

The Emergence of Uzbek Nationalism and the Post-Soviet Nation-Building in Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

The present paper studies the rise of Uzbek nationalism and the post-Soviet nation-building process in Uzbekistan. The study's research design is descriptive. The paper begins with a discussion on the concept of nationalism and its evolution. Before nationalism became the dominant ideology, various groups and tribes exhibited a strong sense of national identity even during the phases of empire-building and colonialism. The national identity strengthened over time, and the idea of political nationhood became necessary, especially following the French Revolution. Nationalism, as an inevitable force in the modern world, has also manifested itself in the Central Asian region. The present paper studies the formation of Uzbek identity in Central Asia that existed before Russian influence, although it was not fully aligned with modern national concepts. The former Soviet Union imposed boundaries that divided the Central Asian region along linguistic lines, resulting in the emergence of five titular nations of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. The Soviets exposed the Uzbeks and other tribal people to the concept of a nation. This viewpoint overlooks the active participation of Muslim intellectuals during the Soviet era and the pre-existing sense of national identity among the Uzbek tribes. This Uzbek identity was crucial in the rise of Uzbek nationalism. The Uzbek nationalism, rich cultural heritage, religion, and language were all heavily highlighted in the state-driven post-Soviet nation-building effort in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Uzbek identity, Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Uzbek Nationalism, Soviet delimitation, Post-Soviet nation-building, Language, Religion, Culture

INTRODUCTION

Uzbekistan distinguishes itself among other Turkic countries in Central Asia through its rich cultural heritage, which combines traditional and modern influences. In the modern era, religion, language, and culture have played vital role in the emergence of Uzbek nationalism and in the unification of Uzbek Muslims, strengthening their Islamic identity. Before the arrival of the Russians in Central Asia, the nationalism as a modern concept had not yet fully developed as the tribalism remained prevalent here. These tribal groups in Central Asia distinguished themselves from one another based on distinct languages and cultural traits. However, if we look at the modern idea of nationalism, we see that national consciousness

promoting distinct identity are among the important aspects of nationalism and nation-creation. It can be said that national consciousness among Uzbeks of Central Asia, though not fully developed as a modern phenomenon, existed even before the arrival of the Russians. The identity consciousness in Central Asia assisted the Soviets in their process of national delimitation in 1924. After the exercise of national delimitation was carried out and later when independence was gained in 1991, the Uzbek identity was reinforced as a distinct national entity, emphasising its uniqueness among Central Asian States. The present article tries to understand the doctrine of nationalism and its evolution in the modern world. It explores the development of Uzbek nationalism in Central Asia, examining how the Uzbek community

was formed as a distinct group in the region, which served as the foundation of Uzbek nationalism during Soviet rule and continues to influence nation-building efforts in the post-independence period.

The Doctrine of Nationalism and Its Evolution

In pre-modern societies, there were no citizens or nationals; people belonged mainly to tribes, distinguished by language, culture, religion, or customs, with tribal or ethnic consciousness evident. The term ‘nationalism’ has gained prominence since the French Revolution in 1789. We can observe that tribal consciousness—or, proto-nationalism—survived to some degree as local patriotism in the empires, dynasties, and city-states that controlled much of humanity’s literary history and could develop into a form of national consciousness among the marginalised peoples. The sentiments of nationalism were used by medieval colleges and the medieval church, which adopted the word “nation” with a technical meaning as an organisational entity¹.

When the University of Prague was founded in 1348, its students were split up into German, Czech, and Polish nationalities. In the face of another tribe or out-group, this sense of in-group unity, tribal awareness, or even national consciousness may occasionally grow extremely strong. As we have seen in the histories of the Jews, Vietnamese, and Koreans, there have been such instances².

Eugene Kamenka emphasises the ongoing growth of national consciousness, which he considered to be a weak sense of national consciousness that was evident in Europe during the 12th century. He claimed that significant social and economic advancements that gave rise to the nation-state were intricately linked to the growth of national consciousness. By establishing it as the rational basis for the transition from subject to citizen, the French Revolution politicised national consciousness. Such awareness remained an emotion rather than an

ideology—nationalism in the weak sense—where the prerequisites for a nation-state were already evident. When they weren’t, tribal, local, or national sentiments gained vitality, evolved into nationalism in the strict sense, and became a political philosophy that took centre stage on the democratic agenda. Greece, Poland, Italy, Hungary, Ireland, and South America throughout the nineteenth century, as well as Asia, Africa, and the Pacific during the twentieth, all experienced this³.

This emergence of meaningful national consciousness and the belief that nations are the fundamental social and cultural elements of society gained momentum in Europe between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. A national economy was emerging from the domestic economies of the urban guild and the rural nobility. Although those in the middle and upper classes grew into more enthusiastic exhibitors of national, rather than local or cosmopolitan, interests, these monarchs were emerging representatives of national authority and pride⁴.

Before the era of modern nationhood, the peoples that nation-states claimed to represent frequently cultivated a feeling of peoplehood or belongingness to each other, even if this sense wasn’t compatible with the peoplehood that the state claimed. The identity of being “French” and, most definitely, Frankish or Gallic were not created by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Additionally, the new French nation both invented and adapted as it developed its sense of Frenchness⁵.

The term “nationalism” was originally used in 1798 in the renowned ‘Memoires pour servir a l’histoire du Jacobinisme’, written in exile in London by the passionately anti-Jacobin French priest Augustin Barruel. In 1849, fifty years later, the term “nationalism” was being used quite frequently. A far more illustrious exile than Barruel thought about “isms” that year⁶. The day was already being won by isms, such as nationalism or at

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1. Kamenka, E. (1973). Political Nationalism: The Evolution of the Idea. In E. Kamenka, *Nationalism: the nature and evolution of an idea*. (pp 2-22). Australian National University Press, Pg.4
 2. Ibid, pg. 4.
 3. Ibid, pg.15.
 4. Ibid, pg.7
 5. Billig, M. (1995). Banal Nationalism. *SAGE Publication*, Pg.26
 6. Kamenka, E. Loc.cit., Pg.8.

least the idea of nationality. Men were turning into Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, etc.⁷.

High dynasticism came to an end with the First World War. The Ottomans, Romanovs, Hohenzollerns, and Habsburgs had all vanished by 1922. The League of Nations, which did not exclude non-Europeans, replaced the Congress of Berlin. Following the devastation of World War II, the nation-state tide reached its highest point. By the middle of the 1970s, even the Portuguese Empire had vanished⁸.

According to Eugene Kamenka, the dissolution of dynastic empires resulted in a significant shift in the foundation of political sovereignty as well as the type of legitimacy that political institutions seek and assert. The idea of the subject was replaced by the idea of the citizen, and the idea of the spiritually or historically appointed king was replaced by the idea of popular sovereignty⁹. The 20th century had been transformed into a nationalisation process due to the nationalist campaigns that emerged following the French Revolution. Consequently, the terms “national identity” and “national state” have emerged as the most commonly debated themes in the context of globalisation¹⁰.

A variety of measures were put in place by the rulers of France and Italy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in an effort to foster unity among the populace and “form” what they saw as “Frenchmen” and “Italians.” Italy and France are just two instances. Numerous attempts to “nation-build” have occurred throughout history¹¹.

In contrast to the far broader concept of patriotism or national consciousness, nationalism as a political ideology and “ism” is primarily a unique historical event. The best way to understand it is to look at the particular circumstances that led to its emergence, development, and eventual separation from simple patriotism or national awareness. Saying this is merely to focus on the historical content and depth of social and political notions, not to commit the genetic fallacy¹².

A nation is defined as a close-knit, sizable band of people who share a common culture and are psychologically bonded to one another. It is a culturally uniform collection or group of people who share a same language, structures, religion, and heritage, whereas a country is determined by its population, delineated land, government, and sovereignty¹³. A nation, similar to ethnicity, constitutes a community sharing common legendary tales and histories¹⁴. Nationalism is the best-performing doctrine in human history if it is an idea that upholds these nation-states¹⁵.

The precise connection between nationalism and nations is a matter of debate. For some, nationalism generates nations, for others, nations are the contemporary metamorphosis of prenational societies, and for still others, nations originate nationalism but are altered by it¹⁶. The Primordialists, Perennialists, Modernists, and Ethnosymbolists are the major schools of thought in the complicated and contentious area of nationalism studies¹⁷. The Primordialists believe that nations are natural and ancient. According to them,

7. Ibid, pg.9.

8. Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, Pg. 113.

9. Kamenka, E. Loc.cit. Pg.14

10. Gelisli, Y. (2014). The development study of the national identity perception scale. *International Journal on New Trends in Education & their Implications (IJONTE)*, 5(4), Pg.1.

11. Alesina, A., & Reich, B. (2013). Nation-building. *National Bureau of Economic Research*, pg.2

12. Kamenka, E. Loc.cit. pp.3,4

13. Kundra, N. (2019). Understanding nation and nationalism. *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, 21(2), 125-149, pg 125.

14. Gelisli, Y. Loc.cit. p.2

15. Billig, M. Loc.cit., p.22

16. Garner, R.P (2022). Nationalism. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. Retrieved 4 Mar. 2026, from <https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-2039>, pg.2.

17. Kundra, N. Loc.cit., pg 132.

nationality is “as natural as speech, sight, or smell, and that nations have existed from time immemorial”¹⁸. Although the Perennialists acknowledge that nations have existed since the beginning of time, they distinguish them from the Primordialists by claiming that nations are historical and cultural trends rather than natural phenomena¹⁹. According to modernists, nations and nationalisms are products of modernity and were developed for economic and political purposes. Nationalism is seen by modernist theorists as the intellectual framework that creates nations, and they typically concentrate on the manufactured reality of nations²⁰.

Modernist view became the most dominant view of the contemporary world. Prominent theorists like Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner are examples of modernist minds. Anderson stressed the significance of newspapers and other media in spreading the idea of nationalism among people and linked the emergence of national consciousness to print capitalism. Gellner, on the other hand, believed that nationalism was made possible by the era of modernity and that industrialisation led to the creation of a centralised governmental structure.²¹ “Modernity created the structural conditions in which nationalism could become an ideology of modern nations built around this ancient ethnic core”²².

Michael Billig offers a constructivist account of nationalism and focuses on broadening the definition of “nationalism” to include the ideological strategies used to perpetuate nation-states. He pens. “Daily, the nation is indicated, or ‘flagged’, in the lives of its Citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition”²³. Michael

Billig’s theory of “banal nationalism,” highlights that nationalism is created daily in subtle, unrecognised ways.

Almost all prominent scholars agree that ‘nationalism’ is a modern phenomenon that originated in Europe during the 19th century under different circumstances and later spread worldwide. The French Revolution significantly contributed to strengthening the idea of nationalism by emphasizing citizenship and self-determination. The collective consciousness was not strictly ‘national’ by today’s standards but was always present, though formalised after the French Revolution.

Historical Overview of Uzbek Nationalism in Uzbekistan

Nationalism as a modern phenomenon, spread to different territories in different times and under different circumstances, Uzbekistan, an important country in Central Asia, is no exception. The following sections discuss the emergence of Uzbek nationalism and post-Soviet nation-building in Uzbekistan.

Initial Foundations: Turkic and Islamic

The lack of reliable historical records makes it difficult to accurately trace the early history of the Turkic peoples²⁴. Modern Central Asia, a region rich in diverse ethnic backgrounds and cultural heritages, is situated at the crossroads of the historic Silk Road²⁵. This region witnessed a number of nomadic invaders, including Sakas, Arabs, and Ephthalite Huns, who flooded the area before the arrival of the first Turkic settlers from Mongolia in AD 400. The Persian-Tajik dominating civilisation in Central Asia, which the Samanids (874–999) had established from the city of Bukhara, came to an end

18. Ozkirimli, 2010, as cited in Kundra, 2019, pg. 132.

19. Guichard, 2010, as cited in Kundra, 2019, pg. 132.

20. Kundra, N. Op.cit. pg.132.

21. Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, pg 37 ; Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. (R.I. Moore, Gerald Aylmer, Joan Lewis, & Patrick Wormald), *Cornell University Press*, pg.34.

22. Harris, 2009, as cited in Kundra, 2019, pg. 132

23. Billig, M. Loc.cit., Pg.6

24. Dickens, M. (1990). *The Uzbeks*. *University of Alberta*, 49, pp .1, 2.

25. Levin, J. (2017). *From Nomad to Nation: On the Construction of National Identity through Contested Cultural Heritage in the Former Soviet Republics of Central Asia*. *In International Law and Politics* (Vol. 50, pp. 265–293), pg.266.

with the Turkic assaults that persisted until AD 1000²⁶.

The Turkic people have roots in southern Siberia and Mongolia, and they have linguistic and ethnic ties with the Mongols. At first, people who spoke Iranian languages made up the majority of the people living in Central Asia, the region to the south. By the middle of the sixth century AD, the Turks, who called themselves “Oghuz,” had built a massive Turkic Khanate known as the Gokturk Empire and began to move from their homeland to the west and south. Transoxiana, which at the time meant “The Land across the Oxus” in the West, was the term given to the region that stretched southward between the Ural Mountains and Mongolia. This region is now known as Central Asia. The Arab conquests in the second half of the 7th century caused a large number of Transoxiana’s population to convert to Islam²⁷.

The region was profoundly changed by the Arab invasion. Arab invaders crossed the Amu-Darya from the south and assumed control of the region. Maveraan-Nahr means “land across the river.” Following the Arabs, a significant Islamic civilisation thrived on what is now Uzbekistan, connecting it intellectually and spiritually with the broader Muslim world²⁸. Since the Arab conquest, the Muslim world has had a significant influence on Central Asia, leading to the establishment of several Muslim empires in this area. The most influential of these were the Samanids, who succeeded the Afghan Zoroastrian Saman. By establishing a dynasty, these Persian Samanids ruled the region, making Bukhara their capital. The most fervent leader of the Ghaznavid dynasty, Mahmood Ghaznavid, conquered most of Central Asia. The Seljuk established an empire that stretched from the Pamir Mountains to Iraq for over 200 years after defeating the Ghaznavids in 1041. They brought about the first unification of the Arab world, Persia, and Central

Asia. The Seljuk were eventually overthrown by the Mongols. The Mongols under Genghis Khan challenged their power²⁹.

Mongol Invasion and Birth of Uzbek Identity

Born in 1155, Genghis Khan successfully brought the nearby tribes together, and in 1206, he was chosen as the Great Khan during a tribal assembly that decided to call the new association the Mongols. The Mongols began to conquer Central Asia after unifying with the Turkic tribes³⁰.

The Turko-Mongolian Golden Horde, led by Genghis Khan, included the initial Uzbek clans before them³¹. Genghis Khan’s sons divided their kingdom into many hordes after his death. Under one of its kings, the Uzbek Khan (1282–1342), conversion to Islam took place³². Therefore, the name Uzbek is thought to have originated from the Uzbek Khan who belonged to the lineage of Genghis Khan. It is uncertain when and how the various communities that landed in this region got to employ this as a general term; nevertheless, religion possibly played a significant role. In the midst of this complicated circumstance, the Uzbeks became a separate ethnic group in the 15th century. This confederation of tribes split apart from the other Golden Horde tribes under the authority of Abul Khayr (1413–1469), a descendant of Genghis Khan. The first known instance of Uzbek governmental dominance occurred under the reign of Abul-Khayr in the mid-15th century³³.

They moved south from the region between the Aral Sea and the lower Volga and swiftly captured Transoxiana. With the help of the profitable trade ties that connected Europe and China, they hoped to renounce the nomadic lifestyle of battle and attack that they shared with the majority of their Turkic fellow believers and

26. Rashid, A. (1994). *The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism?* Zed Books. Pg.84.

27. Dickens, M. Op.cit. pp.1, 2.

28. Critchlow, J. (1991). *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*. Westview Press, pg.5.

29. Rashid, A. Loc.cit., Pg.13.

30. Ibid, pg.14.

31. Ibid, pp. 85, 86.

32. Dickens, M. Loc.cit. Pg.2.

33. Finke, P. (2017). *Becoming Uzbek: Patterns of identification and processes of assimilation*. In M. Laruelle, *Constructing the Uzbek state: Narratives of Post-Soviet years* (pp. 239–260). Lexington Books, p. 241.

adopted a simpler way of life³⁴.

In this time, the Uzbek language became a distinct language. The credit goes to Mir Alisher Navai (1441–1501), who is recognised as the father of the Uzbek language created a written Turkic language and literary works to replace Persian. His masterpiece, “Farhad and Shireen,” which was originally a Persian epic poem, was transformed into an Uzbek classic. Navai was the Grandvizir of the court for ten years. Navai has been later recognised as the nation’s poet and a trailblazing Uzbek icon³⁵.

A Golden Age under the Timurid Period

Many civilisations and rulers have flourished in Uzbekistan, Timur exerted the most significant impact on Uzbek nationhood among all the invaders who arose in Central Asia³⁶.

Timur was of Turco-Mongol descent and was born in 1336 in Samarkand, now part of Uzbekistan, among the ethnic group of Barlas Turks. His military campaigns did not commence until he reached the age of forty. By 1380, Tamerlane established control over the majority of Turkestan and thereafter expanded southward to Persia and India, westward to Russia, and eastward to China³⁷. Tamerlane established the Timurid dynasty. His Turkic ancestry allowed the Jagatai dialect to supplant Persian in Central Asia, and he was the final significant nomadic invader. His main achievement was to destroy kinship and tribal structure and establish allegiance to the leader’s command³⁸.

Timur’s grandson Ulugh Beg fostered his artistic and intellectual legacy, changing Samarkand together with

Bukhara to become an epicentre of knowledge in the realms of ornamental arts, architecture, literary works, philosophical thought, artwork, and astronomy³⁹. Ulugh Beg, besides being a well-known scholar, was also an advocate of the crafts. In Europe, this emperor was acknowledged to be among the leading astronomers of his era⁴⁰. The Timurid Dynasty left an everlasting print in Uzbek nationhood and Timur period is considered as golden age of history of Uzbekistan. Before the Shyabani Uzbeks arrived, the region had already attained its cultural zenith, and Uzbekistan continued to be a pillar of Islamic knowledge for a lengthy period of time⁴¹.

Shyabani Conquest and Political Consolidation

In 1500, the Timurid dynasty which had its capital in Samarkand, was later captured by Muhammad Shaybani Khan (1451–1510), the grandson of Abul Khayr, who commanded the Uzbeks in the beginning of the 16th century⁴². Under Muhammad Shyabani’s guidance, these tribes, who had Mongol and Turkish origin, got united. At the Battle of Serpul, they defeated Timur’s heir, Babur. Between 1500 and 1510, the Uzbeks expanded their rule throughout Central Asia and Persia after defeating the Turkmen and Persians⁴³. The Safavids killed Mohammed Shyabanis during a fight in 1510. However, because Shia Islam took the role of Sunni Islam as the official religion in Central Asia, their power was diminished⁴⁴.

The Shyabanis established the Uzbek Khanate, which prospered under Abdullah Khan’s rule until 1598 and lasted until the final decade of the the 16th century. The Persians and small-scale Turkic khanates ruled the area when the final Shyabani ruler, Abd ul-Mu’min, died

34. Dickens, M. op.cit. p 2.

35. Rashid, A. Loc.cit., p.85.

36. Ibid, p.84.

37. Ibid, pp.14, 15.

38. Ibid, p.85

39. Ibid pg.15

40. Dickens, M. Loc.cit. pg.22.

41. Ibid, p.22.

42. Ibid, pp. 2, 3.

43. E. Allworth (1990) *The Modern Uzbeks from the Fourteenth Century to the Present: a cultural history. Hoover Institution Press, USA*, p.53

44. Rashid, A. Loc.cit., p.16.

in 1655⁴⁵. Thus, the advantageous prosperity was short-lived, as the Safavids brought Persian hegemony back to Central Asia. The Uzbeks were divided into several principalities as a result of multiple conflicts between the Safavids and Shyabanis. These conflicts led to the creation of three khanates in the towns of Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand⁴⁶.

The word Uzbek was associated with the Shyabani dynasty that ruled the Khanates until they finally lost their independence to Russia. The concept of “Uzbek” did not conform to modern conceptions of nationality. It has to do with the ruling elite and, consequently, the people under their control. In addition to the ruling class, many common people thought they were descended from members of the Uzbek tribal association, which made up the majority of the troops in the victorious army that eventually seized Central Asia following the invasion⁴⁷.

According to historian Mahmudi Wali, who lived in the fifteenth century, the early Uzbeks were “famed for their wicked behaviour, agility, recklessness, and courage”. They were very proud of their rebellious reputation. Travellers from all around the Muslim world and beyond praised them for their unmatched culture of generosity. Uzbek’s poetry praises compassion and kindness as the essential qualities of everyday life, and the author aspires to be a monarch who is revered, compassionate, and brave⁴⁸.

The decades between the 16th and 19th centuries saw the emergence of some polities known as Uzbek Khanates or the Emirates in literary works. Internal strife shortly following the Shaybanid invasion resulted in the creation of three political establishments, with Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand serving as their focal points. Various Chenggisid successors governed each of these polities till the beginning of the 19th century when other chiefs of tribes overthrew them. An imperial structure was imposed

on the inhabitants of the area by the Tsarist expansion within a couple of years of its arrival in the oases⁴⁹.

Tsarist and Soviet Control

By the time Russians reached Central Asia, Uzbeks had already established themselves as a separate group with unique cultural and linguistic characteristics. There was already a Turkic national consciousness among Central Asian Muslims. These people exhibited traits of a distinct national identity.

As a modern nationality, the Uzbeks are essentially a product of the early Soviet period. The word “Uzbek” was first used as a tribal identifier throughout the Middle Ages. A publication of the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia refers to the Uzbeks as a “nation” (natsiya) and recognises that their national foundation occurred prior to the 1917 Russian Revolution⁵⁰.

Russian armies under General von Kaufmann captured Tashkent in 1865 and Samarkand in 1868. Tashkent was designated as the capital of the newly established Turkestan governorate. In 1868, Bukhara became a satellite state of Russia. However, many Uzbek officers could not tolerate this humiliation, and the unhappiness persisted, leading to an additional Uzbek defeat and an even more humiliating deal. In 1873, the Amir of Bukhara and the Khan of Khiva were forced to sign separate contracts with General Kaufmann that constituted their lands as protectorates and outlawed slavery⁵¹.

In Central Asia, similar to other Islamic regions of the Russian Empire, resentment led to the emergence of reform initiatives⁵². The period of Russian colonisation consequently resulted in a resurgence of intellectual activity among Muslims, particularly in the urban areas of Uzbekistan. Intense discussions arose between proponents of a strictly Islamic revivalism in Central Asia

45. Dickens, M. Loc.cit, p, 2.

46. Rashid, A. op.cit. p.16.

47. Engel, J. S. (1997). The Prospects for Uzbek National Identity. In *Harvard University & the National Council for Soviet and East European research, The National Council for Soviet and East European Research*.p4.

48. Rashid, A. Loc.cit. p.86.

49. Finke, P. op.cit. p.241.

50. Critchlow, J. Loc.cit. p. 3, 4.

51. Rashid. A. Loc.cit. p.87.

52. Critchlow, J. Loc.cit. p.9.

and advocates for a sovereign, unified Turkestan led by a Pan-Turkic nationalist ruler. Some, especially Tartar intellectuals, harboured sympathy for a socialist revolution, as they believed it would not only eliminate Russian domination but would also eliminate feudal and tribal elites from their communities⁵³.

So, ideas concerning nationalism and advancement became popular in Central Asia at the beginning of the 20th century. These ideas became attractive to the Jadids, an innovative school of thinkers, as they provided a vision for the revival of their culture, which they felt was crucial after Russian rule⁵⁴. The Jadids, also known as the Young Bukharians, looked to Turkey as a prototype for a contemporary Muslim state. Ismail Bay Gaprinski (1851–1914), a Tartar scholar, is credited as the pioneer of pan-Turkism's rebirth. He promoted the idea of people banding together under a common Turkish language and culture in his publication *Tarjuman* and fighting against the mullahs' and tsarist's calcification of society⁵⁵.

Because of their concern with Turkism, the Jadids' political creativity during the revolution swiftly became ethnicized before 1917. The Turkestan-centered Turkism, which also claims to be indicative of the region's whole history of Islamic statehood and ultimate culture, created the idea that the entire sedentary population of Central Asia was Uzbek. This idea is a bit different from "pan-Turkism," which was a persistent source of irritation and fear for Communist and Western historiography. The Timurid era was this country's golden age, during which the eastern Turkic Chaghatay speech prospered as an eminent culture. Adeeb Khalid employed the term "Chaghatayism" to characterise this conception of the Uzbek nation. In order to become Uzbek, the language of the "Muslims of Turkestan," Chaghatay, was modernised and free of foreign words. Consequently, the expected Uzbek nation claims the legacy of the Timurids,

possessing little in common with the Uzbek nomads led by Shyabani Khan, who expelled the Timurids from Transoxiana. Abdurauf Fitrat (1886-1938), a prominent Bukharan intellectual, was the central actor in the Chaghatayist initiative⁵⁶.

Jadids established covert organisations to investigate novel ideas from Europe and Turkey. In public petitions sent to the Amir of Bukhara and the Russians, they called for reforming education and ending the rule of clerics. To disseminate the principles of modern education, young Jadids journeyed to Istanbul for their studies. After returning home, many of them founded their own schools. By 1916, roughly 23 publications and magazines were being disseminated by the Jadids across Central Asia, and 40,000 learners were enrolled in schools managed by the Jadids in Samarkand⁵⁷.

The claims made by the Jadids and Uzbek national-communists in the 1920s already revealed many aspects of modern Uzbek nationalism, including the importance of Uzbekistan, its function as a model for Turkestan identity, its ties to the Transoxiana legacy, and its combination of sedentary and post-nomadic, Turkic and Persian traits. Through the enormous efforts of local academia, which used ethnogenesis as a basic conceptual framework for defining the country's major historical periods, these characteristics were systematised during the Soviet era. While political turning points in nation-building are easily identifiable, the repertoire of allusions has been solidly formed for a long time and has its own inherent logic⁵⁸.

The Soviet rule that established itself in Central Asia was aware of this rising nationalist sentiment. To suppress this consciousness, the Soviet authorities in 1924 divided Central Asian peoples based on language, creating artificial boundaries that prevented unity. As a result, Uzbekistan became a separate republic, established

53. Rashid, A. Loc.cit. p.21.

54. Khalid, A. (2003). A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 35(4), 573–598. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020743803000242>, p.575.

55. Rashid, A. p.87.

56. Khalid, A. (2017). The Roots of Uzbekistan: Nation Making in the Early Soviet Union. In M. Laruelle, Uzbekistan Political Order societal changes, and Cultural Transformations. (pp. 1-4). *Washington, D.C: © 2017 Central Asia Program, The George Washington University. All Rights Reserved*,Pg. 3

57. Rashid, A. Loc.cit. p.88.

58. Laruelle, M. (2017). The Nation Narrated: Uzbekistan's Political and Cultural Nationalism. In M. Laruelle, *Constructing the Uzbek state: Narratives of Post-Soviet years* (pp. 261–282). *Lexington Books*, pp.270, 278.

through a delimitation process that imposed artificial borders on the Central Asian people.

Attributing the establishment of local boundaries exclusively to the Soviets overlooks the enduring historical trends and the national consciousness of Central Asia's modernist intellectuals, as well as the influence of the concepts of nationhood and progress on their thinking. The 1917 revolution was not a new experience for Central Asians. Instead, their communities were deep in discussion concerning what lay ahead. Cultural reform initiatives that were already in place and had multiple connections with the Bolshevik project were energised by the revolution. The formation of Uzbekistan was one outcome of this connection⁵⁹.

The Central Asian region underwent a major restructuring during the opening twenty years of the Soviet Union, advancing from being ruled by the tribe groupings to having nascent nation-states⁶⁰. The advent of Soviet rule in the 1920s brought about significant transformations⁶¹. Eventually, five Soviet Republics were going to emerge from Central Asia. The Turkestan Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) was founded in 1921, and a commission was appointed in 1922 to prepare a new federation constitution. On December 30, 1922, the Soviet Union's third Congress adopted a union treaty establishing the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The Soviet republic would then have semi-autonomous, if not sovereign, status. Upon the disintegration of the Turkestan SSR in 1924, the Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) of Central Asia was formed⁶². Boundaries were delineated on the map to create five "republics," each designated after the predominant "nationality" within its populace: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Karakalpakstan, the latter currently an "autonomous" enclave in the northwestern region of Uzbekistan⁶³. All five Central Asian Soviet Republics—referred to as "the

Stans"—that emerged between the 1920s and 1930s signified the establishment of entirely novel national identities in the region and a revival of the modern Silk Road. These republics were previously unknown⁶⁴.

The initial Soviet period saw a major beginning in the development of the contemporary Uzbek identity. It can be agreed that the Uzbek identity was rebuilt, or at least given a contemporary equivalent, when the Soviet government established the Uzbek SSR and titular nationality "Uzbek" in 1924 on the grounds of the former Turkestan ASSR and Bukharan People's Republic. The initial procedures for nation-building were initiated within the policy of *korenizatsiya* or nativization policy at the beginning of the 1920s, yet nation-building was mostly carried out in the period following independence. The approach facilitated the development of national identity and primarily produced the idea of titular nationality. Nation-building was also bolstered by the notion of nominal nationhood⁶⁵. The development of national heroes and national icons, as well as the historical reconstruction of the nation's distinctiveness, are all significant facets of nation-building. The Uzbek national elite also placed a high emphasis on this tactic⁶⁶.

The sedentary Muslims of Central Asia, who eventually became known as Uzbeks, were Temur's heirs. Before 1917, the ethnic group was referred to as "Uzbek" in Turkic etymology; soon after, this term became widely used. Amir Temur became the founding father of the Uzbek nation when it was established in 1917. The Soviets sought to suppress the burgeoning Pan-Turkic ideologies through delimitation. However throughout this process, Uzbekistan maintained a significant influence in all discussions concerning delimitation. Bukhara was the first to seize the opportunity for delimitation when the Soviets offered it up in 1924. The Bukharan delegation outlined the fundamental

59. Khalid, A. (2017). Op.cit. p. 3.

60. Levin, J. op.cit. p.266.

61. Finke, P. Loc.cit. p.242.

62. Rashid, A. Loc.cit. p.31

63 Critchlow, J. Loc.cit. p.4.

64. Levin, J. Op.cit. pg.266.

65. Ozturk, S. (2014). The state building of Uzbekistan: Nation state, democratic state, secular state, state with a market economy, independent state building processes. *Journal of Russian Studies*, 3(2), 71-89, p 72.

66. Ibid, p.73.

document that justifies the creation of a new entity with the name “Uzbekistan”. “Bukhara will serve as the foundation for the establishment of the Uzbek Republic”, it asserted. “Uzbekistan will encompass Bukhara, excluding the left bank of the Amu Darya; the Fergana Valley; the Syr Darya region, omitting its Kazakh territories; the Samarqand region; and Khorezm, except for areas populated by Turkmens and Kazakhs,” which constitutes the entirety of the territory populated by the sedentary populace of Transoxiana. Additionally, this territory would unite all of the region’s historic cities into a single republic. This represented the Chaghatayist conception of Uzbek identity articulated in geographical terms⁶⁷.

Uzbekistan was more than just a product of the Soviet Communist Party. It is a result of the success of a national project spearheaded by the Muslim elite in Central Asia during Soviet control. The Muslim intelligentsia, not Soviet ethnographers or party leaders, founded the country of Uzbekistan. The revolution’s relentless pursuit of opportunity solidified the nation’s position at the center of the aspirations of the Uzbek elite, even if the idea of the nation had already spread throughout Central Asia long before the revolution⁶⁸.

The Uzbek intelligentsia played a crucial role in preserving the legacy of Uzbekistan during the significant challenges of the Russian period. The Uzbek intelligentsia continuously expressed their opinions on any opposing issues and firmly maintained their dedication to programs advancing Uzbek nationhood during the Soviet era. They actively pushed for the acknowledgement of Uzbekistan’s rich cultural legacy by drawing on their historical legacies. Uzbekistan has remained the most powerful country among all the republics in the region because of its enduring activism and its deep historical relevance within Central Asia.

The Uzbeks were the largest Muslim ethnic group in the former USSR, and they took the initiative to govern their republic, thereby severing relations with the Moscow proconsuls who had previously held power there. With a population of almost 30 million, Uzbekistan is not only

the country with the greatest indigenous population, but it is also the most centrally located both geographically and culturally. Uzbeks make up sizable minorities and often native majorities in the bordering states of Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, in addition to the nation that bears their name⁶⁹.

All of Central Asia’s best-known ancient cities—Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand—are found in Uzbekistan. They were the capital of both established empires and nomadic civilisations in the past. Additionally, they were instrumental in spreading Islam throughout the region. For many years, students from far-off nations like Morocco and Indonesia visited numerous madrasahs and Islamic schools in Bukhara and Samarkand. Most Muslims consider Bukhara to be one of the most important places in Islam and a place of pilgrimage, second only to Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. Furthermore, Central Asia was the birthplace of Sufism, an Islamic mystical movement that swiftly spread throughout Asia and Africa⁷⁰. Because of its historical and geographical significance, Uzbekistan continues to be the most powerful country in Central Asia and is probably the embodiment of nationalism.

In addition to Uzbekistan’s geographical significance, Uzbek intellectuals—whether self-described or not—remain powerful inside the Russian Communist Party. In 1925, 43% of members of the Uzbek Communist Party were Uzbeks. This remained substantially unchanged in the years that followed, despite the indiscriminate violence of the Great Terror in the middle of the 1930s, which was mostly indifferent to the ethnic backgrounds of individuals who suffered. During this time, Uzbek nationalism flourished with official backing⁷¹.

For nearly 70 years, Uzbek citizens have been using passports with the “Uzbek” mark. They had received “Uzbek” instruction. They glanced through “Uzbek” magazines and watched and listened to “Uzbek” radio and television programming. In a system where people naturally look for authorities to fulfil their needs, “Uzbek” was written on the doorways of the workplaces they visited, despite the fact that the top executives were

67. Khalid, A. (2017). *Loc.cit*. p.4.

68. *Ibid*, pp.2,3.

69. Finke, P. *Loc.cit*. p. 239.

70. Rashid, A. *Loc.cit*.p.5, 6.

71. Khalid, A. (2003). *Loc.cit*, p.577.

Russian. They experienced the same treatment as “Uzbeks” whenever they travelled beyond Uzbekistan or whenever their children had been in the military of the Soviet Union. To those who make up the nationality, this is how the concept of identifying as “Uzbek” has been ingrained. Politically, probably most significantly, “Uzbek” structures had given the Uzbek wealthy individuals who employed them a base of power, even in circumstances in which they were required to provide to Russian leaders⁷².

The observance of traditions, or *meros*, became a major and perfectly legitimate preoccupation of the intelligentsia during the last thirty years of Soviet government in Uzbekistan. Uzbek intellectuals asserted complete ownership of Transoxiana’s cultural heritage, much to the dismay of their fellow Central Asians. The founding dates of Tashkent, Samarqand, and Bukhara were celebrated with lavishly funded “jubilees”⁷³.

National movements calling for democratic reforms and complete independence emerged throughout Central Asia during the Gorbachev period. Various political and social movements formed that focussed on the rebirth of national culture and sovereignty. The elevation of Central Asian languages to state language status in 1989–1990 and the creation of programs intended to address significant national economic issues, such as cotton monoculture in agriculture and the promotion of national customs and traditions, were two specific examples of this process in action⁷⁴.

Independence and Post-Soviet Nation-Building in Uzbekistan

The Soviet political apparatus collapsed in the 1990s, which led to the former USSR’s eventual disintegration and the independence of all former Soviet Republics, including Uzbekistan. Like other former Soviet Republics, the Central Asian countries declared their independence, which resulted in a reorganisation of governmental authority marked by new hierarchies and modified

interactions among various levels of power. The position of president was created in the region’s nations in 1990–1991, and each Republic held its first presidential election⁷⁵.

Islam Karimov, who remained an influential figure in the following period of post-Soviet leadership, was elected as the initial president of independent Uzbekistan in 1991. In the year following Uzbekistan’s independence, he rose to prominence and was instrumental in forming the young country. He focused on building a strong center and navigating Uzbekistan’s complex political and cultural environment during his more than two decades in office.

Following their independence from the former Soviet Union, the Central Asian States began enacting laws that enabled them to start constructing their own countries. Uzbekistan is unique among the Central Asian States in having the deepest cultural and historical roots. Uzbekistan has a wealth of tools at its disposal to shape its national image, including its vast cultural riches and historical legacy. All things considered, it is the country most fitted to write its own history and create a strong sense of national identity across the whole Central Asian region⁷⁶.

Like most of the other former Soviet republics, Uzbekistan’s elites were shocked by the country’s independence. Apart from implementing autonomous political structures and economic changes, the sudden collapse of the former Soviet Union forced them to search for common traits that would either unify or potentially distinguish the people who lived there. Much attention has been paid to building a nation in Uzbekistan, not merely due to it being the most densely populated among the newly formed states, but also because of acknowledged peculiarities, such as the Timurid historical legacy’s prominence in contrast to the Shyabanis’ largely ignored. The way that Uzbekness is understood as an ethnic notion that is based on a centuries-old sedentary lifestyle and culture, average significance for Islam, as well as an intense connection with the state’s land and its various

72. Critchlow, J. Loc.cit. p.14, 15.

73. Khalid, A. (2003). Loc.cit. p .579.

74. Rahimov, M. (2007). From Soviet Republics to Independent Countries: Challenges of Transition in Central Asia. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 6(1–3), 291–312. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156914907x207766>, pg.301.

75. Ibid, p.302.

76. Ozturk.S. Loc.cit. p.72.

regions, bears an obvious connection to the Soviet past⁷⁷.

The government focused on reconstructing its own national identity, secular character, preferred form of governance, and economic framework. In addition, it had to deal with the difficulties of a newly independent country while battling to keep its position in the area and prevent its collapse. Owing to its history, cultural, ecological, and economic potential and talents, the Uzbek country was capable of expressing its authority in the Central Asian area alongside other recently independent countries⁷⁸. The breakdown of the communist structure made the leaders of Central Asia revive the old system, as they were not in favour of economic reforms. They were not ready for political liberalisation or any exposure to the world outside. In Uzbekistan, President Islam Karimov focused on nationalist expressiveness to gain some degree of support from the people⁷⁹.

After gaining independence Uzbekistan focused on analysing the pre-Soviet historical context and taking advantage of the arguments and figures created during the Soviet era⁸⁰. The elites of the newly formed states had to work quickly to create a national identity for their people that would set them apart from the neighbouring states. Diverse regimes pursued distinct paths in this regard, resulting in effects on the internal ethnic structure and on relations between the Central Asian States with other countries, such as Turkey, Iran, and China⁸¹.

Uzbekistan, to symbolise independence, had to choose a whole new flag. The crescent moon, which represents Islam in the Uzbek people's national identity, was adopted in the design of their recently adopted flag.

The most important characteristic of the newly established country was its emphasis on Islam. Uzbekistan has historically been more influenced by Islam because of its rich cultural and religious history, particularly in its largest cities, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Namangan. The sedentary population in the area favoured Islamic culture more than other groups⁸².

In addition to political nationalism, Uzbekistan has promoted cultural nationalism as part of its post-independence strategy. Cultural nationalism gives the nominal ethnic group primacy in every metaphorical detail⁸³.

In Uzbekistan, changes include renaming key stations: Lenin's station was now Independence Square, and Komsomol Station became Yashlik, in Uzbek it means for "young people." The former People's Friendship station remains, but communist-era stamps are hidden. Russian signs below Uzbek signs remain throughout. These changes, along with a new national airline, tourism office, updated seal and flag, reflect modern national identity in this recently liberated country⁸⁴.

Uzbekistan incorporated aspects of the Soviet past and the lessons learned from other decolonised nations⁸⁵. The celebration of Uzbekistan's "golden heritage" or oltin meros encouraged the rise of new nationalism⁸⁶. Uzbekistan emerged to be the legitimate heir to the Golden Age of Central Asia, which lasted from the ninth to the fifteenth century. It seized all of the philosophers, scholars, authors, and Islamic intellectuals who had resided in what is now Uzbekistan. In Tashkent, each of them is honoured with metro stations holding their names, and banknotes feature their likenesses⁸⁷.

77. Finke, P. Loc.cit. p. 243.

78. Ozturk, S. Op.cit. p.72.

79. Rashid, A. Loc.cit. p. 38.

80. Ozturk, S. Loc.cit. p. 83.

81. Finke, P. Loc.cit. p.240.

82. Ozturk, S. Loc.cit. p.73.

83. Laruelle, M. Loc.cit. p.261.

84. Kurzman, C. (1999). Uzbekistan: The invention of nationalism in an invented nation. *Critique Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 8(15), 77–98 p.77.

85. Ibid, p.96.

86. Khalid, A. (2003). Loc.cit. p.578.

87. Laruelle, M. Loc.cit. p. 272.

Moreover, Independence Day is being celebrated annually with lavish festivities that incur significant expenses. To further “nationalise” and Uzbekise the state, the regime has taken action. In 1989, Uzbek was designated as the official language of the country; Uzbeks have been elevated within the security services and bureaucracy; and Uzbek symbols have been found all over the place⁸⁸.

This language law has been comparatively effective in Uzbekistan, unlike its neighbours. Many official documents, especially those with authorised and technical vocabulary, are still prepared informally in Russian before being translated and published in Uzbek. Russian is becoming less and less frequent, but Uzbek is definitely the most widely spoken language in society, the newsroom, schools, and universities. Unlike its language laws, which severed ties to the Soviet past, the nation’s citizenship laws have been founded on its Communist background.. Travel documents and official papers of identification continue to distinguish between citizenship and ethnic group. Individuals who are recognised as Uzbeks beyond the country’s physical boundaries are not under Tashkent’s jurisdiction, but all those who originated in Uzbekistan or were living there as of 1991 are regarded as citizens of Uzbekistan⁸⁹.

The national icons that were stressed again during the nation-building process were carefully chosen. For example, the Jadids were not given much attention. The Jadids’ pan-Islamist and pan-Turkish characteristics did not mesh well with Karimov’s autonomous Uzbekistan. Furthermore, the importance of the Shyabanis is seldom emphasised, even though they represent the earliest known Uzbek rule in history. Rather, Temur was chosen as a national hero and given greater prominence because he lived before the Shyabani era⁹⁰.

So the most recognisable representative of the Golden Age remains Tamerlane. In 1992, his picture

took the position of the Lenin monument in Tashkent’s main square, Timur provided valuable emblems for the Karimov government: having been born in the centre of Transoxiana, in Shakhrisabz close to Samarkand, for that reason he relates, in geographic terms, to Uzbekistan. This illustrates Uzbekistan’s magnificent perception of its power. It stands for the fatherly leader Karimov wanted to be and the governing power associated with the khan. Under his leadership as well as that of his successors, Uzbekistan achieved great creative and architectural accomplishments, which fuelled the country’s ambition to lead the globe in these fields⁹¹. Numerous memorials and museums honouring Temur have been constructed across the nation, and 1996 was designated as Temur Year in Uzbekistan⁹².

Additional individuals were included in the country’s pantheon, particularly the renowned writer, Alisher Navoi (1441–1501). Unlike Tamerlane, Navoi’s credibility stems from the supremacy of Chaghatay, a primordial version of the current Uzbek language (a hybrid of Karakhanid and Khorezmian), rather than from geography, since he was born in Herat, modern-day Afghanistan⁹³. Alisher Navoi is regarded as the originator of contemporary Uzbek literature⁹⁴. Like Ulugh Beg and Amir Timur, Navoi has been embraced as the third great national hero of Uzbekistan. Navoi is depicted in statues all over the nation, just like them. He also has a Tashkent underground station named in his honour, despite being designated during the Soviet era. Navoi’s verses are often displayed on billboards, and the statue of Navoi in Tashkent is featured on the reverse of the 5-som note. However, Navoi’s inclusion in the pantheon of nationalists contradicts the sense of territorial nationalism embodied by Ulugh Beg and Amir Timur. Being the greatest poet in the Uzbek language is what gives Navoi his place in the pantheon⁹⁵. The autonomous Uzbek nation did not invent this novel legend from the ground up; Russian

88. Khalid, A. (2003). *Opcit.* p. 578.

89. Laruelle, M. *Loc.cit.* p.267.

90. Ozturk, S. *Loc.cit.* p. 74.

91. Laruelle, M. *Loc.cit.* p.273.

92. Ozturk, S. *Loc.cit.* p. 73.

93. Laruelle, M. *Op.cit.* p.273.

94. Ozturk, S. *Loc.cit.* p. 74.

95. Kurzman, C. *Loc.cit.* p 85.

writers had already hailed Navoi in the 1920s for declaring the Uzbek language as well as culture⁹⁶.

Alisher Navoi, Tamerlane, and Ulug Beg are the leading rank of national heroes; there is another group that comes in right behind them. It encompasses scientists like al-Fergani (800/805–870)⁹⁷. Prominent figures such as al-Khorezmi, Avicenna, and the contemporary Khorezmian scholar Al-Biruni significantly advanced the intellectual landscape of their era⁹⁸. The designation “Uzbek” has been attributed to them, and their literary works have been published extensively, while fictionalised history has exalted their accomplishments⁹⁹. Two significant figures in Islamic culture who best represent the impact of Bukhara during that era should be added to this scientific lineage: Imam al-Bukhari (801–870), the author of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, a collection of hadiths considered by Sunni Muslims to be among the most legitimate; and Bahaudin Naqshband (1318–1389), the leader of the primary Sufi Order, the Naqshbandiyya, and a highly esteemed mystical poet. Karimov celebrated his restored shrine with great fanfare in 1993 as a sign of the country’s return to its Islamic roots, and the main avenue in Bukhara, which had previously been titled for Lenin, was renamed in his honour¹⁰⁰.

To support the ideology of national independence, the academic community had to adopt the recently formed ideational regime. For instance, the Academy of Sciences was entrusted with creating a “popular-scientific” dictionary of independence that might serve as an encyclopedia of post-communist doctrine in Uzbekistan and offer academic support for the new conceptions of nationalism. Strict monitoring of the disciplines of

ethnology, history, and archaeology was also thought to be required to establish a completely new, wonderful national narrative¹⁰¹.

In the short time after independence, Uzbekistan quickly developed an elaborate historical account upholding the country’s extensive past and its ongoing existence under all forms of government¹⁰².

In the Uzbek capital of Tashkent, a large billboard reads, “Feeling for one’s homeland (Vatan) is greater than all things.” The word “vatan” is frequently used in nationalist billboards that are found all over the nation¹⁰³. Particularly in the 1990s, billboards personifying Karimov as the “founder of the nation” and adorning the urban landscape with phrases honouring the homeland or vatan were displayed¹⁰⁴.

Independence Day is a chance to declare Uzbekistan’s sovereignty to the world community in addition to boosting patriotic feelings. Every Independence Day celebration, Uzbekistan shows the national flag, anthem, military, and sports teams to demonstrate this position. These are not hostile or chauvinistic; they are rather manifestations of national identity. Every year on Independence Day, the country’s achievements in the cultural and economic spheres are highlighted¹⁰⁵.

Uzbekistan’s independence marked the beginning of a fresh phase with many unanswered questions. Independence guaranteed Uzbekistan a chance to abandon the fight for indigenous Central Asian identities and depart from the Soviet era’s practices. Giving cultural self-expression new freedom and allowing the threads of society to be rewoven after it has been ruptured in so many places became possible after independence. This

96. Laruelle, M. Op.cit. p.273.

97. Ibid, p. 274

98. Critchlow, J. Loc.cit. p.4.

99. Khalid, A. (2003). Loc.cit. p.579

100. Laruelle, M. Loc.cit. pp.273, 274.

101. Ibid, p.267.

102. Ibid. p.269.

103. Kurzman, C. Loc.cit. p.90.

104. Laruelle, M. Loc.cit. p. 263.

105. Adams, L. L. (1999). Invention, institutionalisation and renewal in Uzbekistan’s national culture. In *SAGE Publications*, Pg.367.

is countered by the the idea that there is a greater need than ever for a uniform national identity¹⁰⁶.

Uzbekistan saw a resurgence of Uzbek nationalism. Islam Karimov's newly formed state sought to preserve the Uzbek people's language and culture while strengthening their sense of national identity. Significant social, political, and economic changes brought about by freedom from Soviet domination encouraged a resurgence of nationalism among the public. Promoting Uzbek heritage has become more important in the modern era of sovereignty. Thus, the post-Soviet era has marred the growth of Uzbek nationalism, which influences the nation's policies and its position in international affairs.

Till 2016, Islam Karimov served as the nation's first president¹⁰⁷. After Islam Karimov died in 2016, Shavkat Mirziyoyev came to power, marking Uzbekistan's first change in leadership since 1989¹⁰⁸. The Economist awarded Uzbekistan their "country of the year" in 2019 as a result of Mirziyoyev's economic reforms, which is noteworthy in relation to the economic consequences of the country's political change. Through commerce and finance, Mirziyoyev has advanced the country's integration into the global economy, surpassing Karimov's "Uzbek Model." Mirziyoyev has been attempting to boost productivity by establishing a market-based system while attracting international investment, in contrast to Karimov's goal of a state-dominated economy similar to the Soviet Union¹⁰⁹.

Mirziyoyev takes a distinct stance on national identity and governance. Unlike President Karimov, he embraces liberal nationalism and questions the idea of "ideological immunity." He feels that President Karimov's "ideological immunity" is out of line with current trends and advancements in social and economic growth. 2017 was declared the "Year of Dialogue with the People and

Human Interests" in order to provide avenues for residents to communicate their thoughts and concerns to the administration.¹¹⁰

Apart from economic reforms, the new government also focused on the cultural dimension. On April 8, 2019, in accordance with the directive of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev called as "On measures to develop the national idea for a new stage of development of Uzbekistan" the establishment of the project "National idea development at a new stage of development of Uzbekistan" has started a fresh phase in the cultural landscape of Uzbekistan. The idea has only been applied to the Uzbek people, but it has also been utilised in the democratically developed countries of the world. Several thinkers, influential intellectuals, scholars, and specialists of the Republic have been involved in this nation's growth. Human rights, freedoms, democratic principles, full democracy, national growth, patience, solidarity, and tolerance, the rules of law and justice, as well as cultural and material developments, are currently being targeted in Uzbekistan. According to this point of view, Uzbekistan's current progress has been determined to be from nativist to the group of nativist progress. The President of the Republic of Shavkat Mirziyoyev's statement in this regard, of paramount importance is the development of the cultural and moral world of our people, especially youth. Therefore, the most crucial task for us is youth education on the basis of the idea "From national revival to national progress," in the spirit of patriotism, devotion to the Motherland¹¹¹.

Mirziyoyev's current goal is to establish a new Uzbek identity based on universal values. Under the second President's administration, significant reforms in jurisdiction, politics, the economy, and society have been put into place to enhance the welfare of the Uzbek

106. Engel, J. S. (1997). The Prospects for Uzbek National Identity. In *Harvard University & the National Council for Soviet And East European research, The National Council for Soviet and East European Research*, Pg.13.

107. Allayarov, S. F. (2022). The Evolution of National Identity in Uzbekistan: Past, Present and Future. *Avrasya Dunyasi*. April 2022.No 10, pg. 68.

108. Terzyan, A. (2020). What Has Changed in Uzbekistan? Explaining Post-Karimov State-Building. <https://doi.org/10.47669/psprp-6-2020> ,Pg.2

109. Terzyan, A. Loc.cit. p.3

110. Allayarov, S. F. Loc.cit. p. 69.

111. Sobirovich, T. B., & Norman, Z. D. M. (2023). Harmony of National and Universal Values in Uzbekistan. *Harmony*, 7(1), 08-16, pg.9

people¹¹². Promoting the idea of social collaboration based on the principles of the Action Strategy to the Development Strategy, as well as the feeling of the Motherland's development, people's well-being, and national peace, should be the priority at present¹¹³.

The nation-building strategy under Mirziyoyev's presidency is founded on fresh, positive concepts like "New Uzbekistan – new worldview," "the third renaissance," and "for human dignity." It should be highlighted that the creation of a "new Uzbekistan" is an essential historical necessity rather than merely a personal desire or decision. In other words, New Uzbekistan, is currently being constructed on the principles of mutually beneficial relations with the world community and adhering to universally recognized standards and ideals of democracy, human rights, and liberty is an objective necessity that satisfies the long-standing aspirations of the Uzbek people and fully serves its national interests. The ultimate objective is to give the Uzbek people a prosperous and free life¹¹⁴.

Conclusion:

The notion of Uzbek nationalism dates back to

medieval times, when a distinct national identity and set of beliefs were already in place. This helped the Soviets create Uzbekistan and other republics according to national standards. The Russians brought the idea of the contemporary nation-state to Uzbekistan, but the people had already come to believe in a unique Uzbek national identity. The Uzbeks have a strong sense of pride in their country because of their common past with the ancient Turkic settlers who finally established the khanates of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand. Thus, before the Soviet invasion, the national consciousness was well-established. During the last years of Soviet control, the nation-building process was greatly aided by the pre-Soviet Uzbek national identity, which was already strong. During the post-Soviet era, when Uzbekistan proudly showcased its distinctive historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic features to the rest of the world, greatly boosted this nation-building process. To strengthen the national consciousness and streamline the nation-building process in Uzbekistan, the political leaders, intelligentsia and the artists of the country have all played a significant role in building their collective national image and pride in the galaxy of sovereign nations.

112. Allayarov, S. F. Loc.cit. p. 70.

113. Doniyorovich, M. T., & Bazarbaevich, K. K. (2023). The Main Direction of Reforms in Uzbekistan is Peace and Stability. *JournalNX*, 9(6), 253-256, pg.256.

114. Allayarov, S. F. Loc.cit. pp. 69,70.