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Research on Systemic Transformation in the Countries of Central Asia

Abstract: The article presents the goals, tasks, organization and major stages of implementation of the international programme of research on transformation in the countries Central Asia. The research has been conducted since 1997 by a team of political scientists from the University of Warsaw in cooperation with representatives of other Polish and foreign universities.

Keywords: *Research programme, Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, political transformation, political tradition, political modernization, ethnopolitics, velvet revolutions, post-communism*

1. Preliminary Remarks

The idea of political science research on political changes in Central Asia was spawned at the Institute of Political Science of the University of Warsaw in the 1990s, in the conditions of growing interest in cooperation with the newly created post-Soviet states and a huge deficit of knowledge about the region in which a significant Polish diaspora lived. In 1997, an intercollegiate research team was established, conducting, together with scientists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, research on changes taking place in the countries of the region (Deres, 2003). The team was organized on the initiative of Tadeusz Bodio, who was also the head of the international research programme. Its core members included: Wojciech Jakubowski, Krzysztof Kozłowski, Andrzej Wierzbicki and Piotr Załęski.

In this study, we would like to present some results of the scientific activity of the team from today's perspective. We also outline a short history of the research, indicate its goals, organization and stages of implementation, referring in the text, among others, to previous publications in which some issues related to its implementation were presented (Bodio, 2008, p. 22; Bodio, Jakubowski, Załęski, 2007, p. 11-13; Wierzbicki, 2008). We treat the statement about the scientific programmes implemented in the last two decades as an attempt to synthesize the more important effects of research to date as well as the voice of the political science community expressed in the discussion regarding changes in the countries of Central Asian, which have been building their independent existence for several decades. No less important are the pragmatic values of this research for Poland and other European Union countries, due to their involvement in the processes of democratization of socio-political and economic life in Central Asia and the increase of the region's importance in global geopolitics.

The difficulty in conceptualizing, organizing and implementing the research programme consisted, among others, in the fact that it was almost a 'pristine' area of scientific exploration located several thousand kilometers away, and communication with the research centers of the region was extremely difficult. At the time, there was no adequate financial and material infrastructure, no Internet, and political scientists did not show interest in the transformation in Central Asia. At the Institute, and not only there, the chances of implementing the scientific programme were perceived with much skepticism. However, the fascination with the region, the fate of compatriots in five of its countries and the passion for research turned out to be stronger.

2. Objective of the Studies

The basic assumptions of the international research project were created in 1998. The aim of the programme was to study systemic transformation in the countries of Central Asia, with particular emphasis on historical, political, cultural and scientific links between the countries of this region and Poland. The conceptual assumptions implied that the programme should, first of all, compensate for the deficit of knowledge about the history and political contemporariness of Central Asia, secondly, create broadly understood cooperation between Poland and these countries, thirdly, promote Polish science in the region, create a good climate for intensifying scientific contacts and building an institutional base for such cooperation with local research centers, fourthly, the research topics should take into account the didactic needs of scientific centers, but also the expectations of foreign and economic services of our country as well as business people interested in the region.

The programme involved several research stages. The first of them were aimed at formulating a diagnosis of systemic transformations in the newly created countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan¹. At each of these stages, the implementation of seven thematic blocks was planned:

¹ As part of the presented program, the research topic 'Political leadership in the countries of Central

1. **Historical conditioning of transformation processes in Central Asia** (national histories – from ethnogenesis to national identity; first state organisms and the evolution of political systems; political culture and state traditions; Poles in the history of the countries of the region; deportations and the fate of Poles in Stalinist times; Central Asia through the eyes of Poles in the light of diaries and other written testimonies);
2. **Theory and practice of political transformation** (the path to independence and national revival; models of state modernization; specificity of their transformation; periodization of transformation; implementation of political reforms; political regimes and clan policy mechanisms; issues related to democratization of social life; opportunities and threats to political transformation; internal security concepts);
3. **Political system** (constitutional and legal systems in the states; political systems and conditions for their development; systems of public authorities; party systems and social movements; political leadership and elites, political opposition; mass media systems; civil rights and liberties: theory and practice);
4. **Society** (modernization of social structures: the clash of tradition and modernity; tribal and clan structures and their impact on socio-political and economic life; demographic processes; living conditions and social protection of the population; nations and national minorities; Polish diaspora and its everyday life; nationality and linguistic policy; religions and religious life; religious policy; socialization and political education; Islam in socio-political life);
5. **Culture** (cultural specificity of Central Asian nations and its impact on world culture; heritage and civilization challenges; dialogue of cultures and civilizations in the region; identity dilemmas; traditions of political culture; culture and democratization of social life; dynamics of changes in ethnic culture; cultural life after regaining independence);
6. **Economy** (natural resources and economic potential of the countries of the region; communication routes and transport; models and strategies for economic transformation; stages of building market economy; labor market; banking system; stock market; insurance market; investment policy and market access conditions; commercial policy and foreign trade);
7. **Foreign policy** (geopolitical and geoeconomic conditions of the international position of the countries of Central Asia; political and economic significance of the development of the trans-Asian transport routes system for the region; foreign policy priorities; political and economic cooperation with international organizations; the condition and prospects for the development of Poland's political and economic rela-

Asia' was also developed, whose aim was, inter alia introducing models of leadership and profiles of the most important politicians of the region.

tions with the countries of Central Asia; countries of the region in the international security system; cooperation of the countries of Central Asia with the UN, OSCE and other organizations in combating international organized crime).

The next stages were associated with monothematic research of team members, in accordance with the specified specialization, and recapitulation of the results obtained from the analysis of political transformation in five countries of Central Asia.

3. Organization and Research Method

Implementation of the programme, due to the specificity of the countries of Central Asia, required the development of adequate methods and optimal agenda of activities.² It was assumed that the research will be conducted in close cooperation with representatives of science and public life in the countries of the region. Thanks to this, transformational changes were to be explained 'from the inside', by scholars and practitioners of public life in a given country of the region, and 'from the outside', by Polish authors. It was also assumed that this approach would overcome the then barrier to access to scientific information and allow for better understanding of the changes in the region.

In the process of developing the programme, there was much awareness of the dangers of a methodological, conceptual-terminological and interpretative nature resulting from the inevitable collision of the two conventions of making science – arising from European and Asian traditions. The more so, as the rare Eurocentric interpretations of the changes taking place in Central Asia had done more harm than good. It was similar like in the case of Asiacentrism, which was clearly revealed in the research of scientists from the countries of the region. Other dangers involved, among others, censorship and self-censorship, potential consequences for researchers from Central Asia for participating in the programme, which some of them have faced.

The growing institutional difficulties in cooperation with research centers in Central Asia and attempts to block this cooperation by the authorities of some countries of the region in their initial phase were solved thanks to, among others, the idea to publish, as far as it would be possible, two works, the first of which (usually authored by the president of a given country) would present an official interpretation of transformation policy and problems, and the second one, which would be a work explaining the transformation from the perspective of scientists and activists from various political options. The idea proved effective in research practice. Within the project, two visions of practicing science met: 'Asian' one and 'European' one. Attempts of making a synthesis of these two conventions include collective articles in the published volumes by Polish authors and their Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik, Russian

² These assumptions are partly presented in the studies already cited.

etc. counterparts. In order to guarantee the appropriate presentation of the research results of the programme, a special editorial series 'Contemporary Central Asia' was created³.

The research covered five countries of unique specificity, with various mutual relations, involved in disputes regarding, among others, history, civilization, culture and borders. As a result, at each stage of the programme implementation it was necessary to start again from establishing contacts and seeking a compromise between research tasks and the possibilities of their implementation in specific conditions.

A lot of difficulties, especially at the first stages, appeared in the sphere of conceptualization of research and adaptation of some elements of the methodological base to their specificity. It is worth noting that this was the period of creating the concept of research on *post-totalitarian transformation* and verification in Western political science of many paradigms burdened with the stigma of Eurocentrism as well as incorrect diagnoses and forecasts in specific fields. In Central Asia, on the other hand, political science was just being created and developed and was often 'politically engaged' and on a 'leash of power circles' which was preferring creation of a 'new research methodology' considering regional civilizational specificity and 'national models of transformation.' As a result, efforts were made to refine the conceptual-terminological grid (using, among others, the advice of the eminent linguist prof. Jerzy Bralczyk) which were also related to the adequate selection of research methods. Initial research directives were also developed and appeared in the published works. One of them assumes that the *alphabet* and *grammar* of political science research in the region begins with history and cultural traditions (which was not an easy task considering local historical policies), another preferred the process approach in researching the penetration of local traditions by political modernization, yet another – the integral, transgressive, ethnopolitical approaches, etc.

History of individual stages, including the subject, organization and implementation of research, is described in detail in the introduction to each of the five collective monographs. These stories are specific, depending on the country, the level of democratization of life, the links between politics and science, scientific culture, etc.

³ The 'Contemporary Central Asia' editorial series was inspired by the head of the international research programme – Tadeusz Bodio.

4. Key research results (1997–2009)

4.1. Scientific Projects within the Society of the Institute of Political Science of the University of Warsaw⁴

In the years 1997–2000 the first stage of the research programme was dedicated to the transformation of Kazakhstan. Two monographs were published as part of it. The first of them, authored by Nursultan Nazarbayev, entitled *At the Verge of the 21st Century* (Warsaw 1997, p. 221, editors of the Polish edition: Tadeusz Bodio, Wojciech Jakubowski), was the first study in Polish literature presenting the official interpretation of the transformation model of Kazakhstan.⁵ It is worth noting that President N.A. Nazarbayev participated in the presentation of the book at the University of Warsaw, where he gave a lecture on the possible directions of development of Polish-Kazakh cooperation. This visit resulted in, among others, opening of the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Poland, establishing cooperation between the universities in Warsaw and Almaty and intensification of economic relations.

The next publication was a collective monograph edited by Tadeusz Bodio and Adam Wojtaszczyk, entitled *Kazakhstan. History-Society-Politics* (Warsaw 2000, p. 500), which was a kind of compendium of knowledge about the construction of this, full of contrasts, state in the first decade of its independence. Its authors came from 34 research centers, including 20 from Kazakhstan.

In 2000, the next stage of research began regarding the systemic transformation of Uzbekistan. As part of it, Islam Karimow's work was published, entitled *Uzbekistan at the Verge of the 21st Century* (Warsaw, p. 230, edited by Tadeusz Bodio with the scientific cooperation of Adam Wojtaszczyk and Wojciech Jakubowski), which at that time largely compensated for the deficit of knowledge about the policy conducted by the Uzbekistan's

⁴ The 'Contemporary Central Asia' project became the basis for the establishment the Department of Eastern Studies of the Institute of Political Science at the Faculty of Journalism and Political Science of the University of Warsaw under direction of prof. Tadeusz Bodio. In 2019, in connection with the reform of the University's structures, the Department of Eastern Studies was established within the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations of the University of Warsaw under direction of prof. Andrzej Wierzbicki. The research on the history of Central Asian political institutions is conducted by the Department of Political History.

⁵ It is worth noting that the team members were scientific editors of two other publications of N. Nazarbayev. The first, entitled *Бейбітшілік - бар жаскылыққа балама бола алатын сөз* (Peace – the word which defines everything), Pelplin: Barnardinum (scientific editors: T. Bodio, W. Jakubowski) was presented in the Sejm of the Republic of Poland with the participation of the President of Kazakhstan. Scientific editors of the Polish edition of the next work entitled *Kazakhstani road* (Warszawa-Astana: Oficyna Olszynka, 2007, p. 317) were T. Bodio, A. Wierzbicki and P. Załęski. It was an important position on the book market, which presented the official diagnosis of 16-year transformational achievements in Kazakhstan and pointed to the challenges that this country would face in the following years.

elite of power. Its presentation took place on the occasion of the 'Day of Uzbekistan' at the Poznań International Fair with the participation of the President and Prime Minister of Poland and a large delegation of Uzbekistani authorities. The second book, *Uzbekistan. History-Society-Politics* (Warsaw 2001, p. 536, under scientific edition of Tadeusz Bodio) contained the results of research on the transformation of this country conducted by 39 authors, including 16 from leading research centers of Uzbekistan. Its presentation was held in Tashkent with the participation of the highest authorities of Poland and Uzbekistan. The presentation was accompanied by the promotion of Polish transformational achievements and bilateral cooperation in the mass media.

As early as during the publication of the book on the transformation of Uzbekistan, preparations for research on the specifics of the transformation of Tajikistan began. The works were conducted in the years 2001–2002 by 46 scientists, including 21 from Tajikistan's public centers and institutions. On the basis of the research, a collective monograph entitled *Tajikistan. History-Society-Politics* was published (Warsaw 2002, p. 649, under scientific edition of Tadeusz Bodio). The presentation of the book took place in Dushanbe with the participation of, among others, presidents of Poland and Tajikistan, the last of whom was the co-author of the collective monograph.

The next stage of research, carried out in the years 2003–2004, concerned the transformation of Kyrgyzstan. Its implementation, in cooperation with the Kyrgyz National University in Bishkek, proceeded quite efficiently against the background of multiple problems occurring in earlier stages of research. The research was conducted in the seminar and consultation mode with the participation of 60 scientists, including 31 from research centers and institutions of Kyrgyzstan. The results of the research were presented in the book *Kyrgyzstan. History-Society-Politics* (Warsaw, 2004, p. 896, under scientific edition of Tadeusz Bodio). The presentation of the book was held in Belweder, Warsaw with the participation of the President of Kyrgyzstan being at that time on an official visit to Poland.

In the years 2004–2005 a project dedicated to Turkmenistan's political transformation was implemented, carried out with the participation of scientists from foreign centers but without the participation of representatives of Turkmenistan, despite attempts were made in this regard. 37 researchers participated in the project and its results were presented in the work entitled *Turkmenistan. History-Society-Politics*, (Warsaw 2005, p. 835, under scientific edition of Tadeusz Bodio).

The publication of the collective monograph on Turkmenistan meant the finalization of the basic assumptions of the international research programme. By 2005, considering all stages of the project, over 250 scientists participated in it, including 130 from Central Asia. Among them were academics, professors, young researchers and representatives of public life. Not all studies created as part of the study have been published.

From the current perspective, it may be stated that these were pioneering studies, and due to the obtained research effects, their scope and participation of representatives of the region – was unique not only on a European scale (Lamulin, 2015, pp. 247-252; Grochmalski,

2006, p. 42)⁶. The publications published as part of it sketched the ‘portraits’ of the five countries of Central Asia which emerged after the collapse of the USSR. They presented the complex processes of formation of national models of political transformation in the conditions of specific clashes between the oriental tradition and advancing modernization and globalization. They also explained the multiple and specific contexts of political transformation in individual countries – historical, cultural, religious, psychological, economic and international. Among these contexts, attention may be drawn, among others, to the issue of security of newly created states in a conflict-creating environment, clan policy and dramaturgy of the struggle for their political system and economic reforms, in which the trivialization of democracy by the power elites and their attempts to misuse it for the benefit of various forms and shades of authoritarianism, depending on the state, were integrated. Among the publications, also a series of articles describing the situation of the Polish diaspora⁷ and the political, economic and cultural relations of Poland with the countries of the region was issued.

Another important achievement of the implemented scientific projects was the cognitive distance to Eurocentrism and Asiacentrism, openness to arguments and the search for paradigms and methodology considering the historical, cultural, political, economic and psychological peculiarities of the region. This knowledge enriched the methodological skills as well as broadened the perspectives of research on the theory and practice of post-totalitarian transformation. In conclusion, it may be said that the books on Central Asia in their synthesis constitute a compendium of knowledge about the countries of Central Asia, written by Poles together with Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks and Tajiks.

The implementation of the main goal of the programme allowed to move to the next stage – monothematic research on the most important aspects of political transformation in Central Asia. It was also the period in which the co-author of the research – then a doctoral student (under supervision of prof. Tadeusz Bodio) and now an independent scholar, Piotr Załęski was finalizing his doctoral dissertation. The dissertation was defended with distinction at the University of Warsaw and published under the title *The Political Elites of Power*

⁶ The author writes among others: ‘In terms of momentum and cognitive value, the series of political science works developed as part of the international research program ‘Contemporary Central Asia seems to be a truly pioneering work... This is a unique work on a global scale...’; cf. published study reviews.

⁷ It is worth noting here that the co-author of the series of studies on the Polish diaspora was prof. Szodmonkul Pirimkulov from the University of Samarkand, author of the book published in 2006 in Uzbek entitled *СУРГУН ҚИЛИНГАН ПОЛЯК ФУҚАРОЛАРИ ЎЗБЕКИСТОНДА (1941-1946)* (Deported Polish citizens in Uzbekistan (1941–1946)) which was an extremely valuable monograph written on the basis of unique documents and archival materials, with attached 37-page summary in Polish language edited by T. Bodio. Its presentation took place at the University of Warsaw. The full version of the work was to be published in the editorial series in Polish, however, when going to print, some problems occurred, let’s call them ‘formal’, which were independent of the author and Polish publisher. As the latter was unwilling to expose the author to potential consequences, the printing was finally abandoned.

of *Kazakhstan* (Warsaw 2006, p. 313) in the editorial series 'Contemporary Central Asia'. It was a pioneering work, which was distinguished by its original concept and methodology, especially, if the specificity of the subject matter of research is considered. Its scientific inference focused around the hypothesis that the specific clashes of tradition with political modernization create a space of multiple conditions and complex relationships that implies the processes of emerging and functioning of the Kazakh power elite. The author explained the peculiarities of this process, pointing to the genesis and evolution of the ruling elite from the Kazakh khanates through the period of Russian colonization and Sovietization to proclaiming independence and building the foundations of a modern state. Describing the legal and non-legal mechanisms of recruitment, functioning and circulation of the power elite and pointing to the decisive role of the president in this process, he drafted a complementary picture of the ruling elite of Kazakhstan. Studying the trends of the evolution of the power elite on the 'authoritarianism – democracy' axis and mechanisms of clan policy, he among others correctly asserted that, despite strengthening authoritarianism, the velvet revolution in Kazakhstan forecast by many researchers would not break out in this country and changes at the top of power would be associated with the generational exchange of elites. From today's perspective, this forecast has proved to be accurate.

In the years 2006–2007, research was conducted into the crucial problems of organized crime as well as legal and political order in the countries of Central Asia. The result of the former was the monograph by Sławomir Redo with Tadeusz Bodio's extensive introduction. *Combating organized crime in Central Asia* (Warsaw 1977, p. 313). The work was written by a UN expert on crime prevention and justice, working for many years in the region. In the publication, being at the same time the subject of the habilitation proceedings, the author, distancing himself from the dangers of Eurocentrism and Asiacentrism, pointed, among others, to the historical and cultural background of organized crime, its mechanisms and contemporary contexts in the region. He explained why during the first years of independence of the countries organized crime was of a systemic nature and revealed the impact of conflicts in legal, customary, religious and constitutional systems on criminal behaviors and the low effectiveness of counteracting it by state institutions. He paid a lot of attention to the specificity of crime in each of the five countries, proving, among others, that often what is *criminal* in international perception does not have to be perceived so by local communities because of their mentality, traditions etc. The research included illegal migration, human trafficking, arms and drugs trade, money laundering and corruption. It was based on a rich factual base and statistical data. The latter are surprising, among others, because of their scale and the dynamics of crime, including the shadow economy and its impact on political and economic transformation. The diagnosis presented in the work was complemented by a critical analysis of assistance programmes of the UN and other organizations in the field of preventing organized crime in the region. As especially valuable, may be considered the extensive catalogue of recommendations enabling the implementation of a more effective policy in the fight against organized crime.

The effects of studies conducted by the team regarding the legal and political order of the countries of Central Asia are presented, among others in the monograph by Tadeusz Bodio and Tadeusz Mołdawa *Constitutions of the countries of Central Asia. Traditions and modernity* (Warsaw 2007, p. 607). Its authors focused their research on the processes of building constitutional order in the countries of the region. They point to the political and legal conditions of proclaiming independence, the circumstances of passing the first basic laws and introducing key constitutional reforms. Their analysis led to the conclusion that the basic laws of the countries of Central Asia have the features of *transitional constitutions*, accumulating problems and conflicts and, at the same time, reflecting the tactical compromises of the elites in the struggle for power. They were not so much an indicator of political systems as well as their stability and consolidation, as the indicator of function of these systems, and more precisely, the needs and interests of the power elites who did not have a clear vision of the political system. In each of the countries, the construction of the political and legal order had its own specificity, although there were also similarities which manifested themselves, inter alia, in preferences for the legitimization of various forms of authoritarianism. The monograph also reveals the consequences of entanglement of the political transformation of the region's states into quite frequent conflicts between constitutional, customary and religious law. An important value of the book is the fact that it contains all legal acts related to independence and state sovereignty as well as the constitutions of the region's states translated into Polish. Many specific legal norms important from a political perspective were commented therein. It was a publication with diagnostic and prognostic qualities, pioneering in our part of Europe, and had a significant impact on the development of further research on transformation of the legal and political system of the countries of Central Asia.

Research on the legal and political order in Central Asia was continued in the following years. It focused on constitutional reforms in the period 2007-2009. It is worth noting that this was a period of dynamically changing legal and political reality of in the region's countries. At that time, works were also started on preparing a publication in English, which would present complementary results of research on the legal and political system in the countries of Central Asia at the international forum. Their result materialized in the monograph edited by Tadeusz Bodio and Tadeusz Mołdawa entitled *Constitutional Reforms in the countries of Central Asia* (Warsaw 2009, p. 330).

In parallel, the research project entitled 'Integration and security of the Central Asia region' was conducted. It was attended by 36 researchers, vast majority of them being young scientists from research centers of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The research results were published in the monothematic volume of *Studia Polityczne* under the scientific editorship of Tadeusz Bodio, Andrzej Wierzbicki and Piotr Załęski, under the title *Problems of transformation, integration and security the countries of Central Asia* (Warsaw 2008, vol. 12, p. 422, published in Polish, English and Russian). The basis of the programme assumptions was the thesis that the Central Asian states are entering the phase of a 'transformational solstice'

which will result in the redefinition of existing priorities of political system transformation. In the optics of the researchers, this solstice was a natural consequence of the end of the era of 'old' post-communist elites and the increasingly noticeable generational change. In politics, science, culture, business and other spheres, generations were emerging in that time which were not burdened with the Soviet past. Their mentality, aspirations and expectations were definitely different from those of the 'political breakthrough' generation. The process of 'dissolution' of generational mentality in countries attached to tradition is most evident in the circles of young intelligentsia, some of whom decided to pursue a scientific career. The paper attempts to present views mainly of this part of the intelligentsia of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan regarding fundamental issues related to further transformation, security and integration of the region.

In the years 2007–2008, a group of researchers from the Department of Eastern Studies of the Institute of Political Science of the University of Warsaw also implemented the research grant *Ethnopolitical determinants of the functioning of power elites in post-Soviet Central Asia* (directed by Tadeusz Bodio, co-authored by: Andrzej Wierzbicki and Piotr Załęski). It was awarded in the competition proceedings by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The result of the research, including a study visit to Central Asia, comprised another two monographs published in the 'Contemporary Central Asia' series.

The first book, entitled *Ethnopolitics in Central Asia. Between the ethnic and civic community* (Warsaw 2008, p. 489) was written by Andrzej Wierzbicki and constituted the basis for habilitation proceedings. The originality of this study was based, among others, on the comparative analysis of ethnopolitics in the countries of the region (excluding Tajikistan). This analysis was preceded by considerations on ethnopolitics and its methodological base, which had a significant impact on the popularization of field of research in Polish political science. The book verified the hypothesis that ethnopolitics in the Turkish-speaking countries of Central Asia is dominated by the nation-forming process, which is given its dynamics by the process of building national statehood. Author, among others, argued that in the first period of independence there were strong ethnocentric tendencies connected with regaining by the Turkish-speaking titular nations the sense of responsibility for the state. Ethnocentrism led to the ethnization of the state system through ethnocracy, preservation of clan and tribal structures in authorities as well as through language policy. This constituted a significant barrier to national consolidation, alienating power from the titular population and marginalizing politically the non-titular population. The research also showed that in the Turkish-speaking countries of the region there are two models of ethnopolitics. First of them, characteristic of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, was distinguished by high status of Russian as the official language, activity of the president as the most important actor in the system of inter-ethnic relations, creation of civic nation projects and institutionalization of inter-ethnic dialogue. The adoption of this ethnopolitical model was implied by: 1) high percentage of non-titular population, including Slavic population; 2) traditional openness and tolerance of nomads to other ethnic communities; 3) earlier, in comparison to other titular Turkish

nations (Uzbeks, Turkmens), settlement of immigrant population in the region due to its similar climate and nature conditions to their previous place of residence; 4) higher level of democratization, and in the case of Kazakhstan, also a high rate of economic growth. In the ethnopolitics of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, there existed a significant dissonance between the declarative (facade) and the real ethnopolitics. The top-down ideas of nation formation and civic patriotism were accompanied by grassroots 'creeping ethnic nationalism'. Different models were implemented in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. They were distinguished by strong authoritarianism, lack of regulations defining the legal status of Russian language present in the region and a higher level of ethnocracy. A smaller percentage of the non-titular population lived in both countries. The research reasoning contained in the publication led to the conclusion that ethnopolitical processes in the region oscillated between the following paradigms: a) of indigenous people; b) Asian ethno-symbolism – the nation as an ethnic community; c) modernist - the nation as a civic community. Importantly, the publication indicates the development trends of these processes in subsequent years.

The second monograph was entitled *Power Elites in Central Asia. Tradition-Modernization-Ethnopolitics* (Warsaw, 2008, p. 308) and was authored by Tadeusz Bodio and Piotr Załęski. The research contained in the book was based on the assumption that tradition, modernization and ethnopolitics mark a kind of 'problem triangle' around which processes taking place within the power elites of the Central Asian states focus. The analysis of these processes showed that the mechanisms of the emergence and functioning of power elites are formed in the conditions of a specific clash of tradition and modernization. The nature of these collisions was significantly implied by the multi-ethnic specificity of the region and tribalism. The latter factors so successfully intervened in socio-political transformations that in the confrontation between tradition and political modernization, the former won. Being aware of the power of tradition and the needs of modernization and globalization, the elites tried to influence this process, balancing between extremes so as to stay in power and prevent crises resulting in conflicts (ethnic, regional, religious, etc.). At the same time, their 'modernizing immersion in the past' consisted mainly in selective separation from the cultural heritage of those components which legitimized and strengthened their rule and provided 'material' for building 'national models of transformation' in multinational countries. Within these models, the ideas of 'modernization-democratization' were increasingly openly denied in favor of 'open and multi-sectoral modernization' with preferences for authoritarianism.

In the studies on the transformation of Central Asia, much attention was paid to the issues of 'velvet revolutions' in the post-Soviet space. At the seminars on this subject, during the events in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 referred to as the 'tulip revolution', discussions were held whether they were a national uprising, a pure coup d'état or an export revolution? In-depth studies in this field were conducted, among others, by Krzysztof Kozłowski. They resulted in the doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of prof. Tadeusz Bodio and defended with distinction in 2008. It was published under the title *The Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan*.

Genesis-course-results (Warsaw 2009, p. 281). The research inference contained in the work focused on the hypothesis that the 'tulip revolution' was a manifestation of civil disobedience in a traditionally non-civil society. Verification of the hypothesis was a significant challenge, if one considers the contemporary state of research on velvet revolutions and their theoretical and methodological background. The revolution itself, as the Author correctly pointed out, was full of paradoxes. It took place in the most democratic country of Central Asia; as a result, the most democratic president in the region was removed from office; and, in turn, the overthrown president helped the opposition to legally seize power; the opposition, surprised by the dynamics of developments, turned out to be unprepared to take responsibility for the fate of the state. A detailed analysis of the genesis, course and consequences of the tulip revolution led to the conclusion that attempts at a radical political change, democratization of the social system following the Western model and double standards in political life resulted in the outbreak of traditionalism and the renaissance of clan divisions. As a result, cumulative contradictions and conflicts found their way into the described developments in Kyrgyzstan. According to the author, the essence of these events boiled down to the clans disobeying legal authorities in connection with the violation of the traditional balance of power by the leader of the state and departure from the ethos-transactional style of exercising power. It was a 'revolution' which escaped classification in European tradition, more like an illusion of a democratic revolution, behind the facade of which lied tribalism and the logic of clan politics, which seems to be confirmed by the subsequent years of tension and struggle for power in Kyrgyzstan.

It should be emphasized that a significant part of monothematic research on political transformation in Central Asia was published by scientists of the Institute of Political Science of the University of Warsaw also outside the editorial series 'Contemporary Central Asia'. It addressed, among others, the issues of: the theory and methodology of political transformation, the consequences of collisions of tradition and political modernization, tribalism, socio-political divisions, political leadership and elites, velvet revolutions, the nature of post-totalitarian paradoxes and democratization of socio-political life as well as the discourse on the history and modernity of the countries of the region.

In the catalogue of publications dealing with the indicated threads, it is worth to note a study dedicated to clan systems as specific policy mechanisms (Bodio, 2005a). It made one of the first attempts to present tribalism and clan policy mechanisms in the countries of the region, which gave impetus to research on these phenomena in Poland. In turn, in the article written during the events of March 2005 in Kyrgyzstan (Bodio, 2005b) the assumption was verified that there was a 'coup of clans' fighting for power. Interesting conclusions may also be made based on the research on the interpretation of the velvet revolutions in the Middle East.

In the countries of Central Asia, ideas of democracy have often been treated instrumentally to solve swollen problems constituting the result of clashes between tradition and political modernization as well as conflicts in clan and religious systems connected with

power. In the given context, among others, the study entitled *Paradoxes of post-totalitarian policy (based on the example of Central Asia)* may be noticed, published in the collective monograph edited by M. Karwat, *Paradoxes of politics* (Warsaw 2007). It indicates that political paradoxes in their dialectics of 'essence' and 'appearances' are a special kind of reflection, using contrast and sometimes also symbolism. They are based on logical reasoning, but also refer to rationalization, stereotypes and political prejudices. They are often a product of falsification of history and appear in the form of metaphors that stimulate political imagination. Therefore, they constitute a good instrument that allows us to understand the drama of transformation, but also to reveal the 'alleged truths' of political rhetoric, asymmetry and even antinomy between the 'play of words' and the realities of social life in Central Asia. The author identifies and analyzes these paradoxes.

* * *

The results of research on the transformation of the countries of Central Asia were also related to the process of teaching students in the form of lectures, seminars and discussions. Since 2001, the lecture 'Central Asia. History-society-politics' has been held. In 2003, optional classes on psychological and political aspects of international organized crime were introduced into the Institute of Political Sciences' curriculum, and in 2005, an optional lecture was introduced into the studies' plans, regarding, among others, ethno-political conditions for the transformation of the countries of Central Asia. Finally, in 2012, to great extent a new field of studies was launched based on the conducted research – Eurasian studies. Many of the master's theses written within these studies concerned Central Asia.

4.2. Scientific Projects of the Pułusk Academy of Humanities

Some of the research on Central Asia have been published by other academic centers in Poland and abroad⁸. In this group of publications, it is worth to point to three items affiliated with the Pułusk Academy of Humanities. The first one was entitled *Central Asia. The problems of history and contemporariness. Centralnaâ Aziâ. Problemy istorii i sovriemennosti*, published in Polish and Russian (monographic issue of the journal 'Społeczeństwo i Polityka. Pismo edukacyjne', 2007, No. 2-4, Vol. 11-13, p. 376) and was edited by Tadeusz Bodio, Wojciech Jakubowski and Piotr Załęski. It contained 34 studies prepared by scientists from

⁸ For example, in the magazines: *Evrazijskoje Soobščestvo - Eurasian Community*, Institut Razvitiâ Kazachstana, *Politika i Obščestvo, Obščestvenno-političeskij naučnyj žurnal Kyrgyzskogo Nacionalnogo Universitieta, El Farabi. Filosofijalyk-Cajasattanylyk Žene Ruchani-Tanyndyk Žurnal (Filosovsko-politicalologičeskij i Duchovno-poznavatielnyj Žurnal)*, the Institute of Philosophy and Political Science, *Sajasat. Infomatcionno-analoitczeskij Žurnal*, *International Research Society. Politics. Economics*, Institute for Social and Political Research in Kazakhstan; CentrAsia website.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, presenting the latest directions of the research on the history of statehood, religious and tribal traditions, political modernization, political systems and civil society⁹. The publication reflected the contemporary activity of the research team in the field of scientific cooperation with the research centers of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The second of the collective monographs was entitled *Transformation of society and power in post-Soviet Central Asia. Studies and dissertations*, ('Społeczeństwo i Polityka. Pismo edukacyjne', 2008, No. 10, p. 302) and was also edited by Tadeusz Bodio, Wojciech Jakubowski and Piotr Załęski. It constituted to much extent an anthology of previously published texts in political science journals of the Pułtusk Academy of Humanities, concentrating mainly on transformational barriers and challenges related to democratization and building civil society. The works referred to above may be considered a double perspective analysis, from the perspective of Polish researchers and researchers from scientific centers of Central Asia, in the contemporary debate on transformation in the region. The third publication, *Tribalism and power in Central Asia* (Pułtusk 2008, p. 390) by Andrzej Wierzbicki and Piotr Załęski, was also published in cooperation with the Pułtusk Academy of Humanities. It was a synthesis of the authors' multiple years of research on ethnopolitics, power and tribal policy mechanisms. The considerations in the publication focused on the hypothesis that the policy of the countries of Central Asia is dominated by tribalism. The authors explain the nature of tribalism, point to its genesis, evolution and modern forms. They penetrate into complicated networks of clan and tribal connections and their specificity. They also stress their sub-ethnic and ethno-territorial conditions, the relationships between various tribal mutations and power and its functioning. The authors show the consequences of these relationships for nation-forming and state-forming processes, proving that tribalism has left its mark on the functioning of political systems in each of the countries of the region in a specific form. It led to the ethnization of states and over-representation of dominant groups, which was a barrier to national consolidation and resulted in political marginalization of the non-titular population.

5. Central Asian Issues as Part of the Scientific Project 'Leadership, Elites and Transformation in the CIS'

Along with the advancement of research on Central Asia and the experience gained, inspirations for creating a new project appeared. As a result, in 2009 another international programme entitled 'Leadership, elites and transformation in the CIS' was launched. Within the programme, the scope of research was expanded, which was also to include other post-Soviet states and focus on the transformation of power systems, elites and political leadership. The launch of this project was related, among others, to the general assertion resulting from the

⁹ The articles were published in Russian with their summaries in Polish prepared by P. Załęski, PhD and A. Wierzbicki, PhD.

research on Central Asia that power and political elites are the most conflict-forming nexus in which the transformation problems of the countries of the region and, more broadly, the post-Soviet space accumulate and gain sharp focus. After the collapse of the USSR, these elites to much extent decided on the choice of transformation models in individual countries, and in subsequent years, depending on the political situation, on relevant corrections and methods of their implementation. As a result, within two decades a rich mosaic of leadership models and political elites formed in the post-Soviet space. These models share a totalitarian legacy and at the same time differ and manifest themselves in various forms. The main goal of the research was an attempt to penetrate the mechanisms of emerging and functioning models of leadership and political elites, revealing their specificity and role in social life. The effects of the research are presented in the 'Power-Elite-Leadership' editorial series, in which 13 volumes have been published by 2020.

We should note that in the first volume entitled *'Leadership, elites and transformation in the CIS Problems of research methodology'* (Warsaw 2010, p. 570), two studies authored by Tadeusz Bodio were presented, relating to Central Asia. The first of them addressed the theory and methodology of research into political changes in Central Asia. An attempt was made here to synthesize and evaluate the development of the theoretical and methodological base used in research on transformation, elites and their political leaders. The work points to the strengths and weaknesses of Western political science as well as those of Central Asian scientific centers, including, among others, limited scope of universality and even inadequacy of many approaches to research on transformation, elites and leadership used by both of them as well as the need to improve the terminological and conceptual apparatus. It is worth noting that the growing criticism of Western political science in the region, especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which is often accompanied by the demands for a 'new methodology' which would consider the 'civilizational self-sufficiency' of Central Asia and its cultural specificity. The second study entitled *Civilizational explanation in the research on transformation of the countries of Central Asia*, in turn, referring to the debate on the civilization issue in the region, contains proposals of one of possible approaches to the research on the region's transformation, which is based on the civilizational paradigm as well as transgression and integrity directives. This model rejects the popular one-line concepts of 'transformation-democratization' as well as the assumption that authoritarianism is a necessary condition for transition of the countries of the region to democracy.

The second volume in the series (Bodio & Jakubowski, 2010, pp. 17–36), edited by Tadeusz Bodio and Wojciech Jakubowski, entitled *Leadership and political elites in the CIS* (Warsaw 2010, p. 607) contains five studies addressing ethnocratism and ethno-elites in Central Asia (Tadeusz Bodio), parliaments of the countries of the region (Jarosław Szymanek), party elites of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Wojciech Jakubowski, Piotr Załęski), Islam in Kazakhstan (Piotr Fajfer) and the transformation of the administration system in Kazakhstan (Lyaila Ivatova, Sapar Achmedov, Nurlan Uranchaev). It is worth emphasizing that the described volumes try to explain why the countries of Central Asia rejected the 'transformation-

democratization' paradigm modelled on the West in favor of their own national models of transformation and democratization with clear preferences for Asian models of transformation and their methodological background. In the given context, it should be noted that in the 1990s a significant part of European studies, promoting democratic values, at the same time preferred implementation in the region of those political models that were developed in a different cultural circle and in other societies with other history, economy, etc. As a result, they were often burdened with the stigma of Eurocentrism, the region's specificity was underestimated and the transformation priorities of the newly created countries were not accurately diagnosed. For these countries, democracy was a 'regulated good' as long as it did not violate the interests of the power elite. The most important for them were the strategies for survival, maintaining sovereignty, stability, security, national reconciliation, and escaping the economic crisis. These dangers were avoided in the programme's research on the transformation of the countries of Central Asia, in no small measure thanks to the participation of scientists from the region. The research, as has already been emphasized, has intentionally respected the local specificity and placed the political transformation itself in the processes occurring on the 'tradition – modernization' axis. The above methodological assumptions distinguished the research programme in the given period, while time has proved correctness of the adopted conceptual assumptions.

6. Projects Regarding the Institutionalization of Scientific Cooperation between Poland and Kyrgyzstan

The beginning of the second decade of the 21st century brought a number of initiatives aimed at intensifying scientific cooperation between Poland and Kyrgyzstan. They were moderated by the environment centered around the 'Contemporary Central Asia' programme. In 2010–2013, four projects were implemented:

- 'Kyrgyzstan, Cultural and socio-political problems' (implemented in 2010–2011) – project of the Department of Political Sciences and State Management Problems of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic¹⁰;
- 'Methodology of Political Sciences' (implemented in 2011–2013) – project of the Institute of Philosophy and Social and Legal Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic¹¹;

¹⁰ The head of the project on the Polish side was P. Załęski. The scientific effect was the monograph (Jakubowski & Załęski, 2011b).

¹¹ The head of the project on the Polish side was W. Jakubowski. The scientific effect was the monograph (Jakubowski, Zamęcki, Załęski, 2013). The preface to work was written by the director of the Institute of Philosophy and Social and Legal Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic, prof. Osmon Togusakov.

- ‘Organization of the International Kyrgyz-Polish Centre for Eurasian Studies’ (implemented in 2012–2013) – project of the Arabaev Kyrgyz State University in Bishkek¹²;
- Scientific project of the Pultusk Academy of Humanities and Bishkek Humanities University ‘Society and Politics’ (implemented in 2012–2018), including joint publication of a scientific quarterly in a multilingual formula¹³ (*International Scientific Project of Pultusk Academy of Humanities and Bishkek Humanities University*). The measurable result of the project was publication of 18 volumes¹⁴, which places this initiative among effective scientific ventures.

7. Continuation of Central Asia Studies After 2009

Looking at publications from recent years, among others, studies by Piotr Załęski should be noted, especially those focusing on the ongoing discourse of various social groups on the history and contemporariness of the countries of the region. In this context, the publication entitled *Political power in the Kyrgyz nationalists’ discourse* (‘Lud’, 2015, volume, 99), especially in the light of the increasing nationalist tendencies in Kyrgyzstan and other countries of the region in recent years. Critical analysis of this discourse revealed that the negative opinion of the Kyrgyz transformation among the nationalist circles is associated not only with typical transformational difficulties and accompanying pathologies, but also has a historiosophical and ideological background. In the opinion of nationalists, the political system of the state should correspond to the spirituality of the Kyrgyz people, and the reforms implemented by the authorities are a denial of that spirituality.

Among other publications commanding attention, an interesting article by Andrzej Wierzbicki, entitled *Ethnonymy as a policy in Central Asia (the case study of Kazakhstan)* may be mentioned, concerning the nation-forming process in Kazakhstan in the context of its two concepts of nation – ethno-cultural and political, whose collision occurred at the beginning of the construction of independent statehood and is associated with the names of both types of communities – Kazakh and Kazakhstani. The appropriate ethnonym plays an important role in the state-forming process. The political function of the ethnonym is to indicate which national community is concerned, limited to ethno-cultural or political and civic criteria. This constitutes a particularly significant problem in multi-ethnic countries that emerged within the area of former Soviet Union.

¹² Despite the efforts of both parties, the financial problems could not be overcome, which resulted in the slowdown of the works conducted by the unit.

¹³ Texts in congress languages were published, predominantly in Russian and English.

¹⁴ Co-moderators of the project on the part of the Karasaev University were Gulmajram Moldosanova, M.S. and Elena Breslavskaja PhD.

In 2011, a monograph authored by Piotr Załęski, PhD entitled *Political culture of bonds in Central Asia (the case study of Kyrgyzstan against the background of the countries of the Region)*. It is an original and extensive, 492-page work, written as part of a habilitation grant awarded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It addresses fundamental issues in the area of political culture, whose narrative is built on the original model called 'political culture of bonds'. The author verifies the thesis that the political culture of bonds functions and prevails in Kyrgyzstan and other countries of the region. He defines the 'political culture of bonds', points to the typologies of these bonds and analyzes them in detail, referring to rich empirical data and field studies. The publication dives into the subtle and hardly perceptible nature of these bonds, especially informal ones, shows their historical and cultural background, ethnoregional contexts, symbolism and mechanisms of functioning. Reveals their role in attitudes and political behaviors. The characteristic of the rich spectrum of bonds in its synthesis outlines the dominant pattern of political culture of Kyrgyzstan. The bonds turn out to constitute the fundamental value for local communities, imply their attitudes and behaviors as well as influence the shape and functioning of political systems (Jakubowski & Załęski, 2011a, pp. 395–420).

In 2011, Central Asia issues appeared in a publication published by the Institute of Political Science of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn (Jakubowski, 2011, pp. 215–230).

In 2012, a seminar was held at the Institute of Political Science of the University of Warsaw on the constitution and respecting human rights in Uzbekistan. During the discussion with scientists from Uzbekistan, a decision was made to launch a joint research project entitled 'Poland-Uzbekistan: constitution and human rights'. The project, under the leadership of prof. Tadeusz Bodio and prof. Akmal Saidov, was implemented until 2016 in cooperation with the National Centre for Human Rights in Uzbekistan and the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Warsaw. The research results were presented at cyclical seminars with the participation of students. Their topics focused on the conditions for building a civil society in Uzbekistan and Polish experience in this field. The measurable effect of the project was, among others, a publication regarding electoral system (Saidov, 2014; Saidov, 2016), as well as participation of Polish experts (Adam Marszałek, PhD, Prof. Stanisław Sulowski, Prof. Tadeusz Bodio) in parliamentary and presidential elections in Uzbekistan and their appearances assessing the election in Uzbekistani mass media.

Also, in 2012, under the direction of Andrzej Wierzbicki, an international research programme was implemented, dedicated to the processes of ethnic minorities' identity formation in Central Asia. The results of the research were published in the work published under the scientific editorship of Valentina D. Kurgańska, Andrzej Wierzbicki and Piotr Załęski, entitled *Identity, socio-political attitudes and separatism of ethnic minorities in the post-Soviet area / Идентичности, социально-политические ориентации и сепаратистна стизмы эент* (Warsaw 2013, p. 289).

In 2014, the doctoral thesis of Elena Breslavskaja (under the scientific supervision of W. Jakubowski), entitled *Tradition and modernization in the political system of Kyrgyzstan* was defended at the University of Warsaw (the author was an active participant of Central Asian projects of the University of Warsaw and the Pultusk Academy of Humanities)¹⁵.

The following year, as part of the scientific project led by Piotr Załęski ‘The Identity and historical memory in Central Asia’, research was conducted on a wide spectrum of issues related to historical memory and its impact on state-forming processes in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. Its results were published in the collective monograph edited by Valentina Kurgańska, Andrzej Wierzbicki and Piotr Załęski *Identity and historical memory in Central Asia / Идентичность и историческая память в Центральной Азии* (Warsaw 2014, p. 392) in the 5th volume of the ‘Culture and Politics’ editorial series.

Among the latest research, the study by Tadeusz Bodio may be mentioned, which regards the relations between the European Union and the countries of Central Asia, published under the grant ‘European Union towards Central Asia’, awarded by the National Science Centre to the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (Wallas, Fiedler, Przybylska-Maszner, 2018)¹⁶. The author analyzes the EU policy towards the region in the last quarter century. He explains its dual nature, from the first diplomatic contacts, through negotiations on signing partnership and cooperation agreements, to the development and implementation of a political strategy¹⁷. The author diagnoses the strengths and weaknesses of this policy and points to the reasons for the poor effectiveness of the EU activity lying, among others, in the conceptual assumptions of the strategy, instruments of its implementation, distribution of aid funds as well as monitoring their spending. He indicates that the local elites were able to successfully exploit the aid in order to strengthen authoritarian regimes. In the conclusions, he asserts that the European Union is facing a challenge of re-evaluation and making significant adjustments to the strategy being implemented. Particularly as, since 2014, may have been observed, if not departure then distancing themselves by the countries of the region from the pro-European orientation in favor of competitive integration projects: the Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese – ‘Asia from Shanghai to St. Petersburg’. It is worth noting that the above direction of research has been concretized in the studies conducted in the years 2019–2020 on the

¹⁵ Valuable scientific inspirations of Elena Breslavskaja’s, PhD research resulted from participation in the seminars of prof. Tadeusz Bodio, prof. Andrzej Wierzbicki and dr. hab. Piotr Załęski, which the supervisor repeatedly emphasized during his doctoral defence.

¹⁶ In its original form, the study was published under the title: ‘Genesis and evolution of European Union policy in Central Asia’, In R. Fiedler, T. Wallas (Eds.), *The European Union towards Central Asia. International and regional conditions*. Poznań

¹⁷ It is worth noting that the given issues were also studied by Olivia Piskorska (Department of Political History of the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of the University of Warsaw) (Piskorska, 2012).

relations of individual countries of Central Asia (including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) with the European Union¹⁸.

The contribution of P. Załęski and O. Piskowska to the preparation of the monograph 'Contemporary Political Systems' edited by K.A. Wojtaszczyk, W. Jakubowski and P. Załęski (2017, issued as part of the series 'Society and Politics. Fundamentals of Political Science') should be considered, as an important element in promoting scientific knowledge about Central Asia. The chapter 'Political systems of post-Soviet republics' describes the problem of public authority in the countries of Central Asia. Thanks to this study, the issues related to the countries of Central Asia are becoming more and more present at the matriculation exam in the field of Social Studies.

8. Contact with Stakeholders and Pragmatic Research Results

Research on Central Asia also has had a pragmatic dimension. Dozens of scientific centers, institutions and foreign organizations have participated in its implementation. It has been conducted with the support of the most prominent institutions in Poland and the countries of the region, which have been appreciating its practical significance. In the research process, a quite effective model of cooperation between scientists and the then administration of the President of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Economy was developed. The assistance of commercial counsellors in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, cooperation with the UN regional office, OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the Centre for Eastern Studies in Warsaw in obtaining source materials also turned out to be important.

The books and other studies published in the editorial series have received several dozen reviews in Poland and abroad and were used by businessmen and diplomats. The content and conclusions drawn from the research were used in the preparation of inter-state visits and by national chambers of commerce and industry for training purposes. Studies conducted under the programme have been used by UNIDO and sales offices in order to develop guides for Polish business.

The pragmatic values of research were also appreciated in Central Asia, which was reflected in the fact that the programme also included presidents of four countries, high officials and specialists from the most important economic and financial institutions, etc. On the basis of the research, several dozen articles promoting the achievements of Polish transformation appeared in mass media of the region, especially in the sphere of science, culture and economy. The research programme was positively evaluated and supported by intergovernmental economic committees (of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and

¹⁸ The author is currently implementing another research project dedicated to socio-political reforms conducted by Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of Uzbekistan since 2016. It is worth noting that in December 2019, the Embassy of Uzbekistan organized a 'round table' with the participation of parliamentarians dedicated to these reforms and parliamentary election.

Tajikistan) with an indication of the need for its continuation. The practical expression of this support was, among others, introduction of relevant provisions regarding the implementation of the research programme in intergovernmental documents. The research also met the demands of business circles. It was important, because it was based on the consent of local authorities in the region for joint research.

Presentations of the books, as a rule, took place as part of official inter-state visits, at trade fairs, conferences and business seminars. The pragmatic value of the implemented programme materialized in the promotion of Poland's image in Central Asia, economic cooperation with the countries of the region, compensation of the knowledge deficit about the region and changes taking place in this part of the world as well as creation of infrastructure for scientific cooperation with centers in the region.

Research on Central Asia proved to be an important impulse for the growing interest in the transformation of the region among scientific circles¹⁹. It translated into further research initiatives in this area, building a network of scientific contacts with centers of the region, conferences, seminars, student exchange²⁰, or already mentioned launching at the University of Warsaw new field of studies – the 'Eurasian studies'. Another example of initiative in this area is organization by the Adam Marszałek Publishing House in Toruń of a globally unique International Asian Congress, integrating Polish and foreign scientists conducting research on the changes taking place in Central Asia²¹, and more broadly, on the Asian continent. Materials from the Congress are published, among others in the 'Asia-Pacific Library' series and the 'Nowa Polityka Wschodnia' magazine. It is also worth noting that for many years we

¹⁹ Such opinion on the research program was given, among others Władysław Sokołowski - Polish ambassador to Kazakhstan in 2004-2007, expert and researcher of Central Asia during the presentation in the Polish Senate of the published book *From Khanate to the Republic. Historical conditioning of the statehood of Kazakhstan* (Higher School of International Relations and Social Communication in Chełm, 2016). In his speech, pointing to the sources of inspiration for the publication of the book, he stated, among others: 'prof. dr hab. Tadeusz Bodio and his collaborators and co-authors from the University of Warsaw: professors Andrzej Wierzbicki, Piotr Załęski and Tadeusz Mołdawa, Konstanty Wojtaszczyk created the most extensive and most important 'Kazakhstani' political science library in Polish science. The works of the Warsaw centre of research on Central Asia, published in the past quarter century, have become an inspiration for other academic circles, including Higher School of International Relations and Social Communication in Chełm'. See: 'On the historical roots and foundations of Kazakhstan's statehood', <https://www.swpw.eu/o-historyczne-korzenieach-i-wspolczesnych-podasadach-republiki-kazachstanu/>.

²⁰ In 2003, the first scientific expedition to the countries of Central Asia took place organized by students of the Institute of Political Science. Students visited many universities, established contacts with Polish diaspora and conducted field studies.

²¹ It is worth noting that in 2005 we announced the initiative to create the European Centre for Research on Central Asia, which was to perform creative and coordination functions for the development of scientific cooperation with the countries of the region. It can be said that, in a sense, the Asian Congress constitutes a materialization of this initiative. In our opinion, the activity of the Adam Marszałek Publishing House is currently crucial in the development and popularization of the research on Central Asia in Poland.

have been actively participating in the undertaking led by prof. Joanna Marszałek-Kawa, presenting our own research results. In 2020, the seventh edition of the Congress will be held, which will include a seminar on the models of patriotism in the countries of the region.

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