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Ислам и государственное управление в Центральной Азии

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Аннотация. После 1991 года все бывшие республики СССР построили новые независимые государства на принципиально иной основе – взаимодействии правительства и общества. В настоящее время страны Центральной Азии пытаются развивать исламское государственное управление как особый социальный институт. Исторический обзор демонстрирует, как исламские принципы управления и религия влияют на административную систему. Взаимодействие между историческими традициями и современными административными требованиями привело к созданию гибридных институциональных форм. Государственное управление было определено как динамичная система, способная адаптировать институты государственной власти и исполнительную власть к быстро меняющимся потребностям общества в процессе структурных реформ. В статье представлено систематическое сравнение административных подходов и влияния исламского управления в четырех выбранных странах. Национальные демократии обладают особым политическим кодом – исламом, встроенным в их новые системы управления.

Ключевые слова: ислам, государственное управление, Центральная Азия, гибридные режимы, демократия.

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Governance and democracy in
Central Asia.
Conclusion.

Islam and Public Administration in Central Asia

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Abstract. After 1991, all former republics of the USSR built new independent states on a fundamentally different basis – the interaction between government and society. Nowadays, the countries in Central Asia are trying to develop an Islamic public administration as a distinctive social institution. A historical overview demonstrates how Islamic governance principles and religion influence the administrative system. The interaction between historical traditions and modern administrative requirements have created hybrid institutional forms. Public administration is defined as a dynamic system capable of adapting the institutions of state power and the executive bodies to the rapidly changing requirements of society in the process of structural reforms. The study presents a systematic comparison of administrative approaches and the influence of Islamic governance across the four selected countries. National democracies have Islam as a specific “political code” embedded in their new systems of governance. Recognizing the potential of Islamic approach to address modern challenges, the work contributes to a deeper understanding of Islam and public administration in Central Asia.

Keywords: islam, PA, Central Asia, hybrid regimes, democracy.

Introduction

It is essential to consider Islam in Central Asia in the context of the socio-political dynamics of the region and to deepen our understanding of the complicated dynamics between religion and governance. The article documents the author’s research on Islamic Public Administration (PA), bearing in mind the limitations of a Western, where the dichotomy of religious versus secular emerged. The hypothesis is that Islam has had, still has an important and actually strong impact on how the public sphere is organized and managed. For the purpose, a study conducted by Ongaro and Tantardini (2023 a&b), which categorizes Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan based on their unique relations with religious institutions, governance and authorities, is applied. Their classification provides a framework for analyzing how different governmental structures interact with religion influencing policy-making and social norms. This indicate the way religion shapes public life and law and its influence on societal cohesion.

It is necessary to recognize the importance of religion in forming collective forms of belonging and consider it as a marker of difference between and within local communities. In post-Soviet Central Asia, on the one hand, we can observe attempts to renew Islam, on the other hand, there are misconceptions about the Islamic religion. Both, they challenging Western- centric narratives in public administration and demonstrates a continuity between fourteenth-century theories (Ibn Khaldûn) and modern governance. Especially, some key concepts such as *asabiyyah* (social cohesion), has been interpreted and applied in contemporary contexts. This process fosters our better understanding of how historical though can resonate within modern governance policies. We can stress a limited examination of how historical Islamic administrative thought has been integrated into modern governance in comparative administration literature. Good attempt in that direction is a study which aim is

to map the diverse ways Khaldûnian principles have been adapted in different administrative contexts (Alibašić, 2025: 27).

The study's main aims are:

1. To examine the fundamental principles of administration from an Islamic viewpoint;
2. To examine how historical administrative thought can be applied into contemporary challenges;
3. To emphasize the process of transformation in Central Asia's independent states and the relationship between democracy and governance, as a key point of the public policies.

There must be a code defining effective public administration that can help the states to accomplish their goals and Islam appeared as such a code of guidance. The primary research, to carry off one of the aims of the study, is to executed through reviewing Qur'an, Sunnah and the era of Caliphate, which helps to explore the rules of Islamic administration through Islamic source of law. Thus, will help analyzing the administrative system of four countries in Central Asia in the light of Islamic Public administration. Also, the constitutions of those countries have been assessed to observe the public policies there.

The study used a qualitative approach to examine a purposefully selected countries with their political systems, governance structures, as a more contextual and flexible approach to (the study) of PA. The methodology centers on analysis of historical texts, policy papers, and secondary sources including academic literature and review articles on public administration. Such approach allows a systematic research of how historical principles have been applied in contemporary governance systems. The unprecedented speed by which Islam expanded since the time of the Prophet inevitably pushed the limits of governability and administrative capacity, which therefore explains the push for decentralization and the incorporation of local elites, as emphasized in Al-Baladhuri's 9th-century classic *Origins of the Islamic State* (Al-Baladhuri, 2002).

The political system in the four selected countries, is secular republic, with liberal religious regime. The constitution of Kirgizstan ensures secular governance with Islam being the dominant religion among the population. The governance in Tajikistan ensures secularism but has been criticized for restrictions on religious expression. Turkmenistan is officially secular, control religious institutions and practices to maintain political stability. In Uzbekistan the state maintains secular governance with reforms to increase religious freedom and reducing restrictions.

Studying Central Asia's rich history, culture, and philosophy is necessary to understand the region's democratization features, as a key point of the public policies. Democracy is the expression of the will of the people. In ancient times, with a relatively small population, there was no need to vote. People's opinions were expressed publicly, usually in a mosque, where believers regularly came. Muslim jurists did not know the word "democracy". Nevertheless, the principles of democracy formed the basis of the social life of Muslim countries. In particular, this is the principle of consensus – the free expression of one's position in the community, the Qur'anic tenets of tolerance, justice, equality, and pluralism. In history, we see Medina as an example of fair governance through consensus and consultation.

There exists a substantial body of traditional literature that remains both influential and viable, dating back to the Prophetic *Sunnah* (precedent) and the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, specifically addressing Islamic governance. "The Book of Governance", authored by the Nizam al-Mulk (1018–1092), presents a distinct and practical concept of state administration. The Nizam's recommendations and decrees certainly differ from contemporary global-Western perspectives aimed at improving governance in Central Asian – perhaps a key point in explaining why this system of governance excels in its realism and applicability despite its 11th century origins (al-Mulk, 1960). Nizam, emphasizes the

responsibility to those over whom one rules, because from an Islamic perspective, individuals are only responsible for their own actions in Divine accounting (Kalantari, 1998).

Wolf Drechsler and Anthony Cheung are two major scholars of exploring the existence, uniqueness, and relevance of Asian models of governance and public administration. Drechsler argues that there are at least three paradigms of governance in the world: Chinese, Western and Islamic (Drechsler, 2015). Drechsler argues that public administration has two dimensions, equity (goals) and performance (mechanism), based upon which 'good governance/public administration' could be understood as both 'working' and 'ethical'. This argument lays a foundation for Drechsler's proposition that there are diverse legitimate governance goals and mechanisms embedded in various civilizations and governance traditions, apart from the conventional Western public administration (Wang & Liu, 2018). However, Drechsler does not go further to systemically explore the substance of the Islamic paradigms of governance and public administration. The article is trying to fill this vacuum.

Concept of Public Administration in Islam

Public administration in Islam is a comprehensive system that combines religious principles with practical governance to ensure justice, efficiency, and welfare. Rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and the Hadith, Islamic public administration emphasizes moral integrity, social justice, and the welfare of all citizens. This concept extends beyond mere governance to encompass ethical conduct, economic equity, and community welfare.

The basic concept of Public administration is the *implementation of government policies for the benefit of the individuals* (Frederickson, Smith, Larimer & Licari, 2018). Wilson defined it as: *a detailed and systematic execution of public law* (Woodrow, 1887).

In his book "Administrative Development: An Islamic Perspective", Al-Buraye defines Islamic administration as: *Islamic administration is a system that is universal, holistic, and it is based on Tauheed* (Al-Buraye, 2013). He also adds that it is a mission given to mankind and it is not a choice. Such a concept fulfills two sectors including the demands of Allah and of human beings (Al-Buraye, 2013). The concept of public administration does not neglect the aspects of spirituality and is a well-integrated system. He mentioned seven elements of public administration, including: *intention, planning, organizing, implementing, monitoring, controlling, evaluating* (Al-Buraye, 1986).

Fundamentals of Islamic Public Administration

1. The concept of *amaanah* which refers to 'free will' (Qur'an 33: 72). It makes Muslim lives meaningful (Muslims serves to Creator and doing what He commands to do). Allah tests everyone according to their magnetite of *amaanah*. The public administrators and civil servants are tied to their magnitude of *amaanah* (Islam & Miajee, 2017).

2. *Khilaafat* – good governance depends upon good leadership (El-Efendi, 2002: 168). Allah chose His best men to lead community that's why He is placing a successor (*khilaafat*) on earth (Qur'an 2: 30).

Foundations of Islamic Public Administration

The foundation of Islamic public administration lies in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the practices and sayings of Prophet Muhammad). These primary sources of Islamic law provide guidelines for rulers and administrators, stressing accountability, justice, and service to the people. The Qur'an explicitly states, "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice" (Qur'an 4:58). This verse underscores the importance of trust and justice in governance.

The Sunnah complements the Qur'an by offering practical examples of governance. The Prophet Muhammad's leadership in Medina serves as a model for Islamic public

administration. His governance was characterized by consultation (*shura*), accountability, and a focus on community welfare. These principles were later institutionalized during the Caliphate of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (632–661 CE), where public administration was marked by justice, inclusiveness, and responsiveness to the needs of the people.

Principles of Public Administration in Islam

Justice (*Adl*): Justice is a cornerstone of Islamic public administration. It requires fair treatment of all individuals, equitable distribution of resources, and unbiased legal judgments. Administrators are expected to act justly, ensuring that policies and practices do not favor any particular group over others. *If you judge, judge between them equitably. God loves the equitable* (Qur'an 4: 42).

Accountability (*Mas'uliyah*) and Transparency: Islamic governance emphasizes the accountability of leaders and administrators to both God and the people (Qur'an 18: 49). Public officials are considered servants of the community and must act transparently, providing justifications for their decisions and actions.

Consultation (*Shura*): The principle of consultation is essential in Islamic administration. Leaders are expected to consult with their advisors and the community, fostering a participatory form of governance (Qur'an 42: 38). This practice helps in making informed decisions and ensures that the voices of the people are heard (Esposito, 1983).

Welfare (*Maslaha*): Public administration in Islam is fundamentally concerned with the welfare of the community. Policies and actions should aim to promote the common good, improve living conditions, and protect the rights and dignity of individuals.

Trust (*Amanah*): Administrators are entrusted with authority and resources, and they must manage these with integrity and honesty. Misuse of public office or resources is seen as a serious breach of trust in Islam. The term is derived from Qur'anic injunctions (4: 58), and emphasizing the responsibility of those in positions of authority (Iqbal & Lewis, 2009).

Historical Foundations of Islamic Governance

The foundations of Islamic governance can be traced to the time of Prophet Muhammad and the first Islamic polity in Medina (622–632), establishing precedents for governance that would influence subsequent generations (Watt, 1956). The subsequent Rashidun Caliphate (632–661) further developed these principles, introducing administrative innovations such as the *diwan* system for managing state finances and military affairs (Al-Buraey, 1986). During this formative period, the above-mentioned key Islamic concepts emerged that would shape future administrative practices (*shura*, *adl*, *amanah*).

The Islamic Golden Age (approximately 8th to 14th centuries) saw a remarkable intellectual flourishing that profoundly influenced governance and administrative thought. The translation movement during the Abbasid Caliphate facilitated the integration of Greco-Roman philosophical traditions with Islamic governance concepts, creating a sophisticated intellectual framework (Gutas, 1998). Key figures in the movement included Al-Farabi (870–950), whose work, *The Virtuous City*, presented a Neoplatonic vision of the ideal state guided by philosophical and prophetic wisdom (Mahdi, 2001); Ibn Sina (980–1037), whose *Book of Healing* has some influential sections on governance that emphasized the role of reason in administration (Goodman, 2006); and Al-Ghazali (1058–1111), whose *The Revival of Religious Sciences* significantly influenced Islamic political thought, emphasizing ethical dimensions of governance (Al-Ghazali, 2016). Also, in this period the intellectual environment of Al-Andalus (Muslim Iberia) made distinctive contributions to Islamic governance thinking. Scholars like Ibn al-Khatib (1313–1374) integrated philosophical traditions with practical governance concerns, often navigating complex political realities (Akhtar, 2015).

Ibn Khaldūn's (1332–1406) *Muqaddimah* represents a culmination of Islamic intellectual achievement in governance and social theory. Ibn Khaldūn synthesized earlier traditions while developing innovative frameworks for understanding state formation, decline, and administrative practices. His concept of *asabiyyah* (social cohesion) offers valuable insights into governance and societal dynamics (Khaldūn, 1958).

This overview provides essential context for understanding how historical concepts manifest in modern administrative practices across the selected countries.

Analytical framework

Analytical framework would be helpful in serving as an epistemic and analytical tool for an in-depth and systemic understanding of Central Asian PA and governance.

1. Central Asian PA

Following the Islamic tradition, PA in Central Asia is based on a conception of moral accountability and shares a number of important values and principles. They are found in Qur'an and Sunnah and in an intellectual tradition consisting of scholarly texts and a body of guidance literature that includes a long and well-developed tradition of *mirrors of princes* (Samier, 2017: 59).

Also, Islamic principles of administration are deeply linked to the principles of good governance and are founded on a collection of ethical values such as accountability, transparency, justice and virtues. The adoption of ethical conduct by the administration supporting the achievement of societal objectives (Hassan, Sarwar and Muazzam, 2016).

PA in the four selected countries contribute to a sustainable society which maintains a balance of individuality and community and we can identified some foundational principles of Islamic management such as: *al-Hurriyah* (principles of human rights and freedom), *al-Musawah* (principles of equality and equity), *al-Adalah*, that thoughts and actions are grounded in justice (truthfulness, honesty, trustworthiness) and that decisions are logical and informed and made through consultation with those who are knowledgeable, experienced and skilled (Talaat et al. 2016). The kind of knowledge and skills they require, consisting of using higher-order values in making judgements rather than simply following procedures and rules, using conscience, being able to read people's intentions and motivations, having strategic and tactical abilities for planning and implementation, having a knowledge of proper staffing allocations, making just and fair decisions, making appropriate salary allocations and rewarding people for professional work rather than their skill in the politics of organization. Salleh and Mohamad (2012) approach knowledge and skills through four categories associated with key concepts: knowledge (*Ilm*), which includes staff selection and assignment of duties and appropriate decision-making in planning, organizing, directing and supervising staff; trust (*Amanah*), emphasizing obedience to Allah and regarding work as a form of worship; justice (*Adalah*), which involves treating people fairly and not assigning tasks they are not capable of doing as well as not being influenced by personal preferences and friendships; and showing responsibility for one's staff, both rewarding as well as disciplining and supervising and following up on delegated duties. Kalantari approaches seven Islamic meta-values that govern thought and action for everyone in all spheres of life that are grounded in moral accountability and law aimed at maintaining social order and balance: equality and social equity, justice, kindness and compassion, righteousness and true conviction, self-discipline, respect for private property and personal growth through constant learning (Kalantari, 1998). An important feature of the social-equity principle is a concentration on the welfare of others and the community and society at large reflecting the strong collectivist orientation of Islam. The conceptions of justice and kindness are interpreted to mean creating a balance between the material and spiritual worlds as well as others' rights, as they guide

one's thoughts and actions along with self-control, which should delimit self-interest. Islamic administration, forms a belief system that consists of Islamic substantive values that should guide intentions, decision-making and actions in the way organizations are structured, the way people work in them and manage their social relations, and the ends which they aim at through policy and planning (Kazmi and Ahmad 2006).

Islamic values: justice, fairness, equity, and tolerance, integrate the material and spiritual realms aimed at people's self-development and correction that can bring perfection to the belief (*Iman*) (al-Qudsy, 2007: 35). As a system of work ethic, may describe an Islamic administration as one well-being, achieved through *Itqan* (excellence in work), *Amal Saleh* (value of good and work as religious observance and contributing to society), and *Ihsan* (carried out in a professional manner) (Syed & Metcalfe, 2015).

In the four countries of Central Asia we can underline four aspects: *organizational culture, human-resource management, policy and decision making, and public sector leadership*, trying to develop an Islamic PA as a distinctive social institution.

A value that emerges from Islamic PA institutions in such an environment is the *concept of embeddedness*, or the idea that economic and political forces exist within, and are subordinate to, a set of social norms, traditions, and customs (Peters, 2021). Culturally embedded Islam influences the practice of Islamic PA. Mutual assistance is carried out because they are considered fundamental requirements for qualifying as a good Muslim (Urinboyev, 2014).

Observing a contemporary Islamic organizational culture, it is still based in the Qur'an and Sunnah, through both *Ijma* (consensus of recognized authorities), and *Quias* (individual decisions), which helps to develop organizations that are distinctively Islamic in their values and practices. A few factors contribute to ethical culture in organizations and human-resource management, such as: sincerity to Allah (*al-Ikhlās*); an understanding of Islamic epistemology on ethics; self-determination (*al-yaqīn*); social environment; organizational policy; training and motivation; recognition and support (al-Qudsy, 2007: 36).

We can also find some principles of Islamic management relevant to contemporary human-resource management (Tayeb, 1997). *Adl* (the pursuit of justice, fairness and equality), which means that rewards and punishments should be used only with fairness; *Amana* (cultivating and maintaining trust necessary for a community of high morality and cohesiveness); *Sedq* (the virtue of truth, including accepting responsibility for one's good and bad actions and maintaining fairness); *Etqan* (the attainment of perfection through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, continuously improved through professional development); *Ekhlas*, being sincere, necessary for organizational trust and cooperation; *Shura*, working through consultation at and with all organizational levels to create a sense of belonging and an openness to others, which can reduce the predilections towards arrogance and pride (and more importantly, narcissism); *Sabra*, or patience, which can prevent one from overreacting and making mistakes through hasty decision-making (Branine & Pollard, 2010).

Such approach places an emphasis on training and the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes and the cultivation of a strong Islamic work ethic (Yousef, 2000), which contributes to strengthening integrity in the civil service.

The main issue is the moral and religious responsibility to consult with people who are knowledgeable. Islamic public administration plays role in maintaining a balance between material and spiritual realms and in improving society. The leader must adhere to the religious and moral values of Islam. What differs Islamic PA is the obedience to rulers and the legitimacy of rule. The legitimacy of rule in the Islamic tradition therefore rests upon the government's ability to foster a society that lives in accordance with the *shari'a*, creating an environment where religion (*din*) can contextually flourish. In parallel, *maqasid* is the

summarization and prioritization of the wisdom, which is a vastly underexplored source of Islamic PA ethics and values. The first scholar to put forth an elaborate ‘maqasid’ framework, still utilized today, the Andalusian theologian Al-Shatibi (1320–1388) in “*al-Muwafaqat*” (“The Reconciliation”), identifies the highest-priority goal of the shari‘a as the preservation of din or faith based “binding customs or practices that allow communities to function” (Nongbri, 2013: 42). Din, as a system of Islamic social order, is a sacred implementation/administration for a life of sacred purpose. The sacred purpose of policy-making and implementation places religious foundations at the core of Islamic PA. Din may serve as a particularly useful concept for understanding societal good (i. e. public value) (Drechsler, W. Kattel, R. Chafic, S. 2023).

This overview demonstrated how Islamic governance principles and religion impact administrative system and how Islamic ethical and legal principles derived from historical past are integrated into governance structures.

2. The influence of moral imperative on administrative decisions and public policies

In examining the complexity of governance within Islamic context, is essential to explore how ethical teachings from Islamic sources inform modern administrative practices and influence administrative decisions and public policies. Effective governance in Islamic contexts is understood as multifaceted, encompassing multi-level decision-making, stakeholder participation, and integration of religious principles and values in policy design and implementation.

According to Alibašić, Khaldûn’s “*Muqaddimah*” is a crucial base to understand governance dynamic and offers pioneering insights into several areas relevant to contemporary administration (Alibašić, 2023: 33). Such is the bureaucratic function and development, as Ibn Khaldûn critically examines the role of bureaucrats and their impact on state functionality, advocating for merit-based systems where officials’ qualifications and moral integrity are paramount (Kay, 2023). Social cohesion (*asabiyyah*)³ is a vital concept for understanding the legitimacy and efficiency of governance. Good governance is characterized by outcomes that resonate with ethical imperatives derived from Khaldûnian principles, promoting trust, stability, prosperity, preventing corruption and leading to more democratic societies (Alibašić, 2023 & 2024; Chafik & Drechsler, 2022). A case study design, made by Alibašić, and documents analysis, allow for an in dept examination of how historical principles manifest in different contemporary context (Alibašić, 2023: 36).

The principles of justice, charitable obligations (*zakat*) and systematic accountability, shaped various facets of public administration. The social cohesion is a cornerstone for effective governance and economic strategy. Modern governance mechanisms endeavor to adapt these historical principles to confront contemporary societal challenges, incorporating them through diverse avenues, from constitutional frameworks to policy design and implementation. Liberal regimes foster social cohesion through civic engagement and pluralism, while secular economic systems navigate cultural sensitivities (Alibašić, 2023: 36). The concept of pluralism, derived from the postulates prescribed by Allah⁴, is fundamental.

³ Khaldûn argues that societies possessing strong social cohesion tend to develop effective administrative systems.

⁴ Civil society has its origins in the actions and utterances of the Prophet, who in Medina established a true civil society of the Islamic type. After his death, Muslims returned to pre-Islamic social structures. Therefore, the creation of an Islamic civil society requires a return to tradition, which must be used in the context of modernity. Replaces the western “civil society”, with the term *masyarakat madani*.

On this basis he developed his views of civil society, democracy and civility, whose main attributes should be fair legislation and guarantee of human rights.

Uzbekistan is a good example for administrative efficiency and reforms that reflect Khaldûn's emphasis on the necessity of a competent bureaucracy for state stability. There are also Uzbekistan's transparency initiatives aligning with Khaldûnian concepts of administrative accountability and meritocracy (World Bank, 2023). Administrative strategies emphasizing national unity and social cohesion as a base for effective governance. The country pursuing policies that balanced central authority with local administration, aligning with Khaldûnian insights about effective governance structures (Alibašić, 2023: 41). Uzbek *mahalla*⁵ is well recognized and this model is one of *Erzatz* (some as secondary government), a centuries-old autonomous indigenous institution, a semi-integrated with central administration (Peters, 2019). The mahallas form *Indigenous Cooperative Governance Institutions* and they do so in an Islamic, and in particular in a Sufi, way. They are a public value creation, based on localized Islamic tradition, which re-emerge because the national government cannot manage public service provision. According to Peters, PA is carried out not only by the state but also through alternatives such as social actors and institutions (Chafic and Drechlsler, 2022).

The analysis reveals and how Khaldûnian principles highlighting their relevance and applicability in understanding societal and governmental dynamics. Furthermore, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan each present unique governance models. The reform of public administration at the regional level increasing the responsibility of regional state structures for the quality of services provided by the state authorities to the population.

Thus, encourages dialogue between Islam and secular administration, promoting a pluralistic understanding of governance. The integration of rationality into Islamic thought has the potential to bridge traditional Islamic values and principles with contemporary concepts of democracy and human rights. Islamic rationalism offers a good framework for addressing ethical dilemmas in governance, including issues such as justice and public welfare (Tan, 2014).

Governance and democracy in Central Asia

The effectiveness of public administration, on the one hand, and the effectiveness of its reform in order to optimize national development, on the other, have become a priority for four selected countries. The public administration was determined as a dynamic system capable of adapting the institutions of state power and the executive. The political changes that are taking place in those countries, create an urgent need to design a new management model that has a high mobilization and development potential (Abdullayev, 2022: 3). This model impact on the whole society with the aim of streamlining, organizing, improving and stable development and has the realization of public needs, interests and problems⁶. The

⁵ El- Mahalla in Arabic means "district" or "encampment". Makhallas are a vivid example of a Central Asian medieval urban quarter, with distinctive features and elements of the influence of the Fergana-Kashgar traditional architecture. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6578/>. The *makhalla* also is an institution that in the Islamic East ensures local self-government. In Uzbekistan the word means local community and is a separate self-governing public organization and each Uzbek is a member of mahalla. Its role and importance have always been invaluable in carefully preserving the multi-ethnic Uzbek people's national and universal human values, culture, way of life, thoughts and spirituality. In independent Uzbek *mahhala* is an officially established institutions recognized by the state.

⁶ The introduction of a model of governance that would serve its citizens and provide effective mechanisms for public control over the authorities. Within the framework of public administration

formation of a strong democratic states, the stability of society and the sustainable development of the economy are impossible without the support of the population, without its social consolidation as a condition for the development of democracy and the formation of civil society. An integral feature of democratic governance is the opportunity for citizens to participate in the process of shaping public policy.

The supreme law, in four countries, is the Constitution, which establishes the framework for the country's public policies. The Constitutions ensured equality before the law. There are different types of democracy in the region (hybrid, imitative, national democracy). The Eastern model proposes a democracy based on the ideas of paternalism, collectivism, with the priority of social consensus. The dominant government model in the region is a 'hybrid regime' that combines elements of democracy and autocracy.

1. Kyrgyzstan emphasis on secular governance with Islam being the dominant religion. Constitution ensures secular governance and Islam influences cultural and social aspects. This is the country with the most developed democratic system. Voters in this country support the creation of a parliamentary democracy, a first for a region ruled by authoritarian regimes. The Constitution of 2010 further advanced the principle of equality, including in Article 16 (4), which refers to not only equal rights and freedoms for men and women in Kyrgyzstan, but also equal opportunities for their realization, an important reference to enabling mechanisms and implementation⁷.

In Kyrgyzstan, the most important forms of direct participation by the population in decision-making are the discussion of all-important issues of public and state life and the implementation of decisions through *kurultais*⁸, assemblies, citizens' meetings, and other forms of direct democracy.

Public administration reforms aimed at eliminating excessive bureaucratic barriers, accelerating decision-making processes, and improving government efficiency. The reforms are part of the implementation of the presidential decree *On Additional Measures to Improve the Efficiency and De-bureaucratization of the Civil Service System of the Kyrgyz Republic*⁹.

The world is changing rapidly, and states in Central Asia have entered a new phase of global competition. Kyrgyzstan meet these challenges and beginning a fundamental transformation of public administration. The country joined the *Millennium Challenge Pilot Program*¹⁰. Kyrgyzstan's public administration reform process has provided for relatively gender-sensitive legislation and policy, which aim to ensure women's representation in central government and local self-governments. A new civil service code, which aims to unite in one piece of legislation the various fragmented laws and decrees, appeared (Law No. 99 'On local self-governments and local state administrations' (29 May 2008).

2. The President of Turkmenistan has concentrated almost all state power in his hands. Officially secular state, but Islam plays a role in cultural and social norms. As regards human rights, there have been positive steps, such as the adoption of a comprehensive *National*

reform, particular importance is attached to the provision of public services to citizens and legal entities. To date, in order to improve the quality and accessibility of public services, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the Model Standard for Public Services and the Instructions for Developing the Standard for Public Services by Decree No. 603 of September 3, 2012.

⁷ <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/KyrgyzstanFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>; See Kyrgyz Republic entry at <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/section/constitutions>

⁸ *Kurultais* was a political and military council of ancient Mongol and Turkic chiefs and khans.

⁹ <https://timesca.com/kyrgyzstan-launches-large-scale-public-administration-reform/>

¹⁰ <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/KyrgyzstanFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>

Human Rights Action Plan, in 2016, and the nomination of the first National Ombudsman, in line with the requirements of the renewed Constitution. With regard to democracy, it is necessary to have a strict separation between the executive, legislative and judicial powers, which requires consultations with international experts to assess the level of adaptation of the Turkmen constitution to the democratic principles. Turkmenistan acts within the framework and in accordance with the key world-class standards regarding the requirements for the organization of civil service.

European Union funded the Support to the Public Administration Capacity Building program for the modernization of the Turkmen Public Administration in line with European standards. Public administration reform agenda outlined in the *National Program for Socio-Economic Development of Turkmenistan* for 2011–2030. One of the results is a development a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program for the Academy of Civil Service under the President of Turkmenistan.

3. The *Civil Service Law* was enacted in 2007 that led to the creation of the Civil Service Department under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Constitution is secular, however, Islamic traditions influence cultural practices. The Strategy for Reforming the Public Administration system, adopted by Presidential Decree, determined the Government's actions in public administration and civil service reform, and it aimed at improving the structure of central and local executive bodies of state power. Two more documents, the *Concept for Civil Service Reform* and the *Program for Reforming the Civil Service of Tajikistan* also influenced the course of civil service reform in the country. The first, aimed at creating a modern and professional civil service¹¹, in the short-, medium-, and long-term; and the second by ensuring consistent implementation of the Concept and by increasing the efficiency of civil service development. The formation of solid constitutional foundations¹² for the civil service in Tajikistan, demonstrates that no democratic state can function effectively without a highly professional state apparatus consisting of a competent civil service corps¹³ (Dzhuma M. Davlatov & Zaynidin M. Mukhtorov & Fariza Ergasheva-Mamadiyeva, 2022).

Civil society institutions are playing a crucial role in a democratization process generate social capital for the development of nation-state¹⁴. Civil Society in the region is called the third sector. The Tajikistan National Unity and Revival Movement (TNURM) created in July 1997 united efforts of different social strata and forces to establish an environment of peace, mutual trust, and consent (Swain, 2012).

¹¹ The concept of 'civil service' emerged when people began to manage the processes of social relationships and public processes in general. It is well known that the Civil Service is a category that is organically connected to the state. The emergence, development, and further fate of the Civil Service stems from the emergence and development of the state. This concept is an important state legal institution that exists in all legal democratic states.

¹² The Constitution of Tajikistan came into force on 6th November 1994 through nation-wide plebiscite. This constitution contains 100 articles and is divided into 10 chapters. This Constitution was also amended on 26th September 1999 and on 22nd June 2003 through national referendum.

¹³ See: Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan (with additions and amendments of 26 September 1999 and 22 June 2003). Dushanbe, 2003.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Program Report on "Policy process reform: institutionalization of consultations between government institutions 70 Eurasian Report, Winter 2012 and non-government organizations in the CIS: Countries, conditions, forms, practice". Bratislava, August, 2002, p.10.

4. The president of Uzbekistan defines the country as a democratic state, maintaining a course of stability in Central Asia¹⁵. The state maintains secular governance, with Islam influencing cultural identity. The parliament aims to turn Uzbekistan into a 'welfare state' where the supreme values are human life, freedom, honor and dignity.

After Uzbekistan got independent in 1991, the authorities expanded the role and responsibilities of 'Mahhala', which increased significantly thanks to the creation of the *Association of Mahallas of Uzbekistan* and the introduction of the 'mahalla seven' mechanism. These reforms have contributed to strengthening interaction between local communities and government bodies, which has improved living conditions, increased employment, and intensified the fight against poverty. The year of 2003 was declared *The Year of Mahhala* and was officially transformed into the basic administrative unit of local government. Today, 'mahallas' are hybrid institutions, operating both as part of the formal system of public administration as well as an informal, community-based welfare system. The formal ones mean that there are committees headed by a state-salaried chairman that act on behalf of the state while informal means that social mahallas are established on moral ideas of solidarity and mutual help and are led by an *aksakal* (elderly person) chosen by the residents. The Samarkand Declaration¹⁶ covers in detail the activities of the 'mahalla' as a significant institution that contributes to strengthening social cohesion, intergenerational dialogue and humanistic values. It is a key element of the social structure. Due to the fact mahalla traditionally functions as the primary link of self-government some activities include mobilizing the population to participate in reforms, developing entrepreneurship, creating jobs and providing social support¹⁷. It's necessary to underline the role of the 'mahalla' in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is considered a key platform for implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, contributing to the creation of safe conditions for the growth and development of children, including children with disabilities, as well as ensuring their rights to food, clean water and sanitation. Particular attention is paid to protecting the rights of women and children, preventing violence, child labor and early marriage, and achieving gender equality. UNICEF and UNDP support the 'mahalla' through initiatives aimed at improving social infrastructure and the quality of social services¹⁸. This unique model of local self-governance (a territorial and administrative unit) which combines traditional community principles with modern approaches to governance, acts as a reliable institution that supports the welfare and security of its citizens, and also is a way of life, a type of thinking and a centuries-old tradition.

Uzbek 'Mahhala' exist in neighboring countries among the local ethnic Uzbeks, but possibly unofficially, in Kyrgyzstan (Usken, Osh), and Southern Kazakhstan (Shymren, Sayram).

National democracy in these countries has, the specific "political code – Islam", embedded in their new systems of governance. National democracies' are usually structured in a way that makes them extremely vulnerable during the inevitable transitions in governance that occur over time, especially when a national leader has to be replaced. Turkmenistan and,

¹⁵ The constitutional reform will allow the 65-year-old statesman to run again in 2026 and, if re-elected, remain in power until 2033 and, if re-elected, until 2040.

¹⁶ The Samarkand Declaration was adopted during the International Conference "The Role of Mahalla in Improving the Living Standards of the Population", which was held from 2 to 5 October 2024 in Samarkand.

¹⁷ See: <https://internationalaffairsreview.com/2025/04/02/the-mahalla-system-uzbekistans-unique-experience-with-self-governance/>

¹⁸ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6578/>

more recently, Uzbekistan are good examples of 'national democracies' that have successfully weathered transitions in governance that many assumed would be extremely difficult.

Adip Khalid, one of the most outstanding scholars of Islam in the post-communist region of the Caucasus, notes that profound changes are needed to properly understand modern Islam, its role, and its place in the public sphere (Yemelianova & Račius, 2023).

Conclusion

In conclusion, public administration in Islam is a holistic approach that intertwines governance with ethical and moral principles derived from Islamic teachings. It seeks to create a just and equitable society where the rulers are accountable to both God and the people, ensuring the welfare and dignity of all citizens. The governance system in Central Asia is shaped by its national tradition and historical evolution.

In contemporary times, the principles of Islamic public administration continue to influence governance in the four selected countries. The concepts 'modern' and 'global' in the field of PA are a Western way of looking to the things. The selected countries present a non-Western public administration and diverse legitimate system of governance. Islamic culture and values also serve to distinguish them from the main characteristics of Western experiences. In Asian culture, government is considered as being capable of providing solutions (Mahbubani, 2010). Islam as a case study, is a specific challenge, which principles can be integrated with modern administrative practices to create systems that uphold justice, accountability, and community welfare. The emphasis on transparency and accountability resonates with modern democratic values, while the focus on welfare aligns with contemporary social justice initiatives.

The work observes a spectrum of approaches to incorporating historical principles into modern administrative frameworks and emphasizes the necessity for culturally contextualized approaches within public administration discourse. In future, the focus on historical and cultural influence on the governance, should be deepened.

The interaction between historical traditions and modern administrative requirements created hybrid institutional forms and a balance between historical principles and modern needs. This balance is a tool for theories that accommodate institutional pluralism and hybrid governance forms. The effectiveness of public administration, and the effectiveness of its reform, have become a priority for the selected countries. The public administration there is a dynamic system capable of adapting the institutions of state power and the executive, to the rapidly changing needs of society.

When Muslims talk about democracy, it does not mean they are ready to imitate the Western model of democracy. Democracy in Central Asia preserves a humanity as a whole and it takes shape differently in each country. The societies there have democratized, and the influence of authoritarianism remains evident. Islam become the core ethical value and driving force of a civil society and contribute to implementing the democratic values of pluralism and tolerance, fair government in the interests of the peoples in the region, where the prospect of connecting East and West is possible in the future. The work contributes to a deeper understanding of Islam and public administration in Central Asia and recognizing the potential of Islamic approach in PA to address the modern challenges.

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