

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE OTTOMAN TURKS ON THE BUKHARA, KHIVA, AND KOKAND KHANATES

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**Abstract:** This article examines the multifaceted influence of the Ottoman Turks on the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates during the 19th and early 20th centuries, with particular emphasis on political, diplomatic, cultural, and religious dimensions. Through an analysis of archival documents, diplomatic correspondence, trade records, and contemporary accounts, the study elucidates the ways in which the Ottoman Empire projected influence into Central Asia, reinforcing Islamic identity, supporting administrative and educational reforms, and facilitating transregional networks. The research highlights the reciprocal nature of these interactions, demonstrating how Central Asian khanates selectively adapted Ottoman models to their local contexts while negotiating autonomy under the pressures of Russian expansion. By situating these relations within broader geopolitical and socio-cultural frameworks, the article provides a nuanced understanding of the historical processes that shaped the development of Central Asian polities and their enduring engagement with the Ottoman world.

**Keywords:** Ottoman empire, central asia, bukhara, khiva, kokand, diplomatic relations, cultural influence, political agency, islamic identity

**Introduction:** The 19th and early 20th centuries marked a transformative period in Central Asia, during which the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates navigated a complex geopolitical landscape shaped by the encroachment of imperial powers, regional conflicts, and transregional interactions. Among the most significant yet understudied dimensions of this era was the influence of the Ottoman Empire on these Central Asian polities, encompassing political, diplomatic, cultural, educational, and religious spheres. The period from 1865 to 1910 witnessed the emergence of sustained engagement between Ottoman authorities and the khanates, which was motivated by a combination of geopolitical considerations, shared Islamic identity, and the pursuit of modernization initiatives. This engagement was neither unilateral nor purely symbolic; rather, it represented a complex interplay between Ottoman strategic projection and the autonomous agency of Central Asian actors, who sought to leverage Ottoman support to consolidate internal authority, maintain political stability, and counterbalance Russian expansionism. Archival evidence indicates that the khanates actively solicited Ottoman assistance, sending envoys to Istanbul to negotiate diplomatic recognition, military support, and cultural cooperation[1]. The Ottoman Empire, under the leadership of reform-minded sultans and bureaucrats, responded with initiatives designed to project influence and reinforce Islamic solidarity. These initiatives included the sponsorship of educational institutions, the dispatch of scholars and religious authorities, the provision of guidance on administrative and legal reforms, and the facilitation of trade networks. Through these channels, the Ottoman Empire sought not only to strengthen bilateral ties but also to assert itself as a central actor in the broader Islamic

world, countering Russian geopolitical ambitions and reinforcing its ideological legitimacy. Trade relations played a particularly important role in Ottoman engagement with the khanates, as commercial networks enabled the circulation of textiles, agricultural products, artisanal goods, and financial practices. Ottoman merchants and intermediaries operated alongside local traders, fostering economic interdependence while simultaneously facilitating cultural and intellectual exchange. Educational initiatives further reinforced these connections, with Ottoman-style madrasas established in Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand, and Central Asian students sponsored to study in Istanbul and other Ottoman centers. These exchanges promoted the dissemination of legal, administrative, and intellectual frameworks, contributing to the modernization of local governance and the cultivation of an elite cadre attuned to both regional and transregional developments. Religious and ideological factors underpinned the sustainability of these interactions, as the shared framework of Islamic identity and pan-Islamic consciousness created a sense of solidarity that transcended political boundaries. Central Asian elites, scholars, and religious authorities often perceived Ottoman engagement as a source of spiritual and intellectual support, particularly in the context of Russian imperial encroachment, which threatened both political autonomy and cultural-religious integrity. The interplay between Ottoman initiative and local adaptation thus reflected a negotiation of influence in which Central Asian actors retained considerable agency, selectively appropriating Ottoman models and adapting them to local contexts while remaining attentive to indigenous sociopolitical structures. Furthermore, the period saw the emergence of new forms of diplomatic, cultural, and intellectual exchange, facilitated by travel, correspondence, and the circulation of printed materials. Ottoman administrative manuals, legal codes, and educational curricula were studied and selectively implemented within the khanates, contributing to incremental reforms in governance, judicial practice, and educational standards. These processes fostered the development of transregional networks linking Central Asia with the Ottoman world, reinforcing both political alignment and cultural cohesion. The Ottoman influence also provided a framework for the negotiation of identity, enabling local elites to articulate modernizing agendas that drew upon Islamic solidarity while maintaining traditional legitimacy[2]. Historiographically, the study of Ottoman influence in Central Asia has often been marginalized, with most scholarship focusing on Russian expansion or the internal dynamics of the khanates. Nevertheless, emerging research highlights the importance of Ottoman-Central Asian interactions in shaping political, cultural, and religious trajectories. By analyzing archival materials, contemporary accounts, and scholarly interpretations, it is possible to reconstruct the multidimensional nature of these relations, revealing a landscape characterized by reciprocal influence, strategic negotiation, and the co-construction of political and cultural frameworks. In conclusion, the influence of the Ottoman Turks on Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand between 1865 and 1910 was a decisive factor in shaping the political, economic, cultural, and intellectual evolution of these khanates. The interactions were marked by complex negotiations, the selective adaptation of Ottoman models, and the pursuit of both internal stability and transregional connectivity. By situating these developments within the broader context of imperial expansion, Islamic solidarity, and modernization initiatives, this study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the enduring significance of Ottoman engagement in Central Asia, highlighting the intertwined dynamics of agency, influence, and adaptation that defined the historical trajectory of the region during this critical period.

**Literature review:** The historiography concerning the influence of the Ottoman Turks on the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates during the late 19th and early 20th centuries has

gradually expanded, revealing a complex matrix of political, cultural, economic, and religious interactions that have been historically underexamined. Zumrad Rakhmonkulova emphasizes the proactive role of the Ottoman Empire in projecting influence across Central Asia, highlighting how Istanbul sought to establish diplomatic recognition, provide guidance on administrative reforms, and support educational and religious institutions within the khanates[3]. Her analysis, grounded in extensive archival research from Ottoman and Central Asian sources, demonstrates that Ottoman engagement was deliberate and multifaceted, encompassing both ideological projection and pragmatic strategies aimed at consolidating influence while fostering transregional Islamic solidarity. Rakhmonkulova underscores that the khanates, in turn, actively engaged with Ottoman initiatives, sending envoys and negotiating treaties that reflected both a desire for external support and a strategic calculation to maintain autonomy under the growing pressure of Russian expansionism[4]. Complementing this perspective, Abduvali Berdiev provides a comprehensive study of the foreign diplomatic strategies of Central Asian khanates, situating Ottoman interactions within a broader framework of multilateral relations[5]. Berdiev contends that while the Ottoman Empire offered ideological, cultural, and administrative models, the khanates demonstrated considerable agency by selectively adapting these frameworks to their local sociopolitical realities. He highlights instances in which Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand modulated their reception of Ottoman advisors, educational curricula, and administrative guidance to reinforce internal governance structures and maintain political legitimacy. Berdiev further argues that these interactions were reciprocal, with Central Asian actors influencing Ottoman perceptions and policies through petitions, diplomatic envoys, and participation in intellectual networks[6]. Together, these studies reveal that the influence of the Ottoman Turks on the Central Asian khanates cannot be understood as unilateral or merely symbolic; rather, it was mediated by local agency, strategic adaptation, and the broader geopolitical context of Russian expansion and regional consolidation. The scholarship collectively illustrates the multidimensional nature of Ottoman-Central Asian relations, encompassing diplomacy, trade, education, religious collaboration, and cultural exchange, while demonstrating the iterative processes through which influence was negotiated, implemented, and localized. By synthesizing the perspectives of Rakhmonkulova and Berdiev, it becomes evident that the Ottoman engagement with Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand played a pivotal role in shaping governance, reinforcing Islamic identity, and fostering transregional networks, thereby providing a richer understanding of Central Asia's historical trajectory in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Methodology:** This study employs a comprehensive and integrative methodological framework to examine the influence of the Ottoman Turks on the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates between 1865 and 1910, combining historical, diplomatic, economic, and cultural approaches within a single analytical design. The research is grounded in the systematic analysis of primary sources, including archival diplomatic correspondence, official decrees, treaties, trade records, travelogues, and contemporary newspapers, drawn from the National Archive of Uzbekistan, Ottoman Imperial Archives, and selected Russian repositories, ensuring empirical rigor and historical veracity. Historical-comparative analysis is employed to identify patterns of interaction, continuity, and divergence across political, economic, and cultural domains, revealing how local khanates selectively appropriated Ottoman models and adapted them to their socio-political contexts. Complementing this, a contextual-analytical approach situates the Ottoman engagement within broader geopolitical and socio-cultural currents, such as Russian imperial expansion, pan-Islamic ideological movements, and the transregional flow

of knowledge, trade, and cultural norms. Qualitative content analysis of textual and documentary evidence enables a detailed interpretation of ideological, religious, and administrative dimensions of Ottoman influence, while historiographical synthesis integrates prior scholarly perspectives to provide comparative frameworks for understanding bilateral interactions. By combining archival research, historical-comparative methodology, and contextual analysis, this study reconstructs the multidimensional character of Ottoman influence, highlighting the iterative negotiation of power, cultural exchange, and institutional adaptation that defined the political, intellectual, and socio-cultural evolution of the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates during this transformative period.

**Results:** The analysis of archival documents, diplomatic correspondence, and contemporary accounts reveals that the Ottoman Turks exerted a multifaceted influence on the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates during the period 1865–1910, encompassing political, economic, cultural, and religious dimensions. The khanates actively engaged with Ottoman authorities, seeking diplomatic recognition, military advice, educational support, and administrative guidance, while simultaneously negotiating their autonomy under the expanding influence of the Russian Empire. Political results of this engagement include the consolidation of diplomatic channels, the negotiation of treaties, and the enhancement of administrative structures informed by Ottoman models, which strengthened the governance capacities of the khanates. Economically, trade relations facilitated the circulation of goods, financial practices, and commercial networks that connected Central Asia with broader Ottoman markets, enhancing both material wealth and cross-regional interaction. Cultural and educational influence is evidenced by the establishment of Ottoman-style madrasas, the sponsorship of students to study in Istanbul, and the adoption of Ottoman legal and administrative frameworks, which contributed to the intellectual and institutional modernization of the khanates. Religious and ideological outcomes were equally significant, as shared Islamic identity and pan-Islamic consciousness provided a foundation for enduring transregional networks, fostering social cohesion and intellectual collaboration between Central Asia and the Ottoman world. The results indicate that the engagement was reciprocal and adaptive: while the Ottoman Empire projected influence through soft power, diplomatic initiatives, and cultural diplomacy, the Central Asian khanates selectively appropriated Ottoman practices, ensuring compatibility with local sociopolitical structures and priorities. Collectively, these findings illuminate a period of dynamic interaction in which bilateral relations were characterized by negotiation, adaptation, and strategic engagement, demonstrating that Ottoman influence contributed substantively to the political stability, economic integration, cultural development, and ideological cohesion of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand, laying the foundation for enduring patterns of transregional connectivity that shaped the subsequent evolution of Central Asian societies.

**Discussion:** The scholarly discourse on the influence of the Ottoman Turks on the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates during the late 19th and early 20th centuries presents divergent interpretations regarding the extent and nature of Ottoman agency versus Central Asian autonomy. Zumrad Rakhmonkulova emphasizes that the Ottoman Empire actively sought to shape political[7], cultural, and religious developments in the khanates through a deliberate policy of influence, highlighting diplomatic missions, administrative guidance, and educational sponsorship as mechanisms of strategic projection. According to Rakhmonkulova, these initiatives were not merely reactive responses to Russian expansion but constituted a proactive strategy aimed at consolidating Ottoman authority in the Islamic world and reinforcing



transregional cohesion[8]. She argues that Ottoman engagement provided the khanates with crucial ideological, administrative, and educational resources that contributed to political stabilization, governance reforms, and the cultivation of an educated elite aligned with broader Islamic principles. In contrast, Abduvali Berdiev foregrounds the agency of the Central Asian khanates, contending that Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand strategically mediated Ottoman influence to serve local political and socio-economic objectives. Berdiev asserts that while Ottoman engagement offered valuable cultural and administrative models, local rulers selectively appropriated these frameworks, adapting them to indigenous governance structures, social norms, and regional priorities. He emphasizes that the khanates' diplomatic initiatives, petitioning, and participation in transregional networks were not passive but actively shaped Ottoman perceptions and policy approaches, demonstrating a reciprocal and negotiated relationship rather than unilateral influence[9]. Berdiev further contends that the selective adaptation of Ottoman models allowed the khanates to maintain internal legitimacy, strengthen social cohesion, and navigate the pressures of Russian imperial expansion. The juxtaposition of these perspectives illuminates the nuanced dynamics of Ottoman-Central Asian relations, revealing a complex interplay between external projection of influence and local adaptation. Integrating Rakhmonkulova's emphasis on Ottoman strategic initiative with Berdiev's focus on Central Asian agency underscores that the bilateral engagement was neither entirely top-down nor fully endogenous but involved iterative negotiation, mutual adaptation, and co-construction of political, cultural, and educational frameworks[10]. The discussion further highlights the importance of ideological, religious, and educational dimensions, illustrating how shared Islamic identity and pan-Islamic consciousness reinforced the effectiveness of diplomatic, cultural, and economic exchanges. Ultimately, this polemical engagement demonstrates that the formation and consolidation of Ottoman-Central Asian relations between 1865 and 1910 were shaped by a reciprocal, multidimensional process in which both Ottoman and Central Asian actors exercised strategic influence, negotiated authority, and co-created the institutional and ideological foundations that would leave enduring legacies in the region.

**Conclusion:** The analysis of Ottoman influence on the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates from 1865 to 1910 reveals a complex, multidimensional, and historically significant pattern of interactions that shaped political, economic, cultural, and religious trajectories in Central Asia. This study demonstrates that the Ottoman Empire's engagement was deliberate and multifaceted, encompassing diplomatic initiatives, administrative guidance, educational sponsorship, and the projection of Islamic ideological influence, while Central Asian khanates actively negotiated, adapted, and selectively appropriated these models to serve local political, social, and economic objectives.

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