

Introduction

JOURNALIST ALISHER SAIPOV left his office just before sunset. On a typical day he would be back at his laptop, drinking coffee to the ping of instant messages well into the early morning. Familiar to Western readers for his reporting with *Radio Free Europe*, the online news agency *Ferghana.news*, and *Voice of America*, Saipov had recently turned his attention to the local audience.¹ His new paper, *Siyosat*, was a hit among the Uzbek-speaking population in his hometown of Osh, Kyrgyzstan. News-starved residents across the border—in the nearby Uzbek cities of Andijan, Fergana, and Namangan—also patiently awaited their copies of the Friday weekly. They are still waiting. Saipov was shot on the night of October 24, 2007. His murderers remain at large. Saipov's life captures the fleeting promise and the enduring challenge post-Soviet Central Asia represents. The promise is that the Saipovs of Central Asia, along with well-intentioned Western counterparts, work tirelessly to reform autocratic rule. The challenge is that Western democracy promotion has yielded little substantive political reform; citizen activism has at best been met with government indifference and at worst with disappearances, torture, and death.

Patronage politics in Central Asia has not budged. It remains entrenched throughout the region. Autocrats—from the presidency to the village administrator—continue to rule at every level of government. Each autocrat presides over his fiefdom and in return for control over this fiefdom, economic rents (that is, licenses to exploit) flow from the top to the bottom while kickbacks flow from the

bottom back to the top. Before 1991 political scientists called this system communism or Soviet socialism. Today we call it patrimonialism or neopatrimonialism—depending on whether the patrimonial state in question indeed possesses the “professional military, technocratic administrative staff, and all of the other elements of a comparatively modernized industrial society” to merit the “neo” label.² During the Soviet period local autocrats controlled collective farms. Today local autocrats control what are de facto collective farms as well as natural resources, local bazaars, the drug and sex trades, gambling, and construction. Despite grand democratization experiments, patronage remains unchanged. If anything, daily life for many Central Asians has gotten worse.

The fortunes of the average Central Asian autocrat have likewise not improved all that much. Today the journey from boss to bust is short; higher-level bosses regularly replace underlings, and on occasion underlings band together to unseat the alpha autocrat. The disappointing irony of Central Asian autocracy—and in part the explanation for the persistence of this autocracy—is that it is considerably safer to challenge patronage rule the old-fashioned way—by planning a putsch—than it is by publishing a newspaper. It is therefore the Saipovs of Central Asia, the human subjects of Western democratization experiments, who operate outside the patronage pack and challenge hierarchy through transparent means—through the media, through discussions following Friday prayer, through nongovernmental organizations—who find their lives and their dreams of a better future for their children cut short. Strip the Brezhnev patronage machine of centralized party control, add local activists emboldened by a newly arrived global discourse of political and religious freedom, and you have today’s Central Asia. In short, you have a political mess or, as one observer put it, you have “Trashcanistan.”³

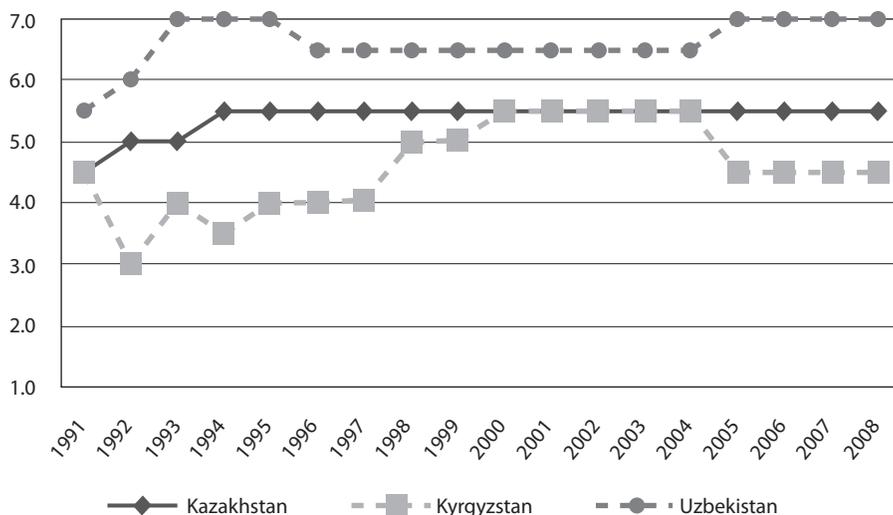
Critically, though, and at the heart of this book, the degrees of this current political mess vary. Kyrgyzstan’s political mess is one of chaos. In contrast to the heavy-handed rule in neighboring Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz presidents have tended to run from rather than steadfastly repress protesters. President Askar Akaev, facing thousands of angry demonstrators outside his “White House” in March 2005, fled to Moscow. Kyrgyzstan’s so-called Tulip Revolution did not substantively alter Kyrgyz politics, however. Just the opposite: for the next five years the patronage machine in Kyrgyzstan sputtered along, enriching its mechanic of the moment, President Kurmanbek “Bucks” Bakiev. In April 2010, though, the same angry crowds, and indeed many of the same political elite that had brought Bakiev to power, crashed the gates of the White House, compelling Kyrgyzstan’s second president to flee to Minsk. Perhaps this time Kyrgyzstan watchers will get it right and label these leadership convulsions for what they are: popular putsches rather than democratic revolutions.

Uzbekistan, in contrast to the chaos that exists in Kyrgyzstan, has thus far proven politically stable. This stability has been secured through horrific human cost, however. In May 2005, President Islam Karimov's troops shot and killed hundreds of protestors in the Fergana Valley city of Andijan to ensure Uzbekistan would not play host to the next post-Soviet "color revolution."⁴ Karimov got his wish. The Andijan protests did not topple him from power, but they did produce an indelible color: red. "Blood was flowing on the ground," eyewitness Mahbuba Zokirava recounted, going off-script during the October 2005 show trial of the alleged Andijan protest instigators.⁵ The blood of Andijan would continue to flow, and beyond the confines of Uzbekistan. In Osh, Kyrgyzstan, journalist Saipov, in addition to bearing witness to the Andijan massacre in the pages of *Siyosat*, organized a safe haven for Andijan refugees. It was this activism, many fear, that pushed the Uzbek president's agents in Kyrgyzstan to move from their steady campaign of intimidating Saipov to murder.⁶

The Kazakh state is neither as sputtering as Kyrgyzstan nor as violent as Uzbekistan. Rather, Kazakhstan's mess is contained to the presidential family. Dynasty, not demonstrators, is what keeps the Kazakh president Nursultan Nazarbaev awake at night. The president's once anticipated successor and now exiled former son-in-law, Rakhat Aliev, provided an unflattering window into the first family's dysfunction in his May 2009 tell-all, *Godfather-in-Law*. Dariga Nazarbaeva, who divorced Aliev in June 2007, has all but disappeared from the Kazakh press, a press she once controlled as director of *Khabar*, Kazakhstan's largest news outlet. Timur Kulibaev, married to Nazarbaev's second daughter of three, appears to be the president's new favorite. In May 2009, Kulibaev assumed chairmanship of the boards of Kazakhstan's most lucrative energy companies—KazMunayGaz, Kazatomprom, and Samruk-Energo.⁷ Kulibaev is hedging his bets, however; Nazarbaev has yet a third son-in-law in reserve, and should Kulibaev suddenly find himself out of favor, he has a mistress and a mansion (the Duke of York's former residence) waiting for him in Berkshire, England.⁸

Kyrgyz chaos, Uzbek violence, and Kazakh dynasty—this book seeks to explain these variations. In addition to this, my categorization of Central Asian regime variation, indexes such as Freedom House's Freedom in the World and the World Bank's World Governance Indicators equally illustrate the markedly different paths the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek autocracies have taken since the Soviet collapse. Freedom House's Freedom in the World scores countries along a seven-point "freeness" scale. States at or above 5.5 on this scale are "not free." As such, regimes that flatline at the top of Freedom House's seven-point scale are the least free or, perhaps more appropriately, the most violent and repressive. States between 5.0 and 3.5 are "partly free." States below 3.0—terra incognita in Central

Figure I.1. Freedom House Measures of Central Asian Regime Variation



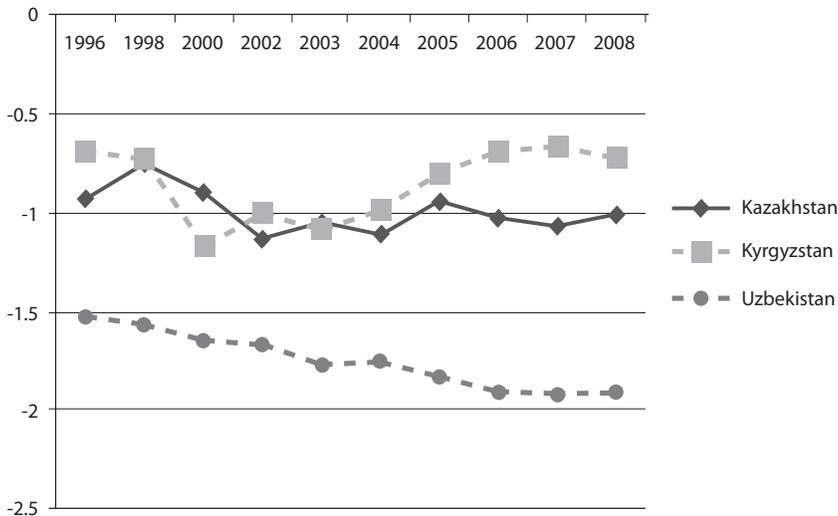
Source: The Freedom House Measures are available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/File/fiw/historical/FIWallScoresCountries1973-2011.xls>.

Asia—are “free.” Figure I.1 provides a legend for Central Asia’s post-Soviet governments, although a legend is likely not necessary for the reader to identify which line represents the chaotic Kyrgyz government, the violent Uzbek state, and the dynastic Kazakh regime.

Uzbekistan, at the line at the top of the figure, unwaveringly ranks as the most autocratic of the Central Asian states. Indeed, since the Andijan massacre, the Karimov regime has distinguished itself by winning the most autocratic score the Freedom House scale allows. Kyrgyzstan, in contrast, bounces up and down the Freedom House scale, movement reflective of the chaos that exists in Kyrgyz patronage politics. Kazakhstan is steady, neither as brutally repressive as Uzbekistan nor as jarringly unsettled as Kyrgyzstan. The ups and downs and bloody backstabbing in this polity is limited to the Nazarbaev family as the president’s children jockey for his throne.

The World Bank’s World Governance Indicators (WGI) are equally suggestive of Kyrgyz chaos, Uzbek violence, and Kazakh dynasty. The WGI’s “voice and accountability” measure gauges “the extent to which a country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government.”⁹ The measure ranges from a low of -2.5 to a high of $+2.5$ and here too, as figure I.2 illustrates, we find a steadily auto-

**Figure I.2. World Governance Indicators—
Voice and Accountability, 1996–2008**

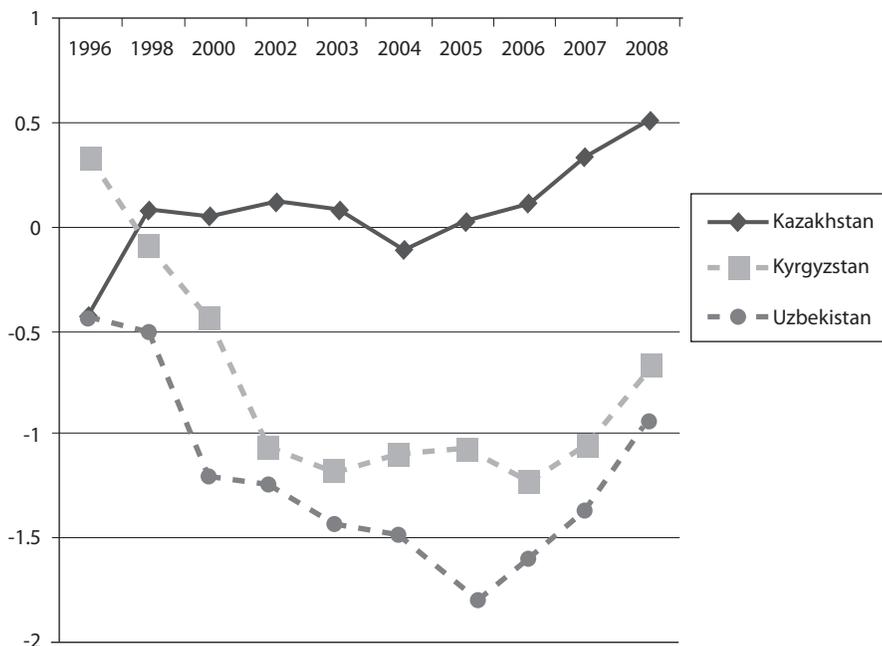


Source: The World Bank's World Governance Indicators are available at <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>.

cratic Uzbekistan, a consistently autocratic though not excessively heavy-handed Kazakhstan, and an inconsistently autocratic Kyrgyzstan.¹⁰

The Karimov regime's violence exacts more than a considerable human cost. State violence has prompted an equally violent response from within Uzbek society. Uzbekistan is the only Central Asian country subject to frequent terror attacks and militant insurgency. Most notably the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a militant paramilitary group that distinguished itself by landing on the U.S. Department of State terror watch list in September 2000, bombed the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, in February 1999 and July 2004. Although most in Uzbekistan do not share the IMU's Islamist agenda, the relative ease with which the IMU moves from safe havens in Afghanistan across the border into Uzbekistan suggests that a considerable portion of the Uzbek population may see armed resistance an attractive alternative to the passive acceptance of state repression. Moreover, the Andijan protests suggest that this resistance is moving beyond tacit support for the IMU. Andijan was prompted by an armed jailbreak, an effort to release twenty-three prominent Muslim leaders and businessmen whom the Karimov government had imprisoned. Andijan is by no means the only Uzbek city whose jails are filled with influential and independent Muslim businessmen. Should the

**Figure I.3. World Governance Indicators—
Political Stability, 1996–2008**



Source: The World Bank's World Governance Indicators are available at <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>.

Uzbek government continue jailing local elites for alleged Islamist leanings, Karimov will encourage the very militancy he purports to be fighting.

The “political stability” measure of the World Governance Indicators captures this potential for armed insurrection in Uzbekistan. As figure I.3 illustrates, this WGI indicator, which gauges “perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means,” consistently locates the stability of the Karimov regime below that of the Kyrgyz and Kazakh states.¹¹ Kyrgyz patronage politics, although it may be chaotic, at least is not violent. The predictability of the Nazarbaev family, as multinationals like Chevron and ExxonMobil can attest, makes the stability of Kazakh politics attractive indeed.

This comparative equanimity in Kazakhstan stands in sharp contrast to tumultuous state-society relations in Kyrgyzstan and the often violent state-society relations in Uzbekistan. Protests specifically targeted at the Kazakh executive are rare and fleeting. The largest anti-Nazarbaev protest occurred on December 8,

1996, when approximately thirty-five hundred gathered in Almaty to demonstrate against worsening economic conditions.¹² This protest lasted three hours. Sustained large-scale protests in Kyrgyzstan, however, are regular affairs. In addition to the ten-thousand-strong March 2005 protest that ousted President Akaev, Kyrgyz citizens have gathered to protest the executive's manipulation and rewriting of the constitution (in 2007), executive manipulation of parliamentary and presidential elections (in 1995 and again in 2000), and executive embezzlement of gold reserves (in 1993). Protests likely would be frequent and sustained in Uzbekistan as well, if not for the Karimov government's harrowing coercive capacity. Given this ability to repress in Uzbekistan, dissent has assumed ephemeral and explosive forms—the Tashkent government ministry bombings in 1999 and 2004, overturned and torched police cars in Qoʻqon in November 2004 following the government's imposition of new tax codes on retail sales in city bazaars, and the Adijan jailbreak in May 2005.¹³

Kyrgyz political chaos, Uzbek state violence, and Kazakh dynastic machinations within the presidential family—this is the state of Central Asian affairs two decades after the Soviet collapse. I started this book in graduate school, in the early 2000s, hoping mine would be a story of Central Asian transition. This transition has not come; rather, autocracy and patronage politics remain. Yet politics is not universally miserable in Central Asia. Kazakhstan's dynastic government can be watched with detachment by most. Kyrgyzstan's chaotic leadership convulsions can be endured. It is the steady and oppressive repression of Uzbekistan that is most worrisome. To the extent scholars can uncover the causal forces that produce chaos, violence, and dynasty—and, in so doing, assist activists in prodding the Uzbek state in the direction of its more benign neighbors—this incremental change alone will be a greater achievement than the unrealized hopes the democratization literature has thus far offered for Central Asians. At a more immediate level, if international scholars and policy makers are to further the safety of their Central Asian partners, we must concede that the transitions and democratization lenses are ill-suited for understanding post-Soviet Central Asian autocracy.

Explaining Variations in Central Asian Patronage Politics

Three factors—Moscow's engagement or lack of engagement in mediating Central Asian leadership crises during the perestroika period; differing economic resources available to the Central Asian leaders; and differing degrees of Islamic revivalism—have shaped the diverging outcomes of Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek patronage politics. After defining what Central Asian patronage politics is, I turn to each of these causalities.

Defining Patronage Politics

Patronage politics in Central Asia closely resembles what Africanists have identified as “neopatrimonialism.” Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan are *neopatrimonial* in that, in contrast to the patrimonial state of the past, they exhibit, albeit in varying degrees, the characteristics of modern state bureaucracies—professional militaries, a trained and technocratic administrative staff, and industrialized economies. Like many of their African counterparts, Central Asian states are patrimonial in that executive authority is achieved through “personal patronage, rather than through ideology or law”; the relationship between executive and appointee, or patron and client, is one “of loyalty and dependence”; and money, or access to economic rents, is what encourages appointees or clients to “mobilize political support and refer all decisions upward as a mark of deference to patrons.”¹⁴ This last point of patronage politics—that it is money as well licenses to exploit—deserves particular emphasis. Patronage politics does not only entail an executive handsomely paying his appointees. Although guaranteeing high salaries certainly is one way to maintain effective rule, an executive can also provide appointees positions of authority through which they can enrich themselves.

The political scientist William Reno, drawing a parallel between Mobutu’s Congo and Brezhnev’s Soviet Union, has described this practice of distributing offices: “The structure of power relations, the nature of resources available to different groups and the social capital upon which they can draw also shape the options available to rulers. Even in the seemingly centralized USSR, for example, Brezhnev found that his own son-in-law had become a partner of Sharif Rashidovich Rashidov, the First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party, in the latter’s grand scheme to fake cotton production statistics. Together they and the republic’s Communist Party elite skimmed off billions of dollars from official accounts and used the money to build palaces for themselves and to enter new illicit trades.”¹⁵ Mobutu engaged in one other practice that Brezhnev, in contrast to his predecessors, avoided—mass violence. Patronage politics need not be sustained by economics alone. As the political scientists Houchang E. Chehabi and Juan J. Linz have explained, an executive can provide a “mixture of fear and rewards to his collaborators” so as to further loyalty.¹⁶ Chehabi and Linz label these states as “sultanistic,” differentiating them from neopatrimonial regimes that rely primarily on economic incentives alone. This is an important distinction and one that captures crucial variation, for example, between the Karimov regime’s violence and the more benign forms of patronage politics in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Although my understanding of patronage politics draws heavily from the literature on neopatrimonialism, the insights I ultimately seek differ markedly from the primary thrust of this neopatrimonialism literature. Chehabi and Linz, for example, offer as their central takeaway: “The main conclusion to be drawn from a comparative analysis of sultanistic regimes is that, if overthrown, they are more likely to be replaced by a revolutionary or an authoritarian regime than by a democracy.”¹⁷ Similarly, the coauthors Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van de Walle conclude their study of neopatrimonialism in Africa as such: “Finally, if our logic is correct, the prospects for democracy are better in transitions from regime types other than neopatrimonial ones.”¹⁸ Chehabi and Linz as well as Bratton and Van de Walle are likely correct. Their singular focus on democratic transition, however, and the comparative politics literature’s equally pronounced gravitation to democratization narratives, distracts our attention and subsequently our causal analysis away from substantive variations in autocratic governance.

As brash as this may sound, this book suggests our focus should not be prospects for democratization in Central Asia. The immediate prospects for this are dim. Rather, what I seek to uncover are the causal variables that produce variations in patronage politics, what I have termed the chaos, violence, and dynasty of Central Asia. I now turn to these variables—to varying patterns of Moscow’s intervention in Central Asia during the perestroika period, to Central Asian states’ varying economic endowments, and to these states’ varying degrees of Islamic revivalism.

Variations in Moscow and Central Asian Leadership Crises

Though largely overlooked in analyses of post-Soviet Central Asian politics, General Secretary Gorbachev’s decision to choreograph Kazakh and Uzbek executive change in the late 1980s and his later decision *not* to intervene in Kyrgyzstan’s June 1990 leadership crisis has had profound effects on elite unity in these three countries. Gorbachev’s decision to mediate crises in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan but not in Kyrgyzstan led to the perpetuation of a united Kazakh and Uzbek political elite and to the fragmentation of Kyrgyz politics. These crises, paradoxically, were the products of Gorbachev’s own attempts at political and economic reform. Thus his December 1986 replacement of the corrupt but ethnically Kazakh first secretary Dinmukhamed Kunaev with the ethnic Russian Gennady Kolbin sparked violent street protests in the republic’s capital, Alma-Ata. Gorbachev’s plans to decrease the strains on the Uzbek economy through family planning and outmigration to Siberia sparked violent ethnic riots between

Meskhetian Turks and Uzbeks and an immediate crisis of leadership in Tashkent in June 1989. The attempted implementation of Gorbachev's land reform policies led to deadly ethnic riots in June 1990 between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, as well as a leadership crisis in Bishkek.

Despite these shared causes, the consequences of these crises differed markedly. Gorbachev and the Communist Party resolved ethnic protests and leadership crises in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The general secretary quieted the 1986 Alma-Ata protests by shifting *de facto* control of Kazakh politics away from the disliked Kolbin to the ethnic Kazakh chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nursultan Nazarbaev. Gorbachev similarly precluded elite instability in the wake of Uzbekistan's 1989 ethnic riots by removing his Uzbek family planner, Rafiq Nishonov, from power and replacing the former first secretary with the self-proclaimed Uzbek "traditionalist" Islam Karimov.¹⁹ Yet in June 1990, when ethnic riots in Kyrgyzstan brought down First Secretary Absamat Masaliev, Gorbachev left it to the local political elite to select their new leader. This Kyrgyz elite fractured and, absent Moscow's external choreographing of a leadership succession, settled on Askar Akaev as a compromise candidate. Akaev's winning attribute was his perceived weakness. Kyrgyz politics, in short, was unsettled even before the Soviet collapse. In Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, in contrast, Moscow's central scripting of Karimov's and Nazarbaev's rise to power enabled these two leaders to enter the post-Soviet period with a united and executive-oriented single party.

Chapter 1 presents a simplified formal model to illustrate how these diverging perestroika legacies continue to shape executive stability and longevity in these three states. One can readily understand the insights of this formal model by imagining Central Asian presidents as pilots flying different types of planes.²⁰ All three presidents require the help of a copilot and a navigator. The Uzbek and Kazakh presidents, however, are in command of Boeing 747s in which the passenger cabins are filled with five hundred well-trained reserve navigators and copilots. The Kyrgyz president, in contrast, is flying a six-seater. Should members of Karimov's or Nazarbaev's crews become problematic, they can be tossed from the plane and easily replaced with one of the five hundred trained aviators in the passenger cabin. The Kyrgyz president enjoys no such luxury; if he throws too many from the plane, he too will perish. To make things even more challenging for him, a disgruntled copilot or navigator can readily conspire with the three passengers in the cabin. That is, it may well be the Kyrgyz president who is tossed from the plane.

The reader may recognize this stylization of Central Asian politics as an illustration of the collective action problem. I should stress that mine is not deductive reasoning divorced from comparative historical analysis. To make any sense,

the microlevel insights of the collective action dynamic illustrated here must be contextualized within a historical analysis that uncovers where these differing airplanes—or differing elite institutions—come from in the first place. Chapter 2 provides further discussion of the perestroika-period ethnic riots, the concomitant leadership crises, and the elite institutions that resulted from Gorbachev's decision either to manage or not to manage executive successions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

Variations in Economic Resources

The economic logic of variations in post-Soviet Central Asian patronage politics can be readily grasped. Abundant oil wealth maintains the gears of the Kazakh patronage machine. Indeed, this oil wealth is so extensive and so concentrated in the hands of the Nazarbaev family that the Kazakh state need not, in contrast to the lesser-endowed Uzbek and Kyrgyz states, appear predatory to its citizens.²¹ That is, Nazarbaev can actually pay—and pay well—state employees. Take, for example, the case of teacher salaries. In Kazakhstan the average public teacher's salary in 2009 was the equivalent of three hundred dollars a month.²² Kyrgyz teachers, according to a statement from the Kyrgyz Finance Ministry in 2008, have received no or only partial pay since 2003.²³ Uzbek teachers arguably have it even worse; in addition to poor pay, they are forced to join their students in the fields for the cotton harvest every September, an effort that ultimately serves to further the Uzbek state's repressive capacity. Repeat this pattern in other sectors of the state bureaucracy—code inspectors, village administrators, regional governors, judges, and police—and it is not difficult to imagine which civil servants will be loyal, which will defect for greener pastures, and which the state will coerce into compliance.

Coercive patronage politics, although it has thus far maintained Karimov's hold on power, forces the regime into a delicate and likely unsustainable balancing act. State control of the cotton as well as the gold industries allows Karimov, if not the ability to buy loyalty, then the ability to coerce some degree of deference to centralized authority. Uzbek bureaucrats who become dissatisfied with the rent-seeking opportunities their offices provide and, as a result, diffident to state directives, can therefore be eliminated through court trials, imprisonments, and disappearances. Coercion and the threat of coercion, however, are not always effective. Indeed, as the discussion in chapter 4 of the 1991 Namangan uprising and the 2005 Andijan protests illustrates, coercion may encourage the very challenges to centralized rule that repressive tactics are designed to prevent.

Karimov's dilemma may, from his point of view, be preferable to the Kyrgyz

alternative. Here, as in Uzbekistan, patronage politics is based largely on predation and rent-seeking. The average Kyrgyz teacher, for example, is not starving because he, like most state employees, receives “support” from the local population in return for services rendered. That said, should a new patron emerge who can offer incentives more attractive than the state’s license to predate, bureaucrats will likely defect to this more economically powerful patron. Thus Kyrgyz State University teachers leave their departments to join the faculty of the financier and philanthropist George Soros–funded American University of Central Asia just as many local state appointees begin to work for local business elites rather than the central government. Moreover, the near complete absence of readily exploitable natural resources means that the Kyrgyz executive, in contrast to the Uzbek president, cannot as easily coerce compliance. As I demonstrate in chapter 3, ensuring that judges, prosecutors, and police reliably serve the central government requires money; this is money the Kyrgyz executive often cannot muster. In broad brush strokes this is the underlying source of political instability in Kyrgyzstan.

This book seeks to explain not only why Kyrgyzstan is politically unstable, but why the degree of this instability has increased since the early 1990s. The nature of Kyrgyzstan’s economic resources, however meager, nevertheless has a profound influence on executive tenure in office. Until September 2001 the lion’s share of foreign financial flows to the Kyrgyz government came in the form of political and economic aid. Foreign aid, although it may fuel rather than curtail corruption, is difficult for an executive to outright expropriate. Health aid, agriculture aid, education aid, technical assistance—these bilateral and multilateral donor programs all have their target ministries. For example, although the minister of health may give the president a kickback in return for the privilege to serve as the minister of health, the minister still oversees the distribution—both licit and illicit—of foreign donor money throughout the health administration.

Contrast this state of affairs to the new form of economic rents that began arriving in Kyrgyzstan in 2001—U.S. government payments for access to the Transit Center at Manas just outside of Bishkek. Manas, a critical staging point for U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, secured the sons and sons-in-law of Presidents Akaev and Bakiev payments in the hundreds of millions of dollars. These entrepreneurial presidential progeny, due to their monopoly control of fuel supplies to Manas, became the ire of the Kyrgyz political elite. U.S. government fuel payments after 2001, in contrast to foreign aid during the 1990s, were not divvied up among Kyrgyzstan’s narrow political class. This slighted political class rose up first in 2005 and again in 2010 to oust the executives who were stealing rather than sharing the state.

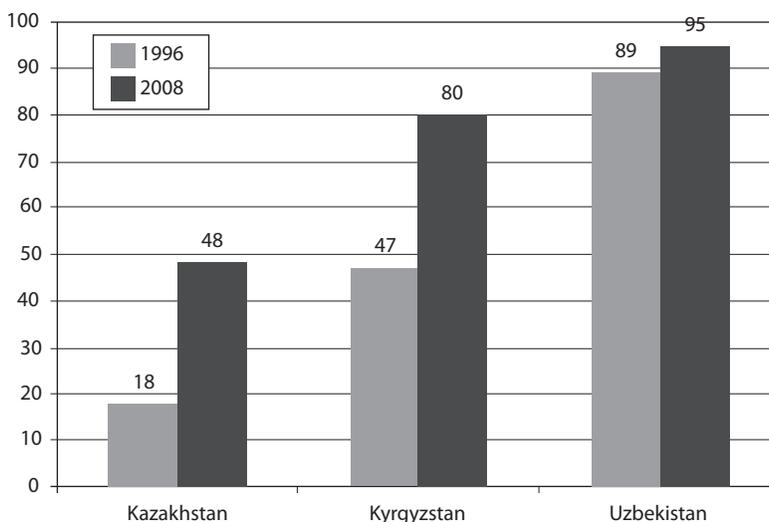
Variations in Islamic Revivalism

Perhaps less intuitive than the resource-endowment logic of Central Asia's diverging chaos, violence, and dynasty outcomes is how differing patterns of Islamic revivalism have contributed to post-Soviet autocratic variation. Similar to the resource-endowment logic, this identity-centered causality also exhibits strong economic dynamics. This book finds that Islamic networks and shared religious norms build interpersonal trust and, as a result, provide fertile foundations for the growth of local businesses and charities. These local businesses and charities in turn provide the social welfare that the post-Soviet Central Asian state (that is, the Kyrgyz and Uzbek states) no longer provide. This shifting of social welfare provision further erodes the central state's presence.

Current variations in Central Asian Islamic revivalism are, to a considerable degree, the results of past historical legacies. Islam's roots in Uzbekistan and in Kyrgyzstan's Fergana Valley span a thousand years. In contrast, it was not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that Islam saw wide adoption in what today is northern Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The ethnic and cultural reach of the Russian state was less pronounced in Uzbekistan than it was in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Ethnic Russians, at the time of the 1989 Soviet census, constituted approximately 36 percent of the Kazakh and 20 percent of the Kyrgyz republic populations, whereas ethnic Russians constituted only 8 percent of the Uzbek citizenry in 1989. Given these societal endowments, we would anticipate that Islamic identification in the immediate post-Soviet years would be most pronounced in Uzbekistan and least prevalent in Kazakhstan. We would also expect that Islamic identification within Kyrgyz society would lie somewhere in between the high of Uzbekistan and the low of Kazakhstan.

Indeed, this is what we find. In surveys that the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) conducted in 1996, fewer than 20 percent of Kazakh respondents reported they were Muslim, whereas approximately half of Kyrgyz and 90 percent of Uzbek respondents identified as Muslim. Kazakh identification with Islam has inched up in response to Russian emigration from Kazakhstan since the mid-1990s. Still, respondent identification with Islam in Kazakhstan remains markedly less pronounced than identification with Islam is in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In surveys colleagues and I conducted in 2008, the percentage of Kazakh respondents reporting they were Muslim remained less than 50 percent. Curiously, as figure I.4 illustrates, Islamic self-identification is now nearly pervasive among the Kyrgyz citizenry, rising from 50 percent in 1996 to slightly more

Figure I.4. Percentage of Kyrgyz, Kazakh, and Uzbek Citizens Self-identifying as Muslim in 1996 and 2008



Source: For 2008, see countrywide surveys of Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, and Uzbeks (1,000 respondents per survey), conducted in June 2008 as part of the National Science Foundation–funded project “The Effect of the Internet on Central Asian Society.” For 1996, see IFES, “Public Opinion in Kyrgyzstan, 1996” (April 1997), available at <http://www.ifes.org/Content/Publications/Survey/1997/Public-Opinion-in-Kyrgyzstan-1996.aspx>; IFES, “Public Opinion in Kazakhstan, 1996” (April 1997), available at <http://www.ifes.org/Content/Publications/Survey/1997/Public-Opinion-in-Kazakhstan-1996.aspx>; and IFES, “Public Opinion in Uzbekistan, 1996” (January 1997), available at <http://www.ifes.org/Content/Publications/Survey/1997/Public-Opinion-in-Uzbekistan-1996.aspx>. The IFES 1996 Kazakh survey included 1,500 respondents. The IFES 1996 Uzbek survey included 1,830 respondents.

than 80 percent today. It is all but universal in Uzbekistan, with 95 percent of Uzbek citizens reporting they are Muslim.²⁴

To a certain degree, in Kyrgyzstan as well as in Uzbekistan, Russian outmigration does account for some of this growth in Islamic self-identification. What is most remarkable, though, is the change within the titular Kyrgyz population. Thus, whereas 55 percent of ethnic Kyrgyz self-identified as Muslim in the 1996 IFES survey—just 8 percentage points higher than the full Kyrgyz survey sample—in our 2008 survey 98 percent of ethnic Kyrgyz self-identified as Muslim. In short, demographics and Muslim historical legacies alone, although they can explain much of the strong Islamic presence in Uzbekistan, cannot account for the marked Islamic revivalism in Kyrgyzstan. What can account for this cascade to Islam, I argue, is economics.

The Kyrgyz state has all but disappeared at the local level. Government-run

enterprises are closed; public schools are shuttered for lack of heat, supplies, and teachers; and Kyrgyzstan's two largest cities, Bishkek and Osh, are in the dark four or five hours a day because of the state's inability to provide steady electricity.²⁵ In contrast, in Kyrgyzstan's local religious and economic communities, generators and businesses are humming. In place of the state, local organizations (most notably Islamic ones) are stepping in to meet growing welfare needs. Muslim mutual-assistance groups build schools, establish neighborhood charities, and form the core of vibrant business associations. As these organizations expand, the Kyrgyz citizens are further drawn away from the state and toward alternative Muslim elites. As long as the central state does not interfere in the everyday life of these local communities, the Kyrgyz citizens are little bothered by the accumulating failures of post-Soviet patronage politics. When the Kyrgyz executive overreaches, however, when it attempts to exert control beyond Bishkek and into the regions, it is rebuffed and, in former presidents Akaev's and Bakiev's cases, unseated by popular protest.

In Uzbekistan, Islamic charities have similarly assumed roles once fulfilled by the state. Here, and perhaps not surprisingly given demographics and the longer historical presence of Islam in Uzbekistan, these Muslim charities emerged far more rapidly than they did in Kyrgyzstan. Karimov's Muslim challenge, as I illustrate in chapter 4, did not begin with Andijan in May 2005, but rather with Muslim charities' *de facto* takeover of Namangan in November 1991. In further contrast to Kyrgyzstan, the state-society relations within which these Muslim charities are embedded are considerably more contentious and violent under Karimov than they were under either Akaev or Bakiev. Karimov has the coercive capacity to counter the growing influence of local Muslim charities and elites. That such coercion is in Karimov's best interest is debatable. His appointees have appeared at times to exhibit greater loyalty to local Muslim economic elites than to the central government—a reality that is understandably threatening to an autocratic ruler. At the same time, repression begets militancy. Karimov's 1991 anti-Islam campaign in Namangan gave rise to the paramilitary Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and his 2005 Andijan repression has reinvigorated this militant Islamist movement. Although the IMU's bombings in Tashkent in 1999 and 2004 did not hit their desired target, Karimov remains in the crosshairs of a militant movement he himself helped to foment.

How long Uzbek patronage politics will remain airborne is not clear. In May 2004, on a flight from Tashkent to Qarshi, my plane taxied past the wreckage of an Uzbek Air Yak-40. The jet had crashed three months earlier, yet the distressing jumble of engines and fuselage remained on the tarmac. Was this Karimov's way of conveying a message to his pilots? Be wary or this too will be your future. Or

was this a portent of Karimov's own fate? Has he, through relentless repression and violence, depleted his reserve of copilots and navigators to the extent that his own regime is about to collapse?

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan we can predict with greater certainty. Nazarbaev has had little need to reach deep into his immense reserve of political elites; few defect because the rewards of defection are so low compared with what the Nazarbaev regime itself can offer. Kyrgyzstan's elite reserve is far smaller, far more fractured, and far more likely to peel away from central government patronage in favor of local (often Muslim) business elites. This leaves the Kyrgyz executive with two alternatives: either he can do his best to maintain the peace, thereby maintaining his hand at the controls, or he can turn his back on the delicate balancing act required to secure a winning coalition among Kyrgyzstan's fractured political elite. Thus far, Kyrgyz executives have chosen the latter alternative, stripping state assets as fast as they can before they are tossed from power. This all makes for a turbulent ride, but a ride that will not end in the same political wreckage that is likely to befall Uzbekistan.