

Michel Foucault's Concept of 'Dispositif of Security': Central Asian Weak States

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Abstract The paper focuses on the issue of how and through which apparatuses the sustainability of Central Asian weak states and their regimes are provided. Using Foucault's concept of 'dispositif of security' allows to argue that Central Asian regimes put an emphasis not on security but on the disciplinary mechanism, positioning them as a transcendent power relative to the population. At the same time, they use the security terminology and techniques of securitization, which makes it possible to maximize control over all spheres of population life through a reduction of personal and social space, as well as public policy.

Keywords Foucault. Dispositif (apparatus) of security. Disciplinary mechanism. Weak States. Securitization. Central Asia.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Methodology. – 3 State Ideology and Identity Politics. – 4 Securitization. – 5 Codification of Norms and Oversight Procedures. – 6 The 'Body of Knowledge' About Security. – 7 Discussion. – 8 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

Despite different approaches to defining the characteristics and criteria of a weak state,¹ it is generally accepted that weak states lack such fundamental qualities as "effective institutions, monopoly on

¹ Singer 1972; Krasner 1978; Jackson, Rosberg 1982; Buzan 1983; Migdal 1988; Thomas 1987; Ayooob 1995; Holsti 1996; Sørensen 2007; Allison 2008.

the instruments of violence, and consensus on the idea of the state" (Jackson 2010, 187) and are, therefore, internally anarchic. In weak states there is a plurality of centres of influence, one of which is the government (regime), which compete with each other, pursuing group values and goals external to the state, rather than the state interest. The situation is aggravated if, in addition to a weak state, the country also has a weak society: in such a situation, political fragmentation is not limited to a social collective identity built on some commonly shared values (Migdal 1988; Saikal 2016). It is believed that each social group or interest group (ethnic, religious, group of influence) in weak states with weak societies seeks to increase its security, which is perceived by other groups as a challenge or threat and, accordingly, generates responses from them. In other words, increasing the security of one social group or interest group produces insecurity in the state as a system as a whole. Since in this understanding of the weak state, the government acts here as a regime and, accordingly, represents one of many centres of influence, any attempt on its part to strengthen its security or even to establish effective public administration provokes challenges from other centres of influence, resistance and further erosion of the institutional basis of the state (Jackson 2010, 187). This situation is described as "an insecurity dilemma" (Job 1992).

The above characteristics of weak states determine that both the weak states themselves and, above all, the regimes operating in them must be unstable. However, as practice shows, paradoxically, they can exist for decades without serious political or social upheavals and are usually not "ungoverned spaces" (Krasner, Risse 2014). Governments continue to manage economy and society even if they do not do so in the way external actors expect them to (Akchurina 2019, 274). How and through what apparatuses is the stability of regimes and governance in weak states shaped? I will take the countries of Central Asia as an example. Until 2021, all of these countries were assessed as weak (Fund for Peace 2021), and none of them, except Kyrgyzstan, has recorded a significant political crisis that would result in political regime change over the past 20 years. The so-called 'Andijan events of 2005' in Uzbekistan and the 'January events of 2022' in Kazakhstan can certainly be seen as challenges to the stability of these states, but they did not lead to regime change and, accordingly, these regimes have remained. I will focus on the internal stability of these countries and their regimes, leaving aside the question of how their security is built at the international or regional level.

In the article, I state that using Foucault's concept of 'dispositif of security' allows us to argue that Central Asian weak states put an emphasis not on security but on the disciplinary mechanism, which, unlike dispositif of security, is not built on forms of knowledge associated with ideas of aleatory and statistically permissible deviation

from the norm, but on a rigid codification of allowed and prohibited and the construction of oversight procedures. At the same time, Central Asian regimes use the security terminology and techniques of securitization, which makes it possible to maximize control over all spheres of population life through reduction of personal and social space, as well as public policy. Central Asian countries are characterized by the securitization of 'regime stability', which enshrines the regime as the only referent object. This securitization is reinforced by the formation of specific ideologies that emphasize the significance of regimes. Securitization leads to the fact that in Central Asian weak states discursive practices, the alternative to dominant ones, lose their 'right to vote' and fall into a situation characterized as 'security as silence'. All these factors combined with the positioning of the regimes as a transcendent power relative to the population determine the stability of weak states' regimes.

2 Methodology

In my position, to answer the question "why weak states persist" from the point of view of their internal security, at least two steps must be taken. First, it is necessary to abandon the understanding of the typology of states into strong and weak as a continuous spectrum, where the 'ideal type' of a strong state is at one pole and the 'ideal type' of a weak state is at the other (Buzan, Wæver 2003, 22-4). The situation does not change with the introduction of additional types, such as 'limited statehood' (Krasner, Risse 2014) or 'incomplete state' (Akchurina 2019), because they also presuppose the preservation of this continuous spectrum, although they supplement it with an extremely productive possibility to analyze the zones of state-society interaction. The idea of such a spectrum implies a certain continuity between 'strong' and 'weak' states, the possibility of using universal concepts about them, one of which is 'security', which, if it is correct, requires additional justification. Secondly, it is necessary to abandon the understanding of 'security' as a universal, 'immutable' category. The notion of 'security' has its genealogy and archaeology (in Foucault's sense), which should be studied specifically.

The rejection of the idea of a continuous spectrum of states implies the search for and fixation of a 'break point' between 'strong' and 'weak' states, as which the idea of modernity and, accordingly, the reference to the question of modernization of this or that state can be considered. Thus, Cooper (1996), distinguishing three worlds - pre-modern, modern, and post-modern, points out that the first includes pre-states, which do not meet Weber's criterion of having a legitimate monopoly on the use of force and have a fragile structure that receives no support either from traditional communities or from the

urban industrialized population. Thus, it is political formations of the pre-modern type that can be called 'weak states'. A clear link between the idea of dividing states into strong and weak and dividing states into postmodern, modern, and premodern is recorded by Buzan and Wæver, who classify as weak states pre-modernist and some modernist states characterized by "low levels of socio-political cohesion and poorly developed structures of government" (2003, 24). Using the idea of modernity allows us to consider the regimes of weak states in terms of the model of governance adopted in them: if for modernist states it will be what Foucault designated by the term 'governmentality', then for pre-modernist states governance will appear rather in the form where governments act as regimes and occupy an exclusive, external and transcendent position about the population and even to their status. The special position of the regime in pre-modern states allows us to question the anarchy of such states since in this case the regime no longer acts as only one of many groups of influence. Within the framework of certain practices of building a system of governance, the regime can occupy a dedicated position and consolidate it.

If we are dealing with the transcendent position of regimes in the Central Asian countries, we should be able to observe here the following phenomena: (1) the construction of some ideologies that consolidate the special status of political regimes and, possibly, some identity politics that complements them; (2) the use of securitization mechanisms, in which the political regime and its stability in various modifications are positioned as an exclusive reference object.

The concept of securitization refers to the idea of security as a response to an emergency (Schmitt 1996). This idea is enshrined in most security studies. However, this reading of security is not the only possible one. Thus, Foucault (2007, 5-6) considers security as one of the mechanisms of governance, along with legal and disciplinary mechanisms. Legal and disciplinary mechanisms refer to norms; their main function is the codification of norms through a binary division into what is allowed and what is forbidden. The legal mechanism focuses on the forbidden, while the disciplinary mechanism focuses on the obligatory. The security mechanism is related to the idea of aleatory and is characterized by three points: (1) the phenomenon is included in a series of probable (random) events; (2) the response to the phenomenon is planned in a costly mode; (3) instead of a binary division into allowed and forbidden, the definition of the optimal average for society and the fixation of the limits of the allowed is introduced. Foucault suggests that these three mechanisms are not a sequence where elements replace one another, but a series of complex systems where, in moving from the previous to the next,

what above all changes is the dominant characteristics, or more exactly, the system of correlation between juridico-legal mech-

anisms, disciplinary mechanisms, and mechanisms of security. (Foucault 2007, 8)

In my view, the coexistence and non-linear relationship of these three mechanisms are one of the key explanatory moments of the stability of regimes in at least some weak states, namely those that have an unfinished experience of modernization and are therefore defined by the interaction between tradition and modernity. Central Asian states are among such states (Isaacs 2014). They are characterized by a shift in emphasis from security to discipline. At the same time, they retain the terminology inherent in the security mechanism.

If we are dealing with a focus not on the security mechanism but the disciplinary mechanism in Central Asia, we should be able to observe the following phenomena: (1) the codification of norms through a binary division into permissible and forbidden, the construction of rigid oversight procedures; (2) the lack of attention to the forms of knowledge that allow the introduction of the accidental and, therefore, the concept of security into political discourse.

3 State Ideology and Identity Politics

For regimes in the Central Asian countries, an important mechanism for securing their allocated position is the formation and development of ideological constructs aimed at fixing and consolidating the special status of the acting government (regime). For example, in Uzbekistan under President Islam Karimov, this was the "idea (ideology) of national independence", in the framework of which state independence is viewed as the dominant value, one of the most important components of which is a clear articulation of the special dedicated position of the state ("The state is the main reformer", Karimov 1993). In Turkmenistan, the ideological consolidation of the fundamental model is also fixed both in the concept of independence and neutrality (often reduced to isolationism) and in ethnic ideologemes such as "Ruhnama (Book of the Soul)" (under Saparmurat Niyazov), "The Great Renaissance" and "The Age of Power and Happiness" (under Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov). The most important element of the ideology is the legally fixed personalization of the state leader, which reached its peak with Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov, who received the title of Turkmenbashi and the status of the president for life. A close to this level of personalization of the regime was recorded in Kazakhstan, where Nursultan Nazarbayev received the status of the First President, which allowed him to regularly extend his powers, and the Leader of the Nation (Kazakhstan 2010), which takes him beyond the national law. In Tajikistan, the question of the stability of the state (regime) is largely justified through a reference to the

civil war of 1992-97 and postulating the idea of the inadmissibility of its repetition. Even the introduction of the position of the Leader of the Nation on the Kazakhstani model was made with a reference to the establishment of peace in Tajikistan: in 2015, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon received the status of "Founder of Peace and National Unity - Leader of the Nation" (Tajikistan 2015). In this regard, the regime has the weakest position in Kyrgyzstan, where there is neither a serious ideological basis for the functioning of the regime nor a justification for the personalization of power.

In fact, in all the countries of Central Asia, except Kyrgyzstan, the model of governance built under the president can be characterized as super-presidential. For example, in Kazakhstan, this characteristic of the model of governance is defined by the status of the president as "the head of state, its highest official, who determines the main directions of the domestic and foreign policy of the state", as well as "ensures the coordinated functioning of all branches of state power" (Kazakhstan 1995, art. 40).

In Central Asian countries, regimes and some interest groups, in addition to constructing a state ideology aimed at consolidating the allocated position of the regime, implement the practice of manipulating identity contradictions and conduct identity politics: "the claim to power on the basis of a particular identity" (Kaldor 1999, 6). In Central Asian countries, this identity is ethnic, linked to the concept of the 'titular nation', which has been in use since the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union, the titular nation was understood as an ethnic group whose name defined the official name of a certain territory or quasi-state formation (union republic, autonomous republic, autonomous oblast). The titular nation was in a privileged position in a given territory relative to other ethnic groups: the language and culture of the titular nation were maintained at the state level, and representatives of the titular nation formed the local nomenclature. Thus, the titular groups established a sense of ownership over certain territories and legitimized a fairly high degree of self-government. Over time, there was the marginalization of other, non-titular, ethnic groups, who were perceived as aliens or immigrants, regardless of their history of settlement in the territory. These attitudes were adopted and codified in the states formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which acquire a clear ethnic dimension. Leaders of political regimes in Central Asian countries, as a rule, get additional legitimization exactly as representatives of the 'titular nation' or, on the contrary, are criticized based on non-affiliation with this ethnic group (Drobizheva et al 1996, 282). As Kudaibergenova (2019) shows, modern regimes in Central Asia, using various forms of communication with society, fragment the population, constructing audiences and political communities with their narratives and discourses about the nation, state, and regime, which contributes to

regime stability and legitimization. Identity politics forces societies in Central Asian countries to focus not on issues of state or nation-building, but on the discussion of what is the 'population' of these countries, representatives of which ethnicities can be 'real' citizens of Central Asian countries, and which form the basis for external interference. For example, in Kazakhstan, after the events in Crimea in 2014, there has been a steady discussion regarding the possibility of a repeat of the 'Ukrainian scenario' here and the position that the citizens of Kazakhstan – ethnic Russians – would take in this situation: whether representatives of the 'Russian-speaking society' can act as full-fledged citizens of Kazakhstan or whether they act as carriers of 'colonial codes' and, consequently, the basis of neocolonialism on the part of Russia. Identity politics in Central Asian countries form a space of structural and cultural violence against groups labeled with labels other than 'titular nation'. The political regime in such a situation is seen as the guarantor of "interethnic and interreligious harmony" (Nazarbayev 2012), which, again, strengthens its position.

4 **Securitization**

Regimes of all Central Asian countries actively use securitization mechanisms, in which 'stability' is positioned as a reference object. This allows, on the one hand, to ensure consolidation of the population to a greater or lesser extent, and, on the other hand, by introducing the idea of a state of emergency, to obtain the right to some extraordinary measures, for example – restriction of freedom of speech or opposition activity, thus consolidating the regime's allocated position.

Since the early 1990s, the securitization of 'stability' in Central Asia has been built through reference to the situation in Tajikistan, where there was a civil war from 1992 to 1997, and its connection with the processes in Afghanistan. Up to the end of the 1990s, this topic was one of the key ones and was connected with the issues of domestic and regional stability. Thus, in the summer of 1996, President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov notes, "The most dangerous thing is to destabilize the socio-political situation, huge, hard-to-measure losses and deprivations of people, which would set our society back dozens of years [...] The example of neighboring Tajikistan [...] and some other newly independent states speaks for itself" (Karimov 1997, 118). In 1997, it was noted that the crisis in Afghanistan and instability in Tajikistan cannot but hurt regional stability in Central Asia as a whole and Uzbek national security in particular (Karimov 1998).

In the 2000s, the most revealing year for Central Asian countries in terms of securitization of 'stability' was 2005, when the so-called 'Tulip Revolution' occurred in Kyrgyzstan, which resulted in the res-

ignation of President Askar Akayev. In the rest of Central Asia, these events were seen as a threat to their stability. Under the pressure of this discourse, extraordinary presidential elections were held in Kazakhstan in 2005. As President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted,

During the pre-election campaign we faced such phenomenon as the concern of Kazakhstani people and in some cases fear because of possible destabilization in the country. (Nazarbayev 2006)

Uzbekistan officials pointed out the direct connection between the processes in Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian countries with the Andijan events of May 2005, when a mass protest and some extremist actions were harshly suppressed by government forces. President Islam Karimov said that

the tragic Andijan events were an attempt to recreate everything that happened in Kyrgyzstan in recent years and recently... A long confrontation, civil war or something similar, which is connected with disturbance of stability and which has been taking place for a long time on the territory of one country, one state, will not stay within its borders and will overflow the borders and move into the territory of neighboring countries. (Karimov 2005, 169)

An important component in ensuring the stability of regimes in the countries of Central Asia is the securitization of 'international terrorism', and, since the 2010s, of extremism (sometimes indicated as violent extremism) and radicalization (Lemon 2018).

In general, the securitization of some threats without a certain functional actor (such as a threat to stability or extremism) in Central Asian countries is intended to fulfill a function similar to that of preparing for war in modern states, ensuring the mobilization and consolidation of the population.

5 Codification of Norms and Oversight Procedures

The dominance of disciplinary (permissive and prohibitive) practices as well as the construction of supervisory procedures and the limitation of personal and social space as well as the field of open politics are fixed in the Central Asian countries, as a result of which many discursive practices alternative to the dominant ones lose their 'voice' and fall into the situation characterized as 'security as silence', that is

when insecurity cannot be voiced, when raising something as a security problem is impossible or might even aggravate the threat being faced. [...] a situation where the potential subject of securi-

ty has no, or limited, possibility of speaking its security problem. (Hansen 2000, 287, 294)

The situation of 'security as silence' in Central Asian countries is primarily formed in the political sphere. For example, in Kazakhstan – through the introduction of the idea of 'countering extremism' without distinguishing between 'extremism in general' and 'violent extremism'. At the legislative level, this approach was established in 2005 in the On Countering Extremism Law (Kazakhstan 2005), which in one list (art. 1) specifies both, on the one hand, "actions aimed at forcible change of the constitutional order", and "forcible seizure of power or keeping it", "participation in sedition", and, on the other hand, "inciting social or estate discord". This approach is also documented in the Criminal Code (Kazakhstan 2014), where the extremist crimes include inciting social, national, tribal, racial, estate, or religious hatred (art. 174). Because of the securitization of 'stability' issues in the Central Asian countries, these legal provisions can also create difficulties for the speaker when articulating problems of a societal (identity) nature. This is greatly facilitated by the fact that there is no clear differentiation at the legislative level between inciting discord and articulating the interests of one's identity group (and sometimes simply the manifestation of identity group features of a cultural nature). Any openly expressed dissatisfaction with the current social or economic situation can be interpreted as "inciting social or estate discord". The situation is exacerbated by the fact that current legislation in the countries of Central Asia (except Kyrgyzstan and, as of 2020, Kazakhstan) provides for permissive rather than notification-based practices in the organization of peaceful assemblies, and, accordingly, the organization of a rally aimed at criticizing the regime can easily be blocked. Legislative changes introduced in Kazakhstan in 2020, suggesting a shift from permissive practices to the practice of coordinating rallies with the authorities, led to a significant increase in the number of such events but preserved the authorities' leverage to limit the public activity of the population.

The situation of 'security as silence' in the countries of Central Asia also affects the social sphere, where the 'right to vote' is lost primarily to vulnerable groups: women, representatives of the LGBT community, children, and ethnic minorities. For example, several Central Asian countries continue to criminalize homosexuality. By art. 120 of the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan, criminal punishment follows for "the satisfaction of a man's sexual need with a man without violence" (Uzbekistan 1994). A similar article (art. 28) is present in the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan (Turkmenistan 2010). Even in Kazakhstan, which has a relatively liberal attitude toward the LGBT community, the pressure on its representatives remains strong. For

example, in 2014, an advertising agency in Almaty was fined for a poster depicting Kazakh musician and composer Kurmangazy kissing poet Alexander Pushkin made for a gay club (Lillis 2014).

Some physical actions are a manifestation of 'security as silence'. For example, the inability to articulate security threats and, consequently, to defend oneself legally, leads to migration from Central Asia by members of the LGBT community. To a large extent, the response of representatives of 'non-titular ethnic groups' to identity politics is also migratory.

In a situation dominated by the concept of the 'titular nation' and the cultural and structural violence associated with it, a consistent defense of the interests of 'non-titular ethnic groups' can lead to a sharp increase in pressure on activists, up to and including physical violence, as shown by the example of Kyrgyzstan, where in June 2010 clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks resulted in at least 420 deaths, mostly Uzbeks, and the majority of those prosecuted were also Uzbeks (Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission 2011). The most radical form of non-verbal action in Central Asian countries is a suicide, often in public in the form of self-immolation. As a rule, self-immolation is a reaction of women to some form of domestic violence. However, such reactions are also recorded as a response to pressure from state agencies, such as law enforcement.

Disciplinary practices and 'security as silence' are opposite to securitization, but, on the other hand, complement it, as they significantly reduce the number of speakers, in other words, the number of securitizing actors. The voice of political regimes becomes, if not the only one, then the dominant one, which undoubtedly increases the stability of the regime. At the same time, the 'loss of voice' pushes opposition interest groups to non-verbal actions, such as mass protests, including acts of violence. One form of nonverbal protest can be seen as acts of violence against representatives of the authorities, which the regime portrays as terrorist acts.

However, the space of using the disciplinary mechanism in Central Asian countries is not universal. One can record its fragmentation: zones to which the disciplinary mechanism does not apply, and zones for which randomness is not eliminated. The former includes political regimes themselves, going beyond what is allowed and forbidden, as well as control procedures. For example, Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov has repeatedly participated in and won presidential elections, even though, according to the Constitution, he could hold office for no more than two terms. Kazakhstan's first president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, was legally guaranteed immunity and the inability to be held accountable for any actions committed during his presidency (Kazakhstan 2000). To the latter are populations. Regimes in weak states rule the law on an ad hoc basis and thus create uncertainty for the population. Despite the proclamation of the rule of law,

Central Asian countries have a model in which the regime manipulates the law and governs through arbitrary rule (the 'arbitrary rule' or 'rule by law' model): the regime stands above the law and applies it selectively (Gel'man 2003; Tulumlu 2016).

6 The 'Body of Knowledge' About Security

For weak states - in particular for Central Asian countries - the problematic field of understanding security is determined by the fact that here, as a rule, there is no developed concept of 'security': in official documents and analytical texts it is defined and linked to a certain set of concepts ('interests', 'threats'), but it is not analyzed in terms of its place in discursive and non-discursive practices. For example, in art. 1 of the On National Security of the Republic of Kazakhstan Law (Kazakhstan 2012) 'national security' is defined through a linkage to the concepts of 'interest' and 'threat': national security is understood here as "the state of protection of national interests... from real and potential threats, ensuring the dynamic development of a person and a citizen, society and the state". It is indicative that the law fixes tautology in the definitions of key concepts, as 'national interests', in turn, are defined through a reference to "the ability of the state to ensure protection", and threats - through a reference to national interests. Thus, the answer to the question 'what is security' is missing here.

The book *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress*, by President Islam Karimov became definitive for Uzbekistan's security policy, is one of the most illustrative. The book focuses on the threats to stability, sustainable development, and security in Uzbekistan, and what can be done about them:

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

At the same time, the concepts that make up the triad are taken in the book without special explanation, as intuitively clear.

This situation is largely explained by the fact that the concept of 'security' is not developed in the Central Asian countries, but is taken as a given from discourses that are external to them. Central Asian security discourses, on the one hand, are heirs to the Soviet tradi-

tion of using the term 'security' as life safety ('fire safety', 'road safety') or as state security ('Committee for State Security' or *the KGB*). On the other hand, the Central Asian states adopted as ideological (formal) reference points the settings of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, including the terminology of security in its European reading, where in the late 1980s and early 1990s the logic of security as deterrence of hostile states began to be replaced by the logic of deterring 'adverse' processes, and the problematic of security, having lost its purely military content, included such areas as social, environmental, personal and even cultural

Security in the countries of Central Asia is considered something natural and self-evident, and, acts as an abstraction. There is no analysis of security as a reaction to chance in the Central Asian countries, an indicator of which is the very low attention to the formation of statistical data on the most problematic issues (such as migration or unemployment), as well as to the conduct of sociological research.

7 Discussion

This study leaves several important questions beyond its scope. First of all, it does not address how Central Asian security is constructed on the regional and interregional levels if there are disciplinary rather than security mechanisms in place. An analysis of the regional and interregional levels of security in Central Asia has been presented in many works since the mid-1990s. While initially descriptive approaches and analyses based on the ideas of neorealism dominated here, more recently there are works that consider the region from fundamentally different positions, for example, from the perspective of constructivism (Burnashev 2015; Azizov 2017), the concept of regional fracture (Lewis 2018), or the English school (Costa Buranelli 2021). The question of whether the data obtained in these studies are consistent with Foucault's concept of the 'dispositif of security' remains open and requires additional research.

A related technical aspect is whether the 'regional approach' used in the article is justified, rather than emphasizing the situation in any one Central Asian country. In this case, there was a choice between providing as detailed an analysis as possible of one of the Central Asian countries or showing some universal significance of Foucault's concept. Understanding that each Central Asian country has its approach to security, I nevertheless preferred an approach that emphasized the broad application of Foucault's ideas to the study of security in weak states.

Next, the article examines only those practices that we can identify as indicators of the transcendent position of political regimes in Central Asia and that these regimes use disciplinary mechanisms

rather than security mechanisms. There are other practices that ensure the regimes' stability, such as the development of repressive apparatuses; the formation of patronage systems; the manipulation of the democratic process; the establishment of 'strategic partnerships' with significant external actors and the implementation of so-called 'multi-vector' policies; 'quasi integration' formations at the regional level (Jackson 2010, 192-4). This can also include 'bribery' of the population, which is typical for Kazakhstan. Of course, the analysis of these and other similar practices in terms of what mechanism – security or discipline – they correspond to can greatly expand the basis for verifying or falsifying the conclusions presented in the article.

Finally, an important component that is missing from the proposed analysis is the response of the population of weak states to practices that ensure regime stability. The social practices and informal institutions that allow Central Asian societies to be defined as 'weak' or 'strong', as well as their relationship to the state that allows the state to be viewed as a social practice, are not considered. The idea of such analysis is given by Akchurina (2019) and a review of how social groups construct their strategies in Central Asian countries could provide additional verification of the proposed ideas or, on the contrary, falsify them.

8 Conclusion

In Central Asian weak states, the regimes (governments) occupy an exclusive, external, and transcendent position vis-à-vis the population and their state status. Accordingly, one cannot speak here of their 'internal anarchy' and the dilemma of insecurity in the full sense of those words. In these states, anarchy is expressed in a specific form, leaving a place for the regime to act as an arbiter about other social groups. The mechanisms for enshrining such a highlighted position are: (1) the construction of special ideologies and complimentary identity politics, within which the idea of the state is replaced by an idea in which the state is equated with the regime; (2) the use of securitization mechanisms in which the political regime and its 'stability' are positioned as a reference object.

Governance here is constructed not so much based on security mechanisms as through disciplinary practices, the codification of norms through a binary division into permissible and prohibited, and the construction of rigorous oversight procedures. The lack of attention to forms of knowledge that allow for the insertion of the accidental and, therefore, the concept of security into political discourse is fixed. Although Central Asian regimes use a disciplinary mechanism, they actively employ the rhetoric of the security mechanism. And the most common mechanism here is securitization. Se-

curitization is a means used by the regimes to increase control over all spheres of life of the population, which becomes the object of manipulation through maximum codification and control of personal and social - and thus non-politicized and non-securitized - space. Political activity is carried out as non-transparently and non-publicly as possible. To some extent, one could say that in Central Asian countries private and public spaces are reversed: private issues such as ethnicity, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation come to the surface and become subject to state control, while issues that should be public, such as elections and politics, are hidden and become the private business of a small group of people. In the sector designated as 'security', the priority is to ensure the stability ('security') of the regime (protection of the ruling elites from violent change). Questions of state security (ensuring the effective functioning of state structures and institutions regardless of the change of the ruling elites) and national security (ensuring the security of the state as socio-political integrity with its way of life and independent self-government) recede into the background. In fact, as in neoliberal states, the problem of security here undergoes the same change: from the security of processes external to the apparatuses of governance (social, economic, and demographic processes), there is a shift to the security of governance mechanisms (Dean 1999). There is fragmentation in the field of governance. The regime itself is placed in the field of security. The dominant discursive practice gains the right to active securitization. Oppositional discursive practices and the population are placed in the disciplinary field, where security is realized not as an act of articulation, but rather as an act of silence.

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