

## Summary

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The main concern of my study is to understand the contemporary conflicts regarding Islam in the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Today a revival of Islam can be observed, which began in the last years of the Soviet Union. Since the late 1990s Central Asian governments have feared Islamic terrorism and have taken diverse measures against its spread. Despite this, as I show, apart from fundamentalist movements, modernist groups and folk Islam are also gaining ground in Central Asia. By way of an explanation, my vicious-circle hypothesis demonstrates how state repression against such movements might be having a counter-intended effect on the radicalization of Muslims in the region.

The revival of Islam in Central Asia cannot be analyzed without understanding the local forms of Islam prevalent in the region. *Part I* of the study highlights the most important aspects of Central Asian Islam such as the prevalence of the Sunni Hanafi School of law and the adaptation of local customs; the combination with pre-Islamic rituals, and the influence of Sufism. Following this I present an overview of the different definitions of political Islam and the history of Salafism before introducing the most influential Salafi groups in the region. Not only do I focus on radical political groups in my analysis but also on apolitical groups and religious movements aiming at the mere social transformation of the society. Indeed I also regard these as an essential part of my analysis since they often have more members than political groups and are similarly prone to state repression. This part concludes with a typology of actors contributing to the revival of Islam.

In *part II* I focus on the relationship between politics and religion during the last centuries. Knowledge of tsarist and communist religious po-

licies is important for an understanding of the politics of the contemporary Central Asian states in the domains of religion, security and jurisprudence. I start my comparative study by addressing the issue of how Central Asian states are currently dealing with Islam: I analyze the status of religion in their respective constitutions, the content of religious laws, the institutions which are involved with religion and some important state-controlled procedures concerning religion such as hajj and the registration-process for religious communities. I furthermore compare these countries' security strategies and counter-terrorism laws, the capacities of their secret police (GKNB), of their internal forces (MVD) and their military and give an overview of their international security cooperation. Against this background, I finally elaborate an actor-typology of the Central Asian states' restrictions towards Islamic groups.

In *part III* securitization theory provides us with a useful theoretical framework to analyze my hypothesis with an agent-based computer simulation. As I reveal, many observers of Central Asian government policies suggest that state repression towards Islamic groups leads to the radicalization of individuals but they do not explain how this mechanism has come about. I here use a computer simulation model to test my hypothesis and the assumed mechanisms. Finally, I present my simulation model of the conflict in Central Asia and draw some conclusions from the simulation outcomes.