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# State Stability in Post-Soviet Central Asia

## **Abstract**

The concept of state failure in the modern world is a comparatively new notion, which did not emerge until former colonial possessions in Africa and Asia, once fledgling states, seemed to be in decline. As governments collapsed and states fractured into civil war, the developed world looked on. Nearly twenty years after the fall of the USSR and the rise of state failure, scholars' understanding of the causes of state weakness and state failure remains incomplete, and the policy literature's orientation toward economic causes of weakness is more descriptive of weakness than insightful of its causes. This study seeks to gain greater insight into the causes of state weakness by assessing eight socio-economic, political, and geographic variables in the five post-Soviet Central Asian cases. While many of the results suggest greater insight into the political and geographic causes of state weakness, several strongly indicate a close relationship between state stability and the state's degree of modernization and colonial experiences.

## STATE STABILITY IN POST-SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

Erica Podrazik

**Abstract:** *The concept of state failure in the modern world is a comparatively new notion, which did not emerge until former colonial possessions in Africa and Asia, once fledgling states, seemed to be in decline. As governments collapsed and states fractured into civil war, the developed world looked on. Nearly twenty years after the fall of the USSR and the rise of state failure, scholars' understanding of the causes of state weakness and state failure remains incomplete, and the policy literature's orientation toward economic causes of weakness is more descriptive of weakness than insightful of its causes. This study seeks to gain greater insight into the causes of state weakness by assessing eight socio-economic, political, and geographic variables in the five post-Soviet Central Asian cases. While many of the results suggest greater insight into the political and geographic causes of state weakness, several strongly indicate a close relationship between state stability and the state's degree of modernization and colonial experiences.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the case of post-Soviet Central Asia, it may be tempting to overlook state weakness, in part because the region is known for being comparatively weak, poor, and fragile. These five young states have historically maintained close colonial ties to Russia, first under the czars and then under the Soviets, not emerging as independent states until the fall of the USSR in 1991. Colonialism left its mark on the region; since independence these five states have struggled with impoverished and dependent economies, weak civil societies, and volatile and dangerously unstable neighbors like Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> Yet, almost twenty years after independence, some states are significantly more likely to fail than others. Although a comparatively unpopulated and often forgotten corner of the world, state collapse in Central Asia could have far reaching consequences. It is generally accepted that weak and failed states provide an ideal breeding ground for terrorists and other criminal organizations, away from the prying eyes of an established government trying to enforce the law. As the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 proved, international terrorism is a growing threat, and further state failure in Central Asia, so close to problematic states such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, would merely serve as fuel for the fire. Whatever the consequences for the international community, state failure holds far more stringent consequences for the people of the failed state itself. One need look no further than the example of Somalia to understand the tremendous costs of state failure; endemic violence, human rights catastrophes, lack of access to necessities like food and healthcare, lawlessness and piracy. Given the significance of state failure and state weakness, then, it is well worth seeking to understand the causes of such phenomena, and how they can be prevented.

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Olivier, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *The State and State Failure*

A clear definition of the state is critical to the understanding of state failure. For the purposes of this research, the state refers to a defined territory with a defined form of government which, first, maintains a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence and, second, engages in the creation of a social contract with its citizens as a means by which to guarantee the creation of peace and security in exchange for the surrendering of some measure of personal freedom.<sup>2</sup> State power, in turn, is measured by autonomy (the ability to make decisions free of coercion from internal and external actors) and capacity. States may weaken along any of these criteria, but true state failure occurs only when the state loses territorial sovereignty, can not maintain a monopoly on the uses of violence, and both autonomy and capacity are critically eroded.

### *The Nature of State Failure*

Because true state failure is rare (agreed upon cases generally include present day Somalia and the former Congo-Kinshasa), it is necessary to consider state failure as a single point on a wide spectrum. At one end stands the strong state, fully endowed with autonomy and capacity. This category includes many democracies and also authoritarian states, since the measure here is state strength, not state freedom. At the other end of the spectrum stands the failed state, which lacks all autonomy and capacity. In between are a host of states, ranked according to relative capabilities. It is understood, then, that a state can be a weak state (with weak autonomy and capacity) without being a failed state.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, because a failed state must fully lack autonomy and capacity, it is evident that a state may actually fail in some of its duties but still be denied classification as a failed state. A pertinent example of this phenomenon is illustrated by the Latin American state of Colombia, in which the government maintains significant control of the economy but lacks control over several regions, where drug cartels, guerillas, and paramilitary groups maintain a monopoly on violence independent of the central government.

In 2006, the Crisis States Research Centre's workshop at the London School of Economics set out to categorize those states that are broadly called "weak." The result was three-part hierarchy classifying "fragile states," "crisis states," and "failed states."

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<sup>2</sup> Mihn Nyugen, "The Question of 'Failed States,'" *View on Asia Briefing Series* (Sydney, Australia: Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Center, 2005); R. Coase, "The Problem of Social Cost," *Journal of Law and Economics* (1960); D. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Rosa Ehrenreich Brooks, "Failed States, or the State as Failure?," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 72 (Autumn 2005): 1159-1196.

TABLE 1  
*Weak States 1*

<i>State Type</i>	<i>Fragile State</i>	<i>Crisis State</i>	<i>Failed State</i>
<b>Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Particularly vulnerable to internal/external shocks/conflicts</li> <li>• Often characterized by weak institutions, poor law enforcement, and factionalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions face serious contestation</li> <li>• Danger of collapse</li> <li>• Lack resiliency to cope with conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can no longer maintain territorial security</li> <li>• No control over territories and borders</li> <li>• Can no longer reproduce conditions for its own existence</li> </ul>

The resulting system is a useful one, primarily because it suggests that state failure is not simply “the end,” but rather a process of failing over a period of time that is flexible; the state can move toward or away from failure. Even more importantly, it “allows for a wide range in degrees of failing,<sup>4</sup>” which is a critical element in the understanding of state power structures.

It is evident, then, that states can fail across a variety of dimensions. It has been suggested that it is possible to rank state failure by a state’s inability to provide social or political goods. The model dominant in the field was proposed by Robert Rotberg<sup>5</sup>, and relies on the understanding that states exist to provide social and political goods to their citizens, including “security, education, health, economic opportunity, environmental surveillance, making and enforcing an institutional framework, and providing and maintaining infrastructure.”<sup>6</sup> In order to calculate the severity of state failure (state weakness), Rotberg creates a hierarchical ranking of state functions: (1) The ability of the state to maintain internal security; (2) The ability of institutions to regulate conflict by maintaining the rule of law; (3) The ability to represent citizens in the international political arena; (4) The ability of the states to provide social goods and regulate the national economy. Failed states will fail in essentially all of the listed functions, while weak and failing

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan DiJohn, “Conceptualizing the Causes of Failed States: A Critical Review of the Literature,” *Crisis States Research Centre Working Papers Series 2* (January 2008): 1-53.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Rotberg, “The New Nature of Nation-State Failure,” *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 85-96.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan DiJohn, 2008.

states will show a mixed profile. Here, it is important to understand that no single element constitutes state failure, but every element contributes to a state's perceived strength or weakness.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Causes of State Weakness*

To some degree, scholars already have a measure of understanding of the causes of state weakness and failure. In particular, the greatest percentage of such work has been conducted in regards to economic variables. For instance, it is generally accepted that states suffering economically are significantly more likely to become weak and failing states.<sup>8</sup> While these studies are important landmarks, they are difficult to interpret simply because they raise the directionality question; while economic hardship may cause state weakness, state weakness may also cause economic hardship. Other studies suggest a correlation between state weakness, limited economic pluralism, and limited business competition in late developing capitalist societies.<sup>9</sup>

One economic approach to state failure that has gained notoriety in the field examines the role resource scarcity plays in inciting political violence and violence against governmental authority. The literature suggests that where resource scarcity exists, the gap between the haves and the have-nots of social and political factions expands, and eventually erupts into violence. This violence undermines the state monopoly, and eventually breaks down state autonomy and capacity.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, there is evidence that environmental degradation increases the conflict for limited resources and can marginalize poorer classes, particularly in rural areas. In such instances, social and political unrest often occur, frequently resulting in displacement of native peoples and uncontrollable migration from conflict zones to stable areas. Such mass movements of people can further strain the state's resources and heighten tensions with neighboring states, exacerbating the situation.<sup>11</sup>

The resource curse too, stands as another possible instigator of state weakness. In particular, commodities like oil, diamonds, and narcotics are thought to stymie diverse (and therefore increasingly stable) economic growth while simultaneously encouraging rent seeking behavior and the formation of greed-based insurgencies. Additional literature suggests that states

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Rotberg, "The New Nature of Nation-State Failure," 85-96.

<sup>8</sup> P. Collier and A. Hoeffler, "On the economic consequences of war," *Oxford Economic Papers* (1998): 50.

<sup>9</sup> A. Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); A. Amsden, *The Rise of 'the Rest'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> T.F. Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> James Fairhead, "The Conflict over Natural and Environmental Resources" in E. Wayne Nafziger, Frances Stewart, Raimo Väyrynen, ed., *War, Hunger and Displacement: Volume 1: The Origins of Humanitarian Emergencies – War and Displacement in Developing Countries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), chap. 4.; I De Soysa, "Paradise is a bazaar? Greed, creed, and governance in civil war, 1989-1999," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 4 (2002); J-F Bayart, *The State in Africa: the Politics of the Belly* (Paris: Fayard, 1993).

under the resource curse, being highly dependent on a single commodity, have little need to develop a strong bureaucracy in order to raise public funds. This in turn is thought to make states more vulnerable to insurgencies.<sup>12</sup> Proponents of the so-named modernization theory suggest that the most stable states are those that have engaged in a modernization process. Although the process often requires a period of radical (even violent) economic and political change as traditional values and institutions are shed, the final result is a state with a strong central government. States that desire stability can be aided in this process by wealthy<sup>13</sup> democracies, but those which do not may condemn themselves to poverty and instability. While there are many different branches of modernization theory the most important common aspect suggests that an international community of free market democracies provides the greatest conditions for state stability.

The literature examining political causes of state weakness is sparse, compared to the economic literature. A recent study by Marshall and Gurr (2003) suggests that authoritarian regimes may indirectly contribute to state weakness because they are more likely to result in political violence, which weakens the state by undermining the state's monopoly on violence and hindering cohesive decision making and law enforcement.<sup>14</sup>

Work produced in 1995 by Hirschman examines the relationship between corruption and patronage and their affect on state weakness, eventually suggesting that internal corruption weakens the state structure by undermining state institutions.<sup>15</sup> Again, however, it is necessary to be clear about what is a measure of state weakness and what is a cause.

There is also some speculation that the way in which citizens define their socio-political identity may also play an important role in the creation of state stability. In particular, where clans are powerful social actors and individuals maintain a traditional identity over a state identity, there is greater potential for conflict between the state and clan leadership. Where citizens feel little obligation to the state, they may also be less inclined to support state institutions and political processes.<sup>16</sup>

The belief that the lasting effects of colonialism hinder the development of state strength has also taken root in recent years. Literature published in 2005 suggests that colonialism left several lasting marks on colonized states. First, it instigated a legacy of dual legalism, second, it frequently created a bifurcated state which operated differently in urban and rural areas, and lastly

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<sup>12</sup> T.L. Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms in Petro States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>13</sup> W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960).

<sup>14</sup> M. G. Marshall and T.R. Gurr, *Peace and Conflict* (College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Kathleen Collins, "The Political Role of Clans in Central Asia," *Comparative Politics* 35, no. 2 (2003): 171-190.

it often legitimized despotic puppet regimes to enforce the colonizer's will. Upon state independence, particularly where state independence occurred quickly and without oversight, political patronage emerged, reducing the possibilities for the creation of strong civic institutions which made state authority internally vulnerable.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, it has been suggested that colonial rule promoted an incentive for leaders to utilize disorder or the illusion of disorder as a political instrument. The model proposed by Chabal and Daloz suggests that, where this occurs, political actors seek to capitalize on the climate of fear and uncertainty in order to accommodate the demands of elite factions, whose support is critical to the regime.<sup>18</sup> While this political device may fulfill a short-term purpose, it misuses government power to achieve a limited political or economic payoff. In turn, state power is neither consolidated nor legitimized, and over time the climate of instability (real or illusion) deteriorates state capacity and autonomy.

Nicholas van de Walle's work addresses the new nature of civil warfare, and provides important insight on one possible geographic cause of state stability. His work provides strong evidence to support the theory that states which lie in close proximity or share borders with other failed and failing states have increased chances of falling victim to the same lawlessness and disorder. In this so-called "war next-door syndrome," wars are seen as readily transmittable, like a plague, from one state to the next.<sup>19</sup> An important corollary to de Walle's work illustrates how the cross-border movement of refugees can strain states suddenly forced to maintain order and provide for thousands of displaced noncitizens, which in turn may complicate regional relations between states.<sup>20</sup>

## METHODOLOGY AND OPERATIONALIZATION

### *Case Selection*

In order to test the strength and importance of possible causes of state weakness and instability, this study examines the five post-Soviet Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. This particular selection of cases is uniquely suited to a most similar comparative study, which selects a series of cases which possess similar traits in one or more instances. As a result, these similar variables are automatically

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<sup>17</sup> M. Lockwood, *The State They're In: An Agenda for International Action on Poverty in Africa* (Bourton-on-Dunsmore: ITDG Publishing, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> P. Chabal and J-P. Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

<sup>19</sup> Nicolas van de Walle, *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).; P. Wallensteen, and M. Sollenberg, "Armed Conflict and Regional Conflict Complexes, 1989-97," *Journal of Peace Research*, 35, no. 5 (1998).

<sup>20</sup> R. Väyrynen, "The Age of the Humanitarian Emergency," *WIDER Research for Action 25* (Helsinki: WIDER, 1996).



controlled for in the greater study. The cases of Central Asia are optimal for such a design, because although these former Soviet republics share so many traits in common, there is a distinct disparity in state strength across the region. See Table 2

TABLE 2  
*Regional Similarities 1*

	<i>Kazakhstan</i>	<i>Turkmenistan</i>	<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	<i>Tajikistan</i>	<i>Uzbekistan</i>
<b>Soviet Republic</b>	1936	1924	1936	1925	1924
<b>Independence</b>	16 Dec, 1991	27 Oct, 1991	31 Aug, 1991	9 Sept, 1991	1 Sept, 1991
<b>GDP/ PPP (2008 in thousands)</b>	\$11,500	\$6,500	\$2,200	\$1,800	\$2,600
<b>Primary Exports</b>	Petroleum, natural gas	Petroleum, natural gas	Hydropower, gold	Hydropower, petroleum	Natural gas, petroleum
<b>HDI</b>	.804	.730	.710	.688	.710
<b>Percent Muslim</b>	47%	89%	75%	90%	88%
<b>Freedom House Composite Score</b>	11	14	9	11	14
<b>Freedom House Status</b>	Not free	Not free	Partly free	Not free	Not free
<b>Government Type</b>	Presidential republic	Presidential republic	Presidential republic	Presidential republic	Presidential republic

In particular, the case selections and most similar design controls for a host of potential variables. All of these cases originally became republics under Czarist Russia over the span of twelve years,

and then retained that status under the Soviet Union. With the fall of the USSR, the Central Asian republics were granted their independence, and within the span of several months each state had accepted its independence. Today, these states are classified as developing nations, all with a strong consolidation of presidential power and a historically Islamic populace. These regional uniformities cannot account for levels of state weakness in Central Asia today.

#### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable of this study is the degree of state weakness among the five states in the region. The Fund for Peace's 2009 Index of Failed states provides such a measure, ranking 177 states on their degree of success or failure in twelve aspects of state power. For the purposes of this study, the total score of each state's ranking is used as a working dependent variable.

TABLE 3  
The Dependent Variable

Country	Rank (Strongest to Weakest)	Total Score (Strongest to Weakest)	Demographic Pressures	Refugees and IDPs	Group Grievance	Human Flight	Uneven Economic Development	Economic Decline	Delegitimization of the State	Public Services	Human Rights	Security Apparatus	Factionalized Elites	External Intervention
Kazakhstan	105	72.5	6.0	3.9	5.5	4.0	6.4	6.4	7.7	5.3	6.8	6.5	7.6	6.4
Turkmenistan	59	84.3	7.0	4.8	6.5	5.6	7.6	6.9	8.5	7.2	8.9	7.6	7.7	6.0
Kyrgyzstan	42	89.1	8.0	5.3	7.2	7.5	8.3	7.6	8.3	6.5	7.6	7.7	7.3	7.8
Tajikistan	37	90.3	8.2	6.4	6.9	6.5	7.3	7.5	8.9	7.6	8.6	7.5	8.4	6.5
Uzbekistan	31	92.8	7.9	5.3	7.4	7.0	8.7	7.2	9.0	6.6	9.2	9.0	9.0	6.5

Even a cursory glance at Table 2 suggests while none of the Central Asian states are particularly robust and none are democratic, their levels of weakness vary widely. The Failed State's Index

records a wide range of values for state stability across the region, with Kazakhstan ranked among the more stable and economically viable of the less developed countries, and Uzbekistan ranked among the weakest states in the world with particular problems in the field of human rights.

The question central to this study is: What causes some states in this region to be so much weaker than others? While it is comparatively easy to discern the signs of a weak or failing state, it is much more challenging to pick apart the causes of weakness in a particular state. Within the narrowed context of the five post-Soviet Central Asian nations, this study attempts to gain insight into those particular variables that cause Uzbekistan and neighboring Tajikistan to be so much closer to state failure than Kazakhstan. This research should provide some general propositions that will be applicable to state weakness and failure across a variety of settings.

### *Independent Variables*

#### *Socio-Economic Hypotheses*

A series of eight independent variables are included in this study, sub divided into three categories of topics addressed in the literature, beginning with socio-economic factors. The first variable under consideration examines the evenness of economic development in each state. In particular, the GINI score is used to examine a measure of income inequality or unequal wealth distribution in a country.<sup>21</sup> The second variable examines the degree to which the state under consideration has been modernized. In this case, the degree to which the population of a state has urbanized is used as a measure of modernity.<sup>22</sup>

**H<sub>1</sub>:** States with uneven economic development are more likely to be weak than those with even economic development.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** States which are less modern are more likely to be weak than those which are more modern.

#### *Political Hypotheses*

The second category of study focuses on political variables. The third variable for consideration in the cumulative list relates to a measure of Islamic fundamentalism in each of the five post-Soviet Central Asian cases. Because no readily obtainable statistic exists in this case, relevant data was taken from the scholarly literature and each state was assigned a measurement value between 0 and 2. In this instance, 0 indicates the presence of no tangible fundamentalist movement, 1 denotes states where fundamentalism is present but of limited concern on the national stage, and 2 indicates a state where fundamentalist groups represent a serious concern to internal stability and citizen safety.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> United Nation's 2007-2008 *World Human Development Report*.

<sup>22</sup> 2008 CIA *WorldFactBook*.

<sup>23</sup> Roy Olivier, 2005.

Next, the fourth variable addresses the historical relationship between each state and the Soviet Union. Specifically, the degree to which each of these historically Muslim cases possesses a Russian Orthodox population is used as a measure of this variable.<sup>24</sup> This measure was selected based on the rationale that the growth of Orthodox Christianity in the region will coincide with Russian presence, just as it has in other colonial cases. For instance, the spread of Christianity through southern Nigeria coincides heavily with colonial British presence in a historically Islamic region; the northern interior of the state, where British influence did not penetrate, is still predominately Muslim. It is not illogical, therefore, to suggest that Russo-Soviet influence had the same effect on religion in Central Asia. The fifth variable addresses the positive or negative nature of each case's experience with Soviet colonialism. The measurement for this independent variable is drawn from the date of each state's independence following the collapse of the USSR, based on the rationale that states with a particularly negative or exploitive experience would be the first to claim their independence. The variable is measured on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the first state to gain independence and 5 the last state to gain independence.<sup>25</sup>

**H<sub>3</sub>:** States with strong fundamentalist movements are more likely to be weak than those without strong fundamentalist movements.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** States with a less privileged position within the Soviet-Union are more likely to be weak than states with more privileged positions.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** States with a heavily exploitive experience with internal colonialism are more likely to be weak than states with a less exploitive experience.

#### *Geo-Political Hypotheses*

The final category of variables under study is comprised of possible geo-political or external factors that may contribute to state weakness. The sixth variable endeavors to evaluate the fractured nature of the region's ethnic groups, and utilizes a measure of the percent of the region's most dispersed ethnic group, the Uzbeks, present in each case state.<sup>26</sup> The seventh variable examines the importance of a state's proximity to other weak or ailing states. For the purposes of this study, this measure comes from whether each state shares a border with Afghanistan, currently the most nearly failed state in the region. The measure was coded 0 if no border was shared and 1 if a border was shared. The eighth and final variable examines the relationship between the stability of each state and its geopolitical importance to America and its allies. To measure the relative geo-political importance of each state, this study utilizes a measure of each state's level for foreign direct investment as a percentage of each state's gross fixed capital

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<sup>24</sup> CIA *WorldFactBook*

<sup>25</sup> CIA *WorldFactBook*

<sup>26</sup> CIA *WorldFactBook*

formation.<sup>27</sup> This particular measure was chosen based on the logical understanding that wealthy states are most inclined to invest in states with a measurable level of geopolitical importance, whether from economic resources or useful geographic location for regional military bases.

**H<sub>6</sub>:** States with a large percentage of a regionally fractured ethnic group are more likely to be weak than those without a large percentage of such a group.

**H<sub>7</sub>:** States located in proximity to weak states, like Afghanistan, are more likely to be weak than those without proximity to weak states.

**H<sub>8</sub>:** States not of geo-political interest to the United States and its allies are more likely to be weak than states of geo-political interest.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

TABLE 4

*Data*

	<i>Kazakhstan</i>	<i>Turkmenistan</i>	<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	<i>Tajikistan</i>	<i>Uzbekistan</i>
<b>GINI</b>	30.40	40.80	30.30	32.60	36.80
<b>% Urbanization</b>	58%	49%	36%	26%	37%
<b>Fundamentalism</b>	0	0	0	1	2
<b>% Orthodox</b>	44%	9%	20%	0%	9%
<b>Independence</b>	5	4	1	2	3
<b>% Uzbek</b>	2.5%	5%	13.8%	15.3%	80%
<b>Proximity of Afghanistan</b>	0	1	0	1	1
<b>% FDI</b>	40.2%	39.9%	18.6%	39.9%	17.9%

First and foremost, it should be noted that, in light of the small sample size utilized in this study (only five cases) significant results are merely suggestive and do not necessarily indicate

<sup>27</sup> 2008 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Report.

generalizable results. Similarly, nonsignificant results are inconclusive and require further study before the null hypothesis can be confirmed or rejected.

*Socio-Economic Results*

TABLE 5  
Socioeconomic Results

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>Significance</i>
H <sub>1</sub>	GINI score	.265	.333
H <sub>2</sub>	% Urbanization	-.874*	.026

The results of a bivariate correlation indicate that my first hypothesis relating the level of state stability and income inequality suggests a weak relationship. The Pearson's correlation coefficient yielded a small positive correlation of .265, but the correlation did not indicate any level of significance for the variable. Given the lack of evidence supporting the relationship between state stability and income inequality, the null hypothesis is supported in this instance.

The second hypothesis in the socio-economic category proves much more robust. A bivariate correlation relating state stability and urbanization (used here as a measure of modernization) revealed both a strong negative correlation of -.874 and significance at the .05 level. Therefore, the evidence suggests an inverse relationship between the variables; as a state's level of modernization increases, the propensity for state weakness declines.

*Political Results*

TABLE 6  
Political Results

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>Significance</i>
H <sub>3</sub>	Fundamentalism	.642	.121
H <sub>4</sub>	% Orthodox Christian	-.859*	.031
H <sub>5</sub>	Date of independence	-.819*	.045

The third hypothesis utilized in this study, relating state stability and the presence of religious (Islamic) fundamentalism showed mixed results. A bivariate correlation indicated a strong, positive correlation of .642, although Pearson's correlation coefficient did not measure any significance. The correlation was expected in my hypothesis, and the issue raised by the lack of statistical significance may be explained by the methodology utilized in this study. Aside from the small sample size, the scale used was comparatively small and only utilized three measurement values- this lack of variation may have contributed to the lack of significance found. In addition, a return to the raw data in search of some explanatory power might prove useful.

The fourth hypothesis, comparing state stability and the percent of Orthodox Christians (used as a measure of Russification in the region) yielded a strong negative correlation of -.859 and obtained significance at the .05 level. Indeed, these results suggest that those states (such as Kazakhstan) closest in both geography and historical ties to Soviet Russia, and also the largest recipients of the USSR's exported German and Russian population to the region, are more likely to be strong states. By contrast, those states with smaller Orthodox populations and therefore less Soviet influence, particularly those in the southern part of the region like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, are more likely to be weak. As a result of past precedent and strong statistical support, there is sufficient support to reject the null hypothesis in this instance.

The fifth hypothesis, examining the relationship between state stability and the quality of each state's relationship with the Soviet Union yielded a similarly strong negative correlation of -.819 and obtained significance at the .05 level. Logic dictates that states which enjoyed a positive relationship with the USSR would be less pressed to claim independence after the fall of the Soviet Union than states with an overtly negative or oppressive relationship. With one exception, this holds true for the post-Soviet Central Asian cases. Kazakhstan, the breadbasket of the Soviet Union and the object of the USSR's outstandingly successful *Virgin Lands Campaign*, stands as the most stable state in the region and also the state for which Soviet colonialism was arguably least disastrous. The weakest case in the region, Uzbekistan, is discernable as the state most abused

under Soviet rule. Massive Uzbek cotton fields and the laboring populations who worked them experienced extensive exploitation under Soviet rule, resulting in severe loss of life (including numerous instances of worker suicide in protest of Soviet oppression), severe environmental degradation from agrochemicals, and depletion of the Aral Sea.<sup>28</sup> In this instance, the secondary literature supports the legitimacy of the measure used, and the correlation's results validate the rejection of the null hypothesis.

### *Geographic Results*

TABLE 7  
*Geographic Variables*

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>Significance</i>
H <sub>6</sub>	% Uzbeks	.612	.136
H <sub>7</sub>	Proximity to Afghanistan	.567	.159
H <sub>8</sub>	%FDI of fixed capital formation	-.595	.145

The sixth hypothesis under examination in this study examines the relationship between state stability and the extent to which each state contains a measurable Uzbek population. Although the bivariate correlation measures the positive correlation of .612 without statistical significance, the raw data suggests a much stronger correlation than the results yield (see Table 4). Why these two variables appear to be related is unclear. Logic suggests that, because the Uzbeki people are the most geographically dispersed ethnic group in the region, they are inclined to have the most difficulty creating a cohesive national identity and therefore the most difficulty creating a stable nation state. This does not fully explain why the presence of Uzbeks in other states correlates with state weakness, but it may be that where a minority ethnic group lacks a national identity, they are less inclined to support state institutions or law, thereby weakening the host state.

The seventh hypothesis relating state stability and state proximity to weak or failing states yielded a positive correlation of .567, although the results were not statistically significant. In this particular instance, there is some evidence that the correlation would have simply benefited from a larger sample size. Nicholas van de Walle's work on this topic in Africa suggests a much stronger

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<sup>28</sup> CIA *WorldFactBook*



correlation, and his work had the advantage of a sample size more than twice the size of this study. In this instance, the most important observation to be made lies in the understanding that the two weakest states in the region share sizable, porous borders with Afghanistan, while the strongest state in the region does not; it shares a border with southern Russia, a notably stable (if increasingly authoritarian) state.

The eighth and final hypothesis compares the relationship between state stability and each state's possession of foreign direct investment as a percent of the state's fixed capital formation. Bivariate correlations indicated a moderately strong negative correlation of  $-.595$ , indicating an inverse relationship between the variables. Although these results are not significant, they do suggest that states with sound FDI are more likely to be stable states than those without.

### CONCLUSION

Consistently, Turkmenistan stands as the outlier in the region. It never enjoyed a strong or positive relationship with the Soviet Union (despite being the fourth state to claim its independence), and as one of the more remote southernmost states in the region it shares a long boarder with Afghanistan. Nonetheless, Turkmenistan claims a very stable position as the second most stable state in the region. Turkmenistan's unanticipated status may be a result of the unique path it took following independence. While neighboring states struggled to create a functioning government and civil society, Saparmuran Niyazov quickly seized the reins of government and titled himself Turkmenbashi and president for life. Niyazov's dictatorship, which centered on his cult of personality, lasted until his death in 2006. His state's present stability may be a result of a strong and lasting authoritarian regime.

The states of post-Soviet Central Asia provide an extraordinarily rich context within which to examine the causes of state weakness. With one exception, the hypotheses seeking to explain the causes of state weakness were validated by the results. While the relationship between state stability and income inequality appears weak at best, and the variables dealing with geography encourage more research, the three independent variables dealing with degrees of modernization and the strength and quality of colonial relationships with the USSR yielded strong evidence of importance in the region. Ultimately, the data suggests that in the five post-Soviet Central Asian cases, colonialism may have acted as a modernizing force in states where a strong Soviet presence existed, particularly Kazakhstan. Combined with privileged position within the USSR and a positive relationship with Moscow, these states emerged from independence and developed into relatively stable states. Those states not deemed worthy of Russification, particularly Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, were not subjected to modernizing forces, but instead reduced to cases of colonial exploitation. As a result, they emerged from independence as devastated states with minimal economic and political resources to aid them in the creation of a stable state.