

The evolution of Kazakh political structures and practices under Tsarist colonization: studies around the elections in the Semireč'e region (Turkestan, 1868-1917)

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Abstract

My paper intends to shed light on the evolution of Kazakh political practices and structures between 1868 and 1917 through the lens of the elections. The study focuses on an area at the southeast of present-day Kazakhstan, which was conquered by the Russian Empire during the 19th century. Tribal and religious factors, two essential constituents of Kazakh society, are questioned with regard to legitimacy, eligibility and the dual relationship to legality between imperial law and Kazakh social norms. Faced with a colonial administration, the Kazakhs constantly played on the discrepancies between exogenous regulations and institutions and the possibilities offered by the exteriority of Russian power in order to mobilize Kazakh social standards. At the beginning of the 20th century, the processes of both political fragmentation and Islamization confronted the construction of Kazakh national discourse. The purpose of this ideological debate was to reinvent the idea of community that could no longer be embodied in the Kazakh khanate. Two modes of political action were superimposed and could be opposed: practices based primarily on lineage and local elements and a national and unitary vision. The first did not neglect the use of force and illegal means - compared to Tsarist legality - the second was attached to a legalistic and democratic line.

Author information

Xavier Hallez: Phd at the EHESS (2012): National Communism and Revolutionary Movement in Orient : Crossed Biographies of three Soviet Oriental Leaders (Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev, Turar Ryskulov et Elbegdorž Rinčino) through the Construction of a new Geopolitical Space 1917-1926. Currently associate researcher at Centre d'études turques, ottomanes, balkaniques et centrasiatiques (EHESS) and teaching a seminar in collaboration with Vincent Fourniau : History of self-discourse and forms of identity and collective representations in Central Asia (XVI-XXth centuries).

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Friday, 18 June - Session 7 - **10,30-12,00 CET (Webex)** - Panel – *Places of politics in the Kazakh steppes*

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