ABOUT THE BOOK:

The volume is organized into an introduction, two substantive parts, and a conclusion. Introduction: The Need for Paradigm Shift (Kuat Akizhanov). The introductory chapter establishes the case for rethinking the dominant approaches to development in Central Asia. It situates the region's post-Soviet experience within wider debates about economic orthodoxy, development theory, and the relationship between ideas, institutions, and policy outcomes. It calls for greater theoretical pluralism and analytical approaches capable of accounting for the complexity of real-world economic and social processes.
Part I. Development under Neoliberal Orthodoxy. This section examines the influence and consequences of neoliberal approaches to development across the region.

- *Global Development Architecture: Embedding Neoliberal Socio-Economic Orthodoxy in Kazakhstan* (Kuat Akizhanov) examines how international development frameworks and economic ideas have shaped Kazakhstan's policy trajectory.
- *What was Uzbek About the 'Uzbek Model'? Revisiting Uzbekistan's Transformation and What it Means for Central Asia Today* (Franco Galdini) reconsiders the distinctive features and legacy of Uzbekistan's post-Soviet development model.
- *Heterodox Approaches to Development: Comparative Insights from ASEAN for Central Asia's Development Trajectory* (Pawel Jaskula) draws comparative lessons from Southeast Asia for reconsidering Central Asia's development options.
- *Klepto-Neoliberalism or Elitist Capitalism? Urban Regeneration and Capital Accumulation in Uzbekistan* (Kristian Lasslett and Dilmira Matyakubova) investigates urban transformation, elite interests, and capital accumulation.
- *Dismal Reform Outcomes in Central Asian Agriculture: Market Failure, Government Failure or Theory Failure?* (Martin Petrick) critically examines agricultural reform and questions the explanatory adequacy of conventional accounts of reform outcomes.
- *The Moral and Cultural Political Economy of Central Asia: Rentierism, Neofeudalism and Neoliberal Hegemony* (Balihar Sanghera) explores the moral, cultural, and political-economic dimensions of power and economic organisation in the region.

Together, these contributions examine how dominant development ideas interact with local institutions, political structures, social relations, and patterns

of accumulation, while opening debate about how the region's reform experiences should be interpreted.

Part II. Beyond Neoliberal Orthodoxy: Re-thinking Development in Central Asia. The second part explores alternative analytical frameworks and broadens the discussion to include social policy, migration, innovation, finance, gender, and human dignity.

- *Reforming to Preserve: A Gramscian Reading of Kazakhstan's Post-Soviet Transition* (Serik Beimenbetov and Zumrat Sanakulova) applies a Gramscian perspective to the relationship between reform and the reproduction of established social and political arrangements.
- *The Political Economy of Forsaken Schooling and Migration* (Ilhom Abdulloev, Gil S. Epstein, and Ira N. Gang) examines the relationship between education, migration, and broader political-economic processes.
- *The Correlation of Science and Social Policy with High-Tech and Novel Industrial Development as Soviet Innovation: An Algebra of Development* (Chokan Laumulin and Siddharth S. Saxena) revisits the relationship between science, social policy, and industrial and technological development through the experience of Soviet innovation.
- *Deepening Finance Capitalism Through Women's Empowerment in Central Asia* (Elmira Satybaldieva) critically examines the relationship between gender-focused empowerment agendas and the expansion of finance capitalism.
- *Human Dignity-Based Political Economy Versus Structural Injustice and Violence Inherent to Neoliberal Capitalism* (Galym Zhussipbek) advances a human dignity-centred perspective on political economy and structural injustice.

The concluding chapter by Serik Beimenbetov draws together the volume's broader concerns and reinforces the need for continued debate about development theory and practice in Central Asia. Taken as a whole, the collection offers a distinctive contribution to scholarship on the region by bringing critical political economy, heterodox development perspectives, and interdisciplinary research into a shared conversation. It seeks not merely to critique established approaches, but also to expand the conceptual and empirical foundations for discussing alternative development trajectories.

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