

Diffusing norms in times of transition: a comparative perspective on promotion of human rights by international organizations in post-Soviet Central Asia

Medet Tiulegenov

PhD Candidate
Doctoral School of Political Science, Public Policy
and International Relations
Central European University

International organizations have official mandates as normative actors, and not least in promoting human rights in post-soviet countries. Chief entities working in Central Asia with normative mandates affecting human rights include the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and other international organizations and foreign governments. This paper explores from a comparative perspective some mechanisms used by international organizations (OSCE, UN and EU) in instituting human rights norms in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The paper looks at the intersection of international and national actors in the area of human rights and analyzes the way external and internal approaches to human rights converge on some issues and diverge on others. It finds that expected variance of norm diffusion is not necessarily attributed to coercive capabilities of external actors, and that there is a divergence between three case countries on the spectrum of rights they are engaged with vis-a-vis international organizations.