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Islamic Legacy beyond Islam: The Case of Uzbekistan

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Abstract

Centuries of dominance of Islam in the political systems of countries where Muslims make up a majority, as well as political, economic and cultural exchanges that were fostered by Islam, lead us to suggest the existence of Islamic legacy in public administration (PA). This article examines Ideology of National Independence in Uzbekistan and identifies several mental models rooted in the Islamic legacy. The deficit of legitimacy experienced by the Uzbek government after the collapse of the Soviet Union has created conditions for explicit use of the Islamic legacy to address the legitimacy problem. The internalization on the part of Uzbek civil servants of the mental models rooted in the Islamic legacy has also affected its sense of purpose and coherence as well as Uzbekistan's response to the outside pressure for reforms.

Keywords: Islamic Public Administration, Islamic legacy, Uzbekistan, mental models.

1. Introduction

Despite the important role the Islamic legacy still plays on the mass-culture level, there has been limited research on its effect on the state administration in Islamic countries (see Drechsler 2013a; 2013b). Analyzing the literature on the national ideology of Uzbekistan, this study finds that the Islamic legacy was used in Uzbekistan in order to fill the ideological gap that emerged in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Uzbek government used the mental models rooted in the Islamic past in order to legitimize its continuous hold on power. These mental models also had an effect on the sense of purpose and coherence of the Uzbek civil service and the way it responded to the pressure to reform. This study provides support for the existence and relevance of Islamic legacy in PA.

The 19th and 20th centuries saw Islamic legacy in retreat across the globe as Muslim countries struggled to deal with the challenges brought about by the growing preeminence of the European colonial powers. National liberation movements patterned on the European models and appealing to the European values of national

self-determination came to dominate the Muslim countries across North Africa, the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia. Most of them were either anti-religious or merely tolerated Islam (Salem 1962).

Islamic legacy has lost its centrality in the administrative systems of the majority of Islamic countries. Yet, the World Values Survey that has assessed over 60 countries along the Traditional/Secular-rational and Survival/Self-expression dimensions found considerable persisting similarities among Muslim societies. Countries where Muslims comprised a majority of the population tended to score high on the Traditional and Survival values (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). The Islamic legacy embodied in values and cultural traits seems to be still relevant across many Islamic countries, so why is this fact not reflected in the institutions and administrative structures of these countries?

One possible explanation could be that Islamic legacy is still present in the administration but due to certain incentive structures, countries with majority Muslim populations might be more interested in emphasizing consistency rather than divergence of their administration systems from the mainstream public-administration structures and practices. Isomorphic mimicry is a biological term that signifies a process in which one organism imitates the other in order to gain evolutionary advantage. Similarly organizations or even whole countries could choose to imitate the outer appearance of mainstream PA systems driven by the desire to secure legitimacy, pressured to conform to institutional structures of the more powerful countries and giving-in to the normative influences of professional associations (DiMagio and Powell 1983). These conditions make the study of Islamic legacy in PA more challenging and require a focus on less tangible aspects such as values and mental models that provide a basis and shape the formal aspects of state administration.

Uzbekistan provides an interesting case for the study of effects of Islamic legacy on state administration. On one hand, various states with developed governance systems were located on the territory of modern Uzbekistan, and places like Bukhara, Samarkand and Khorezm were important political and cultural centers of the Islamic world. On the other hand, Uzbekistan had a seventy-year-long history of being part of the Soviet Union, during which it has experienced massive efforts aimed at eradicating past cultural, social and administrative practices while instilling a new identity and new values. In addition there has been a certain continuity between the leadership of Uzbek SSR and Uzbekistan, most clearly visible in the persona of the president of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, who had also served as the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbek SSR. What makes this case particularly valuable is that, upon Uzbekistan gaining its independence, the Uzbek elite has been very active in formulating a new ideology. The body of literature on the Ideology of National Independence provides rich material for the study of various values and mental models that served as a basis for the administrative system.

The following section deals with the nature and interpretation of Islamic legacy in PA. The next section examines factors that have contributed to the loss of prestige and relevance of the Islamic legacy in PA. The third section focuses on the case of Uzbekistan and the reasons why Uzbek government chose to make explicit use of Islamic legacy. The fourth section examines the Ideology of National Independence (INI) in Uzbekistan and its functions. The fifth section looks at mental models

imbedded in the INI and their effect on coherence and sense of purpose of civil service as well as the pace and directions of reforms. Finally, I will conclude with a discussion of implications of this research.

2. Islamic legacy in PA

Unlike other world religions, such as Christianity or Buddhism, Islam has been intertwined with state administration from its very beginnings. The spread and exchange of ideas on administration between Islamic countries was facilitated by strong trade ties and exchanges of scholars and officials. Islam was an important factor facilitating trade, the exchange of ideas, and the movement of people. The strength of the trade networks between Muslim countries was one of the key factors behind the voluntary conversion to Islam that took place in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (Insoll 2003; Ricklefs 2001). Similarly, the Sufi orders that played an important role in the spread of Islam also contributed to maintaining links and an exchange of ideas between different Muslim territories. In some sense they often stepped in to bridge the gaps that formed in times of political instability and rivalry between various local rulers in Iran and Central Asia (Potter 1994; Siddiqui 2012). The networks of religious and legal scholars were also an important way how legal knowledge and practices spread in the Islamic countries. The remarkable story of travels of Ibn Battuta is illustrative of the prestige and considerable mobility across the Islamic countries afforded to those knowledgeable of Islamic law. Thus, Ibn Battuta (1304-1368/69), who was trained in the Maliki jurisprudence, was able to find employment as a judge in places as distant from his native Tangiers as the Delhi Sultanate and the Maldives Islands (Lawrence 2009). Similarly Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) of Tunis and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838/39-1897) also traveled extensively and held offices in several Islamic states in North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, respectively (Salem 1962). The considerable influence of Islam on all aspects of life, as well as the diversity and density of links between Islamic countries leads us to suggest the existence of a legacy in PA that is common to Islamic countries.

As with any complex phenomenon, the Islamic legacy in PA is multifaceted, and different stages in the development of Islam have left different influences on the state administration. Tribal affiliation and values played an important role in the time when the first Muslim community was established. The "Constitution of Medina" speaks to the importance of tribal affiliations. This agreement conceived by Muhammad between his Meccan and Medinese followers names not individuals but various tribes as parties to it (Cook 2014, 22). In the life-time of Muhammad, Muslims constituted a relatively small and closely knit group that lacked the hierarchy common to its Persian or Byzantine neighbors. Equality and solidarity modeled after the values that characterized the Arabian tribe were more prominent in the early days of Islam. (Salem 1962).

The dramatic expansion of the first Islamic state that took place under the rule of Caliph Umar saw Islam moving away from its tribal roots. The conquest of the former territories of the Persian and Byzantine empires led to the transfer of knowledge about administration practices that was accumulated there over the centuries. In addi-

tion, as the Islamic states grew and expanded, a new body of knowledge on administration was generated and incorporated into the Islamic administrative tradition. Among these works were *Mabadi' ara' ahl al-madina al-fadila* (*Virtuous City*) (1985) by Al Farabi (872-950/51), *Qudatgu Bilig* (*Wisdom of Felicity*) (1983) by Yusuf Khass Hajib (1021-1075/86), and the *Siyasatnama* (*The Book of Government*) (1960) by Nizam al Mulk (1018-1092).

Considering the richness and diversity within the history of administration in Islamic countries, the questions of what constitutes the Islamic legacy and to what extent this legacy is open to interpretation have been highly controversial. The conservative interpretation often limits Islamic legacy only to Sharia. The Islamic tradition holds that Sharia is a God-given law, and its legislation was complete with the death of Muhammad, the messenger of God. Any later additions to Sharia were done only as interpretations and extrapolations of the God-given law. An example of this narrow interpretation of the Islamic legacy could be glimpsed from the criticism of the Kuwaiti constitution by the conservatives. The constitution of Kuwait designates Sharia as a *principle* source of legislation. This formulation has been ridiculed by one of the jihadi ideologues who likened it to a designation of God as merely one of the principle gods (Cook 2014, 282)

A broader and less rigid definition of Islamic legacy is based on the history of administration in Islamic countries, which is full of examples of bringing Islamic laws into accordance with the "man-made laws". The two main ways how this accord was achieved were through creative interpretation of the Sharia and through the coexistence of Sharia with other legal systems (Cook 2014, 271-276). For example, the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence used "hiyal", or the legal stratagems to evade the prohibition on the charging of interest (Ismail 2010). Also, in the Ottoman Empire, "Qanun", an Arabic word of Greek origin, was used to signify steppe traditions and latter, state-made laws that functioned in parallel with the Islamic law. Similarly in Central Asia, under the rule of Timurids, "Yasaq", or the code of Chingiz Khan, was observed on par with Sharia (Cook 2014).

Despite the considerable influence Islam used to exert on political life, and the richness and relative sophistication of administrative practices in Islamic countries, Islamic legacy can be barely traced in contemporary PA systems. The following section discusses some of factors that led to this situation.

3. Islamic legacy in retreat

One of the key reasons for the loss of relevance of Islamic legacy has been the economic and political decline experienced by Islamic countries in the past two centuries. The growing technological, industrial and military superiority of the European powers by the end of the 19th century resulted in the situation where an overwhelming majority of territories outside of Europe were either colonized or fell under the European protectorate. Karl Deutsch has defined power as "the priority of input over intake, the ability to talk instead of listen … the ability to afford not to learn." (1963, 111). In the 20th century, as probably never before, Muslim countries felt the need to learn. The gap between the aspirations and achievements of Islamic societies gave birth to a wide variety of political and religious reform movements. Few of these

movements rejected the need to learn from the European powers, but they did vary considerably in terms of what and how much should be learned.

The practice of learning from abroad was common to Islamic polity. In the siege of Medina, a Persian follower of Muhammad had suggested to dig a defensive trench as it was often done in Persia, at that time still an infidel country. Muslims adopted this recommendation and were able to overcome the enemy. The battle itself was named the battle of Khandaq or the "battle of the Trench" (Cook 2014). There is a tradition according to which Muhammad, once realizing that he had given bad advice on the cultivation of palm trees, told the growers that they had a better understanding of these worldly affairs than he did (Cook 2014, 252). This tradition was often used to justify the adoption of knowledge that lay outside of religious doctrine. The flourishing of theological tradition based on rational thought – Mu'tazila in the 8th and 9th centuries, was precipitated by the translation of many Greek philosophical texts into Arabic. The Greek influence on the development of medicine and the natural sciences in the early period of the Islamic caliphate was also considerable (Rosenthal 1994). In later years, Islamic countries maintained a similarly pragmatic approach, transferring knowledge from European, Indian and Chinese sources. Despite the long traditions of learning from others, it was always done from a position of power. Even when in the 13th century many of the Islamic countries were conquered and devastated by the Mongol armies, it was the Mongols who eventually adopted religion, culture and administrative practices of the conquered population.

The 20th century saw a dramatic departure from this trend. Whereas before, Muslim societies were willing to adopt techniques of other cultures but actively avoided foreign values (Cook 2014, 264), by the 20th century governments of Muslim countries began a full-scale transfer of European values and institutions. One exception from this trend were the Gulf monarchies, which were able to continue to actively adopt foreign techniques while resisting the pressure to adopt foreign values. At the same time, the economic and political conditions of these states were so unique that this made them unlikely role models for other Islamic states.

The true embodiment of the trend that was taking place across the Islamic countries were the reforms in Turkey under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk. Previously the rulers of the Ottoman Empire held titles of both the Sultan and the Caliph of Islam (on Ottoman PA, see Drechsler 2013b). After coming to power the nationalists led by Ataturk made a conscious effort to distance themselves from Islam and Islamic legacy. In 1924, the institution of the Caliphate was abolished, and the Turkish leadership embarked on a mission of secularizing and in many ways Europeanizing the government of Turkey. Such a swift transfer of institutions and values from abroad without rooting them in the local traditions and reality created situations where two different sets of values were espoused by different social groups. The chasm that this approach created within the society was most easily visible in the differences in architecture, clothing and practices in different parts of Islamic cities. In many Muslim countries new European-style parts of the cities were inhabited by civil servants and professionals, while the traditional city neighborhoods that often lacked basic infrastructure housed the urban poor and rural migrants (Ansary 2010).

Yet in few Islamic countries this transfer of European institutions and values could be called truly successful. The radical departure from traditional values and legacy institutions embodied in this approach denied the governments useful sources of legitimacy. Likewise, attempts to fit the local realities into the borrowed ready-made models wasted valuable social resources, disrupted social cohesion and made both governance and administration less effective. The problems often lay not in the European institutions or values themselves but in the ways they were adopted and the reasons behind the push to adopt them.

The drive to transfer European institutions and administrative systems was motivated by the desire to be competitive. Yet the way the transfer was carried out and the way these institutions function today point to the fact that the competitiveness goal could have been supplanted or even replaced by other goals. Isomorphism, a concept from organizational theory, is helpful in explaining the motivations behind the drive of Islamic countries to conform to the European administrative structures and practices. Isomorphism describes the trend towards homogenization among organizational forms. When certain organizations become established in a field, other organizations learn from them and end up looking similar to them. DiMagio and Powell (1983) have argued that often this process of organizational homogenization is determined by factors other than the need to stay competitive or efficient. In fact, in many organizations such homogenization occurs without any gains in efficiency. Unlike the competitive isomorphism which, as its name suggests, is motivated by the need to stay competitive, institutional isomorphism is driven by the desire to gain legitimacy (coercive isomorphism), deal with uncertainty (mimetic processes) and respond to the normative pressures exerted through formal education and professional networks.

Coercive isomorphism represents formal and informal pressures exerted by more powerful organizations and countries on the weaker ones in order to secure their conformity. The efforts of developing nations to copy Western administrative practices were often motivated by the need to gain legitimacy and access to funds rather than actual efforts to increase competitiveness (Andrews 2009). The level of absurdity which this trend of mimicking everything European has reached can be glimpsed from the state policies that enforced European attire in Islamic countries (Moors 2011). Productivity gains from the way civil servants dress are highly questionable, but looking "modern" was important for securing the legitimacy and recognition of the European powers.

Another mechanism through which the institutional isomorphism takes place is mimicry. When dealing with ambiguous goals or an uncertain environment, organizations often choose to model other successful organizations instead of creating their own solutions. The problem of this approach is that certain institutional and administrative models are often borrowed without any evidence that they actually enhance efficiency. The lack of local administrative capacity, the aversion of risk associated with administrative innovation and the high esteem accorded to the European practices made a wholesale transfer of foreign practices a prudent career choice for many civil servants.

Finally, the normative influence of formal education and professional networks also played an important role in the organizational homogenization process. In the

case of Islamic countries, Western education was an integral part of modernization efforts. For many civil servants and government officials their Western education was an important source of legitimacy and a basis for their career growth. As the relationship between modernization and the Islamic legacy was framed as dichotomous, civil servants and public officials often found themselves opposing if not actively eradicating Islamic legacy in PA.

The first insight that the research on institutional isomorphism provides us is that some of the contemporary problems with administration in Islamic countries could be caused by wrong motivations guiding the transfer of the best practices from abroad. The second insight is that in the same way as biological isomorphism leads to similarities between the dorsal fins of sharks and dolphins, institutional isomorphism, too, could lead to superficial similarities in the administrative structures of different countries. Accordingly, just as one seeing a dorsal fin might still have to look under the surface of the water to identify a dolphin or a shark, so, too, researchers interested in studying Islamic legacy in PA should look beyond the outer appearances of administrative systems.

Capitalizing on these insights the article aims to search for Islamic legacy not in the actual administrative structures but in values and mental models that underlie these structures. The following section examines the case of Uzbekistan and some of the motivations behind the search by the Uzbek ruling elite for new mental models.

4. Uzbekistan and the crisis of legitimacy

The case of Uzbekistan is interesting due to at least four reasons. On the one hand, Uzbekistan has a long tradition of state administration as three independent states: Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand Khanates were located on its territory in the pre-colonial period. On the other hand, Uzbekistan has been part of the Soviet Union for almost seventy years and has undergone a process of aggressive eradication of traditional value systems, institutions and practices. In addition, unlike in some other former-Soviet states there has been considerable continuity in the country's leadership. This is most vividly illustrated by the fact that the current president of Uzbekistan was also the last First Secretary of the communist party of the Uzbek SSR. Finally, responding to the challenges to its legitimacy, the Uzbek political elite took a considerable interest in formulating a national ideology, and a well-developed body of literature has been published on this subject. This literature is especially valuable for the identification of Islamic legacy embodied in the mental models that make up the foundation of Uzbekistan's system of government.

Although Islamic legacy might have been present in the administrative practices in Uzbekistan even during the Soviet Union, the deficit of legitimacy that the Uzbek government faced after achieving its independence created a need to make an explicit use of this legacy. Initially Islamic legacy was used mainly to address the issue of government legitimacy, but in later stages, it also shaped the response to the problems of disillusionment and disorientation of civil servants and lack of capacity for policy learning from abroad.

The deficit of legitimacy experienced by the Uzbek government at the dawn of the country's independence stemmed from two main sources. Firstly, the Uzbek

government did not really push for the country's independence, and secondly, in its core, it still consisted of the same communist leadership that led the Uzbek SSR. While the authorities of Armenia, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and Moldova boycotted the March 1991 referendum on the preservation of the USSR, in Uzbekistan the referendum turnout was 95.5 percent with 94.9 percent of those voting in favor of the preservation of the union (Nohlen, et al. 2001). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the leadership of other former Soviet states drew their legitimacy from their experience of fighting for independence or from the membership in the democratic opposition. The Uzbek government, however, was only a reluctant observer rather than an active participant of the dissolution process (Olcott 1992).

The communist utopian project was already losing its appeal in the last decades of the existence of the USSR and this process was hastened by the liberalization and raising of the Iron Curtain that occurred under Gorbachev. In this period several ideologies, including nationalism and political Islam, were vying for dominance in Uzbekistan. Uzbek authorities actively resisted the pressure for democratization and liberalization that was emanating from Moscow. One of the examples of this resistance was the refusal to register the Party of Islamic Renaissance in Uzbekistan. While this party was allowed to hold its first constituent conference in July 1990 in Astrakhan, Russia, attempts to hold a similar meeting in Uzbekistan were prohibited by the Uzbek authorities (Abduvakhitov 1993).

After the declaration of independence, the Uzbek leadership saw the need to distance itself from the communist past. Officially the communist party seized to exist and was banished from the territory of Uzbekistan, whereas de-facto it transformed itself into the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (Sengupta 2003). Islam Karimov was nominated to run in the presidential elections on the NDPU ticket in 1991. Yet such crude "rebranding" was easily recognizable. One of the representatives of the religious activists described the situation in the following way: "In Russia the [Communist] party is prohibited, but in our republic it is not. Communism is still strong in Uzbekistan, and everything is being done to preserve it, even by changing the party's name." (Abduvakhitov 1993, 88) The Uzbek leadership needed more than just a name-change; in order to stay in power they had to come up with a new ideology.

5. Goals of the Ideology of National Independence

In his 1992 speech shortly after the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, President Karimov declared that "Uzbekistan is a country with a great future" (Karimov 1992, 1). This greatness was to be ensured through the adoption of a new ideology that has become known as the Ideology of National Independence. President Karimov coined the term and authored numerous books describing its main tenets.

The key goals of the new ideology were to weaken the appeal of the nationalist and Islamist parties while also legitimizing the continual hold on power by the regime and emphasizing its developmental and technocratic credentials. To achieve the first goal, the Ideology of National Independence (INI) was given a considerable

traditionalist character. It was to be "based on the centuries-old traditions, customs, language, and spirit of our people" (Karimov 1993b, 13). Due to the communist past and highly secularist attitudes among the Uzbek leadership, it was quite predictable for Islamic legacy to be framed as a return to traditional values (for the description of a similar trend of Ottoman and Confucian PA traditions persisting not thanks to but despite the wishes of the local elites, see Drechsler 2013b). The ideas propagated by the opposition movement were portrayed as foreign to Uzbek people. The ideological vacuum that was brought about by Perestroika and the competition of different ideologies that followed it were viewed extremely negatively by Uzbek authorities. President Karimov warned against this ideological vacuum and argued that a national ideology should provide "ideological immunity" (Karimov 2001, 204) against dangerous foreign ideas.

> It's certain that we have rejected false communist ideas that are alien to our national nature and our thousand-years-old traditions and customs. At the same time, vacuum in the ideological sphere is unacceptable, if such situation is to occur, without doubt foreign ideas, absolutely alien to our dreams and aspirations, will try to occupy this space. (Karimov 2000, 478)

The new ideology has also emphasized the developmental goals and technocratic nature of the former-communist leadership that was still in power. The two main sets of goals that the Ideology of National Independence strived to achieve were (1) stability and security and (2) development.

> Today, the entire logic of the last years encourages us to address three basic issues that will condition Uzbekistan's future: how should security be preserved, how stability should be preserved, and how can sustainable development on the road to progress be achieved? These simple words – security, stability and sustainability – have deep meaning that we must comprehend. (Karimov 1998, 3)

The conservative values of stability and security fit well with the idea that the current leadership should be preserved. One of the early slogans propagated by the Uzbek government and posted in various public spaces in Uzbekistan was "Don't Destroy the Old House before Building the New One" (Karimov 1993a). Choosing development as one of the main national goals also strengthened the legitimacy of the ruling elite as they portrayed themselves as technocrats experienced in development. Economic development was one of the key stated goals of the communist party. Lenin even once defined communism as "Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country" (Arndt 1989, 41). Karimov was able to lay a claim to the development legacy of the previous regime by arguing that he, just like a considerable part of the Communist party members, was a technocrat that enabled the state machinery to function. (Levitin and Charlisie 1996).

6. Mental models imbedded in the Ideology of National Independence

There are two important mental models that become evident at closer analysis of the Ideology of National Independence. Both of them take their roots in Islamic legacy. The first mental model is the use of the body as a metaphor to describe a country, while the second one is the use of metaphor of a physician to describe the role of the ruler. This is reflected in the use of the term "ideological immunity" (Karimov 2001, 204). The word immunity conjures an image of competing ideologies as viruses attacking a body/state while also implying the need for intervention on behalf of the body if it is not strong enough to withstand the negative influence from outside (March 2003). The body metaphor has a long history in the Islamic political philosophy. Thus, al Farabi in his *Mabadi' ara' ahl al-madina al-fadila* or the *Virtuous City* (1985) argues that ideal political order is similar to cosmic structure and the human physiology (El Fekkak 2012). Al Farabi argues that in the same way as there is a clear hierarchy in the human body, with the heart occupying the ruling function and other body organs subservient ones, so, too, in the city there is a clear hierarchy between people.

> The excellent city resembles the perfect and healthy body, all of whose limbs co-operate to make the life of the animal perfect and to reserve it in this state. Now the limbs and organs of the body are different and their natural endowments and faculties are unequal in excellence, there being among them one ruling organ, namely the heart, and organs which are close in rank to that ruling organ … Other organs, in turn, perform their functions according to the aim of those which are in the second rank, and so on until eventually organs are reached which only serve and do not rule at all. (Abu Nasr al-Farabi 1985, 231-233)

Similarly, "ideological immunity" seems to take its roots in al Farabi's writing as he compares ignorant ways of life to diseases and calls for the ruler to safeguard the virtuous modes of life in the city similarly as a physician would protect the health of the body.

> The first virtuous kingly craft consists of cognizance of all the actions that facilitate establishing the virtuous ways of life and dispositions in cities and nations, preserving them for the people, and guarding and keeping them from the inroad of something from the ignorant ways of life – all of those being sicknesses that befall the virtuous cities. In this sense, it is like the medical craft; for the latter consists of cognizance of all the actions that establish health in a human being, preserve it for him, and guard it from any sickness that might occur. (Abu Nasr al-Farabi 2001, 104)

Al Farabi's writings were used by Uzbek ideologues to justify the authoritarian conception of politics in Uzbekistan (March 2002). Presidential adviser Habibullah Tadzhiev, echoes al Farabi's hierarchical vision of the political organization of the city as he states that the "national interest is recognized from the top of the pyramid of social control in the process of interpreting of strategic needs of national develop-

ment, which often cannot be understood by certain bodies of government, agencies, individuals" (Tadzhiev 1999, 47). In Tadzhiev's interpretation the philosopher-king described by al Farabi in the *Mabadi' ara' ahl al-madina al-fadila* becomes a "philosopher-politician, which can be understood as an ideologue who establishes a conception of how society should develop, on the basis of which relationships and laws of behavior" (Tadzhiev 1999, 45). In the same text Tadzhiev refers to President Karimov as "leader-ideologue" or "politician-ideologue".

Although these mental models were used primarily to legitimize the ruling elite's hold on power and to suppress political contestation, due to their widespread use it is inevitable for them to have an influence on other aspects of government, more specifically on the coherence and sense of purpose of civil service as well as on the way reforms were carried out.

6.1. Reforms and pressure to conform

The authenticity claim of the Ideology of National Independence and the responsibility assigned to civil service for the "ideological immunity" of the society provided the policymakers with a wider policy space as the government was able to refer to the uniqueness of the "Uzbek way" and pick and choose from outside experience while not being liable to pressure to follow a particular model of development or political system. While the Uzbek government was subject to pressure from the IMF and the World Bank (Pomfret 2000) to carry out economic liberalization reforms, the guardian/physician role internalized by the president and by civil servants created an expectation that they would pay special attention to the social welfare. To a certain degree these mental models could help explain the gradual liberalization and active attempts by the state to address the growing income inequality. Mental models rooted in the Islamic legacy have made the political contestation superfluous, at the same time this put the full burden of responsibility for the economic development of the country on the government.

6.2. Coherence and sense of purpose of civil service

The use of the state-as-a-body mental model creates a perception of very clear structure, unity and centralized control (March 2003). One body with one head, this metaphor is very appropriate for a government that aims at maintaining a very clear hierarchy, high centralization of power, location of decision-making functions and a high level of coordination between different units of government.

Following the highly hierarchical logic of the "body" mental model we can argue that civil servants are closest to the political leader in the hierarchy and thus they could also apply the physician/healer role to themselves. In this way civil servants are more likely to perceive themselves to be not the servants of the public but rather public guardians. The creation of this narrative is exemplified by the way the national elite was portrayed as the true protectors of the interests of the Uzbek people from the attacks of the Soviet center. They have suffered Stalin's repressions in 1937 and the unfair accusations and smear campaign during the "Cotton Case" in the 1980s.

> Let's remember 80s of the past century. How fictitious narratives about the "Uzbek Case", the "Cotton Case" were used by the center to present the Uzbek nation to the rest of the world? … Do we want the return of those times? After becoming the head of the republic in 1989, I have spent lots of energy to preserve the dignity of the Uzbek people, to prevent any attempts of degrading the nation." (Karimov 2004, 9)

The independence and the revival of age-old traditions were claimed to be the results of the struggle that the national elite had won on behalf of the nation.

7. Conclusion

Islamic legacy is a complex and a multilayered phenomenon that has resulted from many centuries of Islam's dominance in political life and a long history – economic, cultural and political – between the Islamic countries. The economic and military might of the European powers has led to a considerable reduction in the prestige of Islamic legacy and a wave of active adoption of Western political institutions and administrative systems. Due to incentives to conform to the mainstream institutions and practices Islamic legacy might be not immediately visible in the administrative systems of Islamic countries today. This study focused on the Ideology of National Independence in Uzbekistan in order to examine the ways Islamic legacy embodied in mental models was used by Uzbek ruling elites in order to legitimize their hold on power. It has also identified ways how these mental models influenced the direction and the pace of reforms in Uzbekistan as well as the sense of purpose and coherence within the Uzbek civil service.

The focus on Islamic legacy in PA can help further our understanding of the underlying processes within the administrative systems in Islamic countries. Potentially this knowledge can also allow governments in Islamic countries to make civil service more effective and coherent, improve governance mechanisms and increase government legitimacy.

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