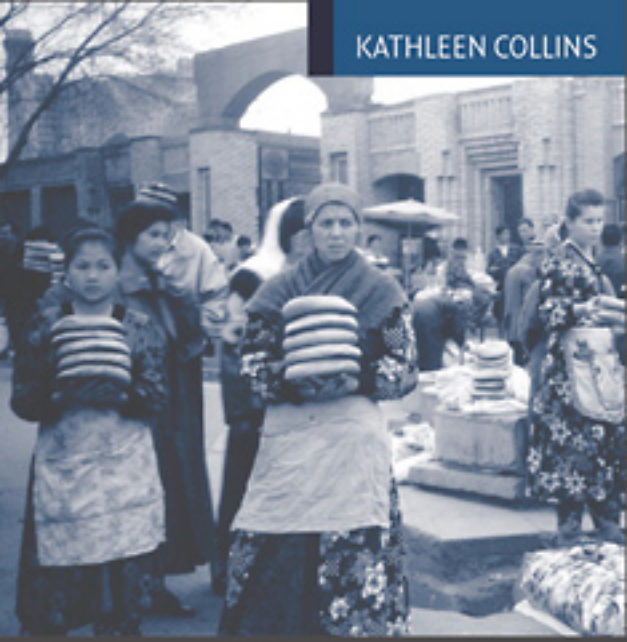
KATHLEEN COLLINS



CLAN POLITICS AND REGIME TRANSITION IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia

This book is a study of the role of clan networks in Central Asia from the early twentieth century through 2004. Exploring the social, economic, and historical roots of clans, and their political role and political transformation during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, this study argues that clans are informal political actors that are critical to understanding politics in this region. The book demonstrates that the Soviet system was far less successful in transforming and controlling Central Asian society, and in its policy of eradicating clan identities, than has often been assumed. Clans increasingly influenced and constrained the regime's political trajectory during the later Soviet and post-Soviet periods, making liberalizing political and economic reforms very difficult. In order to understand Central Asian politics and the region's economies today, scholars and policy makers must take into account the powerful role of these informal groups, how they adapt and change over time, and how they may constrain or undermine democratization in this strategic region.

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To my mother, an advocate of justice, truth, and human dignity.

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Preface

> Trains in these parts went from East to West and from West to East. . . . On either side of the railway lines lay the great wide spaces of the desert – Sary-Ozeki, the Middle lands of the yellow steppes. In these parts any distance was measured in relation to the railway, as if from the Greenwich meridian. . . . And the trains went from East to West and from West to East.
>
> Chingiz Aitmatov, *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* (1980)

This is Central Asia, remote, exotic, and harsh. These are the words of Chingiz Aitmatov, a native Kyrgyz and father of the "Turkestani" movement in Soviet literature. Aitmatov seeks to capture the barrenness and isolation of Soviet Central Asia, its physical and metaphorical distance from Moscow, even at the close of the 1970s, after six decades of Soviet rule. In his surreal fantasy *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*, Aitmatov vividly portrays a land and a people whose history, tradition, and identity were the victims of relentless Soviet purges but, paradoxically, the beneficiaries of Soviet development. From collectivization of the nomads' lands to the elimination of the tribal *bai* (wealthy), to Stalin's war on Islam and his 1937 slaughter of the Ferghana intelligentsia, to Khrushchev's disastrous Virgin Lands program and cotton campaign, Central Asia incessantly felt the heavy and destructive hand of Soviet rule.

And yet by 1980, as the Soviet grip began to relax, Central Asia remained at best only haphazardly penetrated by the Soviet system. Everywhere, modernity clashed with tradition. On the Kazakh steppe, camels still roamed freely on the outskirts of nuclear weapons sites. In the Kyrgyz Republic, Communist Party officials still wore *kalpaks* (traditional felt hats) and drank *kumuz* (fermented mare's milk). Throughout Central Asia, stalwart Soviet "atheists" still laid their dead to rest under the crescent moons of Islam, passed on knowledge of the *Qur'an*, and even observed the Muslim feast of *Ro'za*. And yet all the while, the ever-present steel railroad connected

this vast and persistent expanse of Asiatic steppe, desert, and mountain to modernization, to Soviet politics, industry, education, and culture.

If we leap forward two decades to the late 1990s, the so-called post-Soviet era, we find that presidents have replaced the Soviet first secretaries of each Central Asian republic. The Communist Party has been subsumed by various shades and stripes of "democratic" parties. New ideologies, from consumerism to Islamism, have replaced Marxism-Leninism. Capitalist economic theory is taught by those who once propounded only socialism. The Leninist Houses of Friendship now welcome not brother Soviets, but American, German, and Japanese investors. Changes along the scale of Stalinist industrialization are again under way. And yet Aitmatov's portrayal of Soviet Central Asia is still remarkably fitting. Why is this so? How is this possible? How can so much change so quickly, and yet so much remain the same?

As a political scientist, in this book I look at the transformation of Central Asia in light of such changes and historical processes occurring around the globe. The breakdown of authoritarian regimes, and the democratization that sometimes follows, have been dynamic and ongoing movements for several centuries. In the twentieth century, these issues have often been at the heart of major United States foreign policy efforts. Not surprisingly, these processes are also the focus of much scholarship in the field of political science. Why? Because of the rise of international norms regarding basic human rights, which generally consider freedom from authoritarian rule and a liberal democratic form of government to be integral to human dignity. Although liberal democracy may not, indeed never does, meet the criteria of the classic Aristotelian "best" regime – a regime of participatory rule by the virtuous – liberal democracy has thus far proven to be the closest approximation to the post-Enlightenment Western ideal of a just government. In recent decades, these norms of legitimate government have diffused beyond the West. Thus we have witnessed the courageous deeds that have defined certain cataclysms in world history – East Germans tearing down the Berlin Wall, Hungarians flooding their barbed wire border and heading West, Poles marching behind Solidarity and rallying to the encouragement of their Pope, and Muscovites mounting tanks to defy the 1991 coup against Gorbachev – all this in the name of freedom and democracy.

Deep in the Soviet Union, however, the wave of democratization was slower in coming. Leninism and Stalinism had gripped the Soviet peoples much longer and much more harshly than most authoritarian dictators or ideologies throughout history had been able to do. Yet there was never a lack of dissidents demanding truth and justice. Pasternak's poetry sought space for the personal life. Mandelstam and Akhmatova died in a quest for freedom of self-expression. Solzhenitsyn mocked Stalinism's cowardly attempts to control the human mind and soul. Sakharov survived exile in Gorky and multiple hunger strikes in order to expose communism's brutal disregard for human rights. Writing from Central Asia, Aitmatov and Suleimanov

published fantastic tales to call their ethnic peoples to remember who they are, to value their cultural identity, and to keep sacred those very memories Soviet ideology had sought to destroy. By the late 1980s, atomized dissidence in the Soviet Union had surged into mass movements. What had begun with scientists and intellectuals in Leningrad and Moscow soon rippled outward to inspire the popular fronts and civil protests of the Balts and Ukrainians and, eventually, even of the Central Asians. The grip of repressive and corrupt regimes has been strong, but now, after a decade and a half of failed post-Soviet democratization, Kyrgyz and other Central Asians are again renewing the call for democracy.

The post-Soviet political transition of Central Asia is the main concern of this book. Not only theoretically, but normatively, the Central Asian transition is imbued with importance and meaning – for those analytically studying that transition, for those shouldering the responsibility of shaping and directing that transition, and most of all, for the many people who are living that transition. In this book, I hope to contribute to our understanding and remembering of that process.

Acknowledgments

Perhaps the most enjoyable part of finishing a book is finally to have the opportunity to thank all those who were involved in the process. It is with sincere and heartfelt gratitude that I acknowledge the support of so many teachers, colleagues, and friends who have been a part of this work and a part of my life.

My work in Central Asia would never have been possible without the dedication and assistance of many Central Asian scholars, students, and dear friends who gave of themselves so generously. Many hundreds of people, in many regions of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, patiently sat through interview sessions with me, and always offered such warm and overflowing hospitality that it was most difficult to leave. Unfortunately, because of political risks, I cannot recognize by name the countless individuals who made my travels to Central Asia so rich in friendships, conversations, and experiences, as well as a remarkable education. I shall forever be indebted to them, and I trust that if they read this, they will know that I remember them.

Many other friends, also interlopers in Central Asia, graciously gave of their time to assist in my research in multiple ways. I am indebted in particular to Sabri Ergan, Howard Ockman, Michael Wallace, Dick Rechtiene, Sethurman Dinakar, Dmitry Trofimov, John Fox, Aftab Khoker, and Ambassador Ram Mukhija and Mrs. Mukhija, who were hospitable and kind and who never failed to spark interesting discussions during my long stays in Central Asia. Ambassador Stanley Escuadero and Ambassador Joseph Pressel graciously shared their time and extensive knowledge of the region on multiple occasions. Ambassador M. K. Bhadrakumar's keen insight constantly provoked new ways of analyzing my findings and greatly expanded my appreciation of the history and culture of Asia. Ercan Murat thoughtfully provided much-needed technical assistance and his faithful drivers, and shared the practical advice that kept me from many a bad situation during my travels. Shrinivas, Basit, Waseem, and Mohammed kindly offered much-needed help. My loyal drivers/bodyguards – Sasha, Sergei,

Alexei, Aziz, Sasha, Gulam, Kubanbek, and Alisher – ensured that I never had to worry when I was in their hands. Over the course of our friendship, from Stanford to Moscow, Valery Tishkov has offered a wealth of scholarly advice and wisdom. The Institute for Ethnography and Anthropology, which he directs, has been generous with its treasures of experience, knowledge, and resources.

My book is the result of many influences on my education. My mother was perhaps the first to spark my fascination with Russia, through the history and literature she teaches so well. Father Fred Kelly, formerly a professor at the Jesuit University in Baghdad, long ago kindled in me an abiding curiosity about the Middle East and a profound respect for the Islamic faith and peoples. Although my academic studies originally directed me toward Russia, eventually I found myself in the heart of a fascinating mélange of Russian and Islamic culture and history. I cannot forget the inspiration of many wonderful faculty members at the University of Notre Dame, where I spent my undergraduate years of study. With warm gratitude I remember my Russian classes with Thomas Marullo and David Gasperetti. I owe a debt to T. R. Schwarz, Edward Goerner, Walter Pratt, and Marcia Weigle, who encouraged me to go to graduate school, and especially to George Brinkley, who left me a library of Soviet history books that I use to this day. Jim McAdams, my senior thesis advisor, was a constant source of support, not only at Notre Dame, but during the many ups and downs of graduate school as well. He gave me the best advice possible when I left for Kyrgyzstan in June 1994 – to begin field research. He told me to ask people what was important, and just to listen. I thank him for always having faith in me and my work, right through to this book's completion.

I returned to Notre Dame as a Kellogg Fellow, and later as a faculty member. Since then, I have benefited from being a member of a truly great cohort of colleagues and friends. Scott Mainwaring and the Kellogg Institute have provided a research home and exceptional support. Fran Hagopian and Tony Messina each read parts of the manuscript and gave generous advice and support in recent years. I truly thank them. Rodney Hero has been a wonderfully encouraging chairman. Michael Coppedge and Michael Zuckert offered sound advice. I have learned much from Eileen Botting, Al Tillery, and Lou Ayala. They have been great critics and even better friends. Cheri Gray solved many crises during my overseas travel. Many, many more people in the Notre Dame community have together created a wonderful environment for my teaching and research, and I can never thank them enough.

I owe debts of gratitude to many other people, especially at Stanford University, where this book began as a dissertation. The Department of Political Science at Stanford, the Berkeley–Stanford Program in Post-Soviet Studies, the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), the United States Institute of Peace, the Center for Russian and East European Studies, the Institute for International Studies, and the MacArthur Foundation all generously funded my research. And Jeanette Marino, like a good

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It is hard to imagine being blessed with a more wonderful dissertation committee than mine. They genuinely care about scholarship, about their students, and about the real political problems of regime transitions and democratization. Philippe Schmitter was instrumental in framing my ideas about the study of democratization, and has continually given thought-provoking advice. Jean Oi always challenged me to sharpen and clarify my arguments, and to develop both the careful empirical detail and the broader comparative implications of my work. For years, when not saving democracy in Russia, Mike McFaul has always managed to offer insightful academic advice and an abundance of moral support. Most especially, I thank Larry Diamond and David Holloway. Larry probably lost many hours of sleep in so carefully reading and critiquing my lengthy chapters, and in provoking me to develop my arguments and analysis. Perhaps just as importantly, his perpetual encouragement has given me whatever confidence I have in myself, my ideas,

and my work. Larry's dedication continually fills me with awe. The world is a far better place because of his commitment to democratization. I can never adequately thank my graduate advisor, David Holloway, who unfailingly exemplifies the true nature of scholarship and the strength of personal integrity. I persevered through graduate school because of his support. He has been a constant inspiration. The Uzbek poet Alisher Navoi once wrote that "an *ustoz* is a more than a teacher; he is a mentor and a friend." David Holloway is a true *ustoz*. Because I had such a wonderful committee of advisors, I completed my dissertation, and now this book, with some sadness. I can only hope to bring such passion and dedication to my own teaching and research.

I presented the dissertation and book manuscript at APSA (the American Political Science Association), ASN (the Association for the Study of Nationalities), AAASS (the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies), the University of Wisconsin, Stanford, Cornell, Princeton, Duke, the University of Chicago, Dartmouth, the University of Illinois, Ohio State, King's College Cambridge, Berkeley, the Kellogg Institute, the Harriman Institute at Columbia University, the University of Minnesota, the Harvard Davis Center for Russian Research, and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, among other places. I greatly appreciate the helpful comments I received. An overview of the book was published as "The Logic of Clan Politics: Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories," *World Politics*, vol. 56, no. 2 (January 2004). Parts of Chapter 2 of my dissertation and Chapter 1 of this book were published as "Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 3 (July 2002). I am also indebted to two anonymous reviewers from Cambridge University Press, and especially to my Cambridge editor, Lew Bateman, for seeing the book to completion. I was fortunate to have superb editorial assistance from Stephanie Lewis Levy and Phil Costopoulos. There are many aspects of this study that are still incomplete, unknown, or in flux. Some things have necessarily been left unsaid. The many imperfections are solely my own. Yet I hope that in spite of them, those who inspired and guided this work will be proud to have done so.

Finally, I owe an irreparable debt to my family. My parents inspired in me a love of learning and sacrificed much to give me an education. Ryan, Megan, and Anne have patiently endured me and encouraged my endeavors for many years. No words will express what that means to me. Nor would I have survived "my great white whale," as he puts it, without my future husband, Tom, who always makes me laugh. Tom probably never planned to become an expert on Central Asia, but he has listened night after night with loving kindness and patience to the saga of this book, and he has been waiting too long for me to finish it. Most of all, I thank Jayne Collins, a great teacher, scholar, and mom. I dedicate this book to her – for her innumerable hours of worrying, and for her constant support and love.

Notre Dame, Indiana

Note on Transliteration

In this book, I use a modified Library of Congress system of transliteration from the Cyrillic, especially for Russian words and names. There is no standard system for the transliteration of the Central Asian languages. There is even further confusion in transliteration, given that some languages (especially Uzbek and Turkmen) have started to use a modified Latin alphabet in recent years. There is also disagreement among Central Asians themselves over the proper new Latin spelling of some words. Throughout the text, I adopt the Central Asian form based on the Cyrillic script, since the most comprehensive Central Asian dictionaries are still in Cyrillic. A few exceptions are included in the glossary.

I have adopted some changes for the ease of the reader who is not fluent in Russian or the Central Asian languages. I have typically not used accent marks above the letters, though I have retained the Russian soft sign (e.g., *oblast'*). For words commonly used, such as glasnost, I drop the sign.

For the ease of the reader as well as for the sake of consistency throughout the text, I use one form (the Uzbek form) of any Central Asian word that has very similar variants and the same meaning across the languages (for example, *qishloq, oqsoqol, mahalla*). See the Appendix for other forms of these words in Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen, and Kazakh. When using a plural form of a Central Asian or Russian word (such as *qishloq, kolkhoz*), I simply add the English plural form, "s" (*qishloq*s, *kolkhoz*es), rather than use the Central Asian plural, which might be confusing to the reader.

I attempt to use the most common and most readable spellings of Central Asian persons' names (such as Niyazov, not Niiazov). If they retain the Russian spelling, I adopt that. If they have changed to a more traditional Uzbek or Tajik spelling, I use that form. Some names are written in multiple ways in the local press, so it can be difficult to know which is the preferred form for each person. It is important to note that in some cases, individuals and/or families since independence and in some cases since perestroika have

opted to drop the Russian endings from their names (e.g., the Pulatov/Pulat brothers).

When using Central Asian place names, I generally adopt the transliteration from the Russian/Cyrillic spelling, except when a particular spelling is common in the Western literature, or when the Russian form is less readable than other forms. For example, I use the Uzbek spelling Jizzak (rather than the Russian Dzhizak) for the Uzbek province. I use Samarkand, the common English spelling, for the city and province of Samarkand. I use the common transliteration of the Russian form of Uzbekistan (not the Uzbek form, Ozbekistan). In discussing the post-1991 period, I use the common form, Kyrgyzstan, rather than the official form, the Kyrgyz Republic, throughout text for the sake of simplicity and to conserve space. Transliteration does not reflect any bias toward one of the many languages used in the region, but only my concern for some consistency and the ease of the general reader.

1

An Introduction to Political Development and Transition in Central Asia

In 1994, I had the opportunity to monitor the local elections in the Kyrgyz Republic. I was then given a first glimpse of clan politics. I talked with local elders who had come in to vote for their twenty or thirty closest relatives. The election monitors didn't mind. "This is our practice here," they said. They did not stop the elders, nor report incidents of fraud. Election observers in other districts recounted the same story. This seemed odd in a country recently deemed a "democracy." The election results were even more odd, as political parties gained less than 20 percent of the seats in parliament and did not even field a candidate in the presidential elections. Just as bizarre were the 1994 and 1999 Uzbek and Tajik parliamentary elections, where new authoritarian regimes had attempted since the Soviet collapse to create mass, pro-regime parties, based on their renamed Communist Party institutions, but had widely failed. As in the Kyrgyz Republic, the majority of seats went to so-called independents. None of these regimes was able to combat the widespread practice of voting for personalistic leaders along clan lines. Moreover, in spite of massive campaigns by all three governments since 1991 to create national, civic identities, at the mass level, in all regions of each country, most people strongly identified with their local clan networks, not with parties, not with ethnic groups, and certainly not with either the democratic opposition or the state. In other ways, the Central Asian presidents actively drew on clan ties and practices during elections. In the subsequent presidential elections, the Kyrgyz government informally pressured local elders to organize a traditional "democratic" *kurultai* to endorse the incumbent president and to use their kin and patronage networks in the villages to vote for him.

The Central Asian elections offer just one example of "clan politics." This study explores the causes, dynamics, and implications of this general type of political behavior – politics organized by and around informal identity networks commonly known as clans. After the Soviet collapse in 1991, neither scholars nor policy makers had anticipated the rise of a primarily

informal, clan-based politics throughout Central Asia. While the optimists predicted that democracy could and would spread to the far reaches of the former Soviet Union, the naysayers expected either the rise of Islamic fundamentalism or the persistence of communism even after the Central Asian republics were forced to exit the defunct Soviet Union. Indeed, the basis of such uncertainty and pessimism was strong; Central Asia, the Soviet Union's southern, Islamic, and Asian rim, had never before experienced statehood and nationhood, much less democracy. For 130 years these republics had been colonized, first by the Russian empire and later by the Soviet empire; they thus shared a similar authoritarian political legacy.

While Russia has long viewed this region as its Muslim periphery, Central Asia was at the heart of multiple civilizations long before Russia's entry into the region. The pre-Russian Islamicization, under the influence of Persian and Arab neighbors, and a pre-Islamic history characterized by tribal political alliances and a clan-based social organization are just as important to Central Asia's cultural, social, and political history and identity. Indeed, the complexity of identity and history in Central Asia makes it a region of rich interest for studies of comparative politics.

This book is a study of regime transition, transformation, and state building in Central Asia, from Soviet colonization to decolonization; in particular, the book explores the informal politics that shapes these processes, the political systems that emerge, and the durability of these systems. Creating a democratic regime and creating a durable one are two issues that should be linked, yet most scholars and practitioners of the "third wave" of democracy have focused on building democratic regimes while neglecting the fundamental issue of regime stability.[1] This study integrates these issues.

Building on very similar cultural and social foundations, and coming from nearly parallel experiences with Soviet political and economic institutions and development strategies, the five new states of Central Asia surprisingly embarked on distinct political trajectories. While the Kyrgyz Republic rapidly adopted democratic and market reforms, its neighbors – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan – settled into a post-communist authoritarianism. Moreover, while four of the five Central Asian regimes survived the transition and have subsequently maintained internal stability, Tajikistan's regime did not. In 1992, the Tajik regime collapsed in the midst of a bloody civil conflict that would last until 1997, with violent repercussions and flare-ups into early 2004. This is one central puzzle addressed in this book: What explains this initial divergence of trajectories – in both the type and the durability of these emergent regimes? Is democratization possible in Central Asia? And why do some regimes survive decolonization

[1] On the democratization wave that began in Portugal in 1971, see Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

and transition? That is, why are some regimes durable while others abruptly collapse in conflict?

Going beyond the transition, this study asks: What kinds of regimes emerge in the longer term? Can they be understood by examining only the formal institutions of the regime, when in fact in-country research suggests that clans play such a critical role? Why and how have clans and clan politics been shaping these political trajectories? We must explain the informalization of power in regimes that had once seemed so solidly institutionalized, consolidated, and even modern under the Soviet system. This book shows how clans have played a major role in this process. The book offers a historical and broader theoretical explanation of the persistence of clans and the rise of clan politics. Clan politics creates an informal regime, an arrangement of power and rules in which clans are the dominant social actors and political players; they transform the political system. Clan networks, not formal institutions and elected officials, hold and exercise real power. Clan politics has a corrosive effect on the formal regime, especially on democratic institutions; it further erodes the durability of both democratic and authoritarian institutions over time, as fragile, personalistic regimes cling to power.

In these respects, understanding clans in certain societies is critical to responding to one of the key theoretical and policy questions of our time: why and how does democratization sometimes fail, and why is political order often a victim as well? Instability, collapse, and conflict are the brutal consequences. Since the late 1990s, the U.S. government, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have been both intrigued and confounded by democratization and its failures in Central Asia. Scholars and policy makers alike have viewed Central Asia through theoretical models that fail to grasp the complex sociological basis of either its pre-transition politics or its transitional and post-transition regimes. Most observers have viewed the post-communist countries uniformly as cases of democratization, implying that significant forces within society or the state were pushing for democracy. But while Central Europe succeeded, Central Asia failed. Thomas Carothers recently inserted a reality check into the "transitions debate."[2] Carothers countered that Central Asia, the Caucasus, and even Russia have not in fact been struggling toward democracy. They are not temporarily trapped between communist dictatorship and liberal democracy. Rather, like many failed (or half-heartedly attempted) African transitions of the 1950s and 1960s, and again in the 1990s, these regimes have comfortably settled into new forms of authoritarianism that might continue for decades.[3] Not just in post-Soviet

[2] Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transitions Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 1 (January 2002), pp. 5–21.

[3] Philip Roeder, "The Revolution of 1989: Postcommunism and the Social Sciences," *Slavic Review*, vol. 58, no. 4 (Winter 1999), pp. 743–755. For similar views on African transitions,

Central Asia, but in Afghanistan, Somalia, the Sudan, and Iraq, tribal and other identity networks have similarly attained greater salience as socialist dictatorships were swept away.[4] The Central Asian cases therefore present a remarkable opportunity for scholars of regime change and democratization. In comparatively tracing three distinct post-communist transitions – democratization in the Kyrgyz Republic, authoritarianism in Uzbekistan, and regime collapse and disintegration in Tajikistan – this study ties together and examines both regime transition and democratization and political order and collapse.

I. AN OVERVIEW OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN TRAJECTORIES

In the heady days of the early 1990s, the Kyrgyz Republic seemed the exemplar of democratization theory; democratization had made significant strides, even in the most unlikely and unfavorable of circumstances. Neither socioeconomic deprivation and decline, nor the "Leninist legacy" of seventy years, nor Islamic or Asian values – all factors that earlier scholarship had highlighted as detrimental to democratization – seemed to have thwarted the spread of democracy. Following the adoption of its new constitution in May 1993, the Kyrgyz Republic was internationally touted by the Western media as "an island of democracy" surrounded by a sea of authoritarianism. The president of the Kyrgyz Republic (more commonly referred to as Kyrgyzstan) was Askar Akaev, a former academic who became renowned in Western circles for his supple references to Alexis de Tocqueville and Thomas Jefferson. Kyrgyz legislators and judges flew to Washington, D.C. for training in democratic principles, the rule of law, and market economics. Where civil society had been nearly nonexistent, nongovernmental organizations suddenly proliferated, defending human rights, supporting women in business, developing a free press, and even creating a Silk Road Internet. Kyrgyz youth watched *Dynasty*, listened to Bruce Springsteen, wore American flag tee shirts, and even studied at Georgetown, Indiana University, and Notre Dame. These changes were foreign not only to communism but also to the region's Asian and Islamic culture. The globalization of capitalism and democracy seemed at its apex.

A neat discussion of the Central Asian transitions would end with 1995; by then, the second set of presidential and/or parliamentary elections had taken place, a point that many democratization theorists use as the marker to end the transition. Kyrgyzstan had liberalized and established an electoral democracy by late 1991, according to Joseph Schumpeter's minimalist

see Jeffery Herbst, "Political Liberalization in Africa after Ten Years," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 33, no. 3 (April 2001), pp. 357–375.

4 Susan Sachs, "In Iraq's Next Act, Tribes May Play the Lead Role," *New York Times*, June 6, 2004.

criterion of free and fair elections. Civil and political liberties were rapidly expanding.[5] While hardly a full-fledged liberal democracy, much less a consolidated one, Kyrgyzstan surprised the world during this early period. In Kyrgyzstan's neighbors, however, elections were manipulated, and some doubted that any transition had taken place. In Uzbekistan, President Islam Karimov won a referendum and appeared to have consolidated his dictatorship, described in the American press as Stalinist. In Tajikistan, the former communist leadership was run from power during the civil war, and the newly elected president, Emomali Rakhmonov, emerged from the chaos of the civil war and recreated an authoritarian regime with Russia's backing.

Yet the story of transition does not end here. As political uncertainty subsided and the new institutions and rules of the game were established, Central Asia's regime trajectories increasingly converged. By 2000, these regimes looked quite similar – similar in their inability to consolidate their formal institutions, similar in their informal division of political and economic resources, and similar in their increasingly precarious grasp on domestic stability. By 2002, not merely democracy, but the durability of these regimes appeared to be in question. Why were these democratic and authoritarian institutions unable to consolidate their power? These cases suggest important implications for our understanding of institutions, the role of social actors in transitions, and the importance of informal politics.

Indeed, we find that, despite the postcommunist regime, institutions turn out to be less significant than the informal clan relationships that organize society and politics. In adopting a more historical and sociological view of political development in Central Asia, this work situates the short-term regime transition within the longer-term political development of this region – from its pre-Soviet and pre-modern society, through Soviet "modernization," to a post-Soviet transition, transformation, and state building. In this light, the post-Soviet transition is indeed a sharp and uncertain break with the past. The divergence of Central Asia's immediate post-Soviet trajectories is puzzling. The post-transition period, from about 1995 to the present, exhibits an ongoing dynamic between the formal and informal elements of politics, and a surprising reemergence of informal organizations embedded in both the Soviet and the pre-Soviet political order of this region.

Clans have not played a political role only in Central Asia. Yet they have greater resilience and political power in some societies than in others. For example, clans declined or disappeared in many states in Western Europe, and have sometimes been controlled by states in East Asia. Yet in post-Soviet Central Asia, we find that clans adapted to the Soviet system, were

[5] See Joseph Schumpeter's classic, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975 [1947]).

TABLE 1.1. *Political trajectories in the post-Soviet Central Asian cases*

Short Term: 1991–94		
Case	**Formal Regime Type**[a]	**Regime Durability**[b]
Kyrgyzstan	Electoral democracy	Durable
Uzbekistan	Autocracy	Durable
Tajikistan	Collapsed regime	Not durable
Kazakhstan	Autocracy	Durable
Turkmenistan	Autocracy	Durable

Medium–Longer Term: 1995–2004			
Case	**Formal Regime Type**	**Informal Regime**	**Regime Durability**
Kyrgyzstan	Autocracy	Clan politics	Weakly durable
Uzbekistan	Autocracy	Clan politics	Moderately durable but declining
Tajikistan	Autocracy	Clan politics	Weakly durable
Kazakhstan	Autocracy	Clan politics[c]	Durable
Turkmenistan	Autocracy	Clan politics	Weakly durable

[a] Regime type is measured according to Freedom House scores.

[b] Regime durability scores reflect indicators of collapse in Robert Rotberg, "Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators," in Robert Rotberg, ed., *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 2003), pp. 2–9. Specifically, I use a broken pact, coup attempts, protest, and violent insurgency as indicators of declining durability.

[c] Clan politics is much more limited and controlled in this case, as a result of economic prosperity.

both repressed and fostered by it, and now play a transformative role in the post-colonial conditions of these new states. (See Table 1.1 for an overview of the cases and trajectories.)

One of the objectives of this book is to explore the relevance of two major theoretical arguments about democratization for understanding regime transition in Central Asia and, by implication, in other clan-based societies. Comparative historical analysis of the Central Asian transitions finds that neither the "preconditions" school nor the "transitions" school adequately explains the type of transition that takes place in these cases.[6] However, this inquiry goes beyond the rather narrow focus of these approaches to post-communist studies, situating these transitions within a broader set of political

[6] For a more precise discussion of each theory's predictions for Central Asia, see Kathleen Collins, "Clans, Pacts, and Politics: Understanding Regime Transition in Central Asia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1999), chapter 2; and Kathleen Collins, "Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 3 (July 2002), pp. 137–140.

processes under way.[7] In developing an alternative approach that puts clans at the center of a theory of political development, I draw upon the classic political sociology of Weber and Durkheim, as well as upon insights taken from the more recent literature on political development, informal institutions, norms, and networks, to explain these political processes. Clans are the critical informal organizations that we must conceptualize and theorize in order to understand politics in Central Asia and similar developing states. This work finds that the dynamic interplay among clans and between clans and the state helps to explain the central elements of the political trajectory: (1) regime durability, that is, whether or not the regime will be viable or collapse during and after the transition; and (2) regime type, not just the formal governing arrangements and distribution of power (e.g., democracy, autocracy, state socialism), but more importantly, the informal governing arrangement and distribution of power beneath the formal façade.

II. LINKING POLITICAL TRANSITION AND POLITICAL ORDER

In this book, I bring together two major literatures often treated disparately: studies of transition and democratization, and scholarship on political development and the social foundations of political order. This analysis both builds from and critiques earlier approaches, and contributes to them by offering a theory that connects clans and political trajectories. The post-communist cases are indeed a "laboratory" for theories of democratization.[8] Yet they are also a laboratory for understanding the dynamics of political development and state building in post-colonial and post-imperial societies. Indeed, the two issues are deeply intertwined. Before delving into a discussion of a theory of clan politics and transition, in chapter 2 of this book, it is important to understand what the prevailing paradigms for studying transition tell us, or in fact fail to explain, in these cases.

The Inadequacy of Theories of Regime Transition

Two schools of thought have dominated the literature on regime transition and democratization, as well as the literature on post-communism, for

[7] Some scholars have argued that we should view the post-communist cases as transformations, suggesting a deeper change than a mere formal regime transition. See Lazslo Bruzst and David Stark, *Post-Socialist Pathways: Transforming Politics and Property in East Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Katherine Verdery and Michael Buroway, *Uncertain Transition* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999); and Valerie Bunce and Maria Csanadi, "Uncertainty in the Transition: Post-Communism in Hungary," *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Spring 1993), p. 262.

[8] George Breslauer, "Introduction," in Richard Anderson, M. Steven Fish, Stephen Hanson, and Philip Roeder, *Postcommunism and the Theory of Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 3.

decades. Since 1989, these schools have shaped the debate about the causes and failures of democratization in the post-communist transitions.[9] In the 1960s and 1970s, one school of thought, generally known as "preconditions" or alternatively "modernization" theory, emphasized the causal role of macro-social, macroeconomic, and macro-cultural variables in explaining regime change and democratization.[10] This school looks at rising GDP, literacy, and economic development, at the rise of a middle class, and at the presence of a secular, individualist culture as preconditions for democracy. Focusing on one social structure – class – Barrington Moore formulated the hypothesis: no middle class, no democracy.[11] He would not have anticipated democratization in Kyrgyzstan, or anywhere else in the former Soviet republics for that matter. In fact, in 1991, except for their literacy rates (estimated at 97 to 99 percent) and their partial industrialization and urbanization, the Central Asian republics would hardly typify societies on the brink of democratization. (See Appendix, Tables A.3 and A.4.) Almond and Verba, representing another strand of the "preconditions" school, would have been skeptical because of the lack of individualistic and civic values, much less a civil society, across the region. On the one hand, large segments of society did remain independent of the state, especially after the Stalinist period. Yet, much like what has been termed "traditional society" in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, Central Asian society is organized around an array of clan, kin, and Islamic institutions. Social organization is largely ascriptive and involuntary, promoting communal norms and values, unlike the individualist and voluntary associations that de Tocqueville and others have argued are the basis of Western and democratic civil society.[12] Others have fined-tuned the negative prediction of the modernization school, pointing out that democratization might commence in these low-income, semimodern countries but would

[9] These two theoretical paradigms, their specific hypotheses, and their application to Central Asia are discussed at greater length in Kathleen Collins, "Clans, Pacts, and Politics: Understanding Regime Transition," pp. 21–99. For a statistical critique of the preconditions literature's variables as applied to the post-communist states, see M. Steven Fish, "Democratization's Requisites: The Postcommunist Experience," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 14, no. 3 (1998), pp. 212–247. For a critique of transitology, see Valerie Bunce, "Comparative Democratization: Big and Bounded Generalizations," *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 33, no. 6/7 (August/September 2000), pp. 703–734.

[10] Exemplars include Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968); Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1960); Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995); and Kenneth Jowitt, *The New World Disorder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

[11] Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

[12] Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965); and Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

probably not be sustainable.[13] An unanswered question, however, is what mechanism or mechanisms undermine democracy in less modern countries.

For the past two decades, the "transitions" school has become the predominant approach for explaining transitions from authoritarianism and democratization. Dankwart Rustow, and later Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, in a sharp break with their pessimistic predecessors, set out the central argument of democratization theory: elite actors can willfully reject authoritarianism and both initiate democratization and consolidate democracy irrespective of social, cultural, and economic conditions or historical legacies.[14] While giving hope for democracy around the globe, this view often explains the short-term, elite-led initiation of democracy at the expense of anticipating and understanding the medium-term retrenchment toward authoritarianism, especially given the absence of social support for democracy. Indeed, the central hypothesis of this theory is that elite choices, in the form of often-exclusivist elite pacts are, paradoxically, the most likely path to successful democratization. Conversely, paths that involve society, the theory predicts, are more likely to end in failure. A large corpus of subsequent literature has focused overwhelmingly on the formal and elite level, on getting the *formal* institutions right to consolidate democracy,[15] rather than on the often more powerful informal level.[16] Less scholarship has been devoted to explaining the factors working against democratization, much less against consolidation. O'Donnell himself did warn that informal, particularistic relationships lead to low-quality, "delegative democracies" in much of the developing world, but he expects them to be durable regimes.[17]

The Central Asian cases call us to rethink the central hypothesis of O'Donnell and Schmitter, since pacts in Central Asia have generally been followed by autocracy; they were followed by a brief period of democratization only in Kyrgyzstan, where Askar Akaev and a handful of civil society activists, not a pact between regime elites, were mainly responsible for

[13] Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics*, vol. 49, no. 2 (January 1997), pp. 155–183.

[14] Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 2, no. 3 (April 1970), pp. 337–363; and Guillermo O'Donnell, Laurence Whitehead, and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

[15] On consolidation, see Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995); and Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

[16] Exceptions include Guillermo O'Donnell, "Illusions About Consolidation," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 7, No. 2 (April 1996), pp. 34–51; and Katherine Verdery and Michael Buroway, *Uncertain Transition*.

[17] Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 5, no. 1 (January 1994), pp. 55–69.

the democratization that briefly occurred. The Central Asian cases offer a different hypothesis: pacts, when made between clan elites, are not a mode of transition to democracy, but an informal agreement that fosters the durability of the state, irrespective of the regime type.[18]

Recent contributions to the transitions school have often focused on the "post-communist" cases and the peculiarities of the "Soviet legacy," without distinguishing the vast variation in that legacy from Hungary to Tajikistan. Again, they highlight the role of elite actors, ideology, and leadership choice in designing democratic institutions.[19] However, they fail to explain why democratic ideology resonates in some societies and not in others, why some leaders matter and others do not, or how society may constrain transitions.[20] A related problem is that few scholars have systematically incorporated the role of society and social organization, either in driving, facilitating, or inhibiting democratization and democratic consolidation. This is somewhat surprising, given the powerful role of social movements in the political transitions in Eastern Europe and the Baltics, in contrast with the silent role of society in most of Central Asia, where autocracies emerged. Those who have examined society's role in democratization typically focus on class, labor, and parties – *formal* social organizations that are largely irrelevant in Central Asia since the Soviet collapse.[21] Examining the role of *informal* social actors is just as critical.

Studying Central Asia further forces us to examine *nondemocratic trajectories* – either the rise of new autocracies or, conversely, regime collapse. These phenomena have received surprisingly little attention in the transitions literature until recently, as scholars of post-communism struggle to explain

[18] Kathleen Collins, "Understanding Regime Transition," chapter 3; and Collins, "Clans, Pacts, and Politics," pp. 137–145.

[19] Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[20] See Michael McFaul, "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World," *World Politics*, vol. 54, no. 2 (January 2002), pp. 212–244; M. Steven Fish, "Postcommunist Subversion: Social Science and Democratization in East Europe and Eurasia," *Slavic Review*, vol. 58 (Winter 1999), pp. 794–823; Gerardo Munck and Carol Leff, "Modes of Transition and Democratization: South America and Eastern Europe in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 29, no. 3 (April 1997), pp. 343–362; Gerald Easter, "Preference for Presidentialism: Postcommunist Regime Change in Russia and the NIS," *World Politics*, vol. 49, no. 2. (January 1997), pp. 184–211; and John Higley and Richard Gunther, eds., *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

[21] For example: Ruth Berins Collier, *Paths towards Democracy: The Working Class and Elites in Western Europe and South America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); David Collier and Ruth Berins Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); and Eva Rana Bellin, "Contingent Democrats: Industrialists, Labor, and Democratization in Late-Developing Countries," *World Politics*, vol. 52, no. 2 (January 2000), pp. 175–205.

democratic backsliding.[22] Explanations have generally treated the return to autocracy as little more than a lack of elite commitment to democracy; elites desire to hold onto power, and do so by creating super-presidential institutions.[23] And yet an array of new autocracies has emerged in this region.[24] In many of them, the president does not act autonomously, despite the hyper-concentration of executive power, but is instead constrained by informal networks, such as clans. Neither democratic nor autocratic power is consolidated. As Samuel Huntington astutely observed in the 1960s, the problem in many new states is consolidating power: "there is a failure to recognize that most countries are suffering from an absence of power in their political systems."[25] The problem of political order becomes fundamental – where is power located, how is it used to govern, and what are the implications for stability? We need to understand the nature and content of these autocracies, and the implications for their stability. In order to do so, we must go beyond the literature's narrow focus and study the informal mechanisms beneath the failed liberalization and declining durability of regimes in Central Asia.

Political Development and Order when "Informal" Politics Prevails

The Central Asian cases challenge us to rethink the democratization literature and to search for better explanations of these political trajectories. Democratization may occur at the initiative of a few elites, and democratic institutions imposed from above may indeed introduce significant reforms, as we have seen in Kyrgyzstan and Russia in the early 1990s. An elite component to democracy is critical. At the same time, a social component is just as critical, if not more critical, to the sustaining of democracy. The social component is to a large extent rooted in social organization and in socio-economic and cultural conditions. When social actors at the mass level are networked into a clan-based structure of patronage and dependency, they are less likely to check the actions of elites. When power is organized informally in the hands of opaque clan networks, the ideological choices and actions of the best-intentioned elites will ultimately have a very limited effect.

[22] O'Donnell and Schmitter's classic work emphasized and the transition "from" the old regime, not necessarily to democracy. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). Recent exceptions to the focus on democratic outcomes include Richard Anderson, M. Steven Fish, Stephen Hanson, and Philip Roeder, *Postcommunism and the Theory of Democracy*; Bunce, "Comparative Democratization"; McFaul, "The Fourth Wave"; and Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 2 (April 2002), pp. 51–66.

[23] An elite focus offers a partial explanation of democratic backsliding. See Fish, "Postcommunist Subversion."

[24] Philip Roeder, *Postcommunism*, pp. 11–53.

[25] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order*, chapter 1.

When there is a long historical, institutional, and cultural basis for fostering nontransparent clan-based politics, these mechanisms and patterns of political development are not likely to disappear with ease. The "social" focus of the "preconditions" school, then, does have merit. Yet, rather than concentrate on macro-level factors that involve no agency or mechanism for undermining democracy, this inquiry focuses on meso-level social networks and the logic of individual actors within these networks. Those actors seek to maintain their power, prestige, and social stability through creating informal and exclusivist rules of the game that effectually subvert open and inclusive democratic rules.

Given the inability of either the democratization or the preconditions theory adequately to explain the Central Asian trajectories, this study proposes a shift in thinking, a turn toward understanding these cases in terms of the *informal politics* of state-society interaction that underlies the dynamics of regime transformation. As Guillermo O'Donnell later argued, the transitions literature and its overwhelming focus on formal institutions and democratic consolidation has neglected the *informal* level of particularistic ties, where power is often located.[26] Still, this powerful critique of the democratization literature has generated few studies of the relationship between informal organizations and regime type and durability, either theoretically or empirically. A number of scholars outside of the transitions paradigm do look at informal politics and the state-society dynamic that critically affects political development.

An earlier political-sociological literature on development in the post-colonial world did take the social organization of post-colonial and transitional societies seriously, especially in connection with their prospects for nation and state building. In fact, this literature's framing of these issues, as well as the lessons it offers, give us some insight into the relationship between clans and political trajectories in contemporary Central Asia. While some proclaimed the informal politics of tribalism a primordial curse, others naively dismissed it as a thing of the colonial or pre-colonial past. The former strand, in overemphasizing the static, unchanging culture and social structure of these regions, assumed the incompatibility of "traditional society" with modernity or democracy. For example, one scholar wrote that "tribalism is Africa's natural condition, and is likely to remain so for a long time to come."[27] This deterministically anticipated the failure of political transitions in such societies.[28] While highlighting tribalism or the salience of other subnational identities as a problem, few scholars have investigated

[26] Guillermo O'Donnell, "Illusions about Democratic Consolidation."

[27] Colin Legum, "Tribal Survival in the Modern African Political System," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1–2 (January–April 1970), p. 102.

[28] M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, eds., *African Political Systems* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940).

both the roots of such strong informal politics and the conditions that foster the emergence or continuance of tribalism.[29]

The latter strand of this literature was fused with optimism after the advent of post–World War II decolonization – not unlike that of the 1990s. Arguing against those who had viewed tribalism as an inexorable problem,[30] the optimists asserted that the modernizationist policies of post-colonial states were already breaking down traditional society. Tribalism would disappear, they argued, thereby fostering nation-stateness and democracy.[31] Even Samuel Huntington, who had stressed the challenges of clan, tribal, and religious loyalties, argued that modernizing state policies would shift "loyalties from family, village, and tribe to nation,"[32] although he was pessimistic about the prospects for simultaneously achieving stable democratic outcomes. Others, observing the Indian case of political development, argued that tradition and modernity were not diametrically opposed; rather, subnational identity groups could be integrated into a durable democratic system.[33] The Indian case today stands as one of the few successful models for integrating informal organizations, such as caste, into a durable democratic system in post-colonial states.

Critiquing those who had predicted successful transitions, the establishment of nation-states, and durable democracies, James Coleman and C. R. D. Halisi argued that the elite-centrism of the early post-colonial period had overestimated elites' power and will to transform society.[34] Elites of the early transition, they claim, were a minority whose support of nationalism

[29] Exceptions include Daniel Posner, "The Colonial Origins of Ethnic Cleavages: The Case of Linguistic Divisions in Zambia," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 35, no. 2 (January 2003), pp. 127–146.

[30] See Colin Legum, "The Dangers of Independence," *Transition*, vol. 6, no. 7 (October 1962), pp. 11–12; David Apter, *Ghana in Transition* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1963); Aristide Zolberg, "The Structure of Political Conflict in the New States of Tropical Africa," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 62 (March 1968), pp. 70–87; Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

[31] See Thomas Hodgekin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (London: Frederick Muller, 1956); James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); Aristide Zolberg, *Creating Political Order* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966); and James Coleman, *Nationalism and Development in Africa: Selected Essays*, edited by Richard Sklar (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). Revisionist modernization theory treated social organization as capable of interaction with the state and transformation. Also see James Coleman, "Nationalism in Tropical Africa," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 48 (June 1954), pp. 404–426; and James Coleman and Carl Rosberg, eds., *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964).

[32] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order*, pp. 140–141.

[33] Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

[34] James S. Coleman and C. R. D. Halisi, "American Political Science and Tropical Africa," *African Studies Review*, vol. 24 (September/December 1983), pp. 220–221.

and democracy did not reflect the deep social divisions, informal groups, and informal politics at the subnational level. Indeed, an abundance of research on the "economy of affection," bureaucratic development, corruption, and the developing economies of these regions demonstrates the persistence of informal institutions and social organizations, but generally without linking those issues to questions of regime.[35] The effects on the political economy of African state development have generally been negative.[36] Nor are such phenomena entirely confined to the Third World. A rich literature on political development in southern Italy – which has lagged behind the rest of Europe – has similarly pointed to the negative political effects of the social structure and cultural norms in which "*clientelismo*" is rooted.[37]

The "state-in-society" literature goes further in examining the dynamic relationship between social organization and the state in historical perspective.[38] Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue have persuasively demonstrated the need to look beyond democratic or authoritarian regimes and states and to examine the complex and multifaceted relationship between society and state. A central insight of this approach is that society and the state are not separate realms; a dynamic "mutual transformation" intertwines them.[39] At times, society can penetrate and transform the state; in other conditions, the state may transform society. Migdal, Kohli, and Shue argue: "States are parts of societies. States may help mold, but they are also continually molded by, the societies within which they are embedded. . . . Societies affect states as much as, or possibly more than, states affect societies."[40] This approach questions the common assumption of the statist and institutionalist literature that autonomous states shape society. Similarly, Jeffrey Herbst's study of state building in Africa argues that neither colonial nor post-colonial states have effectively governed Africa's dispersed societies.[41]

[35] See Robert Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Goran Hyden, *Beyond Ujaama in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); and James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976).

[36] Refer to Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[37] See Sidney Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967).

[38] Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capability in the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); and Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, eds., *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[39] Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, *State Power*, Chapter 1.

[40] Ibid., p. 2.

[41] Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); and Mark Beissinger and Crawford Young, *Beyond State Crisis? Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002).

James Scott's seminal work further demonstrates that society often resists powerful states, causing their modernization schemes to fail.[42] State ineptitude is particularly acute when it attempts to control societies organized *informally*. Lisa Anderson's work on tribes and the state in the Middle East is one of the few works in political science that studies the political development and persistence of tribes.[43] In fact, Joel Migdal has recently argued that clans are one of several types of traditional social organization that "vie for power to set rules" affecting social order, but that too little research on clans has been done.[44]

More than political scientists, "new institutionalist economists" have begun to appreciate the economic and political role of informal organizations. Avner Greif and Douglass North, in their works on the economics of collectivist cultures, concur that "pre-modern" collectivist organizations such as clans – despite their suboptimal efficiency and potential long-term deleterious effects – are nonetheless both rational and surprisingly durable, and that they are therefore important variables to be explained.[45] Similarly, Avinash Dixit uses game theory to show that "alternative" informal institutions and organizations (such as clans and mafias) support economic activity when a government is unable or unwilling to provide adequate protection.[46]

The political development and state-in-society approaches, together with the new institutionalist economics, point toward the important dynamic between clans and regimes. Nonetheless, here too, clan politics has been neglected. As Joel Migdal has noted, too little research exists on *how* informal social organizations transform regimes. The literature on clans and clanlike organizations remains scant and is rarely linked to issues of regime type, durability, and transition.[47] Studies of Central Asia by political scientists

[42] James Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

[43] Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830–1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[44] Joel Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 50. One exception is Hans-Joachim Lauth, who has categorized the effect of various informal institutions, including clans, on democracy. Hans-Joachim Lauth, "Informal Institutions and Democracy," *Democratization*, vol. 7, no. 4 (Winter 2000), pp. 21–50. Lauth categorizes clans as informal "institutions." He ignores their organization and identity. Nor does he delve into empirical analysis.

[45] Douglass North, "Where Have We Been and Where Are We Going?" in Avner Ben-Ner and Louis Putterman, eds., *Economics, Values, and Organization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 491–508; and Avner Greif, "Historical and Comparative Institutional Analysis," *The American Economic Review*, vol. 88, no. 2 (1998), pp. 80–84.

[46] Avinash Dixit, *Lawlessness and Economics: Alternative Modes of Economic Governance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), Chapter 1; and Avinash Dixit, "On Modes of Economic Governance," *Econometrica*, vol. 71, no. 2 (March 2003), pp. 449–481. Dixit argues that more empirical work on specific informal organizations and problems is needed. North similarly accuses the literature of being long on schemas and short on substance.

[47] Analysis of clans has generally been left to anthropologists.

mention the pervasive phenomenon of clans but do not explore it,[48] or alternatively assume that clans were destroyed by Soviet institutions.[49]

Historians of Central Asia have delved into clan and kinship ties much more deeply, but without addressing the broader questions of political development and regime change. This book builds on Gregory Massell's and Adrienne Edgar's significant works on tribe, clan, and kinship in the early Soviet period,[50] and on Olivier Roy's insightful study of the difficulties of nation building in the Central Asian societies.[51] Certainly, clans in the post-Soviet context are not organized as traditionally as they may have been in post-colonial Africa or the Middle East, due to Soviet and now post-Soviet development. In an ongoing state-society dynamic, Central Asia's states exhibit "the modernity of tradition."[52] Informal clan networks still pervade society and play a central political and economic role, but their role and form have changed over time, and not always with positive effects on political development. The task of this work is to conceptualize clans, view them as political actors, and examine the relationship between clans and the formal institutions of the regime. The political dynamics of clans will help to explain the social foundations of order/disorder in Central Asia, and will help us to think about the factors driving negative political trajectories in similar societies.[53]

III. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION IN UNFAMILIAR TERRAIN

Defining Clans

Max Weber observed over a century ago that clans were a historically common form of social organization in the nomadic and seminomadic regions of Eurasia, the Middle East, and parts of Africa.[54] However, Weber, like many social scientists, assumed that clan networks would disappear with

[48] See excellent works by Martha Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1988); and Gregory Gleason, *The Central Asian States: Discovering Independence* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

[49] For this view, see Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions, and Pacts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[50] Gregory Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); and Adrienne Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[51] Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

[52] Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

[53] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order*.

[54] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952).

the emergence of modern states and the rise of institutionalized politics. As the election story recounted at the beginning of this chapter vividly illustrates, however, clans can act as surrogate political organizations and can thereby play critical roles in the political arena, as well as in the social and economic ones.

Simply put, then, a clan is an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin and fictive kin identities.[55] These affective ties comprise the identity and bonds of its organization.[56] Kinship ties are rooted in the extensive family organization that characterizes society in this region and in historically tribal societies. "Fictive kinship" ties go beyond blood ties and incorporate individuals into the network through marriage, family alliances, school ties, localism (*mestnichestvo*), and neighborhood (*mahalla*) and village (*qishloq*). Clan ties are neither exotic and primordial, nor inherently negative or undemocratic; they are networks based on the rational calculations of individuals made within a collectivist cultural and institutional context.[57] As anthropologists and historians have often noted, clans are common in tribal and recently tribal regions and in collectivist cultures. In both pre-modern and modern times in Central Asia, clans, tribes, and localist networks have generally defined their groups according to kinship identity ties, even though actual blood ties do not always exist; more important than the objective reality of kinship is the subjective sense of identity and the use of the norms of kinship – such as in-group reciprocity and loyalty – to bind the group and protect its members.[58]

The bonds of clans are vertical and horizontal, linking both elites and nonelites. This bond forms "strong ties" based on tight, predominantly ascriptive relationships and norms; the clan's boundaries, while not fixed and unchanging, are difficult to permeate.[59] Individuals cannot easily enter or

[55] See Andrew Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 40–41 and 318; Richard Tapper, "Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East," in Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, eds., *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 50–51; and Charles Lindholm, "Kinship Structure and Political Authority: The Middle East and Central Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 28 (April 1986), pp. 334–355.

[56] Caroline Humphrey and David Sneath, *The End of Nomadism?* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 26–27; and Andrew Shryock, *Nationalism*, p. 313.

[57] On collectivist culture and institutions, see Avner Greif, "Historical and Comparative," pp. 80–84.

[58] Gregory Massell, *Surrogate Proletariat*; Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, *Tribes and State*; Richard Tapper, "Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople"; and Mounira Charrad, *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[59] On the "strong ties" of kinship, see James Gibson, "Social Networks, Civil Society, and the Prospects for Consolidating Russia's Democratic Transition," *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 45 (January 2001), p. 53; Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 78 (1973), p. 1361; and John Padgett and Christopher

exit a clan, as one would a voluntary association or interest group. In practice, the size of clans may vary.[60] For example, Central Asian journalists estimate that Central Asian clans range from 2,000 to 20,000 individuals. In more traditional or rural areas, informal councils of patriarchs and elders govern clans. In more urban areas, both wealthy elites and elders control clans. An extensive network – poorer relatives and kinsmen, close friends, women, youth, and children – comprise the nonelite members: Clans typically cross class lines.[61]

Why Write about Clans?

Interestingly, while little scholarship on clans and clan politics exists, scholars and policy makers have many different, contradictory, and often negative understandings of the term "clan." It is therefore important to explain why and how I use this term and why I focus on clans at all. Some scholars have disputed the use of the terms "clan" and "tribe" as derogatory, primordialist, or "orientalist." Others, especially social and cultural anthropologists and area scholars, would argue that the term "clan" is too general to capture the great variation and local ethnographic detail within Central Asia. They accurately point to differences between urban and rural communities, recently nomadic and longer-settled populations, and mountain, steppe, and valley populations. Political scientists, by contrast, typically adopt a far more general approach and might be more comfortable with the encompassing term "informal institution," "social network," or "clientelism." Some might even dismiss clans as simply corruption. Depending on one's scholarly discipline, one might bring these various critical lenses to bear when reading this work.

Despite these issues, there are good reasons to use the term "clan" to discuss the general phenomenon that I have defined here. To begin with, I use "clan" as a neutral term to describe a social organization. The terms "clan" and "tribe" have long been used by Central Asians themselves. As the historian Adrienne Edgar observes, in Central Asia and the Middle East, the terms "clan" and "tribe" have not been viewed as negative, as they have in Africa. The clan as a social phenomenon may have both positive and negative effects.

Second, while there has undeniably been both cultural and historical variation in kin-based networks and communities across Central Asia, from Gorno-Badakhshan to the Kyzyl-kum, the term "clan" gives us a general concept for use in comparing these societies and states. Most Turkmen,

Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400–1434," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 98, no. 6 (May 1993), p. 1267.

[60] Caroline Humphrey and David Sneath, *The End of Nomadism?*

[61] Adrienne Edgar, "Genealogy, Class, and 'Tribal Policy' in Soviet Turkmenistan, 1924–1934," *Slavic Review*, vol. 60 (Summer 2001), pp. 266–288.