

THE OBSTACLES FOR REALIZATION OF SOCIAL COHESION IN UZBEKISTAN*

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INTRODUCTION

There are two main problematics in the social sciences concerning with social events; first is related to “what the social system, social order is”, “which reasons create and provide to continue the social system”. The second of these is about “what the social transformation is” and “which causes create the social movements and transformation”. While the most social theorists such as who interested in social contract (Rousseau, Locke, Hobbes, Mill...), the structural functionalist (Parsons), Durkheim... are concerned with the factors of social order, social cohesion, when we come to 20th century, social movements, social transformation, has been replaced of this old approach as parallel to events in 1900s. On the other hand, the rapid changes in technological, social, political, and economical in the last 30 years resulting in also social, cultural crisis behind the economical crisis and constant increased social tension has brought up the question how social cohesion can be provided in the permanent chaos or in the constant changes, transformation. In addition that, it can be drawn up the recede the state from many policies area, claiming of the death of nation-state as another reason to cause the social disintegration.

After Soviet Union which had made many contributions to the changes mentioned above, many new transformations occurred, including transition to capitalist system in the Post-Soviet Geography, creation of new national identity. Departing from this point, securing social harmony and stability became more important concepts than anywhere else in the world.

Creation of a market economy and nation state started in Turkish Republics of the Soviet Union different than the attempts in Eastern Europe and Baltic countries. In these countries, apart from ethnic problems arose due to Soviet policies; there were problems of late nationalization, being regional centers of agriculture and raw material, underdevelopment of industrial sector and economic dependency.

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Turkish Republics can be classified in two with respect to their economic change policies. Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic was implemented shock treatment. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan implemented state focused development policies. As in most parts of the world afterwards of neo-liberal policies were implemented, these republics adapted governance perspective to be more participatory and collaborative. Such a perspective was needed to cope with on going economic crises.

When transformations in Central Asian countries, and maybe in the whole Soviet geography, are examined it is possible to make following claims. Restructuring of state resembles the restructuring Keynesian welfare state with neo-liberal policies. When Soviet period is considered as a state capitalism, it is seen that changes in economic area were not so different from the rest of the world. Of course, increasing entrepreneurship and creation of a new bourgeoisie are distinct features of these countries. Yet the most important change underwent in these countries was in the sphere of identity politics. The examination of the real change in Central Asia countries should focus on creation of nations and on policies implemented for it. Like in the case of other Middle Asia countries, problems faced by Uzbekistan after independency are as follows;

- Passing through a period of capitalization from Soviet structure of state and economy and creation of an “Uzbek bourgeoisie”,
- Establishment of nation-state and creation of an “Uzbek Nation” with respect to this establishment,
- Adaptation to global and neo-liberal world system of economy, articulation with this system.

The main aim of this paper is to evaluate the relationships of transformations in Uzbekistan after independency with the concept of “Social Cohesion”. With this aim, first short definition of the concept and its basic characteristics will be given. In the second part existing situation in Uzbekistan will be discussed with respect to social cohesion concept. This discussion will be done in different sub-titles and in each of these titles general statistical data about Uzbekistan and findings of the field study carried out in August 2006 will be given.

1. The Concept of the Social Cohesion

The concept of “social cohesion” has emerged and gained popularity in recent times. It can obviously be seen that the increasing importance of this concept is due to confirm what the reasons engendering the tension in a society are. However, the originality of “social cohesion” relies not only on being limited by economical problems or inequality but also on interested in all socio-economical factors in a society. In this concept, the importance of all lack of capacity in the individuality is highlighted. However, the relationships between these different capacities need not to be left out of account. In other words, in

social cohesion concept, these capacities are taken as if they are independent from each other. Indeed, this discussion is not only about the concept of the social cohesion, it comes from the development literature. In modern times, the concept of development has been understood as just economical and any region or nation can developed if it improves the economical problems. However, today it is understood from old experiments that the possibility of development depends on other factors;

“The development can be seen as the progress of extension the real liberties from which individuals benefit. To focus on the liberties counters the conception of acute development including just GNP, improvement of individual income level, industrialization, technological progress or social modernization. The liberties depend on other determining factors such as social and economical accommodations, civic and political rights...” (Sen, 2004: 19)

The concept of development is something like transformation and transformation is the progress. At the end of transformation, there is naturally a final goal but it needs to follow the right process. Only this way, humans can realize their all capacity, and it can be warranted so that the tension in the society may be cut back and the solidarity increased. For creating this atmosphere, all citizens must have equal opportunity in economical, social, political capacities. Otherwise, the social cohesion can not be sustained.

For this reason, **social cohesion** is an exceptional concept: While describing it, it is easier to apprehend the circumstances of its absence rather than its presence. In the absence of it, the social tension ascends, the ratio of crime rises, the social chaos or social disorder comes into existence.

*“...the term, **social cohesion** is often used to describe a positive characteristic of a society, dealing with the relationships among members of that society. It is synonymous with the ‘social fabric’, implying a supporting structure for the groups in a society. It is the bonding effect of that web of social relationships through which individuals are attached to each other in a society, and through which they help each other, knowingly or inadvertently, to achieve their full potential.”* (McCraken, 1998: p. 2)

The sociologist Emile Durkheim was the first who used the concept of social cohesion. He considered social cohesion as an ordering feature of a society and defined it as the interdependence between the members of the society, shared loyalties and solidarity. Aspects often mentioned in describing social cohesion are the strength of social relations, shared values and communities of interpretation, feelings of a common identity and a sense of belonging to the same community, trust among societal members as well as the extent of inequality and disparities (Schmitt, 2004: 4).

Although there have been various efforts to determine the dimensions of social cohesion, their content resembles each other. Here, the category of

Regina-Berger Schmitt is chosen due to its summarization of all dimensions. According to Schmitt, the concept of social cohesion incorporates mainly two societal goal dimensions which can be analytically distinguished:

- The first dimension concerns the reduction of disparities, inequalities, and social exclusion.

- The second dimension concerns the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties. This dimension embraces all aspects which are generally considered as the social capital of a society.

Social exclusion is another concept which has become more and more popular during the last decade. In the increasing research on social exclusion, older terms of poor living conditions such as poverty or deprivation have been replaced to some extent. Social exclusion represents characteristic of individuals and corresponds to the concept of poverty in a multidimensional way.

Bhalla and Lapeyre identify three principle dimensions of exclusion. Its economic dimension is a direct producer of poverty. The excluded are, in the first place, the unemployed who find themselves entirely eliminated from the labour market and thus deprived of a regular income. Exclusion is also social: unemployment not only deprives one of an income but also of his status in society. He is thus denied all social existence, which in most societies is directly linked to the holding of a job. As a result, the individual may lose his sense of personal dignity. Finally, exclusion takes on a political character when certain categories of the population – such as women, ethnic and religious minorities, or migrants – are deprived of part or all of their political and human rights. (Bessis, 1995)

“If social cohesion defines a society where different groups and institutions bind together effectively despite differences, then social capital must be part of the glue which enables this outcome.” [Blakeley] “Major elements in his analysis include: individual opportunity, family well-being, strong communities, and national identity”. (McCracken, 1998: 4) “The concept of social capital covers topics like the density and quality of relationships and interactions between individuals or groups, their mutual feelings of commitment and trust due to common values and norms, a sense of belonging and solidarity which are supposed to be the fundamental of the internal social coherence of a society”. (McCracken 1998, Wooley 1998, O’Connor 1998, Jenson 1998b)

Most of the time, whereas the Central Asian states saw balance and calm condition, this calmness has not been resulted from economical balance but caused from the political repression. These states have faced some problems after the independence. It can be summarizing above (EBRD, 2003);

- After the collapse of Soviet Union, the quality of life has decreased sharply with economical crisis;

– One reason of this is that due to the fact that Soviets assigned every region with a particular sectors, thus the economy of every republic rely on one or two sector;

– The weak representation and repressive government prohibit to change the traditional Soviet bureaucracy;

– The collaboration with each other can not increase because of ethnic struggle;

– Good education service may not be realized;

– The members of the government and the business sector can not distinguish each other;

– The private sector is still weak and depended on the government;

– Most of the citizens face the problem of unemployment and migrate to other countries (Baykal, 2004).

All these problems prohibit the social cohesion in Uzbekistan. With the problems of social cohesion in the transformation process, we follow these issues;

– Social Exclusion (Economical Perspective)

- low quality of life
- poverty
- regional disparities
- unemployment
- social justice
- social charge

– Equal Opportunities (Cultural Perspective)

- education policy
- healthy policy
- freedom of faith
- liberty of media
- gender equality

– Social Capital (Political Aspects)

- mahalla organization
- free participation to political arena
- democratic elective system
- regional inequality
- ethnic problems

When these issues are analysed, two types of data are used; some general statistical indicators and the field work consisted of surveys and indepth-interviews carried out in Tashkent city in August 2006. In the field survey, the universe is Tashkents mahallas. In Tashkent, there are 11 districts (Tumen) and four of them are chosen as sampling units (Mirza Uluġbek, Hamza, Sabir Rahimov and Yunusobod). These are chosen according to some independent variables such as their socio-economical differences, their income distribution, their foundation date, their ethnic distribution... It is asked in the sampling to compare today and past status according to some indicators and to define which period they prefer. This method, is supposed to be a better way to determine the level of social cohesion than literature and statistical data review. Of course, it can not be proved to determine the confidential level but these data can give some information about the Uzbeks society during the transformation period. It is seen that the answers change with respect to independent variables such as the status in mahalla (member of community or governor), age, sex, ethnic identity, settle in different tumens... The total sampling are 150 people.

2. Social Cohesion in Uzbekistan to Some Indicators

2.1. Social Exclusion

The first area or policy field is the economical development. Accomplishing the social cohesion in the society, the state firstly has to provide the economical satisfaction of every individual such as adequate income, housing service, improve the welfare level, job creation... Before analyzing the field survey, the economical problems after the independence in Uzbekistan are mentioned. The main function of Uzbekistan in the Soviet Union as a region was the production of cotton. In addition to that, it also became a centre of energy production. However, in other production sectors, it was supplemented by other republics of Soviets. After the Second World War, the Soviet Planners started to implement the industrial projects around the Socialist Federe Uzbekistan Republic. In 1991, with a two million population Tashkent, became the fourth metropolitan city in the Soviet Union and the first in Central Asia.

Uzbekistan is country that first puts aside the central planning of the Soviets and determines the strategies of economical transformation. The other feature is to implement the projects on social security and coping with the poverty problems. The primary obstacles for economic reform in Uzbekistan consist of (Luong, 2003: 356);

1. Vested interests in the status quo and a political system that disproportionately advantages these interests,
2. Pervasive government attitudes concerning the prescribed social and economic role of state versus non-state actors, and
3. Entrepreneurs' limited access to information on relevant laws and regulations and experience with using the legal system.

The first implemented policy of Uzbekistan after the independence is related with transcending the market economy. The reasons such as supports of state, the price control resulted in the economical crisis and in 1994 the new economical reform was prepared. According to this new program, it is needed to make the legal arrangements, abolish the price control, enter into partnership with international financial institutions or firms, start to privatization... (Dadabaev, 2004: 152).

Although all these problems are tried to be dealt with, the problem of poverty has emerged in all Post-Soviet area. As we look at “**table 1**”, there are no sharp increases in the poverty in Uzbekistan when comparing with the other countries. On the contrary, when the Soviet Union collapsed, Uzbekistan is still the second poorest country out of fifteen countries.

Table 1: Poverty and Income State during the Transition Period (Poverty Line=4& A Day Per Capita at Purchasing Power Parity)

Countries	% of Population under the Poverty Line	
	1987-1988	1993-1994
Lithuania	1	46
xLatvia	1	23
Estonia	1	40
Ukraine	2	41
Belarus	1	23
Moldova	4	65
Russia	2	38
Kazakstan	5	50
Uzbekistan	24	29
Kyrgyzstan	12	76
Turkmenistan	12	48

Source: World Bank (1996)

Because of choosing the gradual development method rather than shock method, it aims at the slow but balanced development. Nevertheless, “**Table 2**” shows that Uzbekistan takes place in last tiers in these countries as average per capita income and purchasing capacity.

Nowadays, the concept of quality of life is probably the most prominent and widely used theoretical framework for assesing the living conditions in a society. With regardt o the emprical operationalisation of quality of life one can distinguish various approaches which reveal different notions of the concept and thus highlight different components as relevant. But a common feature of all emprical approaches is their focus on the individual. They are based on a conceptualisation of quality of life as concerning individual characteristics. In opposition to this individuum-centred perspective of societal development, several other welfare concepts emerged during the last 10-15 years which put the focus on aspects concerning societal qualities such as the extent of equality, security or freedom or the quality and structure of the social relations within

society. Among those welfare concepts referring to characteristics of societies are for example “sustainability”, “social quality” or “social cohesion” (Schmitt, 2000).

Table 2: Average per Capita Income and Purchasing Capacity of some countries in 2005 (dollar)

Countries	Average per capita Income (dollar)	Range Among Countries	Purchasing Capacity (dollar)	Range among Countries
USA	42101	8	41 399	3
Japon	35787	15	30 615	16
Germany	33922	18	30 579	17
China	1710	110	7 024	84
Russia	5369	61	11 041	62
Turkey	5062	63	7 950	75
Kazakhstan	3717	78	8 318	70
Turkmenistan	3516	80	8 098	73
Azerbaijan	1493	112	4 601	106
Uzbekistan	---	---	1 920	145
Kyrgyzstan	473	150	2 088	140

Source: Rahmetullah Çetin, IMF ve Dünya Bankası Verilerine Göre Bazı Ülkelerin Ekonomik Göstergeleri, e-mail: turkbirdev@yahooogroups.com, 11 Ocak 2007.

In this issue, when the outcome of the field survey is analyzed, the fact that the mahalla community and government take different positions is seen. While % 20 of mahalla community says that their life quality is better in the independent period, this ratio in Soviet period is % 35 of mahalla community. On the other hand, the mahalla governor implying that their life quality today is better is at the average % 60 but just % 20 of mahalla governors denotes to be good quality life in Soviet period. Also, there is nobody saying “worse quality life after independence” among the mahalla governors (**Table 3**, see: p. 1039)

Another issue about social cohesion in economical perspective is the problem of unemployment. When the Soviet and independence period are compared with the problem of unemployment, all the samplings claim that the problem of unemployment has increased after the independence period. Those who claim that there was a problem of unemployment in Soviet Union are just % 25, although % 80 of total samplings show that the problem of unemployment has risen since the independence. However, given answers change in respect of the districts (Tumen), in that there is the spatial differences. The field survey was implemented in four districts; Mirza uluğbek, Hamza, Rahimov ve Yunusabad. Mirza Uluğbek and Hamza Tumens are composed of generally mahallas established in Russian occupation and Soviet revolution and most of people who live in these mahallas work as laborer, academics, bureaucrats and business men. On the other hand, the mahallas in Yunusobod Tumen can be separated in two as to their founding dates; some of them was

established in Soviet period, others have been constituted since the 1992 through migration and transformation of kholhoz (collective farmplace in socialist period) and their residents are also bureaucrats, businessmen... the final Tumen is Rahimov when founded before the Russian occupation, so that it is composed of traditional muslims mahallas. It is in the old Tashkent city and its community mainly deals in "craft" so they mostly are craftsman (hunermadchi) interested in traditional skilled trade such as ironworking.

Whereas in the three tumens (Hamza, Mirza Uluġbek and Yunusobod), % 78 of community stated the rise of unemployment recently, the ratio of this statement in Rahimov Tumen is % 58. On the contrary, those who say that there is no unemployment problem during the Soviets is % 58 of Rahimovs' citizens and % 75 of other citizens (**Table 4, see:** p. 1039). The main reason of these different results is the job of community in Rahimov. The craftsmen were out of work in the socialism due to the fact that it is tried to destroy works of traditional arts, on other hand citizens in others tumens (in new part of Tashkent) could find job in fabric as labour or in state sector as officer. Nevertheless, after the independence, because the citizens in the old part of Tashkent have been given credits and funds for developing the SMEs¹ by both state and international institutions through mahalla organizations, they have leaped at an opportunity to improve their jobs and skills. (Исмоилова, 2003: 37)

Another issue about the social cohesion during the transition period is social justice. In this question, the level of social justice today and in the past is confirmed by different answers of community and mahallas' governor. According to this, % 55 of community said that social justice is not going better but worse in both periods in that they claim that there is no any change between these two periods in realizing the social justice (**Table 5, see:** p. 1040) On the other hand, in the governors, %80 claims that social justice is good and to go better today whereas who argue that there was no social justice is % 60 of governors.

2.2. Equal Opportunities

Components such as creating the opportunity for freedom of speech, providing equal employment, education opportunity, giving rights about freedom of faith and rising the cultural level of citizens can be counted as positive elements on the social cohesion.

The education system is the most important issue after the independence in Uzbekistan because it is the hegemonic instrument to create the new national identity. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, schools, universities, education language, education books which made a strong proghaganda about Soviet

¹ The small and medium enter pries.

period have started to change according to new ideology. According to these developments, the number of students primary schools in which education language is Uzbek have ascended more from year to year than the declining of Russian language (See Table 6).

Table 6: The Number of Students in Primary School According to Language Sayısı (n/%) (1995-2004)

n- (%)	1995	2000	2004
Total number	5.071.400	5.764.800	6.286.600
Student Uzbeks and other Turkish schools	4.405.200 (86)	5.137.800 (90)	5.661.200 (91)
Student in Karakalpaks schools	136.400 (2)	152.900 (2)	153.300 (2)
Student in Tajic school	137.300 (3)	139. 900 (2)	128. 000 (2)
Student in Russian school	392.500 (9)	334.100 (6)	343.800 (5)
Student in other school	-	0,1 (0)	0,3 (0)

Source: The Statistic Committee of Uzbekistan

There are the same changes in the number of university students. According to table 7, the ratio of university students in which education language is Uzbek has increased % 70, % 75 and % 80 from year to year while this proportion is seen as % 20, % 20 and % 15 in universities where education language is Russian. There are two reasons why the Russian language stayed higher in university than in primary schools. One of these reasons is that many resources (books, articles...) at university level were written in Russian language. Secondly, at primary level, there were already school giving educations in Uzbek in the Soviet Union.

Table 7: The Number of Students in University (Aliy Okuv Yurtları) According to Language Sayısı (n/%), (1995-2004)

n- (%)	1995	2000	2004
Total number	192.100	166.500	263.600
Student Uzbeks and other Turkish schools	138.000 (71)	125.000 (75)	213.300 (81)
Student in Karakalpaks schools	8.600 (5)	6.200 (4)	9.000 (3,5)
Student in Tajic school	500 (0,5)	800 (0,5)	500 (0,1)
Student in Russian school	38.300 (20)	33.300 (20)	40.300 (15,3)
Student in English school	-	300 (0,1)	500 (0,1)
Student in other school	6.700 (3,5)	900 (0,4)	-

Source: The Statistic Committee of Uzbekistan

Returning to the field survey, most citizens consider that the education service was better in the Soviet Period than in the Uzbekistan Republic. % 30 of the samplings are not satisfied with today’s education system though the ratio of

unsatisfied Soviets' education system is just % 12. It is ascertained that the differences between the ages affect the satisfaction degree about the education service. According to this, people over the age of 35 are more satisfied with the education during the Soviet period when compared with the younger generation. For example, when % 22 of the persons under the age of 35 are not pleased with the education system during this period, close to % 38 of the persons over 35 are not pleased with the present education system. On the other hand, % 20 of the people under the age of 35 comment on the fact that they are not satisfied with the education service during the Soviets, although this ratio changes to % 8 when we refer to those over the age of 35 (**Table 8, See:** p. 1040)

As a 56 year old Ahiska Turk who has been a member of parliament in the past, Omer Bey, said the following about the education system in Uzbekistan: *"The main reason for the deterioration of the education system today is ideological. So, all the books belonging to the Soviet Period are gradually starting to be abolished from circulation, because of a new ideological hegemony. During the Soviet Period there was propaganda of Marxism, Leninism in all the text books. For instance, in the introduction of a high school physics book, "read, read, read" was written as a quote from Lenin. Presently, all the books are trying to be rewritten in Uzbek, but naturally this is impossible in such a short period of time."*

The fact that the state provides all sorts of opportunities for the citizens without sexual discrimination is also one of cultural factors for the realization of social cohesion. According to field survey, about % 80 the samplings defend the realization of "sexual equality"² during both the Soviet period and the present time. However, when the answers given by men and women are analyzed separately, it is noted that women state that the sexual equality during the Soviet period was better than the present conditions. **For example**, according to **Table 9, See:** p. 1040) % 32 of women say that the policy applied by the state after the independence does not care for sexual equality, while this ratio decreases to %15 when it comes to men. On the contrary, men defend that there is more sexual equality now rather than the past.

The table below shows important things about gender equality and the education level. According to this, the ratio of women in the Ph. D. level is gradually increasing. When table 10 is examined, it is seen that in 1997 % 30 of the total Ph. D. students were women whereas this ratio increased to % 41 after four years. At first, this change might be seen as if there is an improvement in gender equality; actually it indicates that men are moving from the public sector to the private sector. In fact, most of those receiving their Ph. D. are made up of academicians in a university and at this point, it is clear that the male

² This (sexual equality) implies that the state pays attention to this equality while implementing the public policy.

academicians during the Soviet period have moved to the private sector after the independence and women are filling the positions that they have left vacant. In order to be certain, two datas should be considered. First, whether the increase of women mentioned above is the same in primary and higher education or not; secondly, the sexual distribution of academicians through the years should be taken into account.

Table 10: Gender Distribution of Ph. D. Students

(%)	1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total People	30	70	35	65	40	60	41	59
Accepted People	34	66	38	62	38	62	42	58
Graduated P.	23	77	30	70	29	71	41	59

Ўзбекистон Аёллари ва Эркаклари, У. Р. Статистика Вазирлиги Тошкент 2002.

As seen in the **table 11**, gender distribution of the students studying in the primary school does not change during the same years. Gender distribution of both urban and rural population is similar with each other.

Table 11: Gender Distribution of Students in Primary School

(%)	Urban Area		Rural Area	
	women	men	women	men
1997	46,8	53,2	48,7	51,3
1998	47,1	52,9	47,8	52,2
1999	47,1	52,9	48,5	51,5
2000	46,6	53,4	47,6	52,4

Ўзбекистон Аёллари ва Эркаклари, У. Р. Статистика Вазирлиги Тошкент 2002.

On the other hand, the gender distribution of academicians and teachers should be given. The importance thing is that as the level of education rises, the number of female academicians and teachers throughout the years rises. For instance, while % 34,9 of total academicians in 1997 were women, this ratio reached % 39,2 in 2000. (See **Table 12**)

Table12: Gender Distribution of Academicians and Teachers

	Educators in primary s.		Educators in high s.		Educators in university	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
1997	62,6	37,4	42,9	57,1	34,9	65,1
1998	63,6	36,4	43,8	56,2	36,4	63,6
1999	63,3	36,7	46,5	53,5	38,9	61,1
2000	64,5	35,5	48,6	51,4	39,2	60,8

Ўзбекистон Аёллари ва Эркаклари, У. Р. Статистика Вазирлиги Тошкент 2002

Another issue in cultural capacity is whether there is freedom of belief. When the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Soviet Union are compared, it can be easily understood that there is more freedom of belief in the republic of Uzbekistan rather than the Soviet Union. Looking back to the field survey, despite the fact that % 80 imply that the present freedom of belief is better, % 95 claim that there was no freedom of belief during the Soviet Period. The difference in age affects the response to this question: Looking at (**Table 13, see:** p. 1041) % 75 of the younger people infer that there is freedom of belief presently, this thought reaches % 90 in the older people.

The other factor to reduce the social tension is freedom of speech. In field research, the response given to the question of whether they are satisfied with the freedom of media changes according to their status in the mahalla. % 55 of mahalla community believes that there is freedom of speech after the independence whereas % 84 of the mahalle directors believes this. (**Table 14, see:** p. 1041)

2.3. Social Capital

Another way of achieving social cohesion is by allowing citizens and community to embrace the political view and lifestyle they wish. Most of the time these are claimed about the Central Asian countries; It is stable and calm, even if they seem problem-free, this calmness is not because of economic stability, but of political pressure. (EBRD, 2003). Weak representation and repressive government were the biggest barriers in the changing of the bureaucracy holding Soviet traditions. Government and capital stock owners have not separated from each other individually (Baykal, 2004).

It is generally argued that such things like democratic government, human rights are not strong in Central Asian countries which have old totalitarian, Soviet structure. It must be pointed out that no state structure which changed its regime in one day can break away from its past customs. Naturally, the old tradition and structure are moved by social political actors. The important thing at this point is a comparison made by the citizens living in this are between the old and new period.

2.3.1. Mahalla as a Social Capital

The first thing that noticed about the repressive government in the field survey was the independence variable in the tables above. The mahallas in Uzbekistan are institutional structures that have possessed the constitutional guarantee since 1992 as self-local governments (*özünü-öz başkaruv*). These special organizations whose roots grounded on ancient times in a traditional meaning have regained importance recently, even if they lost their importance in the Soviet Period. There is no need to analyse the structure and function of mahallas but the point that attention should be paid to is its causes and effects of

using mahallas as an agent of social policy by the state to realize the social cohesion.

According to historical tradition, the importance of mahallas is that they coordinates the interpersonal relationships and make them to manage themselves. Mahalla committees play a key role in providing social aids and advocating social benefits (Siever, 2002: 132). According to Epstein, the mahalla as a socio-spatial organization is equal to the group that gathers and integrates the people for solidarity (Epstein, 2004: 34). Uzbekistan gained independency in 1991 and aimed to create Uzbek identity. However, there was no Uzbek institutionalization built on Uzbek identity in Soviet period. Hence, leaders and social engineers decided to reorganize mahallas which are the core elements of Uzbek identity. Moreover, Uzbek government leaned Uzbek legitimation on Uzbek culture. (Bektemirov, 2005, 165)

There are some rational reasons for adding the mahallas to the administrative structure by the government;

- The fact that the traditional institution, mahalla has been recognized as the self-government by the central government has provided the citizens to become close to central government;

- The mahalla, as a main element of restructure of state, shows that the Uzbek State can be successively separate itself from the Soviet tradition.

- The central government can control every home and family because of mahalla organization. The mahalla, today, is the branch and eyes of central government.

- Due to the fact that most social policies can be realized by the mahalle organization, the state can be rescued from the responsibility of public service.

- The Uzbek state can act conveniently to the importance of the concept of localization relying on the discourse of globalization through acceptance of the mahalla as a self-government

- In Uzbekistan, the nation has been created in the mahallas. The Uzbek identity is represented by the mahallas possessing traditional Uzbek structure.

- In the mahalla, not only state is organized but also the groups of radical Islam are organized at the scale of mahalla. For this reason, the mahalla organization is the spatial unit in which there is struggle for power.

As a 65 year old employee pensioner, Oksakal (director of mahalla), said the following about the importance of mahalla in Uzbekistan; *“the importance of our mahalla is coming not because of welfare assistance but ethical responsibility. Oksakal knows every person in the mahalla and control them. He try to reduce social tension in the mahalla. For example, he tries to dissuade married couples from divorce In our mahallas, there is really solidarity and*

strong interpersonal relationships. For instance, the person does not know who live in near mahalla but know everyone in own mahalla... ”

After the functions of mahalla organization in the republic of Uzbekistan, two issues concerning social cohesion should be highlighted;

- Whether the mahalla can implement the policy of social benefits or not;
- The relationships between mahalla organization and mahalla community and the representation degree of mahalla organization.

When the social charge function of mahalla is analyzed, *“The Mahallas are supposed to look after the poor in the community, not only through their new role in administering social assistance on behalf of the State but by ensuring that children are cared for, that the elderly have help, etc... The Mahallas managed to survive during the Soviet period, although they were always looked upon with some suspicion. The relationship with the State has changed notably since the break-up of the USSR, and an effort has been made to partially incorporate the Mahallas into the state system. They are now being used as an instrument of social control and cohesion that can in many ways compensate for the loss of the communist party network, which used to perform this function.”* (Marnie, 1998: 5).

There are two problems about the public charge; first is whether the central government distributes the money equitably or not. In the system of social welfare, the most important thing is budget. Now, every mahalla takes the money for public charge from the central government. No mahalla can claim that the amount of given money is inadequate and can not demand more funds. *“...however, this money is distributed not according to the ratio of poor family but the number of population. So, both the poor and wealthy mahallas can take the same amount of money if the number of their population is same.”* (Pashkun, 2003, 31). When field survey is considered concerning “the distribution of charge by central government equitably”, % 55 of samplings think that the state pays attention to the opposition degree of mahalla rather than the number of poor families when it gives the money to mahallas (**Table 15, See:** p. 1041)

The other is whether the mahalla organization distributes the money to community equitably or not. *Kengash* can now decide, without much regard to objective criteria, which mahalla residents receive benefits. As a result, *“mahalla can ensure that truly needy individuals do not fall through the cracks, that local realities are not obscured by national standards, and that individuals who enjoy strong family support do not absorb funds more humanely spent on the truly needy”* (Eric W. Sievers, 142).

Another issue concerning the mahalla organization is the representation degree of community and whether or not there is the existence of repressive government. According to the Uzbekistan Constitution, Oksakal is elected for 30 months but he is practically determined by the central government. Also he

takes wage from the central government. Behind this constitutional arrangement, the goal of using the mahalla by the state for realizing the state function lies. Mahallas are the eyes and hands of the central government on the mahalla community. At this point, we must find if the opinion of mahalla community about the mahalla organization represents the mahalla community or the central government. According to **Table 16, see:** p. 1042), % 55 of mahalla community says that the mahalla organization represents the central government whereas % 85 of mahalle governors claims to represent the mahalla community. As understood, over half of the mahalla community thinks that the mahalla organization control themselves. A young, 29 year old Uzbek said the following: *“if someone in the mahalla community will start to work in the public sector, the mahalla government will give all information to the state such as his/her religion, ethnicity, civic organization in which he/she participates etc...”*. In addition to this, as 42 year old, member of Erk Party, claims that *“In the past (Soviet period), there was one detective in every mahalla, now there are 10”*. On the other hand, when he talked about the situation of mahalla in Soviet Period, Oksakal mentioned the following: *“there was mahalla in the past but Oksakal worked as a detective by giving information to the Communist Party about the mahalla community...”*

2.3.2. Free Participation to the Political Arena and the Elective System

To participate in political arena freely is a political right which raises the social cohesion. % 60 of total samplings thinks that in independence period, the free participation in political area is getting better on the contrary those who thinks like this for Soviet Union is just % 25 of total samplings. This finding may be response to some discussion. In the literature, some argue that the Central Asian states are repressive governments; there is not any change from the Soviet tradition. However, although there are some problems about democratic tradition, the mahalla community (% 60) claims that the independence period, despite everything is better than the Soviet Period concerning the free participation to political arena. Nevertheless, they do not accept this explanation as the ratio of mahalla governors (% 82) as. (**Table 17, see:** p. 1042).

Another issue is the rights of the democratic and fair elective system. It is seen clearly that there are differences between mahalla community and mahalla governors in terms of the response to this question. According to this, % 55 of mahalla community says that there is the democratic and fair elective system after the independence despite of fact that this ratio is just % 25 when those think before the independence. (**Table 18, see:** p. 1042).

On the other hand, the mahalla governors defend to implement the rights of the democratic elective system today with % 90. In the Soviet Period those thinks like this in the mahalla governors is just % 20.

2.3.3. Regional Disparities

The regional inequalities are another element to cause the social tension. The state must reduced them through some policies for eliminating the social tension. In the Soviet Period, every region or federe republic had one economic function, as known, and the function of Uzbekistan was to produce cotton. Because of this, Central Asaian republics together with Uzbekistan were lower than the other Soviet Republics in that economical development. After the independence the most important problem was being depended on the other countries in terms of industry and technology. Despite the gap between regions (vilayet) in Uzbekistan, in the recent times according to the samplings, this gap is less today when compared with the past.

Before analyzing the field survey about this problem, looking at **Table 19** and **Table 20**, though there is general unemployment problem, the ratio of unemployed increases in certain region; especially Semerkand (its population is mostly Tajic) and Karakalpakistan (autonomy region).

Table 19: Distribution of Area, Population, Number of Employed and Unemployed thruout the Regions (Vilayet) (2004)

(%-n/population)	Area (km)	Population	Number of employed	Number of unemployed
Karakalpakhistan	166.600	1.560.300	509.400	5.900 (0,3)
Andijan	4.200	2.309.100	892.300	1.400 (0,06)
Bukhara	40.300	1.490.100	627.000	500 (0,03)
Cizzah	21.200	1.030.700	312.400	500 (0,03)
Kashkaderya	28.600	2.336.400	770. 500	1.600 (0,06)
Nevoii	111.000	804.200	354.500	2. 000 (0,2)
Namangan	7.400	2.042.500	652.600	2. 800 (0,1)
Semerkand	16.800	2.826.100	981.600	3. 400 (0,1)
Surhanderya	20.100	1.864.200	611.100	1.800 (0,1)
Sirderya	4.300	668.500	264.900	1. 000 (0,2)
Tashkent	15.600	2.430.400	952.800	700 (0,02)
Fergana	6.700	2. 799. 200	1.095.300	1.400 (0,05)
Khorezm	6.100	1.410.300	490.400	6.600 (0,5)
Tashkent	x	2.135.400	1.074.200	2.600 (0,1)
Uzbekistan	448.900	25.707.400	9.589.000	32.200 (0,1)

Source: The Statistic Committee of Uzbekistan

At this point, it must be remembered again the social charge distributed at mahalla scale. This social charge helps to reduce the gap between both citizens in the mahalla and the regions. According to a UNDP research, "...however when we look at the results, it is seen that the ratio of funds distributed to

regions is not proportional. Because of this, the gap between the regions has been increasing more and more with the social charge. For example, although the Andijan Regions is lower than the Tashkent and Semerkand regions in terms of income distribution, the amount of social charge given to Andijan Region also lowers than the others.” (UNDP). At this point, tha fact that the strongest Radical İslam groups have detached from this region and the civil commotion depended on radical İslam in Andijan presently have risen must be remembered.

Table 20: The Distribution of Unemployed by the Regions

	1998	1999	2000
Karakalpakhistan	6,8	7,2	8,5
Andijan	2,2	2,7	2,4
Bukhara	1,1	1,4	1,5
Cizzah	0,7	1,2	0,8
Kashkaderya	1,5	1,5	1,9
Nevoii	9,3	8,9	3,4
Namangan	2,2	3,1	2,9
Semerkand	2,9	4,2	4,1
Surhanderya	0,6	0,7	0,9
Sirderya	0,9	0,9	1
Tashkent	0,8	1,1	0,7
Fergana	1,2	1,2	2,1
Khorezm	1,6	2,3	2,5
Tashkent	1,5	2,7	2,7
Uzbekistan	33,1	39,1	35,4

Source: The Statistic Committee of Uzbekistan

Looking at the result of the field survey about regional disparities, there is no differences between the answers of mahalla community and governors. According to (**Table 21, see:** p. 1043) % 65 of the samplings say that the present government does not discriminate between the regions whereas the the ratio of those who defend the idea that the Soviet communist Party discriminated between regions is % 75.

2.3.4. Ethnic Problems

In the end, maybe the most important problem is ethnic issue after the independence in all post-soviet area. Due to the policy and strategy of Soviet ideology, all post Soviet countries tried to struggle with the ethnical problems. Firstly, the distribution of population through the ethnic structures in Uzbekistan should be given. According to the Republic of Uzbekistan Committee of Nations³. (**See: Table 22, 23**)

³ The Institution of Committee of Nations, responsible to both the president and the Council of Ministers has been established for preserving cultur of all ethnic community living in Uzbekistan. Today, there have been 140 cultural institution belonging to different communities

Tablo 22: Distribution of Population through the Ethnic Structures (1995)

Total	23.100.000
Uzbeks	71.4
Karakalpak	2.1
Russian	8.3
Tajic	4.7
Other Turks communities	6.5
Others	7

Source: Brzezinski: **Büyük Satranç Tahtası; Amerika'nın Küresel Üstünlüğü ve Bunun Jeostratejik Gereklilikleri**, Çeviren: Yelda Türeli, İnkılap Y., İstanbul 1997, s. 181.

Tablo 23: Distribution of Population through the Ethnic Structures (2005-2006)

		Total	Uzbek	Karakalpak	Russian	Tajic	Other Turk.	Korean	Others
Uzbekistan	2005	26.021.351	20.820.345	567.074	1.103.366	1.271.391	1.619.529	157.341	482.405
	%	100	80	2	4,2	4,8	6,3	0,8	1,9
	2006	26.312.689	21.170.568	574.671	1.068.989	1.288.801	1.576.022	152.978	480.660
	%	100	80,6	2	4	5	6	0,6	1,8
City of Tashkent	2005	2.135.645	1.304.916	5637	511.053	24.533	165.291	48.988	78.227
	%	100	61	0,2	24	1,2	7,7	2,3	3,6
	2006	2.140.546	1.332.150	5.708	493.529	25.012	161.593	48.099	74.455
	%	100	62,4	0,2	23	1,1	7,6	2,3	3,4

According to Mr. Nusrettin, director of Committee of Nations, in the beginning of 1980s in Uzbekistan, while the ratio of Uzbeks population was % 68, in 1992 this ratio reached % 73. On the other hand, Brzezinski argues that whereas in 1995 The Uzbeks population was % 71,5; Russian population was % 8,3. When coming the 2006, total population is composed of % 80 Uzbeks and % 4,2 Russian.

Especially the problems caused by the forced emigration during Stalins' period have emerged after the independence. The strongest ethnic problem comes from Tajiks because of;

- The radical Islam groups mostly come from Tajik community.
- They claim that Semerkand and Bukhara are belong Tajik nations.
- The Tajik community is the largest ethnic group.

Mr. Nusrettin mentioned about ethnic problems following; *“our main ethnic problem is Tajiks. They are different other ethnic communities... their feelings*

and they are under control of this Committee. The interesting things is “Sunday Schools” (Pazar Maktab) in which the ethnic communities learn their language.

of nationalism is stronger...they did not come during the Soviet period unlike the other ethnic community settled in the older time. Even they have lived together with Uzbeks for centuries. Because of that, the certificates of birth of many Tajiks are written Uzbeks, even in the same family, one child is seen Tajik in the passport whereas others is Uzbeks."

On the other hand, according to the results of the field study, both mahalla community and governors openly claim that Soviet Republic was more discriminative than Uzbekistan government. % 80 of total respondents is thinking there is no ethnical discrimination in Uzbekistan today; yet this number was % 50 in the Soviet period. Apart from this, when considering whether any ethnic discrimination exist or not according to the results of the field study, it is needed to look at the different approaches of different ethnic groups. Results are different than expected. Although Tajiks claim that there is ethnical discrimination more than the Uzbeks do, ratios between these groups about discrimination are not so different. In the period of independent Uzbekistan Republic, Russians seem to enjoy ethnic equality after then the Uzbeks themselves. Interesting results are found about the Soviet Period. Uzbeks and some other ethnic groups (mostly Turks and Koreans) state that there was ethnical equality in Soviet Period % 54 and % 72 respectively. This ratio is found as % 34 in Tajiks. Interestingly % 100 of the Russians state that there was no ethnical equality in Soviet period. This result may be resulting from the number of the Russians interviewed; only 10 Russian were interviewed in the field study. What interesting and noteworthy is that; Uzbeks think that there was an ethnical discrimination more than other groups do (**Table 24, see:** p. 1043).

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the cultural, economical and political elements which are seen as obstacles for realization of social cohesion in Uzbekistan have been analyzed through some statistical indicators, results of field survey and the evaluation of some deep interviews in Tashkent city in August 2006. For this analysis, firstly, the concept of social cohesion is discussed and the indicators of social cohesion are determined. According to this, these indicators are categorized in three groups; **social exclusion** from economical perspective such as quality of life, poverty, regional disparities, unemployment, social justice, social charge; **equal opportunities** from cultural perspective such as education policy, healthy policy, freedom of faith, liberty of media, gender equality; **social capital** from political aspects such as mahalla organization, free participation in political arena, democratic elective system, regional inequality, ethnic problems. After this chapter, it can be started to evaluate these indicators.

In the analysis of these three groups, the independence period and the Soviet period are compared in terms of satisfaction of mahalla community in Tashkent with these indicators. It is founded that the answers about these comparisons

changes according to some independent variables such as; gender, age, status in mahalla, districts (Tumens)....

Related with social exclusion, some empirical evidences can be summarized following;

- The creation of “new Uzbeks bourgeoisie” is the most important issue to accomplish the transition to capitalist system.

- The poverty problems have increased from year to year in Uzbekistan like rest of the post-Soviet area. However, because of choosing the slow improvement during the transition to capitalist system, the income gap is lower than the other Central Asian countries.

- In the findings of field survey, the responses to unemployment problems change according to occupation of samplings, yet generally they defend the unemployment problem has been increasing more and more and there were no problem of unemployment in Soviet period.

- The samplings think that the soviet period was better than the independence period in terms of the quality of life.

- The results concerning with the social justice, answers are affected by people status in mahalla. Mahalla community says that there has been no change from the past to present whereas the mahalla governors claim that today is better than the past that in the social justice.

Findings from field survey concerning with the equal opportunities are summed up as following;

- After the independence, the government tries to change educational system for creating the hegemony of new system and national identity via changing educational language, rewriting the text books...

- On the other hand, people who response to field survey think that Soviet education system is better than today.

- Freedom of belief at the present is better than the past.

- Freedom of speech now is better than the past. However, mahalla governors are satisfied with present freedom of speech more than mahalla community.

- Women participating in the field survey say that the government after the independence has paid less attention to gender equality than the Communist Party; whereas men think otherwise.

- The ratio of women working in education system has risen from year to year because men who employed in this sector has no longer prefer this situation and prefer the private sector.

Another obstacle for achieving social cohesion, political perspective can be summarized as following;

- The mahalla organization as an self-government is used by the central government for social policy because;

- The citizens can become close to central government;

- Mahallas successively separate itself from the Soviet tradition.

- Central government can control every home and family because of mahalla organization. The mahalla, today, is a branch and eyes of central government.

- Central government is rescued from the responsibility of public service with mahallas.

- Central government can act in harmony with the importance of the concept of localization relying on the discourse of globalization

- Central government is better able to struggle with radical Muslim Groups

- The social charge is distributed by Mahalla organization.

- On the other hand, people in the field survey claim that when the central government give the amount of money for social welfare to mahalla organization and when the mahalla government distributes these money to community, both of them act injustice. Because of this, the regional imbalance has risen.

- Despite of this, concerning the findings of field survey, there is more regional inequality before the independence than present.

- Most members of mahalla community argue that the mahalle organization represents the central government not the mahalla community.

- The level of accomplishing the free participation to political area and the democratic elective system after the independence is higher when comparing the Soviet period according to people in the field survey

- The strongest ethnic problem comes from Tajiks because of;

- The radical Islam groups mostly come from Tajik community.

- They claim that Semerkand and Bukhara are belong Tajik nations

- The Tajik community is the largest ethnic group.

- On the other hand, according to field survey, the ethnic equality after the independence is better than the past. There are no big differences in answers of ethnic community.

- The reason why most answers change according to the status in mahalla (community-governors) can be caused from the political repression. Expression of Oksakal (retired professor) of mahalla with lower socio-political gives important things about political repressive; *“it is difficult to answer your*

questions. I am a new Oksakal so that I do not know everything. However, I can say just that if I answer your Question, I get into trouble; if I do not answer them, I feel the pricks of conscience..."

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