

”State-Driven” Cars - From Private to Public Automobility in Central Asia

The following paper focuses on the tension and inevitable conflict between public transport and the automobile. It is based on interviews conducted in the period 2022-2023 in two cities of the countries studied - Bishkek and Almaty, analysis of statistics, regulations and taxation policies. This global clash will be shown through a specific local prism - that of taxation and regulatory policies of automobiles in three countries of Central Asia. It will provide insights into the Uzbek government’s protectionist policies towards its own automotive industry, Kazakhstan’s regulatory interventions, for example in fuel pricing, and Kyrgyzstan’s “total” free car market policies. All of this, to one degree or another, more in one country, less in another, leads to one thing - car dominance, neglect of public transport, and all the consequences that follow for cities, societies, and nature.

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