Uprootedness in Ferghana Valley: The Tragic Consequence of Ethnic Diversity and State Policies

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Abstract

While the phenomenon of up rootedness has become a dominant feature in world's political economy, the region presently comprising the post-Soviet Central Asia has also been affected by mass displacements. The ancient societies-turned-young-nation states resemble a mosaic of ethnically diverse groups, living together for centuries. Particularly in the historical Ferghana Valley various ethnic groups have formed a delicate balance which whenever disturbed by natural, environmental or socio-political factors, has led to massive and often tragic human displacement. Unfortunately, despite the initial euphoria about the newly independent, resource rich Central Asia, not much interest could be generated regarding its socio-political and humanitarian issues while the region descended into the backyard of international politics during the last decade. Nevertheless, the significance of the region and the massive displacements therein can never be under-estimated.

This paper focuses on two causative factors of up rootedness in and around the famous Ferghana Valley geographically bordered by three Central Asian states viz. Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. It mainly focuses on displacements forced by the consequences of ethnic heterogeneity, with special reference to the role of the regional states in this context. For this purpose, the paper is organized into five main sections: the first provides literature survey highlighting the major works on uprooted populations in the region; second furnishes a historical background of displacements in Central Asia; the third section presents a mapping of up rootedness in the three states bordering Ferghana Valley; the fourth tends to identify a conceptual framework that helps understand and analyze the displacement situation in the region; while the fifth section traces the roots of up rootedness in the region following the above mentioned framework. The concluding part analyses the

findings of this research and derive some lessons for the neighboring countries such as Pakistan who are also facing grave refugee issues.

The methods applied for this research are qualitative and analytical. Primary data comprises of UNHCR, World Bank and Human Rights reports and online interviews with relevant persons in Central Asia and Pakistan.

Key Words: Forced displacements, Central Asia, Ferghana Valley, up rootedness, Ethnic diversity, ethnic violence, security-stability framework, statelessness, ethnic cleansing, role of state, state failure

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Introduction

Uprooted populations have become a universal phenomenon in the post-cold war era so much so that many in present times even fail to recognize it as an abnormality. A number of factors ranging from economic plight to genocide, ethnic cleansing and terrorism have caused millions of people to become refugees, stateless or internally displaced. Horrors of what a Human Rights Watch report called an "unprecedented recidivism of medieval barbarity" have left multitudes of people including old men, women and children to face the traumas of exile. Presently when the world is more obsessed with the human displacement crises in the Middle East and elsewhere, Central Asia seems to be a rather ignored region to which occasional references are made in context of democratization and hydrocarbon resources. There have been talks to resettle refugees from Syria (and other parts of Middle East) in Central Asia due to the latter's sparse populations and cultural affinities with the former.[1] Such proposals fail to realize that Central Asia itself has been a hub of some of the world's most intensive migration currents right from the ancient times – a fact obviously reflected in the mosaic of scores of racial and linguistic groups cutting across the borders of the five post-Soviet Muslim states namely Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. Upheavals in the post cold war era have generated some new waves of displacements many of which can be categorized as "forced".

In this context this paper aims at exploring the causes of forced migrations, mainly those resulted from ethnic conflicts in the historically famous Ferghana Valley bordering three Central Asian states viz. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, with an attempt to theorize the issue making it relevant to the similar issues elsewhere. At present the magnitude of displacement in this region is apparently low as compared to Middle East and South Asia, nevertheless, the very existence of ethnic diversity demands a vigilant management in order to preempt any volatile situation in future. In this case, volatile situations have occurred several times in the post-Soviet era. The research applies qualitative and analytical approach in tracing two major root causes of displacements viz. ethnic diversity and flawed state policies. It particularly seeks to analyze the role of regional states in this context. Primary data is driven from official statistics and reports from

[1] See "British Peer proposes resettling Middle Eastern refugees in Central Asia" *Inside the Cocoon –Asia Central* Today, September 18, 2015 at http://www.eurasianet.org/node/75176 accessed 5-10-2015

(United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Human Rights Watch and World Bank, etc. Online interviews and opinion surveys also have been used to gather first-hand information in this regard.

Section 1: Literature Review

Hannah Arendt identifies refugees as "a new species of human beings who have come to symbolize the violence of our times.[2] Apart from the experts in International Law and Demography, historians have played a significant role in studying the extent of migration, its causes, consequences and the response of international agencies particularly in Europe. Yet, the region now called Central Asia figured out sparsely in the early works. Peter Gatrell's seminal work, *A Whole Empire Walking* (1999) combines exemplary empirical research with the careful use of diverse methods to explore the extent of migrations in Russian Empire during the World War I. Though it mainly focused on western fringes of the Russian Empire, some glimpses of Central Asian displacements can be found.[3] The Russian writer Alexander Nekrich in *Punished People (1978)* gave first hand details of deportations of various non-Russian nationalities[4] turning them into "un-nations" as described by Robert Conquest in 1960 in *Soviet Deportations of Nationalities*.[5] Michael Rywkin in his Moscow's *Muslim Challenge* (1990) has given some eye-opening details of migration trends in Central Asia, many of which were induced by the Russian or Soviet policies.[6] His later work *Moscow's Lost Empire (*1994) also explores the migrations in the post- Soviet period.[7]

The post Soviet period is replete with scores of books and articles written on various aspects of the region which now comprise the five newly independent Muslim states. Martha B. Olcot[8], Shirin Akiner[9], Ahmed Rashid[10],

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2 Hanna Arendt, 'We Refugees', in Marc Robinson, *Altogether Elsewhere – Writers on Exile'*, (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1943) 111

3 Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking – Refugees in Russia during World War I*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) 54-58, 81, 92-93

4 Aleksandr Nekrich, *The Deportation and the Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War*, trans. George Saunders, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978)

5 Robert Conquest, *Soviet Deportation of Nationalitie*s,(London: Macmillan, 1960)

6 Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1990) 71-83

7 Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Lost Empire* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1994) 34-41, 88-92

8 Martha B. Olcott, 'Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia', Carnegie Papers No. 77, January 2007

9 Shirin Akiner, 'Silk Roads, Great Games and Central Asia', Asian Affairs Vol. 42, November 2011

Ajay Patnaik[11] and many others have given rich descriptions on the emergent issues and population movements in the region. The new conflicts in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as well as the perpetual Afghan situation caused thousands of new displacements that particularly attracted the attention of UNHCR and Human Rights organizations. Regular reports from relevant organizations including UNHCR, World Bank and Human Rights Watch (HRW) provide valuable insights into the matter. However, most of such reports for the last decade or so have combined Central Asia with Europe and give limited space to Central Asia.[12] Since the Andijan (2005) and later Osh (2010) massacres more focused studies on Ferghana Valley's delicate ethnic balance and human displacements have been produced. As far as theoretical studies on displacements in the region are concerned Myron Weiner's work in significant. Marjorie Farquharsan's 2011 report on 'Statelessness in Central Asia' also gives some insights on the matter.[13]

Section 2: Uprootedness Through Ages – Historical Background

The single most remarkable feature of Central Asia has been the manner in which this region continually both attracted and generated movements of population. Some in the distant past were the result of sudden eruptions of nomadic hordes, or traders and explorers, others, by-product of conquests as the region has experienced at varying degrees the imperialistic influence of the Mongols, the Ottomans, the Persians and finally and most comprehensively the Russians.[14] The Russian conquest by 19th century brought with it a new influx distinct in its religion, language, culture and the level of social evolution. The waves of ethnic Russians were themselves diverse including farmers, soldiers, bourgeoisie and even outlaws. The regional forces tried to gain independence in the wake of Bolshevik Revolution (1917) but were duly crushed and 'reconquered' by the Red Army as an integral part of USSR.

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10 Ahmed Rasheed, *Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism*, (Karachi: OUP, 1994)

11 Ajay Patnaik, 'Agriculture and Rural Outmigration in Central Asia', 1960-1991', Europe-Asia Studies, Vol 47, January 1995

12 For instance, Amnesty International, *Europe and Central Asia*, 2017-2018, , World Bank Group, *Europe and Central Asia Economic Update, Migration and Mobility* 2017 ; World Bank, *Forced displacements in Europe and Central* Asia 2011, etc.

13 Marjorie Farquharsan, *Statelessness in Central Asia*, (UNCHR, May 2011)

14 The Tsarist Russia expanded in Central Asia throughout 19th century and finally absorbed all the previously Muslim ruled region in the Russian Empire, upto the borders of Afghanistan. See Hina Khan, 'The Russian Expansionism in Central Asia and the Region's Response'. Pakistan Horizon, PIIA Karachi, Vol 49, No. 2 (April, 1996), 33-57

Between 1924 and 1936 Stalin's government embarked upon a comprehensive demarcation of borders in Central Asia, dividing it into five autonomous Union Republics within the Soviet Union viz. the Uzbek, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs). This demarcation resulted in grave demographic and ethnic issues as in each SSR a number of enclaves of ethnic groups other than the majority group were left. Further, the borders so created were extremely complex and many grey areas of mixed populations foretold future trouble.

These complexities of ethnic diversity and displacement could easily be hidden under the carpet as long as the Soviet Union existed. Under the single centralized authority of the Communist state, the various peoples (more than hundred nationality groups) were expected to unite themselves in the mould of *homo-Sovieticus*, "national in form but socialist in content".[15] The national, ethnic or religious identities were shunned as symbols of imperialism and capitalist exploitation. But the abrupt breakup of the Soviet state plunged its successor states into a deep identity crisis. In many cases the long suppressed identities reemerged in more chauvinistic forms. The ancient societies-turned-Soviet republics-turned-new nation states once again had to face the consequences of changed status of territoriality.

None of these successor states is homogeneous. The presence of large minorities such as Tajiks in Uzbekistan, Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan and ethnic Russians in all of them, became a potential source of new displacements in the backdrop of uncertainty, instability and state-suppression. Added to this were the four bloody civil wars that erupted meanwhile in different power-nodes in and around the region, viz. Chechnya, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan and the stage was all set for new and more intensive waves of uprootedness.

Section 3: Limits of the Misery: A General Map of Uprootedness in the region:

As early as 1970s, a Soviet demographer Topilin identified some seventy migration currents inside and outside Central Asia.[16] Those currents had increased manifolds in the post-Soviet era. At the time of Soviet disintegration, about sixty million Central Asians lost the Soviet citizenship

[15] The official Soviet slogan. See Veljko Vujacic, *Nationalism*, *Myth and State in Russia and Serbia*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015

[16] Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, op.cit, 74-75

facing the trauma of losing the world-power status without any particular freedom movement.[17] The shock later gave way to the freedom euphoria and in some cases a rise of nationalist fervor with a paranoid identification of the 'others' living within 'our borders'. Hence the Tajiks living for centuries in Samarkand and Bukhara (now Uzbek cities) all of a sudden became minorities. Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan faced same trauma. According to a UNHCR report Central Asia (along with Caucasus) was a region in CIS, most troubled by armed conflict and hence refugee movements.[18]

The Unfortunate Ferghana

One major site of perpetual armed conflict is the famous Ferghana Valley – a large more or less triangular area of approximately 22,000 square kilometers, which spreads across the complex borderlines between eastern Uzbekistan, southern Kyrgyzstan and Northern Tajikistan. It's a fertile area located in a rather dry zone, irrigated by the Naryn and Kara daryas (rivers) which flow east to west and join together near Namangan (in Uzbek part of the valley) to form the famous Syr Darya. Syr Darya then flows westward to the Aral Sea. The valley is a densely populated abode of about fourteen million people of mixed ethnicities, mostly Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kyrgyz. Diversity is the hallmark of the region but unfortunately it has also led to conflict between the three states which share the valley:

[17] The Central Asian states got freedom automatically and almost undesirably with the Soviet breakup in December 1992. See Ahmed Rashid, *Resurgence of Central Asia – Islam or Nationalism,* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994) 1-5

[18] UNHCR report on 'The State of World Refugees – Displacements in Former Soviet Region', 2000 http://www.unhcr.ch/pubs/sowr2000/ch08.pdf

Figure 1 Ferghana Valley - an ethnic melting pot
Source: http://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Ferghana-Valley-Report.pdf

Figure 2 Ferghana Valley shared by three Centaral Asian States and their corresponding regions

1. Tajikistan

Added to and fueled by the perpetual Afghan crises, the Tajik civil war (1992-1997) further destabilized the whole region causing multiple migration currents. The Tajik imbroglio read like a register of all variables: From an ideological conflict of the Islamic fundamentalists allied with the radical democrats against the hard line communist-turned-nationalist government to a clan-based vendetta. All this resulted in about 600,000 internally

displaced (IDPs) and 250,000 refugees to the neighboring countries. Moreover, about one-third of ethnic Russians living in Tajikistan were forced to leave or live in uncertain conditions as the anti-Russian fervor grew in the country. Southern Tajikistan being the main center of the civil war saw the opposing factions slaughtering each other and any civilians they could find. Thousands fled to the capital Dushanbe with horrible stories of killing, arson and rape.[19] Even the camps for the homeless were not spared. Thousands fled to Afghanistan, a tragic irony as that country itself was in the midst of a bloody civil war.

On the other hand the northern border of Tajikistan with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan remained a source of tension between the three countries. The border disputes can be traced to Soviet period. Tajik civil war had greatly alarmed the Uzbek and Kyrgyz governments. The rising religious revivalism beginning with the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) of Tajikistan had grown into even more extremist outfits. Rise of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in 1999-2000 was seen as an impact of Tajik civil war further deteriorating the relations between the two countries. Uzbek President Islam Karimov suspected the significant Tajik minority in Uzbekistan (about 1.25 millions) as a potential source of religious extremism in Uzbekistan. The rise of IMU further strengthened this suspicion. Hence a full-scale official crackdown was initiated in Uzbekistan which led to massive displacements (mainly of ethnic Tajiks) from Uzbekistan to Tajik part of Ferghana valley where they were settled in refugee camps.[20]

2. Uzbekistan

Disturbances in Uzbekistan started later than those in Tajikistan. The President Islam Karimov's authoritarian policies led to protests from opposition groups since independence in 1992. However, in late nineties a series of violent incidents including a couple of failed assassination attempts on the President was followed by a harsh official crackdown on the rebels including those of the outlawed IMU. This further aggravated the situation. Extremely wary of Islamic fundamentalism, and crushing all opponents in its name, Karimov accused almost all regional countries from Turkey to

[19] Amnesty International Report on *Tadzhikistan: Hidden Terror: Political Killings, "Disappearances" and Torture Since December 1992,* 1993

[20] Shirin Akiner, 'Post-Soviet Central Asia: Past is Prologue', in Peter Ferdinand (ed.), *The New Central Asia and its neighbors*, London: Pinter, 1994 pp 10-16

Pakistan of supporting Uzbek rebels while internally vowing to "chop off the heads" of the rebels. Various news reports speak of thousands of people arrested and rigorously punished while thousands fled along with their families to neighboring part of Ferghana Valley in Tajikistan. In August 2000 (and a couple of times later), Uzbek planes bombed the refugee camps in Tajikistan in order to punish the "Uzbek fugitives", while incurring collateral damage on the Tajik villages nearby. Fearing similar fate Kazakh and Kyrgyz governments extradited Uzbek dissidents living in their areas. Continued IMU attacks were responded by Uzbek government by brutally forcing the transfer of ethnic Tajiks from nine mountainous villages in Sukhandaria province to desert areas in Kashkadarya during the early 2000s.

Further, about 1.2 ethnic Uzbeks living in Tajikistan were also badly affected. Fleeing the Tajik civil war they crossed the border to enter the Uzbek part of Ferghana Valley, not welcomed by Uzbek authorities, faced persecution and seventy percent of them had to remigrate to Tajikistan in wretched conditions.[21]

3. Kyrgyzstan

Though a promising democracy in the beginning, Kyrgyzstan later became a fractured and conflict ridden state suffering from corrupt bureaucratic rule, religious extremism and ethnic tensions. The districts of Osh, Kara-suu and Uzgen in Kyrgyz part of Ferghana Valley have witnessed severe clashes between the Kyrgyz (54.6%) and Uzbeks (27%) as early as the summer of 1990 during the last days of Soviet Union. The mutual jealousy between the two ethnic groups seemed perpetual: the poor Kyrgyz farmers watching the rich Uzbeks living in some border districts enjoying surplus produce as well as profitable commerce in towns; while the Uzbeks feeling marginalized in local and national politics of Kyrgyzstan. Both had reasons to suspect each other's motives and moves. The issue of allotment of some land to Kirgiz parties in an Uzbek enclave erupted in worst kind of ethnic riots with horrific atrocities[22] suppressed only by the Soviet military contingent of border guards that remained in the region till 1999.

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[21] Central Asia: Border disputes and conflict potential, ICG Report No. 33, April 2002

[22] According to eyewitness reports, victims were beaten and tortured; some were garroted; women were said to have been raped and paraded naked in the streets. See Abilabek Asankanov, "Ethnic conflict in the Osh region in Summer 1990: Reasons and lessons," in *Ethnicity and power in the contemporary world*, eds. Kumar Rupesinghe and Valery Tishkov (New York: United Nations University Press, 1996), 116-25

To add fuel to the fire religious extremism entered the scene in the next decade[23]. Since 1999 allegedly IMU militants many being fed upon drug trafficking, appeared to cross borders from Tajikistan to the southern Kyrgyz areas. According to some sources, aiming at establishment of an Islamic state, but apparently retaliating the Uzbekistan government's purges of the religious elements, these militants continued to create disturbances along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border areas during the next decade. The 1999 CIS-Kyrgyz military assistance agreement created the 'Southern Shield' with Russian and four Central Asian countries (minus Turkmenistan) and later in 2001 the 'South Anti-terror' exercises were able to control the IMU militants to an extent but occasional outbursts of ethnic clashes kept the region restive.

Further, the ratification of Sino-Kyrgyz border treaty[24] by the Kyrgyz parliament in 2002 brought a new wave of agitation particularly in the southern part of the country. The government's crackdown upon opponents led to further killings and disturbances including the beginning of anti-President movement. The flawed elections in 2005 finally set the scene for what is called the 'Tulip Revolution' resulting in the removal of the President Askar Akaev who had been in office since the Soviet breakup. The southern areas as usual remained the hub of violence particularly affecting the Uzbek minority. The dynamics of the violent conflict there, further complicated by the infiltration of IMU, kept the region turbulent. In June 2010 another bloody ethnic riots in Osh and Jalalabad brought the region to the limelight.[25]

[23] It is sometimes alleged that withdrawal of Russian contingent led to the infiltration of militants suggesting a Russian design to assert the indispensability of its forces in the region.

[24] The treaty was finalized in 1999, according to which the long disputed area east of Lake Isyl-kul was divided giving 30% to China and 70% to Kyrgyzstan.

[25] According to a donor Joint Economic Assessment, the June 2010 violence in southern Kyrgyzstan against ethnic Uzbeks produced 300,000 IDPs and 75,000 refugees who crossed the border with Uzbekistan. As of mid-July, it is estimated that most of the refugees in Uzbekistan were repatriated and that many of the IDPs were able to return to their homes. The number of remaining internally displaced persons is now estimated at 75,000. See Joann P. De Berry and Benjamin Petrini, *Forced Displacement in Europe and Central Asia*, World Bank, 2011

Figure 2: Source: IDMC, Kyrgyzstan (shaded part): Internal Displacement in Brief as of December 2012 at http://www.internal-displacement.org/europe-the-caucasus-and-central-asia/kyrgyzstan/summary

Section 4: Ethnic Diversity, State Policy And Uprootedness: A Conceptual Framework

There is an increasing academic consensus in favor of a multidisciplinary approach towards migration studies including historical, anthropological and sociological dimensions along with the usual demographic and political approach.[26] In this context the present study focuses on the theoretical and historical aspects of causal factors in the conflict induced migrations in the ethnically diverse regions and for the sake of precision excludes the cases of economic and environmental migrations[27]. Although this research categorically rejects the mono-causal approach to the displacement problem

[26] For instance, see T. H. Hollingsworth, 'Historical Studies of Migration', in *Annales de démographie historique,. Migrations*.(1970) 87-96; Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, The Life History Approach to the Study to Internal Migration, *Oral History* Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring, 1979), pp. 26-32; Jan Lucassen, Leo Lucassen, and Patrick Manning (eds.), *Migration History in World History: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, (New York: Brill Paperback Collection, 2010)

[27] Hence, a repetition of economic theories will not be helpful in this case. Though environmental migrations do exist in Central Asia and are now included in forced migrations, they are outside the scope of this paper. For an account of economic and environmental issues see *Ferghana Valley – Five Year Humanitarian Trends Assessment (Report),* Inter-Agency Regional Analysis Network, (March 2017)

(understanding that multiple factors including economic factors cause displacements), it specifically tends to explore the conceptual links between the ethnic heterogeneity and state policies in the generation and perpetuation of displacement. It is premised on two presuppositions:

First, in all displacements resulting from ethnic conflicts demographic diversity has a major role to play;
Second, the way a state responds to the challenge of diversity and ethnic conflict has a bearing upon the generation of internal or cross-border migration.

In both cases people are 'forced' to leave their homes and homelands against their own free will. This brings us to the domain of 'forced migration' which is defined as a process in which certain groups of people in a given country have to leave their home places or even their country in the consequence of economic, social, political or ideological force used directly or indirectly. It includes "the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects."[28] In all such migrations an element of coercion and compulsion does exist and in absence of this element the migration could have been avoided. It must be noted that voluntary migration is only another kind of uprooting and the difference between voluntary and forced migrations are not always pronounced in the environments suffering from chronic discrimination, exploitation and the early rigors of development such as those prevalent in present Central Asian states. Hence the International Organization for Migrations differentiates two types of forced displacements: conflict induced displacements – mostly caused by humans, and disaster induced displacements – caused by natural factors.[29]

Myron Weiner distinguishes two major frameworks to study migration cases[30]:

- Security-stability framework and
- Political economy framework

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[28] International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM), What is Forced Migration? Forced Migration Online, www.forcedmigration.org

[29] Migration Data Portal, Forced Migration or Displacements, https://migrationdataportal.org/ themes/forced-migration-or-displacement accessed 12-3-2016

[30] Myron Weiner, 'Security, Stability and International Migration' *International Security*, Vol. 17 No. 3, (Winter, 1992-1993), pp. 91-126

The security-stability framework focuses on state policies toward human displacements (within or across the international borders) as shaped by concerns over internal stability and international (and internal) security. According to this framework, the political changes within a state and the state's coercive, discriminatory or marginalizing measures against a group or a section of population may lead to conflict within its borders or with a foreign power. This conflict has a potential to deteriorate into state-oppression, crackdowns or even a violent crisis generating displacement of the marginalized population.

On the other hand, the political economy framework views migration primarily as a consequence of (internal or) global inequalities, the economic connections between the sending and receiving regions including the movement of capital and technology, the role played by transnational institutions and the structural changes in labor markets linked to the changes in the international division of labor.[31] In case of Central Asia both the frameworks are applicable. Both point out to the passivity of individuals who actually respond to the larger social context which stimulates them to migrate. Both, as Weiner asserts, are "interactive frameworks" highlighting the nexus between "migration processes and the global changes" and both insist upon the significance of the state behavior and international borders.[32] However, as far as the present study is concerned, the security-stability model seems more appropriate due to the following reasons: First, it puts more emphasis on the state policies unlike the political economy framework that regards the state as rather a weak actor overwhelmed by larger global forces. In case of Central Asia, much of the internal and international population flows are often impelled, encouraged or prevented by governments or political forces for reasons that may have little to do with the economic conditions. Thus, any effort to analyze these flows must take into account the political determinants and constraints upon them. Second, a security-stability framework does not reject or ignore the economic and environmental causes of migration as both of these have a profound impact on the security and stability situation of a country. Hence this framework rather compliments the political economy framework by focusing upon the role of states in both creating and responding to migration. Third, most of the displacement problems in the concerned region i.e. Ferghana Valley are in one way or other linked to the state policies during the Soviet or even the pre-Soviet era and the void created by the disappearance of the Soviet power

[31] *Ibid* 92
[32] *Ibid* 93

when these issues took an inter-state character. Hence, they do not directly correspond to the changing economic scenario of the post-Soviet era though the latter has definitely contributed to aggravate the already restive situation in the region.

Section 5: Tracing The Roots Of Uprootedness In Ferghana Valley

Central Asia has inherited the migration trend from its ancient past. Yet, there is a big difference between nomadism and up rootedness. The region has suffered a lot at the hands of the Mongol onslaught, the Russian imperialism, Soviet Oppression and now tyranny of its own rulers. Ferghana Valley being a granary for regional populations is also the most densely and diversely populated region in Central Asia. Applying the security-stability framework, this section tends to trace the roots of human displacements in Ferghana Valley in two major causations:

- Ethnic diversity of the region leading to perpetual conflict situation
- State failures in providing indiscriminative conditions, controlling the rival populations, checking their violent tendencies and protecting the victimized.

Ethnic diversity as a source of conflict and subsequent displacement:

The ethnic mosaic of Ferghana Valley with Tajik, Uzbek and Kyrgyz groups cutting across the international borders between the three Central Asian states viz. Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan presents a potentially volatile picture. (See Figure 1) It has been observed that diverse ethnic groups living side by side for decades often harbor conflicting aspirations which at times degenerate into blood-letting ethnic strife or even civil wars. The inhabitants of Ferghana Valley, who had lived in mixed societies throughout history, have now increasingly preferred to form enclaves (sometimes called 'exclaves') of their respective groups in the other two parts of the valley. For instance, Uzbeks have formed enclaves in Kyrgyz part of the valley, particularly in districts of Sox, Shakhimardan, Chong-Kara and Jani-Ayil etc. while the Kyrgyz groups have an enclave at Barak in Uzbek part of Ferghana Valley. There are also two Tajik enclaves – Vorukh and Kairagach in Kyrgyzstan.[33]

[33] Forbes, Central Asia: The Complexities of Ferghana Valley, Stratfor Institute of Geopolitics, Washington, https://www.forbes.com/sites/stratfor/2013/10/10/central-asia-the-complexities-of-the-Ferghana-valley/#61685777238d accessed 3-3- 2015

Over the last twenty seven years of independence, this region has suffered worst kinds of violence perpetrated by the above-mentioned ethnic groups against each other causing tragic displacements both internal and cross border. To determine the role of ethnic diversity in causing migrations in the region it is imperative to have a historical overview:

The Ferghana Valley inhabited mostly by Uzbeks, Kyrgyzs and Tajiks, has been a part of the historical Transoxiana of ancient Greeks and *Mavraunnahr* of medieval Arabs.[34] By thirteenth century it came under Mongol and later Timurid Empires. With the decline of Timurids, the valley became a part of the Uzbek Shaibanid Empire and later the Khanate of Kokand. In 1867 the Khanate succumbed to the Russian expansionism and was completely annexed to the Tsarist Empire as the Ferghana Province of Russian Turkestan.[35] For all this period Ferghana Valley remained heterogeneous in population but under one or the other single political power.[36] During all this period migrations continued and the population remained mixed across the region but ethnic tensions seldom occurred. The Bolshevik Revolution brought resistance in these regions against the Communist Regime, the last effort to regain independence duly crushed by the Red Army. Still the ethnic divisions carried no significance. The main source of identity of those people was either religion – Sunni Islam, or the city to which they belong for instance, Samarkand, Bukhara or Andijan (a city in Uzbek part of Ferghana Valley) etc.

It was only after Stalinist demarcation of borders (1924-36) by dividing Turkestan region into Union Republics within USSR, based upon the ethnic configurations of the regions. This may be attributed to the famous 'divide and rule' of the Western imperialist powers. For the first time the heterogeneous and mixed population was assigned different ethnicities with their corresponding Union Republics which they never demanded for. The division left some of the people on the wrong side of the republics' borders – prone to conflict. These divisions subsequently led to the ethnic identity formation among the Central Asians. Ferghana Valley's complex demographic

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[34] For a quick reference see History of Central Asia, Encyclopedia Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Central-Asia

[35] The Kokand Khanate comprised the regions of present Kyrgyzstan, Eastern Uzbekistan and almost whole Tajikistan and continued from 1709 to 1876 when it was finally captured by Russians. For details see Michael Rywkin, op.cit.

[36] It must also be noted that 75 percent inhabitants of Turkestan (present Central Asia) belonged to Turkic origin and hence the name Turkestan. They included Kazakh, Turkmen, Uzbek and Kyrgyz ethnic groups, while only the Tajiks are of Persian stock.

situation made it an ethnic time bomb which started ticking even before the end of Soviet rule.[37]

This shows that ethnic diversity in the region is not new but ethnic divisions were highlighted only by Soviet policies and any recognizable conflict appeared only in the post-Soviet period. This takes us to the other factor to be examined in this study – the state policies.

State Policies as a source of conflict and subsequent displacement

Security-stability framework emphasizes the key role of state in the generation and continuation of forced migrations as well as acceptance of such migrations from outside.[38] The history of Central Asia bears the testimony to the over-whelming role of the state since the beginning.

Tsarist and Soviet Policies

The Russian colonial empire being the most absolutist of all previous states actually was responsible for major population displacements in the region. Be it the influx of ethnic Russians to the region, or the displacements due to the environmental degradation caused by the Tsarist Cotton policy in the river valleys of the region.[39] With the inception of even more authoritarian Communist regime, migration currents actually increased in variety and magnitude with the addition of incessant purges and secret massive deportations of nationalities (Chechen, Ingush etc.) from Caucasus to Central Asia. [40] However, the major state policy which caused conflict and displacements among indigenous nationalities was the border demarcations between 1924 and 1936 as described above. Those demarcations formed the five Union Republics (SSRs) as the first political units in Central Asia established on ethnic basis. The given justification called it an attempt to unify the members of a national group under a single 'national republic' (or SSR) with a titular majority'.[41] No such delineation was demanded by the

[37] Ethnic clashes in Ferghana Valley appeared in 1990

[38] In turn the security and stability of states is also affected by the migration flows. However, a study of effects of migration is beyond the scope of this paper.

[39] For details see Michael Rywkin, op.cit. 14-17

[40] Khruschev Administration initiated the famous 'Virgin-Lands Program' to facilitate massive Russian colonization of Central Asian lands which continued till 1960s.

[41] For details see Albert Nenarokov and Alexande Proskurin, *How the Soviet Union solved the Nationalities Question?* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1983)

local groups which only in due course of decades developed their ethnic consciousness.

Post-Independence Policies

The Soviet successor states inherited the Soviet power structures with only some superficial alterations deemed necessary in the post-Cold war era. These included the change of names of the ruling parties from 'Communist' to 'Nationalist', 'Social Democratic' or even 'Liberal'. Even the faces did not change. Hence, the Communist-turned-nationalist leadership continued the authoritarian style of ruling with consistent lip-service to liberal democracy which came in fashion ala' Fukuyama forecast. The three Soviet successor states sharing the Ferghana Valley have jagged borders and even jagged course of socio-political evolution. Though resource-rich (particularly Uzbekistan) they have fragile political systems under stark authoritarianism and a bleak record of human rights. This has led to a partial loss of legitimacy as well as capacity of the states in dealing with internal crises. The civil war in Tajikistan (1992-97) had already sapped the energies of the nascent state. With this the rise of religious extremism and terrorism became a daunting feature in the region's political scenario permeating from Afghanistan to Tajikistan to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The response of Tajik, Uzbek and Kyrgyz governments to these developments in and around the region led to a continuous conflict situation in the Ferghana Valley.

Tajik State: Inertia and fragility

The Tajik part of Ferghana Valley including city of Khujand is inhabited mainly by ethnic Uzbek population which has been disaffected by Tajik government's policies and officials posted in their region. The resulting protests and a prison attack in Khujand led to government's crackdown and killings in 196-97.[42] The ethnic conflict turned inter-state when the neighboring Uzbekistan government raised its concern for Uzbeks in Tajikistan and demanded autonomy for the Tajik part of Ferghana Valley.

Meanwhile the Tajik civil war ended with a power-sharing settlement in 1997 wherein the United Opposition (UTO) leadership including the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) was co-opted in the government. It was the first time an Islamist party gained a legitimate status in a Central Asian state.

[42] Human Rights Watch Report on Tajikistan, Vol 10, No. 2 D https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/tajikistan/ accessed 16-3-2016

However, some dissident Islamist leaders including Juma Namangani and Tohi Yaldosh, continued struggle by founding another and more radical group – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) having connections with the Islamic State (IS) in the Middle East, and its main front of activity in Uzbekistan. Though the civil war was mainly fought in the south and south-eastern areas, it led to a rise of war-lords in many parts including Ferghana Valley in the north of Tajikistan. The rise of Taliban in Afghanistan also led to a new radicalization of religious groups in Tajik areas along with an illegitimate flow of weapons and drugs from Afghanistan. This generated a restive situation around the country, with incidents of terror attacks, on the capital Dushanbe and some other cities. Ferghana Valley became a hotbed of terrorism with its complex borders allowing the IMU, Hizbe Tahrir and other extremist groups entering Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and inflicting terror in those areas further deteriorating the relations with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In reaction, Uzbek government has several times chased the IMU terrorists across its borders to the Tajik part of Ferghana. Uzbek president Karimov has several times ordered surgical air strikes in this region resulting in collateral damage and massive human displacements.

Nevertheless, President Emomali and his party PDP have yet been able to stick to power by means of a kind of client-patron linkages with strong regional groups across the country together with an unscrupulous nepotism, electoral irregularities, corruption, media controls and human rights violations. Result is an increasing disaffection among various ethnic groups, with a comparatively higher number of youth joining extremist outfits such as IS active less in Tajikistan but more in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. All this is accompanied with international dissatisfaction and government's loss of legitimacy and monopoly over violence. In fact, the Tajik government's authority outside Dushanbe has dwindled during the last decade. The signs of a fragile state are too clear.[43]

Interestingly the only strategy Tajik government has adopted after 1996 is 'staying out' of Ferghana trouble.[44] Further, as the Tajik part of the valley is almost cut off from rest of Tajikistan by mountains, and mostly inhabited by

[43] Government of Tajikistan, http://factsanddetails.com/central-asia/Tajikistan/sub8_6d/entry-4884.html accessed 14-6-2015

[44] Charles Recknagel, 'Ferghana Valley: A tinderbox for Violence', https://www.rferl.org/a/Why_Is_The_Ferghana_Valley_A_Tinderbox_For_Violence/2074849.html accessed 16-3-2016

ethnic Uzbeks, Tajik government perhaps sees little reason to play an active role in safeguarding common people living there.

Uzbek State: Paranoid Tyranny

The Communist-turned-democrat leader of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov exercised absolute power as the president of the republic till his death in 2016. The farce democratic structures common in all Central Asia also exist in Uzbekistan to perpetuate more or less one-party system with the leading Peoples Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (PDPU).

As early as 1989, the Uzbek part of Ferghana Valley was shaken with ethnic riots between the Uzbeks and Meskhetians who had been deported from the far-off Caucasus region to this part by Stalin in 1940s – again a short-sighted act of a previous government. The riots spread to many cities and were controlled only after an intervention of Moscow.

Moreover, Islam Karimov regardless of his name, throughout his life remained extremely paranoid of the Islamist groups emerging within and around the Uzbek borders particularly in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Hence, the establishment of IMU gave nightmares to him and led him to embark upon a large-scale crackdown of fundamentalist groups and even other rivals in the name of war on terror. Full-scale state-building included heavy expenditures on army, police and secret agencies to sniff all kinds of anti-government activity. Prisons remained full while natural rights of the people usurped and human rights violations common.[45]
Nevertheless, the IMU could not be controlled which conducted protests, murder attempts on Karimov, and militant activities in the capital Tashkent and Ferghana Valley. The 2005 massacres in Andijan – a city in Uzbek part of Ferghana Valley where the police opened fire on protesters led to hundreds of killings and a massive emigration from Uzbek to the Tajik and Kyrgyz parts of Ferghana.[46] Since then, Karimov blatantly pursued an aggressive anti-terror policy against the 'Islamists' wary of every man with a beard and

[45] 2016- Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Uzbekistan, US Embassy in Uzbekistan, https://uz.usembassy.gov/2016-country-reports-human-rights-practices-uzbekistan/ accessed 2-12-2017

[46] The trouble started with the arrest of 23 Businessmen on charges of religious extremism. See Dean Cox, '10 years after Andijan Massacre, the Uzbek refugees remained silenced by fear', *The Guardian*, International Edition, 13 May, 2015

every woman with a hijab. Bombing the 'terrorist enclaves' in the neighboring parts of Ferghana had been a common practice.

The state exercises complete control over electronic and print media, think tanks, multinational companies, as well as academic institutions. In 2013 the Uzbek universities were ordered to close Political Science programs while the whole discipline (Karimov called it a 'pseudo-science) was removed from the curriculum by 2015.[47]

This paranoia and oppression has led thousands of people including political leaders and intellectuals to migrate out of Uzbekistan. Uzbek enclaves in Tajik and Kyrgyz parts of Ferghana face a constant threat of annihilation at the hands of Uzbek government in Tashkent.

Kyrgyz State: From 'Tulips' to thorns

The post-Soviet state of Kyrgyzstan also inherited a virtually 'ambivalent legacy' and a 'burning fuse'[48] in its southern Osh-Jalalabad region i.e. the Kyrgyz part of Ferghana Valley. In fact as early as 1990 ethnic disturbances started in Osh province initially on a land issue when a Kyrgyz party 'Osh Aymaghi' demanded reallocation of a collective farm held by Uzbeks in Osh for a housing project for the Kyrgyz people. The authorities agreed to allocate a small part of the farm for the housing project which angered both Uzbeks and Kyrgyz leading to ethnic clashes killing about 300 people in Osh.[49] The conditions only normalized after the deployment of Soviet paratroopers.
The 'First Tulip Revolution' (2005) ousting the first president Askar Akaev of Kyrgyzstan was followed by more upheavals as a result of charges of corruption, nepotism and suppression of opposition by the successive governments. The 'Second Tulip Revolution' (2010) ousted the second President Bakiev, also started the second round of Osh-Jalalabad ethnic clashes killing hundreds of people mostly Uzbeks – uprooting thousands.

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47 The ban on the subject was only recently lifted in January 2019. Reuters, World News, 'Knowledge is Power: Uzbekistan lifts ban on Political Science.

48 As stated by the first President of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akaev, cited in Joseph Zajda (ed.), *International Handbook on Globalization, Education and Policy Research: Global Pedagogies and Policies*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005) 374

49 Yasar Sari, 'Identity-Conflict Relations: A case study of Ferghana Valley Conflicts', Central Asia and the Caucasus, Vol. 14 No. 4 (2013) 14

Interestingly, both rounds of Osh-Jalalabad ethnic frenzy, separated by twenty years (1990-2010) occurred at times of political upheavals in the country - at times when the central governments were weakened and almost paralyzed by the political upheavals around them – when the political leadership was in the midst of an attempt to replace the old ruling elite.[50] Hence the central governments were paralyzed and unable to manage the situation.

Conclusion: Failure of The Authoritarian State

The above study, mainly premised on the security-stability framework for explaining migrations, clearly demonstrates that the roots of conflict-induced forced displacements in and out of Ferghana Valley are embedded in the failure of the authoritarian state the Central Asian Republics have inherited from the Soviet Union.

First, the post-independence ethnic conflicts emerged mainly because their seeds were sown by the perceived notions of state-formation during the Soviet era. Remarkably, the Soviet constitution was unique in creating a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural federation of fifteen Union Republics (including the five Central Asian SSRs) with maximum autonomy at least on paper.[51] Quite understandably, this policy did not actually 'solve the nationalities question' but created it. In fact the '*homo-Sovieticus'* was rather still- born.

Second, all fifteen Soviet successor states, including the three discussed in this study, have shown authoritarian tendencies regardless their pro-democracy rhetoric. In this case the Tajik, Uzbek and Kyrgyz Republics have preferred to exercise control from above using indoctrination, media censorship, propaganda, and a brutal use of force. It must be noted that ethnic diversity in this case did produce conflict and violence only during the last three decades, while the unfortunate Ferghana has always had numerous and heterogeneous children.

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[50] Inga Sikorskaya, 'A brief history of conflict in Kyrgyzstan', Peace Insight, 9-9-2015, https://www.peaceinsight.org/blog/2015/09/a-brief-history-of-conflict-in-kyrgyzstan/ accessed 25-6-2016

[51] The Union Republics in Soviet Constitution had maximum autonomy including the right to secede from the Union. However, the super-imposing Soviet power-structures never allowed that autonomy to be exercised.

Third, these states are also prone to bad governance, red-tapism, corruption, nepotism, and sheer crisis-mismanagement thus aggravating rather than resolving ethnic tensions. State failure is also evident in the rising economic disparities despite the hydrocarbon resources at least in Uzbekistan while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan being comparatively resource-deficient. The significance of economic causes of conflict though not a subject of this paper, cannot be denied particularly if they result in state-policies of un-equal development and marginalization of minorities as suffered by the Ferghana Valley.

Last, the problem is unlikely to be resolved by stricter border controls and surgical strikes as exercised by the Uzbek government. It is practically impossible to put different groups of human beings in separate regions while cleansing those regions of 'other' unwanted groups. History bears the evidence that injudicious use of force in suppressing dissent and diversity always backfires, sometimes immediately, but always in the long run.

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