

Transitions 2.0: The Internet, Political Culture and Autocracy in Central Asia

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Abstract:

In Central Asia the theories and prescriptions of the transitions literature have not borne fruit. The region today is more autocratic than it was eighteen years ago at the time of the Soviet collapse. The goal of this paper is to understand why—why *Transitions 1.0* failed—and to investigate the potential for a *Transitions 2.0*. The answer to Central Asia's autocratic persistence, this study suggests, lies in the elite incentive structures of the region's institutional continuity. Despite this tenacity of Soviet-era patronage politics, I illustrate democratic openings may yet come. Survey research reveals that the use of new ICTs, most notably Internet use, holds the potential to transform Central Asian political culture and, with it, Central Asian politics.

Transitions 2.0: The Internet, Political Culture and Autocracy in Central Asia¹

An unsettling reality for political scientists studying the post-Soviet “stans” is that the theories, and with them, the prescriptions of the transitions literature have not borne fruit. Central Asia today is more autocratic than it was eighteen years ago at the time of the Soviet collapse. The goal of this paper is to understand why—why *Transitions 1.0* failed—and to investigate the potential for a *Transitions 2.0*.

To answer these questions I explore three Central Asian autocracies: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. What is curious about all three countries is that they each have experienced some form of “exogenous shock” that, according to the transitions literature, should have eroded autocratic continuity. Moreover, bilateral and multilateral aid organizations have worked with the Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek governments in the hopes of furthering political liberalization efforts, yet all three countries remain authoritarian. Importantly though, these countries remain authoritarian in different ways. Kazakhstan’s president, Nursultan Nazarbaev, has ruled relatively unchallenged since the Soviet collapse. In contrast, Uzbekistan’s president, Islam Karimov, has secured his continued tenure only through sustained repression. Lastly, Kyrgyzstan’s president, Kurmanbek Bakiev, came to power in 2005 in the wake of chaotic street protests. Bakiev’s rise, initially perceived as a “democratic opening” has yielded only continued authoritarianism. Democratic openings, though, may yet come and not only in Kyrgyzstan. New information communication technologies (ICTs) are emerging in Central Asia and, as survey research demonstrates, these new ICTs hold the potential to transform the region’s political culture from one that abides authoritarian rule to a culture that embraces political reform.

¹ This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 0326101. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

This paper's exploration of *Transitions 2.0* proceeds in three parts. Part I documents the post-Soviet political trajectories in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Part II explains why, despite pronounced variations in the relative ease with which the leaderships in each of these states maintain authoritarianism, these leaderships nevertheless holdfast to a remarkably similar model of patronage politics. Lastly, Part III turns to survey research to demonstrate how new ICTs may undermine what, thus far, has been the uninterrupted continuity of patronage politics in Central Asia. The answer to both the continuity of patronage politics and its potential demise, I find, lies in the logic of path dependency. Central Asia's current political elites—both those in power and oppositionists out of power—were, for the most part, elites during the Soviet period. These elites understand the patronage model. They derive benefits or anticipate they will derive benefits from the patronage model. As such these elites have little incentive to change this patronage model.

Critically though, the current class of political elites is graying while the youth population of Central Asian society is growing larger. And whereas the hierarchical Communist Party carefully controlled the political milieu in which the current political elite was acculturated, today new ICTs have broken the government's information monopoly, laid bare the inequities of patronage politics and are in the process of changing the “mental maps” with which this growing younger generation views national governance.² Institutional path dependency, as Paul Pierson explains, is sustained by “learning effects” and “adaptive expectations.”³ New ICTs have simultaneously transformed what youth in Central Asia learn and what they expect— and it is this transformation, I suggest, that may ultimately undermine the cost calculations that have thus far sustained autocratic patronage in the region. Some autocracies, most notably oil rich

² Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,” *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 260.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

Kazakhstan, may be able to meet the expectations of their burgeoning youth populations. Other Central Asian states like Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, however, will be hard pressed to accommodate their dot-com generations.

Part I: The Post Soviet Patronage Model in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan

Central Asia is ruled by petty autocrats at every level of government, from the presidency to the village administrator. Each autocrat runs his own fiefdom and, in return for control over this fiefdom, each autocrat pays financial tribute to those above. During the Soviet period local autocrats controlled collective farms. Today they control what are *de facto* collective farms as well as natural resource extraction, local bazaars, the drug trade, sex trafficking, gambling and construction. For many of these autocrats, 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 paradox of Central Asian autocracy—and in part the explanation for the persistence of this autocracy—is that thus far it has proven considerably safer to challenge patronage rule by planning a putsch than it is by publicizing abuses of power. Those who operate outside the patronage pack and challenge hierarchy through transparent means—through the media, through discussions following Friday prayer, through nongovernmental organizations—are repressed.

Central Asia today is the Soviet era Brezhnev patronage machine stripped of centralized party control. This absence of party control allows for more elite infighting than was possible during the Soviet period. At the same time, the Communist Party's demise, and with it the disappearance of the state's ability to acculturate subjects into the patronage model, has, along with the arrival of a globalized discourse of political and religious freedom, emboldened social activists to challenge autocratic rule. The coincidence of these two dynamics, and the Central

Asian state's response to these dynamics, has not been pretty. Central Asian state-society relations are a mess, so much so that one observer has labeled the entire region "Trashcanistan."⁴

Critically though, the degrees of political mess vary in present day in Central Asia. Uzbekistan is a bloody mess. In May 2005 President Karimov's troops shot on and killed hundreds of protestors in the Fergana Valley city of Andijan to ensure Uzbekistan would not become a new entry in the expanding list of post-Soviet "color revolutions." Karimov got his wish. The Andijan protests did not lead to revolution. Andijan however, has assumed a lasting color in the memories of eyewitnesses: red. As Mahbuba Zokirava recounted, going off-script during the October 2005 show trial of the alleged Andijan protest instigators, "Blood was flowing on the ground" in Andijan's central square.⁵

In contrast to his Uzbek counterpart, the Kyrgyz president does not shoot protesters. Instead he runs from them. President Askar Akaev, facing thousands of angry demonstrators outside his "Whitehouse" in March 2005, chose to flee rather than to fire. Kyrgyzstan's "Tulip Revolution," however, has not substantively altered Kyrgyz politics. The patronage machine sputters along, enriching its mechanic of the moment, President Kurmanbek "Bucks" Bakiev. The same societal upheaval that brought Bakiev to power will likely see him unseated in the not too distant future. Kyrgyzstan's patronage machine, however, will continue to sputter along once the next round of street politics subsides and Kyrgyzstan's political elite begrudgingly select a new political boss.

The Kazakh state is neither as sputtering or as bloody as its Kyrgyz and Uzbek neighbors. Rather, Kazakhstan's mess is contained to the presidential family. Dynasty, not demonstrators, is what keeps Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev awake at night. The President's once

⁴ Stephen Kotkin, "Trashcanistan: A Tour Through the Wreckage of the Soviet Empire," *The New Republic* (April 15, 2002).

⁵ Daniel Kimmage, "Uzbekistan: One Witness's Testimony Forces Courtroom Collision," *Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty*, October 23, 2005.

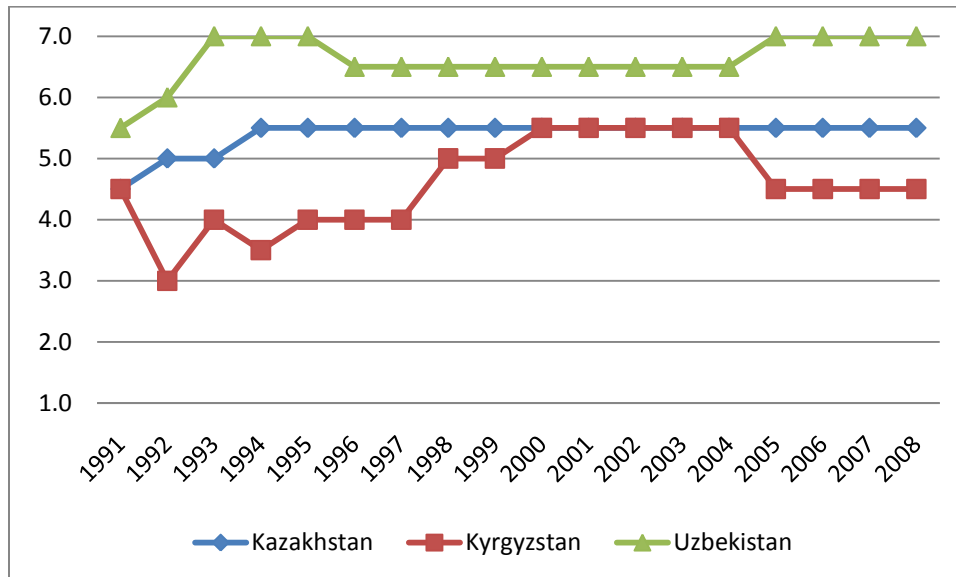
anticipated successor and now exiled former son-in-law, Rakhat Aliev, published the revealingly titled book, *Godfather – In – Law* in May 2009, detailing infighting within the first family. Dariga Nazarbaeva, who divorced Aliev in June 2007, has since all but disappeared from the Kazakh media, a media she once controlled as director of *Khabar*, Kazakhstan's largest media outlet. Timur Kulibaev, married to Nazarbaev daughter number two 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.⁶ Kulibaev, though, may be hedging his bets; 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.⁷

Blood, chaos and dynasty, these are the *BCDs* of Central Asian patronage politics. To a real degree these diverging Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Kazakh post Soviet paths can be seen in leading barometers of regime change such as Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* and the World Bank's *World Governance Indicators*. *Freedom in the World*, for example, combines measures of political rights and civil liberties into a composite "freeness" score. States that score 5.5 or above on Freedom House's seven point scale are considered "not free." States that score between 5.0 and 3.5 are considered "partly free." And states that score below 3.0 are considered "free." Graph 1 summarizes variations in Uzbek, Kazakh and Kyrgyz Freedom House scores between 1991 and 2008.

⁶ "Kulibayev to Chair Boards of Directors in Three National Companies," *Kazakh Oil & Gas Weekly*, May 25, 2009.

⁷ Daniel Foggo, "Royal's £," *The Sunday Times*, July 27, 2008; Geoffrey Levy and Richard Kay, "The Duke, the Dame and the Dictator," *Daily Mail*, March 14, 2009.

Graph 1: Freedom House Measures of Central Asian Regime Variation



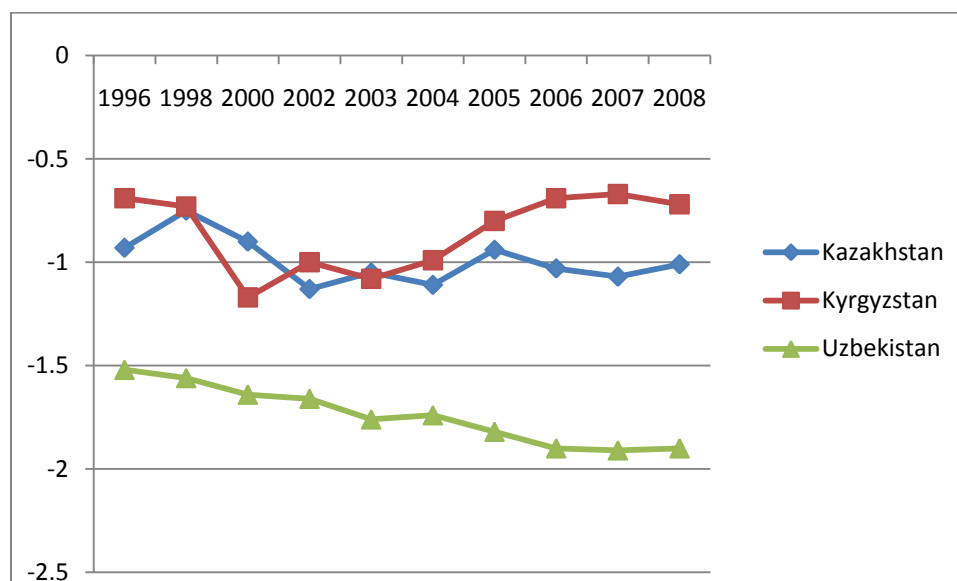
Uzbekistan consistently ranks as the most autocratic of the Central Asian states. Indeed, since the Andijan massacre, Uzbekistan has received the most autocratic score the Freedom House scale allows. Kyrgyzstan, in contrast, bounces between partly and not free, movement indicative of Kyrgyzstan's chaotic patronage politics. This chaos, as the "partly free" ranking suggests, should not be mistaken for democracy. Nevertheless, in Kyrgyzstan we do see a degree of political contestation that we see nowhere else in Central Asia. Lastly, in Kazakhstan political contestation has literally flat-lined. Nazarbaev's family may have all the ups and downs of a soap opera but, until the question of dynasty becomes more pressing, the Kazakh patronage machine will continue to hum along.

The World Bank's *World Governance Indicators* (WGI) are equally suggestive of the blood, chaos and dynasty that differentiates Central Asian patronage states. For example, WGI's *voice and accountability* indicator which measures "the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of

association, and a free media” suggests a frighteningly autocratic Uzbekistan, a consistently autocratic though not excessively heavy-handed Kazakhstan and an inconsistently autocratic Kyrgyzstan. WGI measures, which the World Bank has been aggregating since 1996, range from a low of -2.5 to a high of +2.5. Conveniently, the WGI scores are standardized with a sample mean (WGI covered 212 countries in 2008) of zero and a standard deviation of one.⁸ Thus, for example, Uzbekistan, which scored -1.9 in 2008, is essentially two standard deviations below the average *voice and accountability* score of all countries surveyed in 2008. In other words, 97 percent of all other states surveyed in 2008 allowed more freedoms to their citizens than did the Uzbek government. Granted, as Graph 2 illustrates, neither Kazakhstan nor Kyrgyzstan have shown themselves as bastions of civil liberties and freedoms over the past decade. In 2008, for example, approximately 84 percent of the world’s states allowed greater *voice and accountability* than did the Kazakh government and about 70 percent of sampled countries proved more tolerant of these freedoms than did the Kyrgyz government. Still, when one considers the repression the Uzbek government employs to secure its place at the bottom of WGI’s autocracy barrel, life for the average Kazakh or Kyrgyz may appear sunny indeed.

⁸ Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, “Governance Matters VII: Aggregate And Individual Governance Indicators 1996-2007,” *Research Working Papers* (2008): 1-105.

Graph 2: World Governance Indicators – Voice and Accountability, 1996-2008

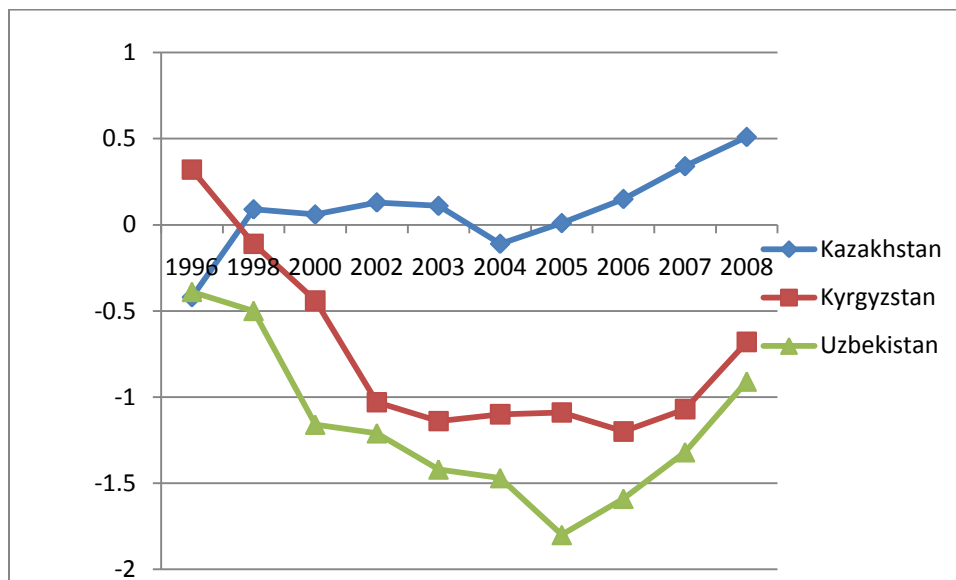


In addition to its immense human toll, the Uzbek government's sustained repression exacts a political cost as well. Uzbekistan is the only Central Asian country that has witnessed frequent terror attacks and militant insurgency. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) carried out a series of bombings in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, in February 1999 and July 2004. Most in Uzbekistan do not share the IMU's Islamist agenda. If the Andijan events of 2005 are accurate indication, however, many Uzbeks are at the point where revolution may be an attractive strategy. The massive Andijan protests were sparked by the imprisonment of 23 of the city's most prominent Muslim leaders and businessmen. Andijan is by no means the only city whose jails are filled with influential and independent-minded community activists. Should the Uzbek government continue jailing local elites for alleged Islamist leanings, it may well encourage the very militancy it purports to be fighting.

The World Governance's *political stability* indicator reflects this tenuous state of affairs in Uzbekistan. The WGI *political stability* indicator measures "perceptions of the likelihood that

the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means.”⁹ These scores, as well as the political stability scores for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are summarized in Graph 3 below.

Graph 3: World Governance Indicators – Political Stability, 1996-2008



As Graph 3 illustrates, the Kazakh government’s comparative equanimity 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 3,500 gathered in Kazakhstan’s largest city, Almaty to demonstrate against worsening economic conditions.¹⁰ This protest lasted three hours. Sustained, large scale protests in Kyrgyzstan, in contrast, are regular affairs. In addition to the 10,000 strong March 2005 protest that ousted

⁹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰ Andre Grabot, “3,500 demonstrate against Kazakh president,” *Agence France Presse*, December 8, 1996.

president Akaev, Kyrgyz have gathered to protest the executive's manipulation and re-writing of the constitution (2007), executive manipulation of parliamentary and presidential elections (1995 and 2000), and executive embezzlement of gold reserves (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, dissent has assumed ephemeral and explosive forms—the Tashkent government ministry bombings in 1999 and 2004, overturned and torched police cars in Kokand in November 2004 following the government's imposition of new tax codes on retail sales in city bazaars, and the Andijan jailbreak in May 2005.¹¹

The Freedom House and World Governance Indicators are helpful in that they provide a sense of Central Asian regime variation over time. Another way to view variations in Central Asian regime type is, in the words of Max Weber, to explore the degree to which states maintain “the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force within a given territory.”¹² The WGI stability measure provides some insight into this Weberian sense of monopoly force: while Kazakhstan enjoys political stability, the same cannot be said for Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Freedom House's *freeness* score and WGI's *voice and accountability* indicator similarly provide insight into legitimacy—the fact that Uzbekistan performs so poorly on these measures and that the Uzbek government represses on such a broad scale suggests that legitimacy, however defined, is not an attribute Uzbek citizens frequently attribute to the Karimov regime.

Weber identifies three types of legitimacy—legitimacy that derives from tradition, from charisma, and from “legality... the belief in the validity of the legal statute... and on rationally

¹¹ “Uzbekistan: Thousands Protest Trade Restrictions at Uzbek Market,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, November 2, 2004.

¹² Weber, “Politics As Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78.

created rules.”¹³ Some form of leader legitimacy, Weber explains, is critical, for without it, civil servants and society more broadly will not be inclined toward “obedience.” Joel Migdal takes Weber’s analysis one step further and differentiates three levels of obedience, that of: (1) a low degree of social control where governments struggle to achieve “compliance” of the population; (2) an intermediate degree of social control where governments achieve “participation” of the population; and (3) a high degree of social control where governments secure “legitimation” from the population.¹⁴ The lowest level of control, social compliance, constitutes at best a passing deference to the state. Society neither challenges nor assists the state but, rather, remains passively on the sidelines so as not to attract the attention of the state’s repressive agencies—the police or the military. Social participation, in contrast, represents greater state capacity in that governments can repeatedly mobilize the population so as to meet specific needs, for example the construction of infrastructure or the filling of state coffers. Effective patronage politics—in essence paying administrators and populations to comply—is one means to achieve this middle level of social participation. Finally, a government characterized by social legitimation, the highest degree of state capacity, not only enjoys participation of its citizens, but the *willing* participation of citizens who perceive their government as just. Governments that are legitimate do not need to bribe their populations; rather, work on behalf of the state because they believe their leaders are just.¹⁵

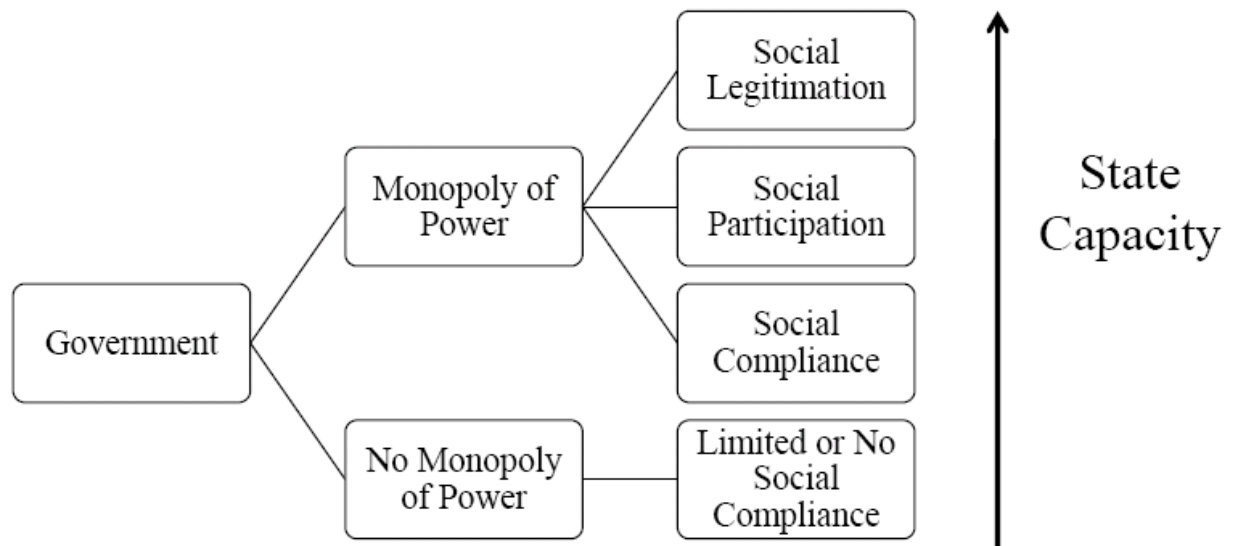
¹³ Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁴ Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 1988), 32-3.

¹⁵ Although I adopt Migdal’s adaptation of Weber, many others have similarly conceived state capacity. See, for example: Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1978)

This Weber/Migdal conceptualization of monopoly and legitimate force is particularly helpful in capturing the substantive ways in which Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek politics have diverged since the Soviet collapse. More specifically, applying Weber and Migdal's insights, one can differentiate Central Asian states according to the degree that they (1) possesses monopoly of power and (2) the extent to which this monopoly manifests itself either in social compliance, social participation or social legitimacy. Figure 1 below illustrates variations in monopoly power and social obedience and the differing degrees of state capacity that accompany these variations.

Figure 1: Monopoly Power and Legitimacy Dimensions of State Capacity



The Kazakh and Uzbek governments have each successfully maintained monopoly power. The Kazakh government, moreover, enjoys a loyal elite and citizenry that, though it may not always perceive the Nazarbaev regime as entirely legitimate, nevertheless actively participates in government institutions. In short, we can locate the Kazakh government, that is the Nazarbaev patronage machine, along the upper half of the Weber/Migdal state capacity continuum. The Uzbek government, though it can count on a deferential political elite, cannot count on a society

that actively participates in government programs. Indeed, as the Andijan and Kokand protests as well as periodic militant uprisings suggest, social compliance is far from guaranteed. Lastly, the Kyrgyz government can count neither on a deferential political elite nor on a compliant society. Indeed, the Kyrgyz government struggles to ensure monopoly power. Travelling beyond the country capital, Bishkek, one quickly gets the sense that the central government is all but absent in the regions. Unlike the Uzbek patronage machine which at least has proven capable of securing the deference of regional appointees if not society more broadly, the spokes of the President Bakiev's patronage machine are broken stubs that fail to extend beyond Bishkek's city limits.

Two variables account for the *BCDs* of Central Asian patronage politics: (1) differing economic resources of patronage rule and (2) differing degrees of Islamic revivalism. In Kazakhstan, immense oil wealth sustains effective patronage politics. In Uzbekistan, rents from the state-controlled cotton industry and from Karimov's regulation of international gold mining companies, fund, albeit less effectively than in the Kazakh case, continued patronage rule. In Kyrgyzstan, however, patronage politics is close to if not already collapsed. With the near absence of easily accessible commodities, the only patronage that persists in Kyrgyzstan is the center's licensing of regional elites' exploitation of local populations. That is, rather than distributing state wealth to political appointees, as is the case in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan's Bakiev government attempts to secure some measure of control over regional appointees by allowing these appointees a free hand in exploiting local populations.

The state capacity-enhancing and capacity-debilitating effects of these differing economic endowments have been heightened by differing patterns of Islamic revivalism in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Islam is considerably more pronounced in Uzbekistan and

Kyrgyzstan than it is in Kazakhstan. Islam's roots in Uzbekistan's and Kyrgyzstan's Fergana Valley span 1,000 years. In contrast, it was not until the 18th and 19th centuries that Islam saw wide adoption in the Kazakh steppe. At the same time, the ethnic and cultural reach of the Russian state is less pronounced in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan than it is in Kazakhstan, which shares both a long border and long history with its northern neighbor. Ethnic Russians constitute approximately one-third of the Kazakh population in contrast to ten percent of the Kyrgyz and two percent of the Uzbek populations. Moreover, as I demonstrate in an earlier study, Islamic revivalism is heightened by its iterative relationship with state failure.¹⁶ Poor economies in Uzbekistan and particularly in Kyrgyzstan weaken local and central governments' abilities to provide social welfare. In the place of the state, local community organizations, most notably local Islamic organizations, have stepped in to meet growing welfare needs. Muslim groups build schools, establish neighborhood charities and form the core of vibrant business associations. As these organizations expand, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz are drawn away from the state and toward alternative, Muslim elites. In short, Kazakhstan's easily tapped oil wealth and relative economic prosperity enables a capacious patronage-based state that enjoys widespread legitimacy among the population. In Uzbekistan, state-control of the cotton and gold industries enables a degree of top-down patronage. At the same time, the poor performance of the broader economy in combination with Islamic revivalism has eroded the state's presence in the regions and has increased the prominence of Islamic charities and business associations. Finally, in Kyrgyzstan, the absence of concentrated economic resources has forced a bottom-up restructuring of patronage politics, that is, the development of rapacious patronage where political appointees attempt to extort local populations. As in Uzbekistan, Islamic organizations

¹⁶ Eric McGlinchey, "Islamic Revivalism and State Failure in Kyrgyzstan.," *Problems of Post-Communism* 56, no. 3 (May 2009): 16-28.

in Kyrgyzstan increasingly are meeting the welfare needs of local populations, thereby eroding the central state's presence in the regions. One wonders, though, if ruling elites in Tashkent and Bishkek are at all bothered by this diminished presence; freed from their social welfare obligations, capital elites can focus on enriching themselves with the few economic plums left to be picked in these countries. This practice of self-enrichment, however, is not sustainable. Central Asian society is changing even if Central Asia's elites are not. Unless the Tashkent and Bishkek leaderships can quickly replicate the comparative wealth enjoyed across the border in Kazakhstan, the dot-com Uzbek and Kyrgyz generation will likely have little tolerance for the disappointments of continued patronage rule.

Part II: The Persistence Patronage Rule

That Soviet patronage politics persists in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, albeit in varying forms, poses several challenges to transitions theory and endless frustrations to political reform advocates. Islam and secular autocracy, first Sovietologists and subsequently post-Soviet transitologists predicted, could not persist side by side. Prior to the Soviet collapse, Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup wrote of "the Islamic threat to the Soviet State" and Michael Rywkin described Central Asia as "Moscow's Muslim Challenge."¹⁷ In 1993, Alexei Malashenko observed of Central Asia: "the idea of forming an Islamic state is being posed openly, and its popularity is growing."¹⁸ A decade later Zeyno Baran informed the House International Relations Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia Central Asia presents

¹⁷ Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983); Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge: Soviet Central Asia*, Rev. ed. (Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 1990).

¹⁸ Alexei Malashenko, "Islam versus Communism," in *Russia's Muslim Frontiers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

“textbook conditions for the growth of radical Islamist groups,” and that in Uzbekistan in particular Islamists have “established a network of cells to organize and carry out attacks on Karimov’s secular regime.”¹⁹ Yet Central Asian secular autocracy persists even as Islamic revivalism advances. As for other anticipated causalities of political change – economic crises and the withdrawal of external patrons, infighting among political elites, and the arrival of foreign democracy experts urging institutional redesign — nothing thus far has shaken the logic of patronage rule in Central Asia. The democratic openings Stephen Haggard and Robert Kaufman found in economic downturns elsewhere have yet to emerge in Central Asia.²⁰ The “hot family feuds” that Dankwart Rustow predicted would produce transitions to democracy have yet to yield reform in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, despite the fact that Central Asians have witnessed both figurative and literal family feuds among their political elites.²¹ The new constitutions of Central Asia, among the most democratic-reading documents in the world, have yet to guarantee a single free and fair presidential or parliamentary election.

The source of this autocratic continuity rests in the perceived incentive structures of patronage politics; the current political elite – even the elite that does not hold power – perceive the maintenance of patronage politics as more attractive to the economic and professional uncertainties of political reform. In short, Central Asia exhibits many of the path-dependency qualities identified in the institutional continuity literature: (1) elites perceive the costs of building new political institutions, be they democratic or autocratic, as prohibitive; (2) elites’ “learned” ability to manipulate existing institutions acts as a break on institutional reform; (3) elites’ perceptions of future economic gain, even among those out of power, strengthen as more

¹⁹ Zeyno Baran, *Building a Democracy in Uzbekistan* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Congressional Testimony, 2004).

²⁰ Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *The Political economy of democratic transitions* (Princeton University Press, 1995), 36.

²¹ Dankwart Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” *Comparative Politics* 2 (1970): 355.

actors play by the rules of existing institutional structures; and (4) political and societal elites' practice of planning for the future assuming institutional continuity, in effect, encourages institutional continuity.²² The brief biographies of three Central elites, Kyrgyzstan's most prominent journalist, Zamira Sydykova, Uzbekistan's former mufti, Mohammad Sodik Mohammad Yusuf, and, until recently Kazakhstan's leading banker, Mukhtar Ablyazov, illustrate this dynamic of perceived incentives and institutional continuity.

Zamira Sydykova was, throughout the 1990s, a leading critic of Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev. Founder of the opposition newspaper, *Res Publica*, Sydykova's investigative reporting into former President Akaev's corrupt and authoritarian practices won her international recognition as well as one month in jail for "slandering" the Kyrgyz head of state. Today Sydykova is Kyrgyzstan's ambassador to Washington, appointed by Akaev's successor, President Bakiev. Bakiev, who came to power in 2005 after street protestors broke into the Kyrgyz "White House" and chased Akaev out of the country, has picked up where Akaev left off. Today the most substantive change in Kyrgyz politics is that past "democratic" oppositionists such as Sydykova are present beneficiaries of Kyrgyzstan's patronage machine. Former Akaev loyalists, in turn, have now assumed the mantle of the "democratic" opposition.

Mohammad Sodik Mohammad Yusuf was, in the early 1990s, Uzbekistan's leading Muslim cleric. Sodik's popularity, however, did not sit well with the Uzbek government and, so as not to incur the wrath on increasingly autocratic President Karimov, Sodik spent the rest of the 1990s abroad. In January 2000, however, Sodik returned to Uzbekistan and began urging Muslims to

²² Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns."

“reelect the man they love (President Karimov) to the post of head of state.”²³ Sodik now lives in a lavish compound in Tashkent and frequently lends his voice to Karimov’s much publicized anti-extremism campaigns.

During the 1990s **Mukhtar Ablyazov** held a number of high level government posts including (1) director of KEGOC (1997-1998), a state run company that controlled the Kazakh power grid and (2) Minister of Kazakh Energy (1998-1999). In November 2001 Ablyazov, along with several other prominent political elites, broke ranks with Nazarbaev and launched the “Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan” opposition party. Ablyazov was promptly tried and, in the summer of 2002, sentenced to six years in jail for abuse of power and corruption. In May 2003 Ablyazov repented and pledged to President Nazarbaev that he would stay out of politics. Nazarbaev, not one to hold a grudge, pardoned his former energy minister and, in May 2005, Ablyazov once again emerged as a major player, assuming chairmanship of Kazakhstan’s largest bank, TuranAlem. Ablyazov and TuranAlem, Nazarbaev likely thought, were a good fit — in December 2004 TuranAlem along with Kazakhstan’s other leading banks, Halyk and Kazkomertsbank, “pledged to be loyal to the president” and not to fund members of the political opposition.²⁴ It appears that Ablyazov, however, has somehow again run afoul of the Kazakh President. In February 2009 Nazarbaev nationalized TuranAlem (now known as BTA) and Ablyazov, fearing the worst, fled to Europe. Ablyazov has subsequently been charged with embezzling \$1 billion of BTA assets.²⁵

²³ “Visit to Uzbekistan of Exiled Mufti,” *EurasiaNet*, http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/uzbekistan/press_digest/digest2.1.shtml.

²⁴ “Kazakh Banks Pledge to Be Loyal to President, Not to Fund Any Political Groups,” *Associated Press* (December 3, 2004).

²⁵ Joanna Lillis, “Kazakhstan: Banking Sector Hit by Allegations of Politically Motivated Manipulation,” *EurasiaNet*, March 25, 2009.

The journalist, the cleric and the businessmen, the careers of all three illustrate the remarkable staying power of Central Asian patronage politics. Far more than the average Central Asian elite, these three had good reason to reject rather than become part of patronage politics. The International Women's Media Foundation gave Sydykova its *Courage in Journalism* award for her reporting on Akaev's corrupt and autocratic rule. Uzbek Muslims in the early 1990s widely championed former mufti Mohammad Sodik Mohammad Yusuf as an attractive alternative to the secular and autocratic President Karimov. And Ablyazov had committed himself and his considerable resources to Kazakhstan's "Democratic Choice." Yet all three quickly returned to the patronage fold, abandoning political reform in their pursuit of personal wealth. Sydykova, Sodik and Ablyazov may well have been genuine in their desire to change their countries' political systems. They each learned, however, that costs of advocating for political change were prohibitive and that benefits of working within a patronage system are hard to resist.

The path dependency literature suggests that these personal cost-benefit calculations persist and, indeed, grow stronger over time. Indeed, the Sydykova, Sodik and Ablyazov biographies all provide "confirming information," that is their personal histories reinforce an existing "mental map" that contemporaries of Sydykova, Sodik and Ablyazov developed as aspiring intellectual, religious and political elites during the late Soviet period: work within the patronage system and one is rewarded; challenge the patronage model and one will be punished.²⁶ This mental map, though it may direct Central Asia's current political elite, is likely disorienting for the increasing portion of the population that came of age after the Soviet collapse. According to the 2008 projections of United Nations Population Division, 47.5 percent of the Uzbek population, 46.1 percent of the Kyrgyz population and 40 percent of the Kazakh population in

²⁶ Pierson, "Increasing Returns," p. 260.

2015 will have been born *after* the Soviet collapse.²⁷ This new generation will not have passed through Soviet institutions of political acculturation – the Young Pioneers, the Komsomol, and the Communist Party. And, no less important, they will not have enjoyed the benefits these institutions provided their parents. Rather, their mental map will be one shaped by the dissonant contrasts of local poverty and images of global wealth splashed across computer screens at local Internet cafes. And, unless the Soviet era elite that currently rules Central Asia willingly relinquishes power and, with it, the perquisites of state rule, to this younger generation, the unmet expectations of this post-1991 youth may well bring an end to the Soviet model of patronage rule.

Part III—New ICTs and the Rise of a Post-Soviet Central Asian Political Culture

As is true with almost every posited single variable driver of political change, so too with new ICTs the record of success in promoting liberalization and democratization is mixed. Several studies demonstrate how new ICTs empower citizen activism. R. Kelly Garrett, for example, illustrates how new ICTs (1) lower the costs of social mobilization, (2) make it easier for activists to monitor elites and expose corruption, and (3) encouraged “decentralized, non-hierarchical organizational forms.”²⁸ Similarly, David Hill and Krishna Sen illustrate how the Internet enabled Indonesian oppositionists not only to break Suharto’s media monopoly, but to break this monopoly using “conversational, dialogic, (and) non-hierarchical” forms of communication.²⁹ And Yongnian Zheng and Guoguang Wu conclude that Chinese reformers

²⁷ “World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision Population Database,” <http://esa.un.org/unpp/index.asp>.

²⁸ R. Kelly Garrett, “Protest in an Information Society: a Review of Literature on Social Movements and New ICTs,” *Information, Communication and Society* 9, no. 2 (April 2006): 211.

²⁹ David T. Hill and Krishna Sen, “The Internet in Indonesia's New Democracy,” *Democratization* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 133.

might productively study how the Zapatistas “benefited substantially from the decentralized, inexpensive, and self-organizing nature of communication facilitated through the new IT.”³⁰

Garrett, Hill and Sen, and Zheng and Wu all acknowledge, however, that structural constraints, that is the political environment within which oppositionists marshal technologies like the Internet, can dampen the transformative effects of new ICTs.³¹ Just as autocracies can control printing presses, radio and television, so too can savvy authoritarian governments monitor and exert control over new telecoms and Internet service providers. Moreover, even absent such control, new ICTs need not be liberalizing. Peter Chroust, for example, demonstrates how illiberal groups – neo-Nazis in Germany and the Taliban in Afghanistan – can equally use new ICTs to facilitate communication and mobilization.³² Benjamin Barber suggests that fears that new ICTs force people “into one commercially homogenous global network: one McWorld tied together by technology” motivate actors to fight for the opposite, for the construction of even more differentiated local identities.³³ As such, Barber predicts, new ICTs will result in more, not less “ethnic, racial, tribal, or religious” violence.³⁴

Just as the empirical evidence regarding the causal effects of new ICTs is mixed in the broader literature, so too is the evidence mixed in the case of broader Eurasia. A ghastly video of Russian neo-Nazis’ point-blank execution of a Tajik and beheading of a Daghestani was the most popular topic on Russian Internet blogs in August 2007. Moreover, in cases where activists do attempt to apply Web 2.0 strategies to furthering political reform, these attempts are often

³⁰ Yongnian Zheng and Guoguang Wu, “Information Technology, Public Space, and Collective Action in China,” *Comparative Political Studies* 38, no. 5 (June 2005): 533.

³¹ For an extensive discussion of how structural constraints can dampen the liberalizing effects of new ICTs, see: Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule* (Washington, D.C: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003)

³² Peter Chroust, “Neo-Nazis and Taliban On-Line: Anti-Modern Political Movements and Modern Media,” *Democratization* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 102-118.

³³ Benjamin R Barber, “Jihad Vs. McWorld,” *The Atlantic* 269, no. 3 (March 1992): 53.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

brutally squashed by the regions ruling autocrats. Here the case of Alisher Saipov is illustrative. Saipov, one of Central Asia's most promising journalists, used Google advertising revenues from his Western-oriented website, *Fergana.ru*, to fund a more traditional print newspaper, *Siyosat*. The print paper, which also received funding from the US-based National Endowment for Democracy, provided Uzbek language news for a population in Kyrgyzstan and especially in neighboring Uzbekistan that was starved for information. Lamentably, *Siyosat's* and Saipov's substantial contributions proved short-lived. On October 24, 2007, assailants shot and killed Saipov and thereby shuttered the first uncensored print newspaper Uzbeks have had access to in over a decade. Although new ICT media is often depicted as difficult for states to control, in Saipov's case 15th century technology silenced Central Asia's leading 21st century journalist.

It is tempting, in the face of these shocking and well-reported cases to conclude that autocratic structure and the xenophobia of *Jihad vs. McWorld* dominate any potential liberalizing effects of new ICTs in Central Asia. What has been less reported, however, and less studied, are the effects of new ICTs on Central Asian populations broadly. Here, survey evidence suggests that although the causal effects of new ICTs are mixed and highly dependent on structural context, the use of new ICTs nevertheless does appear to have a liberalizing effect on political culture. More specifically, where state filtering of the Internet is less pronounced—in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan—survey results suggest that Internet users do exhibit greater inclinations toward political reform and civic engagement. Conversely, where state filtering of the Internet is extensive, as it is in Uzbekistan, inclinations toward political reform and civic engagement differ little between Internet users non-users. I explore this variation in ICT use and political culture in two steps. First, I outline variations in the structural environment of Internet usage in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Next, I discuss the model used to test

relations between ICT use and political culture and apply this model to surveys colleagues and I commissioned in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in May 2008.

State Control of the Internet in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

The OpenNet Initiative (ONI), a project run jointly by Harvard, the University of Toronto, Cambridge and Oxford, monitors the extent to which citizens have free access to Internet sites. In May 2007, ONI published a series of country reports documenting varying degrees of government censorship of the Internet in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as well as in 41 other countries.³⁵ Specifically, ONI investigated the extent to which governments filtered websites that host political, social, and security related content that state leaderships perceive as threatening.³⁶ ONI also investigated the extent to which governments filter websites that provide “internet tools” such as email, content hosting, and communication services.³⁷ Each category was ranked along a five point scale: (1) “pervasive filtering,” (2) “substantial filtering,” (3) “selective filtering,” (4) “suspected filtering” and (5) “no evidence of filtering.”

Kyrgyzstan, despite its ranking toward the autocratic end of Freedom House’s *Freedom in the World* and WGI scales, nevertheless performs well in the ONI scale of Internet openness. In its 2007 study ONI found no evidence of government filtering of political, social, security or Internet tools websites.³⁸ Kazakhstan, which ranks as marginally more autocratic than Kyrgyzstan on the Freedom House and WGI regime type scales, ranks as also marginally less open than Kyrgyzstan on ONI’s Internet freedom scale. Though ONI did not find evidence of

³⁵ These reports are available on ONI’s website: <http://opennet.net/research/profiles>.

³⁶ ONI defines political sites as those “that express views in opposition to those of the current government.” ONI defines social websites as those present “material related to sexuality, gambling, and illegal drugs and alcohol, as well as other topics that may be socially sensitive or perceived as offensive.” ONI defines security-related sites as those that present material “related to armed conflicts, border disputes, separatist movements, and militant groups.”

³⁷ ONI defines Internet tool related websites as those that provide e-mail, Internet hosting, search, translation, Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone service, and circumvention methods.”

³⁸ OpenNet Initiative, “Country Profile: Kyrgyzstan,” May 10, 2007, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/kyrgyzstan>.

Kazakh government filtering of social, security and Internet tools-related websites, ONI did find suspected Kazakh government filtering of political websites.³⁹ Lastly, Uzbekistan, which consistently scores as the most autocratic of the Central Asian states in the Freedom House and WGI indexes, is, according to ONI, “the undisputed leader in applying Internet controls” in Central Asia.⁴⁰ ONI’s analysis reveals substantial Uzbek government filtering of political websites and selective filtering of social and Internet tools-related websites. ONI did not find any evidence of government filtering of security-related websites. ONI’s finding of greater structural constraints to Internet freedoms in Uzbekistan is consistent with our own findings on Internet usage in Central Asia. For example, in our 2008 surveys, only seven percent of Uzbek respondents report using the Internet whereas thirteen percent of Kyrgyz respondents and nineteen percent of Kazakh respondents report using the Internet.⁴¹ Moreover, to foreshadow the statistical analysis below, these varying patterns of structural constraints are also consistent with the broader literature’s posited hypotheses on the liberalizing effects of ICT usage. That is, even for those Uzbeks who do regularly use the Internet, the Uzbek government’s pervasive filtering of content appears to dampen the reformist tendencies that Internet users in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan exhibit.

Modeling ICT Usage and Political Culture

Among the more comprehensive studies into the effects of new ICTs on political culture is Norris and Inglehart’s forthcoming *Cosmopolitan Communications: Cultural Diversity in a Globalized World*. Here Norris and Inglehart explore “the impact of exposure to the mass media

³⁹ OpenNet Initiative, “Country Profile: Kazakhstan,” May 10, 2007, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/kazakhstan>.

⁴⁰ OpenNet Initiative, “Country Profile: Uzbekistan,” May 9, 2007, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/uzbekistan>.

⁴¹ Surveys of 1,000 respondents per country conducted in May-June 2008 as part of the National Science Foundation – funded project, “The Effect of the Internet on Central Asian Society.”

on the strength of national identities and cosmopolitan orientations; values and attitudes towards markets and the state; orientations towards religion, gender equality, and traditional standards of morality; and attitudes towards democracy, self-expression values, and human rights.”⁴² Central to the authors’ analysis are the two core questions of (1) whether societies are becoming more cosmopolitan and less Balkanized as they are exposed to greater global communications and (2) the extent to which “firewalls” – structural constraints such as “the level of media freedom” – limit the potential liberalizing effects of new ICTs.

My own analysis of the potential liberalizing effects of new ICTs follows this Norris and Inglehart model. That is, I too explore the extent to which new ICTs, namely Internet usage, relate to more cosmopolitan political values. More specifically, I explore the relationship between Internet usage and respondent trust (1) in their national governments, (2) in international organizations, (3) in religiosity and in (4) civic engagement. Moreover, similar to Norris and Inglehart’s study, I explore how structural constraints governments place on new ICTs limit the political culture effects of Internet usage.

I should note that my study differs from Norris and Inglehart’s analysis in several respects. First, Norris and Inglehart use hierarchical linear models and a “pooled sample for all societies in the 5th wave of the WVS (World Values Survey)” to explore how, in the context of differing structural constraints, increased “global communications” shape political culture. In contrast, I explore individual level effects of Internet use within the context of the separate Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Uzbek samples.⁴³ Second, Norris and Inglehart are less concerned with individual, country-level outcomes and more focused on how global communications effect political culture broadly. While I share this interest, this paper’s immediate focus is on the potential liberalizing effects of

⁴² Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Cosmopolitan Communications: Cultural Diversity in a Globalized World*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2009), ch. 1, p. 17.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Ch. 6, p. 2.

new ICTs within the Central Asia context. Lastly, I should note that my regional focus complements Norris and Inglehart's broader conclusions on globalized communications and political culture. The fifth wave of the WVS – the surveys that provide the foundation for Norris and Inglehart's research – do not include the Central Asian countries. That my analysis yields similar results to Norris and Inglehart's research adds further support to the core findings of their *Cosmopolitan Communications*.

Results

I use the survey questions—*Please rate your trust in (1) the national government and (2) international organizations*—to explore how Internet usage relates to respondents' perceptions of their ruling governments and of outsiders. I use the survey question—*Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services these days?*—to explore the potential effects of Internet usage on religiosity. Lastly, I use the question—*Do you ever contribute time or money to voluntary or community organizations?*—to assess effects of Internet usage on civic engagement. Response to the trust variables are coded on a five point scale: (1) very untrustworthy, (2) untrustworthy, (3) trustworthy, (4) very trustworthy and (5) do not know. The religious attendance variable is coded along a seven point scale: (1) never / practically never attend, (2) attend less often than once a year, (3) attend once a year, (4) attend only on special holidays, (5) attend once a month, (6) attend once a week, (7) attend more than once a week. The contribution to voluntary or community organizations dependent variable is coded (0) no and (1) yes. Independent variables include the dichotomous variable, Internet use, as well as the demographic variables age, gender, income and education.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Age is a continuous variable. Income is coded on a 6 point scale: (1) below \$50, (2) \$51-100, (3) \$101- \$200, (4) \$201-\$500, (5) above \$501 and (6) do not know. Education is coded on a 7 point scale: (1) primary or less, (2)

Tables 1-3 in the Appendix present the regression analyses of surveys conducted in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in May 2008. Colleagues at the University of Washington and I commissioned the Central Asian polling agency, BRiF, to conduct these surveys. Respondents were selected according to the random-route method. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions are used to explore the dependent variables: (1) trust in the national government, (2) trust in international organizations and (3) religious attendance.⁴⁵ The binary dependent variable, donate to voluntary or community organizations, is analyzed using logistic regressions.

Survey analysis support the hypothesis that structural constraints – in this case, Internet filtering – do dampen the potentially transformative effects of new ICTs. In Uzbekistan, where government filtering of websites is the most extensive in the region, Internet usage has no statistically significant effect on respondents' reported trust in the national government or in respondent trust of international organizations. Nor, moreover, does Internet usage in Uzbekistan have a statistically significant effect on respondent engagement in civic organizations or religiosity. In contrast, in Kyrgyzstan, where filtering is largely nonexistent, Internet users do report statistically significant and lower levels of trust in the national government and significant and higher levels of trust in international organizations. Lastly, Kazakhstan illustrates the intermediate case. Here, ONI reports suspected government filtering of politically-oriented websites but no filtering of other sites. This pattern of political filtering may well explain why Internet use has no statistically significant effect on respondent perceptions of the national government and international organizations. Importantly, though, as the beta coefficient in Table

some secondary, (3) complete secondary, (4) incomplete higher education (5) Bachelor's Degree, (6) Masters Degree, and (7) Doctorate.

⁴⁵ Ordered logistic regressions performed on these three variables yielded similar patterns of statistically significant results. I present the OLS results here for ease of analysis.

2 and the odds ratio in Table 4 illustrate, Internet use does have a positive and statistically significant effect on respondent engagement with civic organizations. The odds of donating to time or money to civic organizations is 2.7 times greater among Kazakhs who use the Internet than among Kazakhs who do not use the Internet.

It is also worth emphasizing the one variable Internet use does not affect, regardless of structural constraints—religiosity. Internet users, even in the comparatively open environment of Kyrgyzstan, are no more or less likely to attend religious services than non-Internet users. In short, analysis of the Central Asian surveys suggest that, absent government filtering, Internet use can produce greater citizen disaffection with authoritarianism, greater citizen trust of international organizations and greater citizen engagement with civic organizations.

Concluding Discussion

This study began with the question: why has the patronage logic of Central Asian authoritarianism remain fundamentally unaltered despite the predictions offered by the transitions literature? Islamic revivalism across Central Asia, contrary to the predictions of social scientists, has not unseated the region's secular autocrats. Similarly, neither have economic crises, the withdrawal of external patrons, infighting among political elites, and the arrival of foreign democracy experts urging institutional redesign reshaped the logic of Central Asian patronage politics. Importantly, however, as Part I illustrates, variations do exist in the effectiveness of Central Asian patronage rule. Kazakhstan's oil wealth ensures the smooth functioning of patronage politics. In Uzbekistan, rents from the state-controlled cotton industry and from the regulation of international gold mining companies, sustain, though less smoothly than in the Kazakh case, continued patronage rule. Lastly, in Kyrgyzstan, where rent-bearing

commodities are all but absent, the only patronage that persists is the center's licensing of regional elites' exploitation of local populations.

That such patronage rule persists, even in the Kyrgyz case, Part II explains, is the product of the incentive structures inherent to path dependency. Central Asia's current elite came of age under the Soviet system. They were acculturated in to the hierarchical reward structures of Soviet politics through the Young Pioneers, the Komsomol and the Communist Party. In short, Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Uzbek political elites' "mental map" is one that readily understands the awards of working within the patronage system and the penalties that arise from challenging this system. Critically however, Soviet institutions of political acculturation no longer exist. As I note in the conclusion of Part II, by 2015 nearly half of the Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Uzbek populations in 2015 will have been born after the Soviet collapse. And although young Central Asians may recognize the logic of patronage politics, this younger population will not, in contrast to their parents, have been rigorously acculturated into the culture of political patronage.

Just the opposite, as Part III illustrates, many Central Asian youth will view politics through a decidedly different lens than that of their parents—through the lens of globalized communications and the Internet. As such, a challenging question Central Asia's autocratic rulers will need to confront is how this Internet savvy, post-Soviet cohort will respond to patronage rule that continues to serve a narrow, Soviet-era political elite. To a certain degree, the region's autocrats are already responding. Uzbek President Karimov maintains blanket controls over Internet access whereas the Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbaev, ensures that political oppositionist websites are selectively filtered. From the standpoint of personal political survival, the Uzbek and Kazakh strategies are wise. In Kyrgyzstan, where such filtering is largely absent, Internet users are considerably less enamored with their national government,

more inclined toward international organizations and, as recent events illustrate, more inclined to protest.

Will *Transitions 2.0* succeed where *Transitions 1.0* failed? To a large degree the answer to this question rests in the ability of Central Asian governments to continue effective filtering of the Internet and of global communications broadly, something that may get progressively more difficult as Internet access shifts from what now are readily controlled public areas (work, Internet cafes and libraries) to the comparative privacy of smart phones and home computers. No less consequential is whether ICT-induced changes in political culture translate to societal changes in political engagement. This study suggests that the retreat of Soviet institutions of political acculturation and the arrival of new ICTs will likely produce a political culture that is less trusting of autocratic rule and more open to outsiders and civic engagement. Whether Central Asians will assume the daunting risks that undoubtedly are required to transform their governments so as to more closely reflect these changed political values, however, remains an open question.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Regression Models Exploring Kyrgyz Respondent Trust in the National Government, Trust in International Organizations, Religious Service Attendance and Engagement with Civic Organizations

	(1) Trust National Government	(2) Trust International Organizations	(3) Attend Religious Services	(4) Give to Civic Organizations
Gender (male=1)	0.051 (0.052)	-0.096 (0.051)	0.456 ^{***} (0.112)	0.045 (0.215)
Age (years)	-0.007 ^{***} (0.002)	-0.006 ^{***} (0.002)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.006 (0.007)
Education (7-pt scale)	-0.079 ^{***} (0.022)	-0.002 (0.022)	-0.048 (0.047)	0.249 ^{**} (0.089)
Income (6-pt scale)	-0.112 ^{***} (0.017)	-0.047 ^{**} (0.017)	-0.112 ^{**} (0.035)	-0.172 [*] (0.075)
Use Internet (yes=1)	-0.187 [*] (0.088)	0.269 ^{**} (0.083)	0.066 (0.188)	0.195 (0.347)
_cons	3.447 ^{***} (0.107)	2.994 ^{***} (0.103)	3.258 ^{***} (0.229)	-2.466 ^{***} (0.433)
<i>N</i>	905	723	1000	1000
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.105	0.038	0.024	
pseudo <i>R</i> ²				0.019

Note: Do not know responses to “trust in national government” and “trust in international organizations” were omitted from the regressions in models one and two. Models report the beta coefficient slopes. Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2: Regression Models Exploring Kazakh Respondent Trust in the National Government, Trust in International Organizations, Religious Service Attendance and Engagement with Civic Organizations

	(1) Trust National Government	(2) Trust International Organizations	(3) Attend Religious Services	(4) Give to Civic Organizations
Gender (male=1)	-0.046 (0.043)	-0.052 (0.041)	0.018 (0.01)	0.113 (0.306)
Age (years)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.003* (0.001)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.001 (0.012)
Education (7-pt scale)	-0.021 (0.02)	-0.002 (0.019)	-0.053 (0.046)	0.358** (0.132)
Income (6-pt scale)	-0.044 (0.024)	-0.034 (0.023)	0.094 (0.055)	0.066 (0.181)
Use Internet (yes=1)	-0.058 (0.061)	0.055 (0.057)	0.191 (0.14)	0.979** (0.357)
_cons	3.364*** (0.134)	3.144*** (0.126)	1.923*** (0.309)	-4.968*** (0.998)
<i>N</i>	947	879	1000	1000
adj. R^2	0.005	0.007	0.011	
pseudo R^2				0.069

Note: Do not know responses to “trust in national government” and “trust in international organizations” were omitted from the regressions in models one and two. Models report the beta coefficient slopes. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3: Regression Models Exploring Uzbek Respondent Trust in the National Government, Trust in International Organizations, Religious Service Attendance and Engagement with Civic Organizations

	(1) Trust National Government	(2) Trust International Organizations	(3) Attend Religious Services	(4) Give to Civic Organizations
Gender (male=1)	-0.014 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.05)	0.537*** (0.103)	0.271 (0.211)
Age (years)	-0.004** (0.001)	-0.005** (0.002)	0.024*** (0.0032)	0.006 (0.007)
Education (7-pt scale)	-0.00 (0.019)	0.037 (0.024)	-0.008 (0.048)	0.098 (0.093)
Income (6-pt scale)	0.002 (0.014)	-0.016 (0.018)	-0.031 (0.035)	0.100 (0.073)
Use Internet (yes=1)	-0.094 (0.082)	-0.08 (0.094)	-0.106 (0.207)	0.379 (0.369)
_cons	3.310*** (0.089)	3.095*** (0.111)	1.619*** (0.228)	-3.150*** (0.472)
<i>N</i>	932	741	1000	1000
adj. R^2	0.005	0.007	0.080	
pseudo R^2				0.012

Note: Do not know responses to “trust in national government” and “trust in international organizations” were omitted from the regressions in models one and two. Models report the beta coefficient slopes. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4: Give to Civic Organizations—Odds Ratios for the Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Uzbek Logistic Regressions

	(1) Kyrgyzstan	(2) Kazakhstan	(3) Uzbekistan
Gender (male=1)	1.046 (0.225)	1.120 (0.343)	1.312 (0.276)
Age (years)	0.994 (0.00685)	1.001 (0.0116)	1.006 (0.00654)
Education (7-pt scale)	1.283 ^{**} (0.114)	1.430 ^{**} (0.189)	1.103 (0.103)
Income (6-pt scale)	0.842 [*] (0.063)	1.068 (0.193)	1.105 (0.081)
Use Internet (yes=1)	1.215 (0.422)	2.663 ^{**} (0.952)	1.462 (0.540)
<i>N</i>	1000	1000	1000
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.019	0.069	0.012

Note: Models report exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

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