain variation in norm adoption rates in a larger range of regimes than foreseen by Levitsky and Way, consequently supplementing their findings. Like the aforementioned scholars, this Ph.D. thesis embraced a rational institutionalist approach and posited that states are rational actors, driven by cost-benefit calculations rather than values. This fact had an influence on how norm adoption was assessed and on the focal point of analysis: less attention was paid to the individual while norm adoption concerned the legal and behavioural level, rather than internalisation of norms.

This chapter will begin by answering both the sub and main research questions of this Ph.D. thesis. In doing so, it will discuss the principal results of the research endeavour and match these to the hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the chapter on the theoretical framework. Subsequently, the lessons to be drawn for the field of political science are presented with special focus falling on regime types and organisational power. Next, it reflects on a number of issues related to the thesis such as the norm selection, the case selection, the regional selection, the potential for an intra-regional study, the operationalisation and the school of thought as to better understand the difficulties associated with the chosen approach. It will end by discussing future outlooks in the field of EU-Central Asian relations and norm promotion based on political developments in the EU and Central Asia.

10.1 Research Results

Answering the Sub-Question.

This Ph.D. thesis set out to answer the following sub-question: “how successful is the EU at spreading its norms in Central Asia?” with the objective of being able to compare the norm adoption levels of different states and consequently insert the data into the aforementioned model. This question was answered by evaluating three EU norm promotion endeavours - human rights, drug prevention and education projects - and comparing their implementation levels in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The analysis of the three norms and their implementation revealed that differences do exist from country to country and norm to norm. In the case of education, a relatively neutral domain, all three states partook in educational initiatives even if implementation was more profound and wide-sweeping in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In contrast, greater disparities could be noted in human rights projects as Kyrgyzstan was an active partner, Kazakhstan remained neutral and Uzbekistan placed numerous hurdles in the way of cooperation. Finally, limited differences were reported in the CADAP project as all three countries were relatively willing to partake in the initiative which was not perceived as a threat. These divergences are determined by the sensitivity of the norm, that is to say, the extent to which it is perceived as a menace to regime survival. Moreover, national priorities and government strategies are also likely to play a role in deciding whether countries show keen interest in projects.

Table 40: Overall outcome

| Country | Outcome: Education | Outcome: Human rights | Outcome: Security Norms | Average |
|------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------|
| Kazakhstan | Reasonable success 2 | Low/ Reasonable success 1.5 | Reasonable success 2 | 1,83 |
| Kyrgyzstan | Reasonable success* 2 | Reasonable success/ outstanding success* 2.5 | Reasonable success* 2 | 2,16 |
| Uzbekistan | Minor success 1 | Lack of success/ Low success 0.5 | Reasonable success 2 | 1,16 |

Source: Own compilation

Having these results, one can conclude that the EU is reasonably successful at spreading its norms in Central Asia, provided that these do not directly tackle human rights but target other more “neutral” areas such as education and public health. It is nonetheless wise to differentiate between the countries. Norm promotion is relatively successful in Kyrgyzstan, slightly less successful in Kazakhstan and least successful in Uzbekistan. While this outcome is not surprising, it is positive to note that even the most authoritarian regimes on earth can agree to some form of cooperation which can entail social benefits for its population. This should in no way be taken for granted as dictatorships such as Uzbekistan frequently show disregard for the concerns of the population at large and seek to protect their vested interests instead of embarking on risky cooperation projects.

Answering the Main Question

The main question looked at “what factors determine the EU’s norm promotion ability in Central Asia?” and concretely explored the role of linkage, leverage and organisational power in norm adoption. The main question was responded to by collecting relevant information pertaining to these variables as outlined in the chapter on the operationalisation of the variables. It was concluded that all three variables played an important role but that both linkage and leverage were decisive as norm adoption was higher in those states where these variables were strongest. However, organisational power - which was heavily influenced by regime type - determined the level of implementation. The outcome also corresponds to the rational institutionalist argument that those states which had more to lose from norm rejection due to higher linkage and leverage rates, were more willing to cooperate with the EU.

Linkage

Linkage included a range of components from trade, intergovernmental and informational ties to civil society and EU presence. The results showed that Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan sustain relatively high linkage rates to the EU, hovering between medium/high. In fact, their scores solely lay one point apart despite finding themselves at different stages of economic development. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan’s

ties were largely conditioned by economic and geopolitical interests whereas in the case of Kyrgyzstan, these were normative. Uzbekistan had a low score and was allocated to the category of low linkage. This is not surprising given the country's isolationist and hermetic stance. Moreover, its sole ties are with NATO and these are likely to fizzle out once the ISAF troops leave Afghanistan, thereby significantly reducing Uzbekistan's connections to the West.

Table 41: Linkage overview

| | Trade | Intergov. | Information | Civil Society | EU presence | Score | Total |
|--------|-------|-----------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| KAZ | H | H | M | M | M | 12 | H |
| KYRGYZ | L | M | M | H | H | 11 | M/H |
| UZB | L | M | L | L | L | 6 | L |

Source: Own compilation

Leverage

Leverage was made up of three principal components: economic leverage, competing foreign policy interests and competing powers. With regard to the first category, economic leverage was calculated by looking at trade, aid, and investments from the EU in Central Asia. It was thus solely concerned with unidirectional flows and how these factors empowered the EU to interfere with the cost-benefit calculations of actors. Competing foreign policy interests entailed an analysis of the policies of the different EU MS and their complementarity. The last part - competing powers - was the most substantive as Russia and China's policies and statuses were compared in the region as well as that of the SCO.

In terms of trade, the greatest dependence was noted between the EU and Kazakhstan, which conferred the EU high leverage. With regard to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, leverage rates were far lower. In the same vein, Kazakhstan enjoyed the most voluminous investments from the EU, and consequently leverage was deemed high in this instance too. This was not the case for Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan as these countries hardly trade with the EU - even if Uzbekistan's level moved in the direction of the middle - and EU investments are low. The picture for aid allocations was radically different. EU had high leverage over Kyrgyzstan due to its high aid

flows, which could not be stated for Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan as neither of these receive a lot of aid. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan has benefited from allocations from banks which raised leverage levels again for the EU even if this did not apply to the other two countries.

In terms of competitive EU foreign policy objectives, it is evident that the division within the EU between pragmatic and idealistic member states undermines EU foreign policy. This was evidenced by the debate over the lifting of the Andijan sanctions and Kazakhstan's OSCE membership. Taking into account the strategic interests of the MS, greatest coherence is to be expected with Kyrgyzstan, followed by Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. This is directly influenced by the importance they represent for different European countries. Again, as was the case with intergovernmental linkage, the dismantling of the Northern Distribution Network will remove one major source of incoherence in EU MS policy as Germany will no longer be torn between its security commitments on the one hand, and its ideals on the other.

Finally, the role of competing powers cannot be downplayed. China and Russia are competitors for the EU in the energy and security sphere and offer alternatives in terms of normative systems. Central Asian states thus have the benefit of having a number of partners to choose from, all of which have their own strengths and weaknesses. Such variety accounts for the multi-vector approach adopted by all the governments of the region through which relations with numerous states are upheld. This fact undoubtedly severely hinders the EU in its normative advances in this part of the world and largely explains the low norm adoption rates in Central Asia compared to other regions.

The results for leverage were as follows:

Table 42: Leverage overview

| | Status | Trade | Investments + Banks | Aid | MS policies | Powers | Score | Result |
|-------|--------|-------|------------------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|--------|
| KAZ | L | H | H | L | L | L | 11 | M |
| KYRGZ | H | L | L | H | H | M | 13 | M |
| UZB | M | M | L | L | L | L | 8 | L |

Source: Own compilation

Kyrgyzstan scored most vulnerable to EU leverage levels given its aid dependence and the relative indifference of the EU and international actors towards this country which harbours few strategic assets. Kazakhstan was deemed second most sensitive to EU leverage in light of the deep trade and investment relations in place between the EU and Astana, even if conflicting EU MS interests undermine the normative potential flowing from this. Finally, Uzbekistan had the strongest bargaining position vis-à-vis the EU as relations are underdeveloped while a range of actors desire to work with the regime in Tashkent, despite its repressive economic and political system. The presence of China and Russia significantly weakens the EU's position vis-à-vis all Central Asian governments, especially those which are strategically more important, namely Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This stems from the fact that governments can then pick and choose, thereby being disincentivised to make normative concessions.

Organisational power

In terms of organisational power, considerable differences could be noted between the three case studies. The richer states of the region, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan had better equipped armies and the capacity to crush any opposition. Moreover, their political elites were more loyal as they were granted a share of the state's pie and had fewer motivations to defect. In contrast, the poorer Kyrgyzstan was largely unable to control its territory due to financial constraints and also saw more frequent political turmoil, thereby equipping it with low organisational power. The result was that, while Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were in a position to either implement or prevent the implementation of norms, Kyrgyzstan frequently failed to act in line with its commitments due to such limitations despite its apparent willingness. This example clearly illustrates the either enhancing or disruptive role that organisational power plays in norm adoption.

Table 43: Organisational power overview.

| Country | Organisational Power |
|------------|----------------------|
| Kazakhstan | High |
| Kyrgyzstan | Low |
| Uzbekistan | High |

Source: Own compilation

Regime type

With regard to regime type, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were ranked as not free and Kyrgyzstan was the only country in the region to be classified as partly free. This attests to the fact that there is a relatively more liberal environment in the country which fosters norm adoption as EU norms are not diametrically opposed to the norms espoused by the governing elite. In contrast, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are likely to see EU principles as a threat to the status quo and as alien to their national governance systems, therefore doing their best to avoid contact with them. That said, the political culture of Kyrgyzstan is fundamentally more similar to that of the latter two than that of a Western democracy and consequently, norm promotion still entails challenges. However, relatively speaking, Kyrgyzstan presents the least challenging Central Asian case for norm promotion. It was thus concluded that the regime types of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan mitigate the effects of the independent variables whereas in Kyrgyzstan the effect is ambiguous.

Table 44: Regime type overview

| Country | Impact on other variables |
|------------|---------------------------|
| Kazakhstan | Mitigating |
| Uzbekistan | Mitigating |
| Kyrgyzstan | Ambiguous |

Source: Own compilation

It is interesting to note that Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan ranked the same in linkage and leverage rates and similarly in norm adoption levels, despite the fact that they do not have the same organisational power and regime type. This suggests that the latter two are secondary in determining whether norm adoption will take place but influence the depth of implementation. Looking at Uzbekistan's results further adds

weight to this argument as it fared low in linkage, leverage and norm promotion levels while Kazakhstan's levels were relatively high across the three. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that the norm promotion score was aggregated and that regime type is likely to influence the outcome more significantly when democracy-related norms are at stake. At the same time, organisational power affected Kyrgyzstan's overall norm promotion levels negatively, as these do not truly reflect the goodwill of the Kyrgyz side. With greater organisational power, Kyrgyz norm adoption levels would have been higher. This cannot be stated for the other two countries, who performed in line with their capabilities. Both organisational power and regime type thus influence outcomes and tamper with the results but are not sufficient to determine the extent of norm adoption on their own.

Table 45: Overall results

| | Linkage | Leverage | Organisational power | Regime type | Norm promotion score |
|------------|-------------|----------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Kazakhstan | High | Medium | High | Mitigating | 1,83 |
| Kyrgyzstan | Medium/High | Medium | Low | Ambiguous | 2,16 |
| Uzbekistan | Low | Low | High | Mitigating | 1,16 |

Source: Own compilation

The results of this thesis are in line with the initial findings of Levitsky and Way. Moreover, they help to further refine the theory and shed light on the functioning of the different variables. As expected, norm promotion was the worst in Uzbekistan which had low linkage to the EU and vis-à-vis which the EU enjoyed low leverage. While this is in line with the predictions of Levitsky and Way's theory, this analysis has succeeded in showing that organisational power can be used in either a positive or negative way. As Uzbek organisational power is high, the regime can either implement the norms it is interested in or resist implementation at the national level. This was seen in the case of CADAP to some extent as there was domestic support for OST but the government remained resistant and blocked its advances. Organisational power was thus used with the end of negatively affecting norm adoption. In contrast, in the case of Kyrgyzstan, lack of organisational power is at the root of superficial normative change in the education sector as the Kyrgyz state does

not have the capacity to fully implement the Bologna Process. In summary, stronger states such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, have the ability to enforce the norms they are interested in adopting and to reject those that are deemed incompatible with their governance regimes. Weak states like Kyrgyzstan are limited in their implementation capacities regardless of their commitment to reform.

Matching the Hypotheses

The hypotheses will now be analysed with the aim of judging if they correspond to the results. If the hypotheses appear to be out of line with the findings, these will be modified so that the true nature of the relationship between the variables can be portrayed. The first hypothesis to be analysed considers the relationship between linkage and leverage:

H1: the higher the linkage levels between the EU and a country, the higher the adoption rates.

In the case of this hypothesis, we expect norm adoption to be highest in those countries where linkage rates are highest. This means that adoption should be greater in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan than in Uzbekistan. This correlation could be noted as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan scored similarly in linkage and in norm adoption rates. Uzbekistan in contrast, which had lower linkage levels with the EU also had lower norm adoption rates. In fact, the difference was substantial and therefore indicates a probabilistic correlation. H1 was thus deemed to have accurately portrayed the causal relationship between the variable linkage and norm adoption.

H2: the higher the leverage levels between the EU and a country, the higher the adoption rates.

The second hypothesis undertook to test the relationship between leverage and norm adoption in Central Asia. The results confirmed that there is a positive correlation between leverage and norm adoption, as norm adoption is highest in those countries where EU leverage is highest. This was proven by the fact that the EU recorded both higher leverage and norm adoption rates in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. In contrast, norm adoption was lowest in the low leverage state Uzbekistan. H2 was therefore

considered to have correctly reflected the relationship between the variable leverage and norm adoption.

H3: the higher the organisational power of a country, the higher the adoption rates due to implementation potential

The third hypothesis sought to test the relationship between organisational power and norm adoption. It proved to be the most complex relationship to test as its results were more subtle. In the case of this thesis, both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan had high organisational power. However, Uzbekistan's norm adoption rate was low, compared to Kyrgyzstan which had low organisational power but relatively high norm adoption. This shows that the relationship between organisational power and norm adoption is not linear and is affected by other factors such as regime type. Regime type is believed to determine how governments use their organisational power as they can either foster or prevent norm adoption. At the same time, it is reasonable to predict that organisational power is to be used in a more positive way in states where linkage and leverage rates are high. H3 would thus have to be changed to: the higher the organisational power of a country, the greater the capacity of a country to implement norms in order to reflect this facet of its character.

H4: the more authoritarian a regime, the less likely it is do adopt EU norms.

The final hypothesis analysed the relationship between authoritarianism and norm adoption, positing that more liberal regimes would be more likely to adopt EU norms. In the case studies analysed, the least liberal state was most likely to reject EU norms. Once the coin was flipped, the picture was more multi-faceted as the difference between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan was not that large in terms of norm adoption. As a general rule one could thus state that being liberal alone is not enough to ensure norm adoption but is conducive to such practices. Still, as Kazakhstan's and Kyrgyzstan's rates were very similar despite substantial differences in regime type, the role of regime type must be seen as a secondary factor.

Null hypothesis: there is no link between norm promotion ability and linkage, leverage and organisational capacity.

This thesis has proven that there is a relationship between norm promotion ability, linkage, leverage and organisational power. Yet, while linkage and leverage resulted in higher adoption rates in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, organisational power limited the level of implementation possible in the latter case. The former two variables are thus seen as more significant in terms of the shaping of cost-benefit calculations whereas the latter influences the concrete means at a state's disposal when implementing its chosen course of action. For there to be successful norm adoption, organisational power is however essential as goodwill alone will not ensure implementation.

Further scientific findings

The results of this thesis have also demonstrated the validity of Levitsky and Way's framework beyond a range of regimes known as "competitive authoritarian". As Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were two of the principal case studies, this thesis has managed to test the aforementioned model on hegemonic regimes. In these regimes, even less competition exists in the political arena and politics is solely a game. The results of this thesis indicate that autocrats' cost-benefit calculations are affected in a similar manner for both regime types and that the degree of authoritarianism does not directly influence the potential of linkage and leverage. It is reasonable to believe that organisational power rises with authoritarianism as dictators need security forces to crush opposition and keep citizens in check. Nevertheless, the ability of a state to strengthen this aspect of its statehood also depends on its financial means, which means that low-resource dictatorships may fail to increase their organisational power to the desired level.

In addition, this endeavour has shed further light on the importance of organisational power in norm adoption. While organisational power alone is not sufficient to ensure norm adoption, government goodwill combined with such capacities will allow for effective implementation. Although this fact was recognised in previous scientific scholarship on the matter, the role of organisational power was not seen in a differentiated manner: scholars generally recognised that capacities influenced implementation, but not that those same capacities could be used to prevent implementation. Further research should delve into the disruptive capacities of

organisational power in norm adoption as well as meaningful countermeasures in order to render EU foreign policy more effective.

10.2 Lessons learnt and future research ideas

This section outlines the main lessons learnt and reflects on possible alternatives with the hope of potentially refining the study and providing fuel for further research on norm promotion in the region. It primarily contemplates the selection of norms, case studies and regions as well as an intra-regional study, the transposition of the model, the operationalisation and alternative schools of thought in this evaluation process.

Norm selection

Solely 3 norms were selected which limited the conclusions which could be drawn for this piece of research. A broader selection of norms, embodied in projects in the field of transport, the rule of law and border management for instance, may have shed greater light on the differences between the individual Central Asian countries. A future or follow-up study should undertake to explore further EU projects and norm promotion endeavours so as to complete the picture which has been drawn in this thesis. Be that as it may, this thesis selected three norms from different areas which varied in their levels of sensitivity and thereby provided a representative image of the EU's projects in the region. Such an approach paved the way for greater awareness relating to the difficulties associated with norm promotion in different fields of action, be it education, health or governance.

Case Study Selection

Focusing on 3 of the 5 Central Asian states reduced the richness of the study as neither Turkmenistan nor Tajikistan were included. However, as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are a representative sample, valid and important conclusions could be drawn on norm adoption in Central Asia. In fact, a relatively in-depth analysis of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was facilitated through this approach. Having taken all five countries as case studies would have limited the inclusion of information from other areas such as the historical context and the number of norms. Given that the identification of a correlation between linkage, leverage and organisational power was not the only objective of this thesis, greater

selectivity allowed for the shedding of light on the differences and similarities between each case. This helped to counter images of Central Asia as being one region without significant divergences.

To build on the findings of this thesis, future research including Turkmenistan and Tajikistan would be of added value and would testify to the broader validity of the research findings. Nevertheless, the challenging domestic context in Turkmenistan renders such an analysis near to impossible in the current political climate. The case of Tajikistan poses fewer difficulties and thus should be incorporated if academic support were to be found for such an endeavour. All in all, the selection of three countries, varying in levels of linkage, leverage and organisational power proved fruitful and served the purpose of this thesis. Restricting the research project to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan paved the way for a succinct overview of the states without sacrificing the robustness of the research endeavour. Nevertheless, if this thesis is to guide future policy in the region, more specific information on the remaining cases would be beneficial in order to add further weight to the findings.

Regional Selection

The region of Central Asia was selected on the grounds of its novelty as an area of study. While this rendered it possible for the researcher of this endeavour to collect a large amount of primary data, it also entailed a number of hurdles which slowed down the data collection process. These include linguistic and bureaucratic barriers, geographical distance, as well as the authoritarianism of the regimes under study.

With regard to the first factor - linguistic barriers - , it cannot be denied that knowledge of local languages would have benefitted the data collection process. Given that English is not widespread and local languages are gaining in importance at the expense of Russian, language barriers were noted at times. Nevertheless, discussions in foreign languages can present both hurdles and advantages. In the former case, communication is disrupted due to insufficient linguistic capacities, in the latter, the interlocutor feels more comfortable due to the fact that the foreignness of the interviewee renders him less threatening and accords him anonymity.

Linguistic barriers should thus not be presented in an entirely negative light as this researcher was frequently positively received despite not mastering local languages.

In terms of bureaucracy, visa issues placed a substantial hurdle in the way of data collection, especially in the case of Uzbekistan. While visas are required for all countries for long-term stays, Kyrgyzstan has relaxed its visa regulations and invites EU citizens to spend 60 days inside its borders without a visa. In contrast, both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan require a letter of invitation which complicates the process and spawns uncertainty. While Kazakhstan is relatively willing to let researchers move freely on its territory, the true travel purpose cannot openly be declared in Uzbekistan, which places the researcher in an uncomfortable position. Luckily, this researcher faced no such challenges besides having to deal with rude and capricious embassy staff.³⁹

Geographical distance is a barrier on two fronts. Firstly, Central Asia is far away from Europe, making travel to the region for fieldwork expensive, especially as a limited number of flights connect to the relevant capitals. This does not encourage spontaneous, short-term fieldtrips for the purposes of further data collection. Secondly, distances within the region combined with weak transportation networks, render travel complicated and time-consuming. Furthermore, not only are countries badly connected, but travel from one large city to another in the same country cannot be undertaken swiftly due to insufficient infrastructure. This limits the speed at which data can be collected and unnecessarily adds time to the interview process. This researcher dealt with this shortcoming by scheduling a three month interview period in the case study countries.

The authoritarianism of the regimes in question influences the researcher in a range of ways. Firstly, potential interviewees are afraid of talking about political issues openly, thereby failing to give an accurate picture of the situation in the country and interfering with the final evaluation process. Unexpectedly, hesitation and restraint were also noted with EU officials working in the region as these feared reprisals

³⁹ As an anecdote, it is worth knowing that the visa application process for Uzbekistan entailed calling the embassy every thirty minutes for 1 week. After each call, the applicant was instructed to call back in thirty minutes time before staff abruptly hung up.

through the shutting down of projects and visa refusals. Secondly, interviewees are often restricted in their movement, risk being imprisoned or harassed. The June 2014 arrest of Alexander Sodiqov - a Ph.D. researcher based at the University of Toronto - is the most pertinent example of this. The latter scholar was accused of espionage and spent several weeks in custody (Kumkova 2014). Such occurrences serve as a deterrent and explain why few researchers select this region as an area of study.

Intra-Regional Study

It could be argued that incorporating another region into the study as a point of comparison would have further enriched the endeavour. Potential regions for comparison could either be those taken from Levitsky and Way's sample or those with which the EU enjoys deep relations at the regional level. Examples for this could be North Africa, Central America or the Eastern Partnership countries. However, Central Asia is relatively unique in this context as linkages between the EU and Central Asia are exceptionally low for global standards and there are few regions which are real "equivalents". Moreover, it harbours two of the world's most authoritarian regimes as well as two near-failed states. This is one major advantage of the analysis as it highlights the difficulties associated with spreading norms in hostile environments. Moreover, as it is a region where few researchers willingly conduct research, one can find unexplored research areas with relative ease and therefore contribute to the field of political science. Countless studies have examined the EU's norm promotion activities closer to the EU's borders and therefore struggle to have the same added value.

Transposition of the Model

One of the main problems of transposing Levitsky and Way's model to the Central Asian context was the limited amount of information available on the operationalised components in the original framework. Working with one of the world's most closed regions, which harbours a number of formidable dictatorships, inevitably brings such constraints with it. Levitsky and Way focused on competitive authoritarian regimes which are per definition more liberal than hegemonic regimes as they at least attempt to uphold the façade of democracy. In the case of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, violations are so blatant and government denial of rights so apparent, that there are

few incentives to facilitate research on norm promotion. Moreover, the government is actively interested in promoting propaganda rather than encouraging true analysis. In contrast, competitive authoritarian regimes, in their attempt of feigning democracy, leave some room for manoeuvre. In consequence, data collection proved extremely challenging and required perseverance as well as local contacts. Nevertheless, considering what great research gaps existed in the field of EU-Central Asian relations, this thesis has made a positive difference to scholarship on the subject by addressing issues which had been entirely neglected. In fact, the added value of the topic under study was frequently highlighted by interviewees who regretted that no analysis of regional implementation disparities had been carried out previously.

Operationalisation

The operationalisation approach occasionally did not portray differences between categories proportionately, thereby failing to give a feeling for the true strength of a variable in a particular country. For instance, the difference in EU presence between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was minimal. However, Kazakhstan was qualified as medium linkage and Kyrgyzstan as high due to a difference in its population size. In contrast, the EU presence in Uzbekistan was deemed low. The categories low, medium and high do not give a true feeling for the component “EU presence” as the difference between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan was far greater than between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, they were all one category apart. This could potentially be rectified by including shades such as low+ or + medium – although this would further complicate the picture.

Furthermore, differences were later hidden through aggregation which meant that the specificity of a particular component was not reflected in the end result. As a consequence, it occurred that countries were assigned to the same category despite the fact that their performance varied to some extent. This could be stated for the case of linkage in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where the result was the same but the performance in each component was entirely different.

Moreover, borderline cases had to either be moved up or down a category which also had the potential of altering the results and the conclusions which could be drawn at the end. The example of the EU presence in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is a case in point. This form of operationalisation was thus considered a rather risky endeavour and required much thought. Future studies should try to rectify this problem by creating more specific indicators which reflect greater shades in variation but do not overcomplicate the picture.

Finally, it was a great challenge to include goodwill in the evaluation process. While this was attempted through the symbol of a star, it was difficult to reflect this in a scientific and objective manner in overall evaluations. As this is of central importance to norm promotion, goodwill should be mirrored in future frameworks and an updated model should be devised to cater for this factor. In fact, once goodwill and organisational power are combined, it is easier for the EU to shape states in accordance with its own norms.

School of Thought

This thesis adopted a rationalist-institutionalist approach and posited that human beings are incentive-driven animals. A non-rationalist approach which would not have focused on cost-benefit calculations would have allowed for greater emphasis to fall on concepts such as identity and culture as well as the intersubjectivity of EU-Central Asian relations. This would have enabled the analysis of causal mechanisms such as normative suasion which was the subject of Alexander Warkotsch's work in the region but still bears further research potential (Warkotsch 2008). However, as the states in question remain relatively closed and occasionally show hostility to EU norms, a rationalist approach was deemed the most efficient way of studying norm adoption in Central Asia.

This thesis could have incorporated a model which sought to analyse both the ideational and material forces at play in the norm adoption process. Such a model may have combined the hypothesised causal mechanisms of rational institutionalism with norm diffusion tools focusing on identity and persuasion as was the case of Manners. Nevertheless, as the latter's work largely concentrated on states where

incentives to adopt European norms were high due to the prospect of accession, these mechanisms are unlikely to capture norm adoption in the Central Asian context. Notwithstanding, this may be a worthwhile endeavour for researchers who have an advanced command of local languages and an understanding of the region.

10.3 Policy implications

This Ph.D. thesis is inevitably confronted with the question of the utility of norm promotion in hostile environments. At the same time, it also has sought to shed light on how to render norm promotion more effective by studying the interplay between the different variables. Relative norm promotion success in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan strongly speaks in favour of raising linkage rates with countries as leverage is difficult to control. As the EU is a large actor with substantial economic clout, it can trigger linkages through further investments in all three countries. Moreover, it can easily raise communication linkages by paving the way for greater internet access via educational projects, as was the case with GEANT and by backing local and foreign journalists reporting on the region. These findings apply to other regions around the world where the EU wishes to obtain greater influence: raising linkage levels should accentuate its pertinence and thereby allow the EU to interfere in the cost-benefit calculations of leaders be they hegemonic or competitive authoritarian autocrats.

Given the findings of this thesis, it could be argued that EU resources should be invested in those states where greater norm adoption success is probable. This approach will inevitably be heavily criticised by NGOs who wish to assist civil society and individuals where repression is the greatest. Having said that, the case of EIDHR and the human rights dialogues shows that Uzbekistan blocks those initiatives which are not to its liking and thus refuses to be influenced. One way of dealing with this moral dilemma is to focus on projects which enable for basic social needs to be met in such countries. As poverty is widespread, financing for basic services such as access to education and employment are likely to be deemed more salient than human rights promotion for instance. Funnelling EU aid into these sectors would enable funds to be used more efficiently and prevent the financing of seminars on human rights which solely serve as a travel opportunity for disinterested

officials. That way, countries with more promising civil society, such as Kyrgyzstan and to a lesser extent Kazakhstan could be prioritised with a view to guaranteeing that EU projects have a greater impact in those sectors where improvements are feasible. The allocations to date suggest that such a differentiated strategy is partly in place, although Uzbekistan receives funding in areas where it has proven totally uncooperative such as the rule of law. Finally, in order to sustain individuals involved in human rights work in such repressive environments, specific grants should be made available for such cases. However, it appears to make little sense to involve governments in these endeavours as they are often the root cause of the problem.

Moreover, contrary to critiques of EU incoherence in Central Asia, treating states differently depending on their regime types should result in greater norm adoption across the board. This stems from the fact that authoritarian regimes with high organisational power are unlikely to adopt norms they perceive as threatening in the first place. In contrast, weak states with low organisational power are not capable of adopting norms even if they have the desire to do so. The latter states should thus receive greater assistance at the expense of the former. It is largely futile to divert funds to projects which are doomed to fail just because one feels morally inclined to spread democracy in such environments. Funds should either flow to those areas where cooperation is endorsed, or to low organisational power - high goodwill contexts where greater backing can lay the ground for sustainable implementation. The rational allocation of funds will contribute to greater norm promotion potential in the long term as countries with greater cooperation capacity will be prioritised.

10.4 Future Outlook

EU-Central Asian relations have deepened substantially since the introduction of the Central Asia Strategy. In fact, the EU has succeeded in establishing blossoming trade relations with Kazakhstan and is an active donor in Kyrgyzstan. Similar trends can be expected with the rest of the countries of the region provided that the EU continues to show interest in them. Normative cooperation is likely to solely play a minute role in the day-to-day interaction between the two actors, especially as Central Asia will with great probability not embark on the path to democracy,

thereby removing the need for EU guidance. Yet EU projects can serve the purpose of tweaking the system in place, by indirectly fostering the respect for basic human rights inter alia. Once civil society grows in strength and political attitudes change, the EU will be able to provide more meaningful assistance. However, this is unlikely to happen in the short to medium term given the current regional context. At present, it is unrealistic to expect a transformation similar to that of Eastern Europe and to raise the bar for EU project success to the same level. Consequently, an approach whereby norms continue to be promoted but do not form the core of relations is to yield the greatest output.

Moreover, it is likely that Russia and China will continue to dominate in the region, thus further reinforcing autocratic governance structures. This is despite the fact that Russia saw a serious blow to its currency following Western sanctions over the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Central Asian migrants are returning from Russia en masse. Instead, such disruptions are likely to be of a short-term nature as the West will inevitably smooth out its relationship with Russia. In addition, it is clear that the EU does not have the capacities to counter the effects of Russian and Chinese policies in any realm apart from trade and investments. For instance, both these actors dominate in the political and security sphere. Be that as it may, multi-vectoral policies will continue to make the EU a coveted partner, especially given Russia's recent incursions into neighbouring territory which have triggered anxiety in the region. Nevertheless, this relationship may be largely restricted to areas beneficial to the governments in place, provided that the EU plays along and proves willing to further neglect the normative commitments it has pledged to pursue in its official strategies.

As the ISAF troops withdraw from Afghanistan, the strategic importance of countries such as Uzbekistan is likely to fall. This will facilitate a more concerted effort by the EU MS who are currently divided by their national interests in the country and are hesitant to speak to the Uzbek government in a more demanding tone, despite its violation of the most fundamental human rights. The consequent boost in leverage should make room for some concessions, even if Uzbekistan is likely to remain largely resistant given the nature of its ruling elite. In spite of this, there is reason to

believe that a potential outbreak of terrorism in the region, seeping over from Afghanistan, may push the elite to embrace the West in an attempt to ensure greater security in the country. At the same time, the rise of terrorism in Western countries, especially in light of the Charlie Hebdomadaire massacre in January 2015, may also incite greater “flexibility” in the EU regarding the human rights of suspected terrorists and allow for both to rally behind the common goal of stamping out extremism linked to the Islamic State in Syria.

Central Asia will almost inevitably be shaken by succession crises which may radically change the face of the regimes in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. While both states are consolidated authoritarian regimes, Kazakhstan has a more substantial Western-educated elite which may enjoy growing influence in the post-Nazarbaev period. These groups have the potential to reform the system and usher in greater political and civil liberties. In contrast, the level of oppression has been so great in Uzbekistan that the successor of Karimov is likely to come from the ruling elite and thus attempt to uphold the status quo. Moreover, even if competition in the form of a power struggle between different factions may result in instability in both countries, the ultimate winner of the contest is unlikely to be democratic in the Western sense of the term.

There is a high probability that the Kyrgyz trend of political instability will continue into the foreseeable future as the country’s governance structures are undermined by poverty, regionalism and corruption. While a change in the political system to parliamentarianism will curtail the powers of presidents, the abovementioned factors gnaw away at the democratic process. Kyrgyzstan will thus not cease to be an open partner to the EU but political turmoil and lack of implementation capacities shall further restrict the EU’s influence in the country and limit its potential as a norm promoter. Nonetheless, as the country is the beacon of hope for the region, it should receive the majority of democracy related funds with the aim of countering its organisational shortcomings.

The EU’s capacity to influence third states, especially those of Central Asia will also depend on internal developments. It is positive to note that regional and bilateral cooperation with Central Asia for the period of 2014-2020 is to total 1,068 billion

Euros, which is an increase of 56% compared to the period of 2007-2013 (European Council 2015). This must be seen against a backdrop where Europeans are increasingly stressing their own wellbeing in face of economic crises and heightened refugee flows. On the other hand, increases in financial aid and statements do not equate to real backing in times of upheaval: the EU's stance in the 2013-2014 conflict in Ukraine is indicative of the occasional hollowness of the EU norm promotion discourse. In fact, as the EU failed to stand by Ukrainian protesters during the period of political turmoil, there is little hope that European member states will succeed in offering meaningful support to those individuals potentially fighting for democratic change during the predicted succession period in Central Asia.

This fact indicates that Laidi's conception of the EU as a normative empire, which uses its economic might to impose its norms in pursuit of its interests accurately portrays EU foreign policy in the former Soviet Union. Manner's EU which is presented as a moral actor, seeking to spread its norms through persuasion thus loses in credibility. It appears that European insistence on its norms remains limited to those countries where linkage and leverage levels are sufficiently high to demand change. In contrast, the ring of states beyond this sphere enjoys sporadic backing by the EU, largely conditioned by its immediate strategic needs and capacities. In light of this, it is reasonable to call the EU a norm promoter, as norm promotion policies exist but this should by no means elevate the EU to a status of a morally superior actor.

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Annex

| Edition * | 1991-92 | | | 1992-93 | | | 1993-94 | | | 1994-95 | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----|--------|---------|----|--------|---------|----|--------|---------|----|--------|
| | Year(s) covered | | | 1991 | | | 1992 | | | 1993 | | |
| | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status |
| Kazakhstan | 5 | 4 | PF | 5 | 5 | PF | 6 | 4 | PF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Kyrgyzstan | 5 | 4 | PF | 4 | 2 | PF | 5 | 3 | PF | 4 | 3 | PF |
| Tajikistan | 5 | 5 | PF | 6 | 6 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |
| Turkmenistan | 6 | 5 | PF | 7 | 6 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |
| Uzbekistan | 6 | 5 | PF | 6 | 6 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |

| Edition * | 1996-97 | | | 1997-98 | | | 1998-99 | | | 1999-2000 | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----|--------|---------|----|--------|---------|----|--------|-----------|----|--------|
| | Year(s) covered | | | 1996 | | | 1997 | | | 1998 | | |
| | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status |
| Kazakhstan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Kyrgyzstan | 4 | 4 | PF | 4 | 4 | PF | 5 | 5 | PF | 5 | 5 | PF |
| Tajikistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 6 | 6 | NF | 6 | 6 | NF | 6 | 6 | NF |
| Turkmenistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |
| Uzbekistan | 7 | 6 | NF | 7 | 6 | NF | 7 | 6 | NF | 7 | 6 | NF |

| Edition * | 2000-01 | | | 2001-02 | | | 2003 | | | 2004 | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----|--------|---------|----|--------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|
| | Year(s) covered | | | 2000 | | | 2001 | | | 2002 | | |
| | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status |
| Kazakhstan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Kyrgyzstan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Tajikistan | 6 | 6 | NF | 6 | 6 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Turkmenistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |
| Uzbekistan | 7 | 6 | NF | 7 | 6 | NF | 7 | 6 | NF | 7 | 6 | NF |

| Edition * | 2005 | | | 2006 | | | 2007 | | | 2008 | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----|--------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|
| | Year(s) covered | | | 2004 | | | 2005 | | | 2006 | | |
| | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status |
| Kazakhstan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Kyrgyzstan | 6 | 5 | NF | 5 | 4 | PF | 5 | 4 | PF | 5 | 4 | PF |
| Tajikistan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Turkmenistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |
| Uzbekistan | 7 | 6 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |

| Edition * | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | 2012 | | |
|-----------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|
| | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status |

| Year(s) covered | 2008 | | | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | |
|-----------------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|
| | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status |
| Kazakhstan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Kyrgyzstan | 5 | 4 | PF | 6 | 5 | NF | 5 | 5 | PF | 5 | 5 | PF |
| Tajikistan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Turkmenistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |
| Uzbekistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |

| Edition * | 2013 | | | 2014 | | |
|--------------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|
| | PR | CL | Status | PR | CL | Status |
| Kazakhstan | 6 | 5 | NF | 6 | 5 | NF |
| Kyrgyzstan | 5 | 5 | PF | 5 | 5 | PF |
| Tajikistan | 6 | 6 | NF | 6 | 6 | NF |
| Turkmenistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |
| Uzbekistan | 7 | 7 | NF | 7 | 7 | NF |

| Interview Number | Date | Organisation type |
|------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 06.08.2012 | GIZ |
| 2 | 06.08.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 3 | 07.08.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 4 | 07.08.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 5 | 07.08.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 6 | 08.08.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 7 | 08.08.2012 | EU Consultant |
| 8 | 08.08.2012 | CADAP |
| 9 | 09.08.2012 | NGO Kyrgyzstan |
| 10 | 10.08.2012 | NGO Kyrgyzstan |
| 11 | 28.08.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 12 | 30.08.2012 | Foundation Almaty |
| 13 | 30.08.2012 | Kazakh NGO Almaty |
| 14 | 31.08.2012 | UNODC |
| 15 | 03.09.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 16 | 03.09.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 17 | 03.09.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 18 | 04.09.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 19 | 04.09.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 20 | 05.09.2012 | EU Delegation |
| 21 | 06.09.2012 | GIZ |
| 22 | 06.09.2012 | British Embassy |
| 23 | 07.09.2012 | Kazakh Ombudsman |
| 24 | 07.09.2012 | French Embassy |
| 25 | 12.02.2013 | International NGO |
| 26 | 01.11.2013 | Research Institute |
| 27 | 01.11.2013 | Research Institute |
| 28 | 04.11.2013 | EU Delegation |
| 29 | 04.11.2013 | EU Delegation |
| 30 | 05.11.2013 | Think tank Uzbekistan |
| 31 | 08.12.2013 | University Kyrgyzstan |
| 32 | 09.12.2013 | UN Kyrgyzstan |
| 33 | 09.12.2013 | EU Delegation |
| 34 | 09.12.2013 | EU Delegation |
| 35 | 09.12.2013 | EU Delegation |
| 36 | 09.12.2013 | Tempus Kyrgyzstan |
| 37 | 07.02.2014 | DEVCO Brussels |
| 38 | 07.02.2014 | DEVCO Brussels |
| 39 | 07.02.2014 | DEVCO Brussels |
| 40 | 07.02.2014 | DEVCO Brussels |
| 41 | 10.02.2014 | EEAS Brussels |
| 42 | 10.02.2014 | EEAS Brussels |
| 43 | 10.02.2014 | EEAS Brussels |