



ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE POST-KARIMOV ERA

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ABOUT ARTICLE

Key words: The Republic of Uzbekistan, Russian Federation, theories of IR, Postcolonialism, Liberalism, Realism, Constructivism, cultural hegemony, economic dependency, migration, political relations.

Received: 01.07.25

Accepted: 02.07.25

Published: 03.07.25

Abstract: This analytical article aims to describe, and analyze the relationships between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Russian Federation from 2016 to 2023, during the post-Karimov era. In this paper, Postcolonialism is used as the primary theory of International Relations (IR) to explain political, economic, and cultural processes between Uzbekistan and Russia, underlying key elements, and saturating historical explanation. Furthermore, the author compares Postcolonial theory with other theories of IR, providing with strong and concrete arguments, and proves that Postcolonial theory best describes the relations between Uzbekistan and Russia in the current world. The main research area of the article is the understanding and explanation of the political, economic and cultural behavior of Uzbekistan in relations with Russia. This is achieved by the process of analysis and description of the valid sources, with an attention to postcolonial features to be interpreted. Postcolonial theory is used to shape, and analyze four aspects: economic dependency, migration, political relations, and cultural hegemony. Moreover, going through all these aspects, the author provides with valid data and statistics to support his statements and arguments. The author gives his opinion on each research aspect mentioned above. In conclusion, the author gives recommendations in further foreign policy of Uzbekistan, referring to the Postcolonial theory.

KARIMOV DAVRIDAN KEYINGI DAVRDA O'ZBEKISTON RESPUBLIKASI VA Rossiya FEDERATSIYASI O'RTASIDAGI MUNOSABATLAR TAHLILI

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MAQOLA HAQIDA

Kalit so'zlar: O'zbekiston Respublikasi, Rossiya Federatsiyasi, xalqaro munosabatlar nazariyalari, postkolonializm, liberalizm, realizm, konstruktivizm, madaniy gegemoniya, iqtisodiy qaramlik, migratsiya, siyosiy munosabatlar.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu tahliliy maqola 2016-yildan 2023-yilgacha, post-Karimov davrida O'zbekiston Respublikasi va Rossiya Federatsiyasi o'rtasidagi munosabatlarni tavsiflash va tahlil qilishga qaratilgan. Mazkur ishda xalqaro munosabatlar (XM) nazariyasi sifatida postkolonializm asosiy yondashuv sifatida qo'llanilib, O'zbekiston va Rossiya o'rtasidagi siyosiy, iqtisodiy va madaniy jarayonlar, ularning asosiy jihatlari va tarixiy asoslari yoritib beriladi. Shuningdek, muallif postkolonializm nazariyasini boshqa XM nazariyalari bilan taqqoslab, kuchli va asosli dalillar orqali aynan postkolonializm hozirgi davrda O'zbekiston-Rossiya munosabatlarini eng yaxshi izohlay olishini isbotlaydi. Maqolaning asosiy tadqiqot sohasi — O'zbekistonning Rossiya bilan siyosiy, iqtisodiy va madaniy munosabatlaridagi xatti-harakatlarini anglash va tushuntirishdir. Bu tahlil jarayonida ishonchli manbalarni o'rganish hamda postkolonial xususiyatlarga e'tibor qaratish orqali amalga oshiriladi. Postkolonial nazariya to'rtta asosiy jihatni shakllantirish va tahlil qilishda qo'llaniladi: iqtisodiy qaramlik, migratsiya, siyosiy munosabatlar va madaniy gegemoniya. Muallif ushbu yo'nalishlar bo'yicha o'z fikr-mulohazalarini bildiradi hamda har bir jihatni statistik ma'lumotlar bilan asoslaydi. Yakunda, muallif O'zbekistonning tashqi siyosatini rivojlantirish uchun postkolonial nazariyaga asoslangan tavsiyalarni beradi.

АНАЛИЗ ОТНОШЕНИЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ УЗБЕКИСТАН И РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ В ПОСТКАРИМОВСКИЙ ПЕРИОД

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О СТАТЬЕ

Ключевые слова: Республика Узбекистан, Российская Федерация, теории международных отношений, постколониализм, либерализм, реализм, конструктивизм, культурная гегемония, экономическая зависимость, миграция, политические отношения.

Аннотация: Целью данной аналитической статьи является описание и анализ отношений между Республикой Узбекистан и Российской Федерацией с 2016 по 2023 год, в посткаримовскую эпоху. В данной статье постколониализм используется в качестве основной теории международных отношений (МО) для объяснения политических, экономических и культурных процессов между Узбекистаном и Россией, лежащих в основе ключевых элементов и насыщения исторического объяснения. Кроме того, автор сравнивает постколониальную теорию с другими теориями МО, приводя веские и конкретные аргументы, и доказывает, что постколониальная теория наилучшим образом описывает отношения между Узбекистаном и Россией в современном мире. Основной областью исследования статьи является понимание и объяснение политического, экономического и культурного поведения Узбекистана в отношениях с Россией. Это достигается путем анализа и описания достоверных источников с акцентом на постколониальные особенности, подлежащие интерпретации. Постколониальная теория используется для формирования и анализа четырех аспектов: экономической зависимости, миграции, политических отношений и культурной гегемонии. Более того, рассматривая все эти аспекты, автор приводит достоверные данные и статистические данные в поддержку своих утверждений и аргументов. Автор высказывает своё мнение по каждому из упомянутых аспектов исследования. В заключение автор даёт рекомендации по дальнейшей внешней политике Узбекистана, опираясь на постколониальную теорию.

Introduction.

In order to make precise analysis with a clear understanding for a reader, the author outlines theoretical framework which consists of description and comparison of the examined theories, such as Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, Postcolonialism; an overall background of the

Uzbek-Russian relations from the Tsarist era, to the Soviet Union and Independence period until 2016 to better showcase colonial ties with Russia; analysis by providing examples, and describing the relations of Uzbekistan and Russia through empirical validity, explaining the approaches Uzbekistan undertakes to rebalance its dependency on Russia; and conclusion which gives an overall description of this work as a whole.

Theoretical framework.

There is a variety of theories of IR which can be used to analyze the relations between Uzbekistan and Russia, such as Postcolonialism, Liberalism, Realism and Constructivism. Postcolonial theory suits this best due to a historical connection between these countries. Before comparing all those theories with Postcolonialism, it is crucial to explain the key elements of each of them. The first theory to be described is Realism.

Realism. As Jahn (2006, p. 7) highlights, “It is argued that Realism can trace its roots back to Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Rousseau, Liberalism to Kant, the English School to Grotius and soon, because the discipline of International Relations addresses certain fairly ‘timeless’ issues – such as war and peace – which have been reflected upon by scholars over time” . Addressing to Thucydides, an Athenian historian, who reflected his thoughts on the Peloponnesian War, and described this conflict between Ancient Greece states chronologically successfully, a classical realism can be noticed. “Since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must” (Crawley, 2013, p. 308), it describes an element of political Realism when a stronger state has the right to decide for a weaker one what actions they need to undertake. To minimize conflicts, and to maintain peace, the Balance of Power is a necessary approach in international political system. However, it is questionable that states can achieve it due to an anarchic system, in which countries have only self-interest, and referring to Hobbes (1651/2012, p. 68), who states that “the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself” . Analyzing the main causes of war occurred between Athens and Sparta, fear comes as the one which affected Spartans most in making a decision to start armory conflicts to take glory over their greatest enemy, proved by a following statement: “The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable” (Crawley, 2013, p. 12) . This makes sense that war is inevitable for both Thucydides and Hobbes (Oldemeinen, 2010) . Furthermore, Waltz (1979) writes about that international system which is anarchic which is why it sets limits on cooperation . States are unaware of the intentions of their so-called “allies”, and this makes them to be dependent on others. Korab-Karpowicz (2010) claims that the main reasons for that are insecurity and unequal gains .

Liberalism. Liberalism is considered as a counterpart of Realism as it is more optimistic than the first one in approaching the realm of the relations between independent states. There are three Kantian influences which can be implemented on analysis, such as democracy, international trade, and international organizations (Dunne, Kurki and Smith, 2013). Democracies do not threaten each other, and are considered to be more peaceful with countries which have different political systems. They tend to cooperate and negotiate, and taking an advantage over a weaker one is not one of the norms for a democratic country. Moreover, democratic leaders are accountable for their actions to the institutions due to “liberalism's primary concern is to build institutions that protect individual liberty by limiting and checking political power” (Duguri, Hassan and Ibrahim, 2021, p. 4). In case of being defeated in war, head of a democratic state might be voted out of office. Second Kantian influence, international trade, stimulates mutual development of states, and creates close trade and economic ties with one another. International trade decreases conflict as stated, – “Violent conflict endangers access to markets, imports, and capital. It may not make trade between disputing states impossible, but it certainly raises the risks and costs” (Dunne, Kurki and Smith, 2013, p. 102). This means that a country involved in war loses benefits, such as economic prosperity, or import of products which are necessary for a well-being of the state. Meiser (2018, p. 24) writes that “International organizations like the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank create an open, market-based, international economic system” , and they also promote human rights, health and environmental concerns.

Constructivism. Dunne, Kurki and Smith (2013, p. 188) highlight that “the failure of IR scholars to predict or initially explain the end of the Cold War” made other scholars think about the construction of Constructivism within IR. Constructivists argued that actors in IR are social, so a surrounding has a big effect on a human being. This is how people define their strong and weak sides comparing each other in intelligence, or physical condition. Once the process of comparison is finished, an individual emphasizes the aspects they need to improve and can understand how to surpass a rival. The same approach is related to countries through the thought of Constructivist theory. State’s “identities and interests are socially constructed, the products of inter-subjective social structures” (Burchill et al., 2005, p. 193). Furthermore, Guzzini (2000) notes that Constructivism is a theory about the construction of social reality . Searle (1995) states that money which is a piece of paper, or a coin becomes the actual “money” when individual attributes it as a means of the exchange of goods . Having given no such a material payment meaning, money becomes just a sheet of paper.

Postcolonialism. One of the most famous works on Postcolonialism has been associated with “Orientalism” by Edward Said. As Göksel and Hüseyinova (2024, p. 216) explain: “Colonialism is not just a political and economic endeavor but also a cultural initiative. Said argues

that the West, by literary and academic endeavors, fabricated the “Orient” as a regressive, alien, and subordinate counterpart to the “Occident” (the West). This rhetorical framework historically legitimized colonial control by portraying non-Western populations as incapable of self-governance and requiring Western intervention” . This shows that imperialistic empires used their own ideological pursuits to show their superiority over colonized nations. Moreover, “Said’s work was groundbreaking in expanding the notion of colonialism to encompass cultural imperialism, wherein knowledge production, language, and representation serve as instruments of dominance” (Göksel and Hüseyinova, 2024, p. 216). Dunne, Kurki and Smith (2013) noted the importance of international morality and ethics in analyzing the colonial relations from the perspective postcolonialism , because the development of political economies is linked with violence which colonizers used, and still implement on their former colonies to avoid their rise in politics, and other areas. So, are the social norms established by the West institutions universal? This question may arise during the conversation about human rights, culture or even ethics as most of the norms, related to them, are seen as Eurocentric. In emphasizing power and legitimacy in the international order, postcolonialism questions them with regard to different dimensions (Dunne, Kurki and Smith, 2013) . Postcolonial scholars also focus on power imbalances, marginalized culture and ethnic boundaries in former colonies.

Comparison. Once an explanation of theories is finished, it is important to compare them to choose a theory which explains Uzbekistan’s approach in relations with Russia more thoroughly. Realism, as it can be seen, better explains conflicts and wars. While Uzbekistan is a successful ally of Russia, and since its independence, Uzbekistan did not have any war conflict with Russia or any other country in the world arena, Realism does not seem to be well applicable for describing these relations. It might be used for analysis on Russia-Ukrainian conflict due to concerns about security and power allocation in Western Europe. Also, Realism ignores friendly cooperation among states which makes it more skeptical. Economic relations between Uzbekistan and Russia might be described and analyzed from the perspective of Liberalism, whereas both countries are not liberal democratic states, so this theory of IR fails to analyze them, as only states with liberal democracies can live in peace without any intention to attack each other. Liberalism does not take into account inequalities in international organizations, and claims that such organizations can control anarchic system in international relations. However, it can be noticed that over the past decades, for instance, the United Nations Organization established for maintaining peace in the world, has faced with a lot of criticism due to its inability to always stop armory conflicts. Constructivism focuses on shared norms and identities but ignores imperial domination which downplays historical legacies. Furthermore, Constructivism is more abstract than Postcolonialism which analyzes relations of countries as former colonies, and colonizers. As

Uzbekistan used to be a colony of Russian Empire, and was a part of the Soviet Union, Postcolonialism can emphasize deeply economic, cultural and political aspects. Moreover, it describes one state's attempts to get out of another country's sphere of influence.

Background.

“In the 16th century, Uzbekistan became the center of the Bukhara Emirate, which was a powerful state in Central Asia. The Emirate controlled a vast territory, and was an important center of trade and culture. In the 19th century, Uzbekistan was conquered by the Russian Empire. The country became part of the Turkestan General Government and served as an important buffer between Russia and British India. After the Russian Revolution, Uzbekistan became part of the Soviet Union. The country was a center of cotton growing and had a developed industry” (Norbaev and Jumaniyazova, 2024, p. 231).

Being mentioned and explained in Russian projects of conquest, the Tsarist government colonized Turkestan and other parts of Central Asia (Gorshenina, 2021, p.191) . Here is a claim for historians and scholars to suggest that it was a process of colonization, not a policy of unification of the West and East. An intriguing feature to be noticed is that Russian Empire did not aim to change traditions, or convert nations of the region into Christianity. By contrast, their policy was associated with control of Turkestan by their local confidants who had a full power to rule under a certain territory, and the populace could continue practicing Islam.

After the fall of the Russian Empire, the Bolsheviks seized control of the government. Sebba (2006) outlines that during the 1920s and late 1930s, the Soviet government established a policy of control over the Central Asian population of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) to reform Arabic script to Latin, and afterwards, to Cyrillic script . One of the major socio-political changes was accomplished by the Soviet Union government, – to destroy a social behavior of the population of the region with a destruction of Islamic institutions, so that Central Asians would not have strong ties with Islamic world which uses Arabic script (Kandiyoti, 2002). What is more, this made locals start to forget about religion which was a leading factor for controlling communities by the USSR. Such a policy led to the successful implementation of Soviet activities in Central Asia like political-administrative control which made it possible to mine natural resources, and their unequal allocation. These cultural, ideological and alphabetical changes caused negative circumstances for Uzbekistan in developing its identity and culture in the future since it is difficult to reform from one type of script being used for more than half a decade to another one.

Fazendeiro (2017) writes that the first president of the Republic of Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991, set self-reliance as a feature of the foreign policy of state. “Mustaqillik” idea became the central slogan of the Uzbek regime. Due to defensive self-reliance policy, a

country attempted to avoid political blocks and military alliances. However, Uzbekistan was one of the 6 countries which signed the Collective Security Treaty (CST) on May 15, 1992. In 1999, Uzbekistan withdrew from CST due to a disagreement with Russia but joined Eurasec and CSTO in 2006, leaving both in 2008 and 2012 respectively. Having joined and withdrawn from CSTO, Uzbekistan announced its “Foreign Policy Concept” in September 2012. Jurayev and Zamonov (2018) write that in this concept, the Central Asian region receives special attention, and it is officially recognized that “this region is vitally connected with important interests of Uzbekistan”. At the same time, taking into account a mutual competition between major countries of the world in Central Asia, it was noted that “the problems of Central Asia should be resolved by the states of the region themselves, without interference of the external forces”. Moreover, the concept emphasizes that Uzbekistan pursues a peaceful policy, is not a member of any military-political block, and in case of the transformation of any interstate structure into military-political block the Republic of Uzbekistan reserves the right to withdraw from it.

Regardless the fact that Uzbekistan officially set up a policy of non-alignment in military blocks like Collective Security Treaty Organization, in which Russia is the main power, Moscow continued to collaborate with the Uzbek government. For example, Tarakanova and Pogodin (2018) elucidate that the economic relations between the Russian Federation and Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan, are based on energy infrastructure projects: coal, crude oil, petroleum products and electricity are exported from Russia to the countries of the Central Asian region, in turn, Russia transits large energy supplies from the Central Asian republics to Western Europe. In addition, Central Asia is the largest food market for the Russian Federation. It should also be noted that Russia is the investor of several projects in the oil and gas sectors of the Central Asian region. Center gas pipeline is a good example of it, which meets the internal needs of the market not only in Russia, but also in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The gas pipeline runs through the territory of several countries: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia; its route is about 5000 km. This gas pipeline was built back in Soviet times, but has not yet lost its relevance. Expansion of the gas transportation system “Central Asia - Center” is one of the priority areas of Gazprom’s work, which will undoubtedly level up its reliability and increase significantly the export capacity of Turkmen, Uzbek and Kazakh gas.

Analysis.

In analytical framework, the relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Russian Federation during the presidency of Shavkat Mirziyoyev are explained by contemporary analysis through Postcolonial lens: political relations, economic dependency and migration, cultural

hegemony. Initially, the author gives an explanation for Uzbekistan's economic dependency and its populace migration to Russia before describing other areas of analysis.

Economic dependency and migration. These two objects are analyzed together due to their close connection with each other. Through data gathered from different sources, the author makes analysis of Uzbekistan's economic domain in relations with Russia.

Under the presidency of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan continued to collaborate with its main economic partner, Russia. Among the most significant contracts Uzbekistan signed was with previously mentioned Gazprom for the annual purchase of 4 billion cubic meters of Uzbek natural gas beginning in 2018 (Dadabaev, 2018). Rakhmanova and Azamov (2023) provide with the data outlining that in the same year, Uzbekistan ranked first in terms of export attractiveness for Russian business sector. In addition to the rich raw material base (the country is among the top ten world leaders in the production of gold, uranium, copper, natural gas, cotton), which is also facilitated by the course towards liberalization of the economy of Uzbekistan, announced by the new leadership of the country. Uzbekistan law sector makes free movement of goods and services possible, as well as the absence of import duties in the mutual trade of Uzbekistan with the countries of the Customs Union. From October 1, 2017, excise taxes on groups of imported goods from food to commercial vehicles have been reduced. Initiatives in the chemical and mining industries, the oil and gas sector, transport and logistics projects were developed. In other words, favorable conditions have been created for trade and economic cooperation with Russia. Uzbekistan is one of Russia's main trading partners in Central Asia, second, compared to Kazakhstan, and fourth within the CIS . This presents that Russia keeps maintaining control on cheap energy resources in Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states.

Moreover, in 2022, among the CIS countries, Russian Federation contributed significantly to the trade turnover of Uzbekistan, at 52.9% which shows that Russia continues to be the main economic partner of the Republic of Uzbekistan out of the Post-Soviet Union states. Due to its geopolitical location, Uzbekistan also develops its economy with Central Asian states, especially with Kazakhstan which affected the trade turnover with the contribution of 18.7% (Image 1).



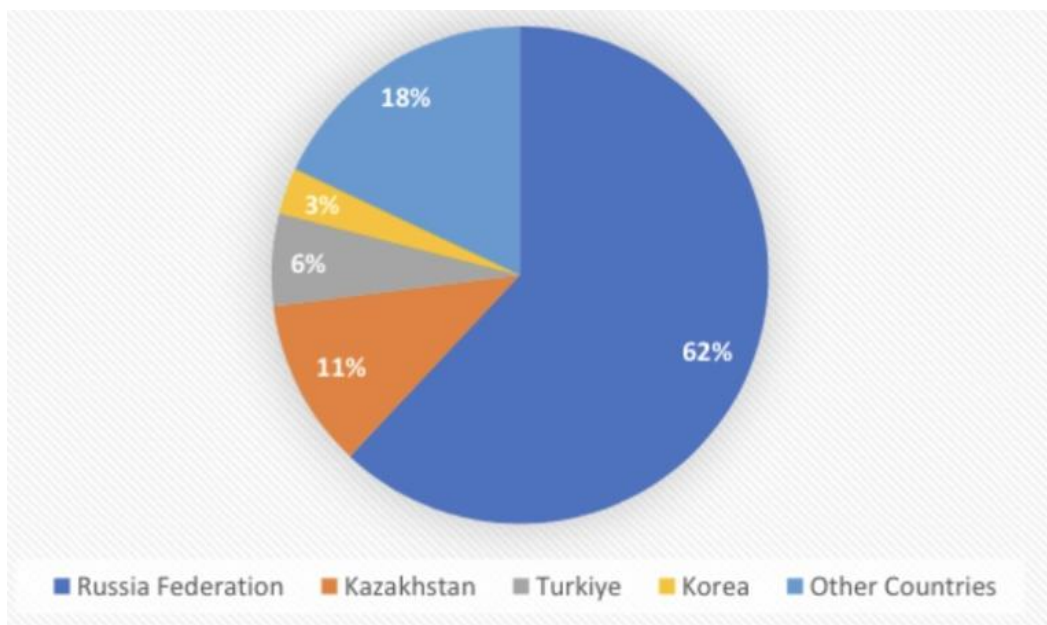
Image 1 (Daryo.uz, 2024).

The data provided above illustrates, and proves that Uzbekistan is still dependent on Russia considerably. A question may occur: “How then Uzbekistan tries to decrease Russian influence?” A Central Asian country uses its strategy relying noticeably on Postcolonial approach to rebalance Russian influence by collaborating with China which became the leading trade partner of Uzbekistan, and other Western and Asian states. For example, Junling (2023) states that Uzbekistan is one of the main actors in “the Belt and Road” initiative which is considered to be a platform for cooperation. In 2017, China invested 100 billion yuan to this project. Republic of Korea granted USD 500 million for the mutual projects, and both governments allocated USD 2 billion for the implementation of these initiatives from 2018 to 2020 (Dadabaev, 2019). In case with the “Land of the Rising Sun”, Adilkhojaeva (2022) mentions Japan-Uzbek trade turnover which amounted to USD 169.2 million, exports – USD 12.3 million, imports – USD \$156.8 million in 2021. There are 46 operating companies with Japanese investment in Uzbekistan.

Migration is one of the factors which affects positively on the economy, and even can make a significant portion of Uzbekistan’s GDP. Remittances made by Uzbek migrants to their home country maintains a stable payment balance which supports macroeconomic stability as such payments provide foreign currency reserves. On the other hand, it might also influence negatively, – “but why?” – it also depends on the relations of countries. If Russia imposes sanctions on Uzbekistan, especially on migration sector, or introduces the laws that complicate the influx of the Uzbek migrants, this will lead to many disadvantages like unemployment.

Share of Uzbek migrant workers abroad by country, September 2023 (in percentage).

Pie chart 1.



According to the statistics, the number of the Uzbek migrant workers increased to 2.1 million people on September 1, 2023 (Pie chart 1) (Shayusupova and Khasanov, 2024). The majority of the Uzbek migrants travel to Russia to work, at 62% which is about 1.3 million people. Kazakhstan being geopolitically close to Uzbekistan accepts of around 11% of Uzbeks. It can be seen that the Uzbek government cooperates with many countries but the figure for migration rate to Russia remains to be significantly high.

Furthermore, Shayusupova and Khasanov (2024) provide with information telling that 25443 Uzbek people were assisted in successful acceptance to jobs in Great Britain, Republic of Korea and Russia by the Foreign Labor Migration Agency (FLMA) under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan . Nevertheless, about 80% of that figure is accounted for Russia. It is clear that Russia uses relatively cheap migration dynamics that comes from Uzbekistan. This also makes Uzbekistan dependent on Russian economy which could be seen during the 2014 financial crisis in Russia, or COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, remittances to Uzbekistan declined, the value of which was affected by the Russian ruble fluctuations. Being aware of all the circumstances a high dependency on Russian economy brings, Uzbekistan continues to enhance its relations with other countries.

Political relations. Coming to the political approach of the Uzbek government, the main principles of foreign policy of the state in terms of political stability remained same in the Mirziyoyev's period as they were during the Karimov's period – non-interference in the internal policy of other countries, ignoring a probability of participation in military conflicts, and non-alignment in military blocks (Abrorkulov, 2023). This shows that Uzbekistan is not willing to worsen its relations with the main political powers like Russia and the United States of America, introducing its foreign policy of neutrality. Indeed, such a farsighted political approach makes a

Central Asian state be more secure, and develop economic partnership with the majority of countries in the world.

What Shavkat Mirziyoyev did when he became the president was his first international presidential trip to Turkmenistan on March 6-7, 2017, followed by Kazakhstan on March 22-23 in the same year. Visit of the head of state to Central Asian countries was to show the importance of the regional cooperation for Uzbekistan which accumulated into a prosperous collaboration in many sectors between countries in this region. Only the third international presidential trip was to Russia, showcasing that Russia is an important economic partner for Uzbekistan. In order to establish stable relations with the West, on May 15, 2018, president had an official visit to the United States, and met with Donald Trump, where “Uzbekistan initiated a new era of a strategic partnership with the US, with which its relations had never achieved to this level after the cooling of relations that followed the 2005 Andijan events” (Toktogulov, 2022, p. 50). Mirziyoyev’s official visits to France in 2018 and 2022, Germany in 2019 and 2023, Italy in 2023 led to the development of strong relations with these countries.

It is important to note that Uzbekistan, pursuing multi-vector policy, promotes its cooperation within Central Asia, Europe, USA, China and other countries. As Toshbekov (2022) highlights, a decision to open Uzbek market for American companies and investors, followed by the 20 major contracts signed, estimated with the amount of USD 4.8 billion. In 2021, Uzbekenergo signed an agreement with the US General Electric which would build a 660-megawatt unit at the Tashkent Thermal Power Plant. Khaitkhunov (2023) notes the importance of Uzbekistan’s new policy which contributed to receive the European Union’s (EU) annual financial assistance. Furthermore, the EU granted Uzbekistan the GSP+ status which led to preferential tariffs for imported Uzbek products, and increased growth in export of goods from Uzbekistan. Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Uzbekistan and the EU was signed in 2022, aimed to focus on different areas, such as freedom and justice, political and economic reforms but one of the most memorable parts of the signing ceremony was the 18th annual Cooperation Committee meeting organized by the delegations of Uzbekistan and the EU, and the parties discussed various topics, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Cultural hegemony. While Uzbekistan has made significant efforts in rebalancing dependency on Russia, a country is still influenced by Russian culture due to their historical relations mentioned in “Background”. Uzbekistan has been fostering Uzbek identity, minimizing the influence of cultural hegemony set by Russia during the colonization and Soviet Union period. Russian influence can be seen in architecture as many buildings were constructed in Soviet style. Old generation sometimes prefers to speak Russian over Uzbek language. Undoubtedly, young generation experienced in their conversation with the old generation a hope of the last in the

preservation of the USSR. As Soviet era emphasized Russian language, ideology, culture, history and literature, Uzbek language and traditions were marginalized. Definitely, this had an impact on people's minds who consume Russian media, including television, films, and news. The elderly finds it difficult to read texts written in Latin Uzbek due to education they received when Uzbek language was written in Cyrillic. So, are there any solutions that Uzbekistan used? Certainly, yes. First, the government elevated status of the Uzbek language in public and official spheres. Many, and almost all of the documents, decrees and submissions of them are practiced in Uzbek language. Second, the rise in schools providing education in Uzbek has increased significantly, and is successfully practiced to absorb information and gain knowledge about Uzbek identity, culture, history, and literature. A popularity of the "Jadids" who were famous reformers has increased. Third, Uzbekistan liberalized not only economy, but also religious policies giving an opportunity to return to traditional values characterized with Islam as a superior religion practiced in Uzbekistan. Also, Uzbekistan assert greater national autonomy collaborating with China, regional countries, and most importantly, with Turkey. Having become a member of the Organization of Turkic States on October 15, 2019, Uzbekistan strengthened its political, economic, and cultural relations with Turkey, and other Turkic states (Dilliyev, 2024). Historically, Uzbekistan, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan share similar traditions and culture, and their state languages are considered to be "Turkic". A decision the Uzbek government made during their consideration of joining the Organization of Turkic States fostered Uzbek identity, minimizing the Russian cultural hegemony, and Uzbekistan emphasizes shared culture with Turkic states promoting "Turkic identity". What is more, Uzbekistan hosts international forums on different topics, related to tourism, business, investments, education, and cultural heritage, which helps a state position itself as an independent country with a historically significant nation.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, it has been proved that Postcolonialism, in comparison with Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism, is more applicable theory for analyzing the tendency of relations between Uzbekistan and Russia. Due to historical ties countries have Postcolonialism shaped, and explicated the specifics of Uzbekistan's approach in rebalancing its dependency on Russia. Policy of the Russian Empire, and Soviet Union towards local communities and the whole region exemplified how their governments controlled all spheres. Being a colony of the Tsarist Russia, and a part of the USSR, Uzbekistan experienced various changes in its local governmental administration, culture, religion, and even alphabet. These are also the main reasons why Postcolonialism was chosen to analyze the relations between Uzbekistan and Russia as this theory

of IR takes into account the relations of former colonies and their colonizers. The term “Postcolonialism” itself tells about it. Furthermore, Uzbekistan’s foreign policy is aimed to collaborate with all countries peacefully to ensure mutual economic prosperity for all partners. Uzbekistan negotiates with the US, China, its Central Asian neighboring states, European Union, Republic of Korea, Japan, members of the CIS, and other countries. This attracts investments into Uzbekistan’s market, and the number of partnerships with both Western, and Eastern countries has been increasing which stimulates to the growth of self-reliance as Uzbekistan concentrates on signing economic documents with different states by conducting negotiations. Here, the growth of self-reliance means that Uzbekistan will be more independent in its economic and political policy, if it continues cooperating with big economies, as well as with other states. So, Russian influence, in all terms, will be minimized. Moreover, each area of analysis, thus, economic dependency, migration, political relations, and cultural hegemony are explained in this paper. Uzbekistan’s attempts for economic independency from Russia have not reached its final destination yet. However, these activities will accumulate into a positive result in the future. While Uzbek government develops its economic relations with other countries, the influx of Uzbek migrants travelling to Russia to work is an issue to be resolved. Regarding the cultural processes, it has been mentioned and explained about the strategy Uzbek government enforces to develop Uzbek identity, traditions and customs. Popularization of the “Jadids”, close and friendly relations with Central Asian states and Türkiye, rise of the usage of Uzbek language in all institutions retransform Russian cultural influence gradually ensuring the dominance of Uzbek language and culture in country. In order to strengthen its foreign policy, Uzbekistan can continue strengthening ties with Russia while also developing equal partnerships with other countries. Furthermore, it is important to diversify the production of goods, which has a positive impact on economic development, and to balance external influences, supporting regionalism in Central Asia.

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