SOURCES OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY:
THE SOVIET LEGACY IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Long before “imminent collapse” became the favored forecast among observers of the storms underway in the Soviet Union, predictions of violent ethnic, primarily religious, rebellion throughout Central Asia began to dominate scholarly accounts of politics in this region. These expectations were accelerated in the late 1980s as nationalist movements proliferated in other parts of the former Soviet Union, and ultimately, contributed to the country’s demise in 1991. Thus, alongside Central Asia’s so-called “liberation” from Soviet rule came a steady stream of predictions that this newfound independence would result in the “resurrection” of pre-Soviet identities in the form of tribal divisions and Islamic fundamentalism, or the violent “rejection” of the Soviet legacy in the form of nationalism and ethnic conflict. Others claimed that independence would reveal that Soviet policies and institutions had left Central Asia virtually untransformed from its pre-Soviet cultural and historical past.

The years since independence, however, have failed to validate these claims. While tribal, religious, and national identities may indeed have been present, none has emerged as politically salient and/or ignited violent conflict. Incidents of inter-ethnic conflict in the region since independence have been rare, short-lived, and confined to a particular city or regional administrative-territorial division (oblast). Islam has also yet to become a dominant cultural or political force beyond the Ferghana Valley. Instead, the pattern of inter-ethnic cooperation and intra-ethnic conflict since independence indicates that regionalism -- that is, identities based on the internal administrative-territorial divisions established under the Soviet regime -- has emerged as the most salient political cleavage in Central Asia. Moreover, the predominance of regional political identities has not resulted in violent ethnic conflict, but rather, coincided with a relatively peaceful transition from Soviet rule.

The salience of regionalism in post-Soviet Central Asian politics and the virtual absence of conflict in the first several years after independence are not coincidental. Both are deeply rooted in the Soviet system itself. In short, Soviet policies and institutions in Central Asia created, transformed and institutionalized regional political identities, while at the same time eliminating tribal, religious, and national identities, weakening them, or confining them to the social and cultural spheres. They also engendered the view that regional identities were the most appropriate identity for the political arena because they were more conducive to settling political disagreements peacefully than these other identities, which would encourage chauvinism and divisiveness. After independence, regionalism continued to serve as the lens through which elites viewed politics. It framed their understanding of who would influence the construction of a new state, what would be the primary issues at stake, and how to assess their relative power in the ensuing negotiations. Thus, the persistence of regional political identities after independence ensured that the very same actors, interests, and basis for evaluating power asymmetries would continue to dominate decision-making in the post-Soviet period, and simultaneously reduced the likelihood for violent conflict.

That Central Asian elites continued to view politics and political decision-making through a regional lens after independence is evident in the striking similarities that characterized the process of electoral system design in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. As the preceding chapters demonstrate, in all three countries regionally-based actors, interests, and assessments of relative power dominated the negotiations over new electoral rules. Regional political identities thus served as the conduit through which their common past continued to influence their
subsequent development, and hence, the mechanism for institutional continuity. The source of this continuity, however, is the structural-historical context that all three states share -- specifically, the Soviet legacy that privileged political affiliations based on region over those based on kinship (i.e. tribe), religion, or nationality.

This chapter utilizes insights from historical institutionalism (HI) to explicate the way in which the Soviet legacy continued to influence institutional choices in Central Asia after independence from Soviet rule. In contrast to other approaches, HI depicts political identities as “investments” that individuals consciously make in response to their institutional surroundings and yet unconsciously maintain. By identifying the combined effect of internal and external influences on identity formation and mobilization, HI directs our attention to the structural incentives that make some identities more desirable and enduring than others. It thus provides the best explanation for the common salience of regionalism in post-Soviet Central Asian politics and their role in the electoral design process in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

**Potential Social Bases for Identity Formation and Mobilization in Central Asia**

If we start from the now widely accepted premise that social and political identities are “constructed from the available repertoire of social categories” in a given society, we must also begin with an understanding of these social categories in Central Asia. An historical overview of Central Asia, extending from the period before Russian occupation through the collapse of the Soviet Union reveals several possible social bases for the formation of identity and its mobilization into politics.

At the time of Russian expansion into this vast region, the peoples who lived there distinguished themselves according to clans and tribal lineages as well as to slight cultural and linguistic differences. Modern-day Kazakhs were divided into three “tribal confederations” (or Juzes), each containing several clans. The Kyrgyz were also organized according to tribes, but in the form of two “wings” -- approximately twenty-one tribes on the right and eight tribes on the left. A complex tribal structure also characterized the Uzbeks. Although once comprised exclusively of nomads, by the nineteenth century settled populations also occupied a significant portion of the territory known today as “Central Asia.” Indigenous peoples of the region and outsiders alike thus began to distinguish the population according to nomads and sarts (or “settled peoples”); Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen belonged to the first category while Uzbeks and Tajiks belonged to the second.

The indigenous Central Asian population also shared some sources of cultural and political identity. By the eighteenth century, they had all been converted to Sunni Islam and most of them had a general Turkish ancestral and cultural heritage dating back to the Mongols. In addition, three major multi-ethnic khanates -- Kokand, Khiva, and Bukhara -- divided Central Asia and its peoples into three distinct political communities, each of which served its Emir. Meanwhile, the Emirs of these khanates battled with one another for supremacy and hopelessly resisted Russian incursion into their fiefdoms.
Although the Russians began colonizing this region in the late 1860s, they did not represent any formidable interference with indigenous identities or customs. For the sake of administrative efficiency, the Russians divided the region into three governorate-generals (guberniaia) -- the Steppe, Turkestan, and Transcaspia -- but left intact two of the Vassal States they had encountered (Bukhara and Khiva) as Russian protectorates. The Steppe included north-central parts of present-day Kazakhstan; Turkestan included southern Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the eastern part of Bukhara; Transcaspia consisted of today’s central and western Turkmenistan; and most of the Bukharan and Khivan Khanates eventually became part of Uzbekistan.

It was under Soviet rule that the potential of another identity -- a national identity -- developed. As part of their approach to incorporating the non-Russian parts of the Tsarist Empire into a Soviet state, the Soviets divided the lands historically comprising Central Asia into ethno-national territorial units. These units were based on the five or six major ethnic groups in Central Asia (e.g. Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, etc.) which had been identified by Russian and later Soviet ethnographers largely through their tribal and linguistic distinctions. Thus, after Central Asia became part of the USSR in 1922, it was subdivided into the republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in 1924, and further subdivided into Kazakhstan, Kirghizia (present-day Kyrgyzstan), and Tajikistan in 1929.

**The Rise of Regionalism in Central Asia**

Following the Soviet Union’s collapse, many scholars expected, and indeed predicted, the outbreak of conflict throughout the Central Asian states based on divisions between titular nationalities and minorities, the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism, and/or the resurgence of tribal identities and animosities. Yet, none of these possible socio-political cleavages played a dominant or even significant role in Central Asian politics following independence. The empirical reality is that post-Soviet Central Asia has witnessed little, if any, violent conflict along ethno-national lines. Rather, episodes of ethno-political conflict in post-Soviet Central Asia have emerged from differences within the titular nationality itself -- in particular, from regional cleavages corresponding to the internal administrative-territorial divisions established under the Soviet regime -- and have been resolved peacefully.

The empirical evidence indicates that the predominance of regionalism in Central Asia is especially acute among social, political, and economic elites. In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, for example, regionalism has manifested itself in the development of regionally-based social movements and political parties, the struggle between regional administrations and the central government for dominance in political and economic decision-making, and, most recently, in political conflict over the establishment of new electoral systems. As illustrated in Table 3.1 below, interviews conducted with over 120 members of the central government, regional leaders, and social and political activists in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan indicate that, in the first few years following independence, regional identities, interests, and conceptions of power were the most salient across all three states. Leaders in all three countries, for example, considered their main source of political support to be the region in which they most recently held office rather than members of their nationality, tribe, or any
particular political party. Similarly, they nearly unanimously cited promoting regional interests as the primary responsibilities of officials serving in both the executive and legislative branches.

Table 3.1 here.

The salience of regionalism was particularly evident during the negotiations over electoral systems in each state. As mentioned previously, regional leaders and central leaders made up the core set of actors, shared the same set of primary interests, and utilized the same basis for evaluating the underlying power asymmetries between them. Preferences over specific aspects of the “new” electoral system were based on each actor’s expectation of how that particular aspect would affect: first, the overall regional balance of power vis-à-vis the center; and second, their own region’s position of strength or weakness within it. Clear divisions thus emerged between the preferred outcomes of regional leaders on the one hand and central leaders on the other, as well as among leaders representing different regions.¹³

Explaining Identity Formation and Ethnic Mobilization

In recent years, a new conventional wisdom seems to have emerged in the study of ethnic politics based on three main tenets. The first, already mentioned above, is that identity is socially constructed and contextual rather than inherited at birth and fixed. The other two concern standards for what constitutes a complete explanation. Most now agree that, in order to be compelling, an explanation must provide an account for both why ethnic mobilization or violent conflict occurs in some cases and why it does not in others.¹⁴ At the same time, a complete explanation must also not assume, even implicitly, that individual preferences or behavior can be derived directly from ethnic group membership.¹⁵

This growing consensus, however, has been slow to reach post-Soviet politics, particularly studies of ethnic politics in Central Asia. First of all, a primordialist understanding of identity -- i.e. that it is ascribed at birth, perpetuated through kinship bonds, and translated directly into one’s social interactions -- was popular among scholars of Central Asian politics before the Soviet Union’s demise and remained so long afterward.¹⁶ This is evident in the large number who predicted that conflict would erupt along clan and tribal lines dating back to centuries even before the Russian conquest of Central Asia (1860-70), or according to the larger, cross-cutting identities of a Turkish heritage and an Islamic faith. Many scholars anticipated the collapse of the Soviet Union years, sometimes decades, before this actually occurred due to its failure to forcibly assimilate the various ethnic groups that comprised its territory.¹⁷ The most prevalent examples of this view claim that Islamic identities throughout the USSR continued to survive and thrive despite Moscow’s anti-Islamic campaigns. Some even predicted that the continued salience of Islam as a separate, non-Soviet source of community, would ultimately evoke the collective rise of the Muslim nationalities against the Soviet regime -- particularly in Central Asia where the largest Muslim populations have been concentrated.¹⁸ Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Sovietologists predicted the emergence of Islam as a political force in the newly independent Central Asian states with renewed conviction. However, they argued that this latent identity would now be provoked by the economic problems plaguing these underdeveloped states or their newfound political freedom, rather than by Moscow’s repeated injustices.¹⁹ The outbreak
of the Civil War in Tajikistan, which often has been attributed (mistakenly) to age-old clan rivalries, has also encouraged some [scholars] to predict ethnic mobilization [and conflict] based on kinship ties in other parts of Central Asia.\textsuperscript{20}

Secondly, the primordialist perspective shares with the other two perspectives that have been used to explain ethnic mobilization and conflict in the former Soviet Union -- constructivist and instrumentalist -- the failure not only to predict which of the multiple possible social identities in Central Asia would become politically salient after independence, but also to explain why other identities did not.

Instrumentalists, or those who view identity as both the object of strategic manipulation and the product of individual rational choice, have consistently predicted that divisions based on nationality would be the most prevalent source of identity and political conflict in Central Asia. This stems from the assumption that, due to its status and numerical presence, the titular nationality in each state was in a uniquely powerful position to design the newly independent state toward its own benefit and would take advantage of this position.\textsuperscript{21} Well before the collapse of the Soviet Union, for example, David Laitin argued that those republics in which native elites had gained the highest political upward mobility -- a “most favored lord” status -- would be least likely to promote national self-determination.\textsuperscript{22} Central Asian elites, with the lowest levels of upward mobility in the former Soviet Union, therefore, were the most likely candidates. After its fall, a number of Sovietologists maintained that native elites who had served as representatives of the titular nationality and had been charged with “managing” nationalism in their respective republics would become “ethnic entrepreneurs.” That is, they would promote nationalism or “play the nationalist card” in order to maintain their position of dominance while capturing new resources generated by independence.\textsuperscript{23} Similarly, Post-Soviet analysts argued that, in the absence of formidable legal or popular restraints, ethnic war would result because it was in the interest of the majority population to establish their dominance in the newly-independent states vis-à-vis the minority. In other words, the majority or titular nationality would deny full political rights to the minority and, knowing this in advance, the minority would launch a civil war in its own defense.\textsuperscript{24}

Those who have utilized a constructivist approach to explain post-Soviet ethnic politics within and beyond Central Asia also have predicted that inter-ethnic divisions based on nationality would be the most salient political cleavage after independence. According to this view, identity is not at all a fundamental attribute of human nature but one that is historically derived through socialization and acculturation. An ethnic group, therefore, is not based on ascriptive bonds, but exists as a social and cultural construct. While few scholars writing about the transition from Soviet rule either ignore or fail to recognize the significance of the Soviet legacy, even fewer adopt a purely constructivist approach to illuminate and investigate the social construction of ethnic identity in the USSR. Those who have, moreover, limit their analysis to the general impact of Soviet nationality policy. In sum, they argue that through the creation of ethno-national republics and official ethno-national identities, the Soviet Union “[institutionalized]... nationhood and nationality” in such a way as to encourage the rise of nationalism within its borders.\textsuperscript{25} Not surprisingly, they also predict that nationality will remain the strongest source of identity and hence political mobilization throughout the former republics in the aftermath of
Soviet rule. This is due both to the Soviet legacy of defining ethnic identity in national terms and the requirements of transitioning to statehood.\(^\text{26}\)

None of the three main perspectives on identity formation and mobilization successfully predicted the salience of regionalism in Central Asia, in short, because they focus primarily on either the internal or the external forces driving identity. Thus, each of them fails to capture part of the explanation. Both primordialists and instrumentalists locate the primary source of identity within the individual him or herself, through self-ascription from birth and conscious choice based on self-interest, respectively. By focusing on internal sources, primordialists and instrumentalists minimize the direct and profound role that state structures and policies play in shaping an individual’s identity, both through limiting the possible identities that one is able to internalize as “given” and providing constraints as to which of these identities is actually “chosen.” Absent the state’s influence, they are unable to explain, for example, why certain identities are rendered politically powerless while others provide a formidable source of mobilization. Constructivists, by contrast, view identity as wholly constructed by outside social, historical, and political forces beyond the individual’s control. Their emphasis on external sources, however, overlooks the role that the individual him/herself plays in selecting and ultimately investing in his/her own identity, and hence, his/her willingness to engage in political activity based on this identity. Thus, they are also unable to explain why a particular identity becomes politically salient among the many that state institutions and policies create and promote, especially since they consider all identity to be inherently political.

Finally, these three perspectives share another weakness that accounts for their failure to predict the predominance of regional political identities in post-Soviet Central Asia. In both theory and practice they have a strong tendency to reify cleavages between groups according to the ethnic categories they recognize or find readily apparent -- e.g. race, religion, and nationality. This contributes directly to their inability to predict the basis for ethnic mobilization (or which identity will actually emerge as politically salient) accurately, since they routinely overlook divisions within and cleavages across these ethnic categories. Thus, it is not surprising that neither primordialists, constructivists, nor instrumentalists predicted regionalism in Central Asia since doing so requires a much deeper knowledge and understanding of the specific manifestations and effects of Soviet institutions and policies in the region. Moreover, the common inclination to essentialize identity encourages scholars of all three persuasions to assume that individual preferences and/or behavior will reflect what they recognize as the main cleavages in society.\(^\text{27}\) This is true for state leaders (or elites) as well as the general population (or masses). Constructivists and instrumentalists analyzing ethnic politics in post-Soviet Central Asia, for example, automatically assumed that titular elites would prioritize their national identity and interests over all others and that the masses would follow their lead, thus resulting in mass nationalist uprisings. Likewise, primordialists were certain that an Islamic resurgence throughout Central Asia was unavoidable once its leaders emerged because it would receive broad popular support.

In contrast, the HI approach is entirely consistent with the new conventional wisdom in the study of ethnic politics and goes well beyond it. Like the constructivist and instrumentalist perspectives, it is starts from the premise that identity is socially constructed and therefore malleable. The HI approach, however, rejects the premise that identity is driven solely by
internal forces, whether psychological needs or economic interests, while at the same time acknowledging that external forces cannot merely impose identities upon individuals. Instead, it highlights the way in which state structures and policies create and reinforce an individual’s desire and capacity to become attached to or invested in certain identities rather than others, particularly in his/her political life. According to this view, identity is neither fully given at birth, chosen at will, nor imposed from above. Rather, it is selected from among a set of finite options, some of which are made more appealing than others by the structural-historical context. In other words, the state not only provides individuals with a feasible set of identities from which to choose the one they find most expedient, it also makes one identity within this set more desirable than the others.\(^{28}\)

State institutions and policies may accomplish this, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in several ways: 1) by favoring some socio-cultural identities or groups over others, 2) by empowering certain social groups -- whether through elevating their status or granting them privileged access to scarce resources -- and not others, and 3) by repressing certain identities and groups, and hence rendering them politically inexpedient and potentially dangerous. Together, these serve to produce asymmetrical power relations between groups, which, in turn, foster inter-group competition and hence politicization of the relevant cleavages. Over time, they can also create a situation in which individuals (as well as groups) become so attached to a particular identity that it is difficult to shed this identity and adopt a new one, even once a seemingly “more desirable” identity emerges.\(^{29}\) Identities, then, are often as “sticky” as the institutions that foster them, and thus, ironically, can even outlast these policies and institutions.

The HI approach, therefore, provides the necessary tools to explain both why certain socio-cultural cleavages become politicized and why others do not, as well as why some political identities are more enduring than others. In the case of Central Asia, it directs our attention to the way in which Soviet policies and institutions created structural incentives for individuals to shift the locus of their political identities from tribe and Islam to region, and to personally invest in regional rather than national political identities.

At the same time, HI rejects the use of essentialist categories to predict the basis for ethnic mobilization. Because ethnic group membership is always an empirical question, so too are individual preferences and behavior. Similar to instrumentalists, HI scholars assign “ethnic entrepreneurs” a fundamental role in politicizing identity and increasing the potential for ethnic conflict. Yet, they do not view the emergence of ethnic entrepreneurs as either purely explained by elite self-interest or limited to a set of preconceived ethnic categories. Nor does it assume that these ethnic entrepreneurs, if they appear on the political scene, will automatically enjoy popular support. Rather, elites and masses are constrained by the same set of policies and institutions that shape their beliefs as to what is politically possible and appropriate. Thus, the HI approach can explain not only why Central Asian elites did not find it desirable to present an alternative to regionalism after independence, but also why the attempt to do so was unlikely to evoke a positive mass response. The answer lies in their common attachment to regional political identities and rejection of the feasible set of alternatives.
The Soviet Legacy and the Rise of Regionalism in Central Asia

In sum, HI provides a more empirically accurate and analytically useful framework through which to view political identities; that is, as “investments” that individuals consciously make in response to their institutional surroundings but unconsciously maintain. By illuminating the combined effect of internal and external influences on identity formation and mobilization, HI enables us to predict which identity becomes politically salient in a given society among several possible alternatives. Thus, HI should be able to explain both why regionalism emerged as the most salient socio-political cleavage in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, and why the other possibilities outlined above did not. More specifically, according to this perspective we should find that Soviet policies and institutions in Central Asia: 1) created and politicized regional identities by building interests and capacities based on regional affiliation, particularly among political elites, and 2) promoted these regional identities while minimizing or even excluding socio-political cleavages based on tribe, religion, or nationality. Furthermore, we should be able to trace the particular nature of regional cleavages in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan to specific Soviet policies and institutions in each Central Asian state.

Why Regionalism? Why Not Tribalism, Islamic Fundamentalism, and Nationalism?

The empirical evidence overwhelmingly supports the claim that the most compelling explanation for the rise of regionalism in post-Soviet Central Asia is the legacy of the Soviet political and economic system. The sum result of this system in the Central Asian republics was to create, reinforce, and politicize regional socio-political cleavages by re-structuring individual identities, group relations, and power asymmetries on the basis of regional affiliation, while at the same time supplanting and de-politicizing pre-existing socio-cultural identities. This is not to say that Soviet institutions and policies eliminated pre-existing social and cultural bonds, but rather, that they transformed these bonds by infusing them with a new social, political and economic meaning. The Soviet state thus created incentives for individuals to shift their social and political identities from pre-existing tribal and religious identities to “Soviet-inspired” ones and to personally invest in these identities over time. Yet, ironically, while the focus of scholars has most often been to demonstrate the unintended consequences of fostering national identities in the former Soviet Union, only regional identities acquired an enduring political significance within Central Asia. Nor did Soviet policies and institutions in Central Asia serve to “re-ignite” political divisions based on ancient tribal affiliations and Islam; instead, they effectively displaced the former by promoting regionalism and de-politicized the latter while politicizing regional identities.

Scholars who have either predicted nationalist uprising in the former Soviet Union or offered explanations for the rise of nationalism ex-post facto have universally based their analysis on the hypothesized effects of three Soviet institutions: 1) the federal structure, which created territorial units for some national groups and not others, 2) the failure of a command economy to satisfy the demands of social and economic modernization, and 3) the creation and expansion of a national cadre in each of these territorial units. Yet, due to their distinctive nature and effects, these same institutions and policies did not engender identities and capacities to incite nationalist sentiments in Central Asia, as in many parts of the former Soviet Union, but rather, to fuel regionalism.
The Soviet administrative-territorial structure in Central Asia fostered regional rather than national cleavages due to its coincidence with very weak (or non-existent) national identities and very strong (pre-existing) local identities. The latter was thus systematically, and perhaps unwittingly, reinforced at the expense of the former. When the Soviet authorities set out to establish republican boundaries in Central Asia according to nationality, there were neither clear territorial delineations based on ethnic groups nor a national form of identity corresponding to territory upon which republics could be readily established. Thus, republican boundaries had to be “artificially” created in the sense that they were drawn on the basis of major ethnic groups as defined by Russian and Soviet ethnographers, and not necessarily the dominant ethnic groups from the local perspective. In no case, however, were borders drawn arbitrarily. Close attention was paid to the work of Russian and Soviet ethnographers and cartographers in identifying different ethnic groups and drawing borders accordingly. The Central Administrative Commission set up to oversee the administrative divisions of these now Soviet territories was charged with considering national composition as the first criterion in its decisions, followed by “economic peculiarities” and “the influence of neighboring republics’ borders.” In the end, five groups were deemed worthy of national republics based on their linguistic and tribal distinctiveness alone -- the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Tajiks, and Uzbeks -- and, by 1936, each became the titular nationality of their own respective national Soviet Socialist republic (SSR).

In contrast, the administrative-territorial divisions within these republics complemented historical cleavage structures. They were deliberately drawn according to real and perceived distinctions among the titular nationality itself. While oblast boundaries encompassed several clans from the same tribes, however, they did not perfectly correspond to pre-existing tribal and local identities among the Central Asian peoples. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, administrative-territorial units were formulated and re-formulated in the 1920s and 30s such that they would correspond to tribal divisions among the northern and southern Kyrgyz; yet, in actuality, a number of Kyrgyz clans, many from different tribes and of mixed descent, resided within each oblast. Similarly, in Kazakhstan, Soviet-created regional boundaries kept entire clans intact, but divided nomadic tribal confederations into separate territorial units and created regional distinctions among and within tribes. Oblasts in Uzbekistan were drawn to closely resemble the five identified regional distinctions among the Uzbeks themselves, but in most cases these regional groupings were not large enough to encompass the entire territory. Clans were thus kept essentially intact, whereas tribes were geographically and administratively dispersed. This was the case even during the collectivization campaigns, which in effect consisted of forcibly settling Kazakh and Kyrgyz nomads and combining Uzbek villages on the basis of traditional kinship or social units.

Thus, the internal system of administrative boundaries in Central Asia, perhaps unwittingly, transformed pre-existing tribal and local identities into regional ones. As in the rest of the former Soviet Union, over time, the creation of regional administrative units institutionalized a pivotal leader -- the oblast party committee (obkom) first secretary -- with the discretion to select and replace local party and government personnel in both political and economic spheres as well as to “[check their] performance..., [unify] and [coordinate]” their activities, and “[procure]...
supplies” to ensure their optimal performance. Yet, in Central Asia, this vast political and economic authority vested in the obkom first secretary had the unique effect of supplanting the authority of tribal and local leaders. The institutionalization of this authority alone formed a “natural” basis for the re-definition and extension of existing clan- and tribal-based patronage networks to the regional level. Through his position as the chief executive in a given territory, the obkom first secretary became the primary dispenser of political and economic resources at the regional and local level, and skillfully used this position to build loyalty and support throughout his oblast. Thus, the general population and elites had mutually reinforcing incentives to attach their political identities to their region. In contrast, the tribal structures and identities of pre-Soviet Central Asia lacked any official recognition or institutional resources. As a result, they were effectively disempowered and the strength of their ties was diluted over time.

The Soviet system of economic specialization also reinforced regional rather than national ethno-political cleavages in Central Asia, both by contributing to the economic authority of obkom first secretaries and fostering economic competition between regions within the republics. At the national level, economic specialization was based upon a division of labor among the Soviet republics. The role of the Central Asian republics was to provide the agricultural basis for the Soviet economy, particularly cotton (Uzbekistan), wheat production (Kazakhstan) and animal husbandry (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan). This had two simultaneous effects. The first was to increase the responsibilities of the regional leaders for economic performance in their republics. During the Soviet period, all agriculture was placed under the control of regional leaders. In this context, the republic-level officials acted essentially as a “mediator” or “broker” between Moscow and the various regional leaders to extract the maximum amount of production. Based on their ability to fulfill Moscow’s directives, one region or several regions in each republic could become more prominent in national politics than others. The second was to create economies which were wholly dependent upon other Soviet republics as sources of both income and manufactured goods. This greatly constrained the Central Asian states’ interest in and capacity for the mobilization of separatist sentiments. Even in the wake of the secessionist drive launched by national republics across the Soviet Union, which culminated in the country’s collapse in 1991, the Central Asian republics failed to produce a nationalist movement (or even agenda) calling for independence.

At the republic level, the Soviet economic structure also reinforced regionalism rather than nationalism or tribal affiliation. First, the ethnic division of labor within the republics provided a strong basis for the expansion of patronage networks. Industrial management and skilled labor was primarily comprised of Russians and other Slavs, while members of the titular nationality largely remained in rural areas engaged in unskilled, agricultural labor. This dichotomy reinforced the patron-client ties between the regional leaders, who were often representatives of the titular nationality, and the rural population, which served as the social and economic base for maintaining and expanding patronage networks. It also contributed to the growing displacement of tribal chiefs’ traditional authority by regional leaders. Collective farms, for example, which were characteristically formed from a single kinship group, or clan, would lend their political support as a single unit to a particular regional official as they once did to a particular tribal leader. Moreover, in contrast to Africa where land allocation under colonialism formalized and invigorated tribal chiefs’ authority, in the Central Asian republics collectivization disempowered traditional leaders (i.e. tribal chiefs, or beys in Kazakhstan) by giving “control” over the use and
distribution of land to kolkhoz (collective farm) chairmen. This economic policy ultimately undermined their authority by eliminating perhaps the primary source of this authority, and hence, the collective farm chairman also effectively usurped the traditional role of the clan leader.

Second, economic specialization within the republics both fostered an intense rivalry between regional leaders from different oblasts and close relationships among regional leaders in the same oblasts. In general, agricultural or land-surplus regions were given priority over others; those regions which produced cotton in Uzbekistan, for example, were automatically elevated to a higher political and economic status in the republic. Economic specialization by oblast also contributed to the practice of long tenure for elites within the same region -- or transfer between adjacent regions -- where their particular specialization was needed or most useful. Water engineers (vodniki), for example, served almost exclusively in those regions that were heavily irrigated for cotton production. Those elites serving in the same region, therefore, were often trained in the same institutes or universities together, which created yet another layer of camaraderie upon which to build regional bonds.

Finally, the Soviet cadre system in Central Asia inadvertently politicized regional cleavages through promoting competition between regions for both political and economic resources, while building and consolidating political capacity on a regional basis. One of the main tenets of Soviet nationality policy throughout the former Soviet Union was korenizatsiia (nativization or indigenization), which involved promoting the development and advancement of indigenous cadre in the national republics. Yet, the very method by which the Soviet regime recruited political leaders in the Central Asian republics fueled regional rivalries rather than building national identities. In response to Central Asia’s lack of both a sufficient national consciousness and a nationalist intelligentsia, the Soviets deliberately targeted certain regions in each republic for elite training and recruitment. Two types of regions, in particular, served as the initial basis for the cultivation of political cadre: 1) those from which strong support for the Bolsheviks emerged during the Revolution, and 2) those which held great economic promise due to their role in the agricultural production of a given republic -- most importantly, cotton. Since then, political and economic power at the republic level has been continuously rotated between leaders from these particular regions.

This is not to say that the other regions were excluded completely from holding republic-level positions. On the contrary, there was also an unspoken, yet widely accepted, “rule” that some percentage of republic-level positions had to be dispersed among representatives from the various regions comprising the republic, albeit not necessarily evenly. One way of ensuring regional representation was that each oblast first secretary was a member of the central committee of the party in their respective republic ex-officio. This gave added significance to the position itself.

Moreover, due to the scarcity of “trusted cadre,” comparatively few Central Asian elites were ever promoted to serve in Moscow, or anywhere outside their titular republic for that matter. Thus, local leaders primarily vied for promotion to positions at the regional-level in their own oblast, while the highest office regional leaders could realistically hope to attain was in the republican-level government. This had an unintended effect on the development and
reinforcement of regional political identities. It fostered a greater incentive among Central Asian elites to remain within their own republics, and their own regions, wherein they could build and maintain a viable local power base to advance their career. Thus, the relevant arena of competition for control over political and economic resources among ambitious Central Asian elites was both within their respective regions and between regions within their republic.

These recruitment patterns also consolidated regional political capacities over national and tribal ones. In contrast to elites in other former Soviet republics, Central Asian elites were promoted almost exclusively from within their own oblasts and served virtually their entire political careers in that same oblast. At the regional- and local-levels, they were also disproportionately chosen from among the titular nationality, both as a means of training indigenous cadre and of ensuring effective communication with the local population. Moreover, while the oblast-level and city administrations usually included some members of the non-titular nationalities (namely, Russians and other Slavs), the local-level administration (i.e. rayons, soviets, and state and collective farms) was almost exclusively comprised of representatives of the titular nationality. This enabled regional leaders to develop close personal ties and professional networks within their regions, to build loyal followings among local leaders as well as the regional population, and to form a strong allegiance toward and affinity for their own oblasts. As a result, they were often beyond the reproach of both Moscow and the republic-level government because they controlled local institutions and enjoyed local popular support. Even after regional leaders were promoted to republic-level positions, they were repeatedly accused of filling positions with people from their own oblasts and continuing to represent the interests of their oblasts.

Thus, region came to replace tribe as the preeminent political category for Central Asian elites. Under the Soviet system, they had a greater incentive to adopt and promote the former than the latter both because their career became synonymous with the status and performance of a particular oblast and because they were promoted based upon their regional rather than tribal affiliation. By the same token, “loyalty” to the regional leaders was necessary to gain access to coveted political and economic positions in the republic, the inputs into production that are vital to carrying out one’s job successfully and thus maintaining it or being promoted, and any extra “perks” or “benefits” that were distributed at the discretion of the regional leaders. The distribution of state resources for “private use,” for example, fell under the jurisdiction of the oblast first secretary and executive committee chairman, including the allocation of private plots of land to grow produce and in some cases to build private houses.

Moreover, the politicization of regional cleavages coincided with the repression and depoliticization of Islam. The Soviet regime’s most demonstrative attempts to penetrate and debilitate Islam in Central Asia are perhaps the elimination of Arabic script, which some have argued was intended to linguistically separate the Central Asian peoples from their Islamic neighbors to the South, East, and West, and the campaign to unveil Muslim women. Its more long-term strategy, however, was simultaneously to provide institutional recognition of Islam through an Islamic Directorate for Central Asia so as to co-opt religious leaders and to suppress open and widespread religious practice among Muslims. Elites who desired career advancement in the state and party organs were instructed to separate their belief in Islam from their political ideology, since Islam was associated with both cultural backwardness and disloyalty to the Soviet regime. While the continuation of Islamic faith and rituals was allowed
within local communities and an “unofficial Islam” thrived throughout the Soviet period, this merely served to weaken Islam further as a political force. Islamic groups were able to organize solely on a local basis, often in rural areas where detection by Soviet officials was much less likely, which essentially destroyed the capacity for Islamic ties to form the basis of a mass movement. From the early years of Soviet rule, moreover, it was made clear that even at the local level Islam was subordinate to secular political institutions. In the 1930s and 1940s, for example, the Soviet regime banned the use of Islamic law (Sharia) or local Islamic courts to settle disputes and replaced them with communist legal and judicial institutions. Over time, therefore, the Soviet system molded Islam into solely a local and cultural identity and officially “secularized” Islam while nullifying its political potential.

The central importance of the regional leaders’ political authority and the regional balance of power is clearly illustrated in the Soviet electoral system. In sum, the electoral system divided influence over both the electoral process and its outcome between regional leaders and the republic-level government, and accorded more influence and control to the former than the latter. Oblasts served as the boundaries for electoral districts, all of which were formulated with the consent of the regional leaders. In republican as well as local elections, regional leaders were entrusted with selecting candidates to serve in the legislature since they were the most knowledgeable about the quality of local cadre. They were also able to influence electoral outcomes by manipulating their ability to appoint local-level administrative heads as well as state and collective farm chairpersons and their control over the flow of material resources to local areas. Moreover, they enjoyed the bulk of influence on the electoral process through their direct supervision over the activities of the District Electoral Commission (DEC), in which the Soviet system concentrated authority over the conduction and results of the elections.

Not surprisingly, oblast first secretaries and other regional leaders were invariably elected to serve in both republic-level parliaments and Communist Party congresses. In both forums, they were expected to articulate and represent the interests of what was considered their constituency -- i.e. the oblast in which they served. The primary function of republic-level parliaments, for example, was to determine budget priorities and expenditures for each oblast within the republic, which forced regional leaders both to compete and compromise over the allocation of resources. Similarly, at party congresses, regional leaders characteristically “attempted to increase the resources available for the development of their [particular oblasts] by altering the priorities assigned to issues on the policy agenda or even by altering the agenda itself.” The net result was “not only [to] pit regional cadres [from the same republic] against the established priorities of the center, but against each other, as well.” As resources became more scarce in the 1980s, “the evidence suggests... that competition among regional elites, as well as between regional representative and the center,... increased.”

The Soviet Legacy and Regional Cleavages in Kyrgyzstan

Regional cleavages in Kyrgyzstan consist of two basic divisions: 1) between the northern and southern regions, and 2) between the northern regions themselves. Both can be directly attributed to its particular experience under Soviet rule. In short, the Soviet state’s structure and policies reinforced the former, which are based on geographical and historical distinctions among the
Kyrgyz themselves, and actually created the latter by providing them with both institutional capacity and territorial form which previously were very weak or non-existent.

Of all the Central Asian republics, Kyrgyzstan seems to have undergone the greatest amount of internal boundary changes. One of the aspects of its administrative-territorial divisions that remained virtually unchanged under Soviet rule, however, was the division between the North and the South. Perhaps this is not surprising since these are geographically divided and ethnographically distinct regions. Yet, they have not always been divided. In fact, they had been unified under a single government without differentiation when they first encountered Russians in the 1860s. It was the construction of administrative-territorial divisions under Russian and then Soviet rule that structurally reinforced north-south cultural and geographical distinctions within the Kyrgyz Republic, and ultimately politicized them.

There are undoubtedly several important geographical factors and ethnographic differences that may have contributed to northern and southern divisions among the Kyrgyz people. Kyrgyzstan is a country surrounded and divided by mountain ranges, which form natural boundaries in its northern territory as well as between the northern and south parts of the republic. Improvements in transportation and communication, both under the Tsarist and Soviet regimes, however, have greatly ameliorated these geographical constraints. Moreover, although the ethnogenesis of all Kyrgyz is normally attributed to the Central and Western Tien-Shan mountains, northern and southern Kyrgyz relate themselves to distinct tribal lineages. Kyrgyz in the northern half of the republic are considered descendents of Tagai and thus the tribes of Otuz Uul, while southerners are largely considered descendents of the tribal group Ichilik with some relation to Adigine and Mungush. [Refer to Figure 3.2.] Yet, these tribes shared in common not only an oral language and nomadic way of life, but also genetic ties. Direct descendents of the northern-based Otuz-Uul, for example, settled in southern territories as well, and mixed with other tribal groups through marriage. Several tribes have also historically occupied the same territory in both the northern and southern halves of Kyrgyzstan.66

Figure 3.2 here.

The administrative and political division of Kyrgyzstan based on north and south, began with Russian intrusion into the region and the consequent collapse of the Kokand Khanate in the mid-to late-1800s.67 The Russians, particularly through trade routes from Western Siberia, first came into contact with present-day Kyrgyzstan when it comprised the bulk of territory under the Khan of Kokand’s suzerainty. Following the fall of the Khanate’s two key fortress-cities near the Russian border, the northern half of the republic officially became part of the Russian Empire in 1855. It was not until the late-1870s -- approximately 20 years later -- that the Kokand Khanate fell completely and Russia gained the southern half of the republic as well. The annexation of the south meant that the whole of Kyrgyz territory would be incorporated into Russia’s system of governance, yet this did not entail the administrative integration of the northern and southern halves. Rather, at the time of the October Revolution, present-day Kyrgyzstan was separated into several oblasts of Russian Turkestan; the northern half was divided between Semirech’e and Syr-Darya Oblasts and the southern half became part of the Ferghana Oblast.68
Since then, administrative divisions have maintained and reinforced the separation between the northern and southern regions. [Refer to Table 3.2.] In large part, this continued division was based on the work of Russian and Soviet ethnographers who distinguished the northern and southern halves by their tribal and linguistic distinctiveness. Immediately following the elevation of Kyrgyzstan from an autonomous oblast to an autonomous republic in February 1926, the existing divisions were found unsatisfactory due to their lack of correspondence to Kyrgyz ethnic (i.e. clan) differences and smaller units (kantons) were thus constructed in place of the original okrugs.\(^6^9\) None of these boundaries, however, could perfectly correspond to Kyrgyz clans which were scattered across the north and south. This realization, along with reasons of economic and administrative efficiency, eventually led to the adoption of a system of oblasty in a Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic.\(^7^0\) The Kyrgyz were thus divided into regional (oblast) administrative structures between the North and the South and within the northern part of the republic, ostensibly based on tribal structure. Yet, in actuality, a number of Kyrgyz clans, many from different tribes and of mixed descent, resided within each oblast. Moreover, the northern Kyrgyz, who historically had considered themselves descendants from the same tribe, were divided on a formal administrative and territorial basis for the first time.

Table 3.2 here.

These okrug and later oblast boundaries served as the basis for the development of an administrative and territorially-based identity between the southern versus northern Kyrgyz as well as the northern Kyrgyz. In essence, they created and reinforced a sense of affiliation with a particular piece of territory among the nomadic Kyrgyz which previously did not exist, thus laying the groundwork for the displacement of tribal identity. First of all, while these internal boundaries did not perfectly correspond to tribal divisions, entire Kyrgyz clans were settled into villages which later became kolkhozes, sovkhozes, and rayons.\(^7^1\) Thus, kinship units based on tribe were divided while kinship units based on clan remained relatively intact. This enabled the region to become a surrogate for the tribal unit. Secondly, for the reasons cited above related to their role in dispensing political and economic resources, regional leaders eventually usurped the traditional functions of tribal leaders. Due to the new political and economic status and benefits they could themselves receive, as well as long tenure of service within the same oblast, these leaders also came to associate themselves with particular oblasts rather than tribes.

Two other features of the Soviet regime in Central Asia directly reinforced and politicized both sets of regional divisions in Kyrgyzstan. First, the Soviet system of economic specialization in Kyrgyzstan essentially divided industrial and agricultural labor and productive capacities between the North and South, respectively. In addition, the bulk of higher education centers for technical training were built and maintained in the North. This not only contributed to the lack of rotation between northern and southern elites (or at least those trained in the North versus the South), it also created competition between regional leaders. Northern and southern political and economic elites vied for the bulk of the republic’s resources -- i.e. whether they were primarily allocated toward industry or agriculture. Since the center of industrial strength in the North was Frunze, however, these resources primarily went to this region rather than being evenly distributed among leaders in the northern regions.\(^7^2\)
Second, Soviet cadre recruitment policies served to polarize these divisions and to further develop the political capacity of regions. Foremost among these policies was the rotation of political control over the republic between its Soviet-designated northern and southern centers -- Frunze (Chu) Oblast and Osh Oblast, respectively -- and the emphasis on these particular regions as sources for national leadership. [Refer to Table 3.3 below.] First secretaries of the republic’s communist party deliberately used their positions of power to bolster the political and economic position of their respective oblasts, while maintaining a careful balance among regional factions. This practice became especially pronounced during the tenure of T. Usubaliyev (1961-1982). During the twenty-one years in which he served as Kirgizia’s first secretary, he filled many positions at the center in Frunze (Chu) with individuals from Naryn Oblast and made special efforts to develop this oblast economically while also preserving some positions and resources for the other northern oblasts.73 Thus, he was able not only to insure that comrades from his own region gained a strong foothold in northern politics, but also that the political dominance of the north over the south continued.

Table 3.3 here.

In addition, as illustrated in Table 3.4 below, there was seldom any rotation between northern and southern regional leaders; the vast majority served either entirely in the North or entirely in the South. Similarly, local officials spent the bulk of their career within the same oblast, often their “native” region (i.e. the region in which they were born), thus allowing them to cultivate and consolidate a strong base of political support.74 [Refer to Table 3.4 below.]

The Soviet system of cadre recruitment and power-sharing at the regional level also promoted a degree of political competition within regions. The various Kyrgyz clans within each oblast, for example, competed for dominance. Some rose to immediate prominence at the expense of others -- the bugu clan, which came to dominate the Kemin Rayon [Refer to Table 3.2 above], became the most powerful in Frunze (Chu) Oblast.75 Power-sharing between clans was also a common feature of cadre recruitment. Yet, this was not limited to the titular population. Although a Kyrgyz majority was consistently maintained within each region, the republic’s most significant minority nationalities -- Russians in the North and Uzbeks in the South have also come to expect their share of economic and political positions within their region. Officials in the Russian-dominated cities, for example, were consistently Russian -- even in the republic’s capital city, Frunze, while Uzbeks had a strong presence in key ministries, such as agriculture and water.76

Table 3.4 here.

There is also an important division of economic labor within each region, which has cemented regional ties among national minorities further; Russians dominate industry in the North and Uzbeks are successful farmers in the South. Thus, while a high level of Russian out-migration from Kyrgyzstan has occurred in search of better economic condition, most have since returned to their original place of residence. Few Uzbeks have left at all, despite the regional conflict in Osh between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks over fair divisions of land and political posts.77 The combined result of these practices thus solidified local officials’ political affiliation with and loyalty to regional officials, as well as the political capital of the regional leaders themselves, who are universally held responsible for maintaining this balance.78
In sum, Soviet institutions and policies created two relevant arenas of political conflict in Kyrgyzstan. On the one hand, intense political competition developed between all oblasts -- primarily between Frunze (Chu) and Osh, and the northern and southern regions -- for control over the republic’s political and economic resources. For example, when the southern (Osh Oblast) candidate for president (Masaliev) was defeated by a northerner (from Chu Oblast) in 1991, the South feared a return of northern dominance, as under the previous president (Usubaliev). The Soviet regime also fostered resentment among other northern regions -- especially Issyk-kul and Talas, but also Naryn -- which did not enjoy as privileged a political position in the republic as Frunze (Chu) Oblast. Indeed, the first post-Soviet president (Askar Akaev) has deliberately attempted to reduce these tensions by including more northerners from these previously underrepresented oblasts in his government and by allowing greater oblast-level authority over local affairs. On the other hand, leaders in the Kyrgyz Republic had the opportunity and capacity to develop strong loyalties and/or attachments to particular regions within the republic and to compete with one another for positions within their respective regions.

Moreover, Soviet institutions and policies fostered political and cultural solidarity among the republic’s southern oblasts and political and cultural divisions among its northern oblasts. First of all, in contrast to the north, the south remained administratively and territorially unified for most of the Soviet period. [Refer to Table 3.1 (above).] Secondly, while all regions maintained a degree of internal power-sharing between various Kyrgyz clans and the significant minorities who resided within their boundaries, the southern Kyrgyz came to share many cultural traits with their Uzbek counterparts as well as political and economic interests. The fact that Uzbeks and Kyrgyz worked side-by-side in agriculture in the South also contributed to these bonds. In the northern half of the country, by contrast, the Kyrgyz became more culturally divided amongst themselves and had less in common with the Slavic minorities in their oblasts.

The Soviet Legacy and Regional Cleavages in Uzbekistan

The Soviet institutional and policy legacy in Uzbekistan has also had a profound impact on the development of regional political identities. In this case, however, Soviet institutions and policies transformed, reinforced and politicized pre-existing identities based on territory rather than wholly creating them. At the same time, they elevated the political and economic status of three particular regions vis-à-vis the others -- Tashkent Oblast, Ferghana Oblast, and Samarkand Oblast -- and thus created and institutionalized a balance of power system between regions.

The formation of the Uzbek SSR in 1924 brought together Uzbeks who had lived under three different khanates and been settled in various parts of Russian Turkestan into one national republic. Uzbeks in the Eastern part of the republic (Ferghana Valley), once part of the Kokand Khanate, viewed themselves and were viewed by others as culturally and linguistically distinct from Uzbeks to the north, south, and west. Those Uzbeks who had lived within the Khivan Khanate, which under Soviet rule became the Khorezm People’s Republic, were often confused with Tajiks due to their physical and linguistic similarities. Moreover, Uzbeks occupying the southern part of the republic, once part of the Bukharan Khanate and, under Soviet rule, the Bukharan People’s Republic, were often not considered Uzbeks at all. In sum, there were five such identifiable regional distinctions among the indigenous population of Uzbekistan, which
have been identified as (1) North-Eastern, (2) Eastern, (3) Central, (4) Southern, and (5) Northwestern and correspond to the present-day territories of (1) Tashkent Oblast (2) the Ferghana Valley (Namangan, Andijan, and Ferghana Oblasts), (3) Samarkand and Bukhara Oblasts, (4) Khorezm Oblast and the Karakalpak ASSR, and (5) Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya Oblasts.  

**Figure 3.3 here.**

Over time these regional identities have lost some of their original characteristics, yet have far from disappeared. Rather, the Soviet system of administration and economic development has reinforced some of their boundaries and reconfigured others. The original six oblasts into which Uzbekistan was divided immediately following its formation roughly corresponded to these five regions. Yet, each of them has undergone noteworthy changes since then. Under both the Russian and Soviet regimes, the administrative divisions of Tashkent (region 1), Ferghana (region 2), and Khorezm (region 4) have maintained the most consistency with the preceding regional identities. In contrast, Samarkand and Bukhara (region 3) have remained separate [oblasts (or okrugs)] since Russia divided the territory into administrative units in the 1870s. Similarly, Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya (region 5) have remained administratively separate throughout the Soviet period.  

**Table 3.5 here.**

Thus, for the most part, the Soviet administrative-territorial divisions cut across the territories of the larger tribal units which historically formed boundaries between the sedentarized Uzbek population. This laid the groundwork for the development of new regional identities by providing the institutional capacity for a new elite to emerge within these new boundaries, who quickly learned that acquiring a position or status within one’s oblast meant unprecedented political and economic opportunities and rewards. For similar reasons, it simultaneously created additional incentives for elites in oblasts with pre-existing territorially-based identities to support the continued regional separation and distinction of the Uzbek people. These new boundaries also contributed to the reformulation of regionally-based identities due to the fact that divisions within oblasts were drawn such that Uzbeks constituted the majority in virtually all rayons as well as oblasts. Thus, pre-existing patron-client relations between the Uzbek clans that once inhabited a particular territory were disrupted only minimally; that is, they were reduced in terms of scope but not depth. Moreover, they were in fact revitalized with the infusion of new resources to be distributed at the discretion of Soviet-appointed local and regional leaders.

The division of the Uzbek SSR into economic sectors has essentially mirrored the pattern of these administrative-territorial divisions, and thus served to reinforce them. Tashkent, Ferghana, and Khorezm (“historic” regions 1, 2, and 4, respectively) have each remained separate economic zones while parts of “historic” regions 3 and 5 have been combined into two different economic zones (Samarkand, Bukhara and Kashkadarya in one, Surkhandarya in the other). Economic restructuring in the 1950s and 1970s further divided the regions on an economic basis, maintained the special status of Tashkent and Ferghana and, moreover, raised the status of Samarkand. For example, all of the Councils of National Economy (CNE’s) in Uzbekistan, which were established as part of General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev’s economic reforms were located in Tashkent, Ferghana, and Samarkand. The management of these organizations was also
comprised primarily of personnel from these areas -- with the exception of one from Karakalpakia. Later, under Leonid Brezhnev’s general secretaryship, Samarkand and Bukhara were placed into two separate economic zones.

Similarly, the Soviet regime created and institutionalized a clear division of labor between oblasts and a hierarchy based on this division of labor. Early on, the Soviet Government had deemed that Tashkent Oblast was the most suited for industry and that Ferghana Oblast, because of its abundant fertile land and access to water resources, was most suited for agriculture. Thus, these two regions almost immediately became the most important economically due to concentration of industry and cotton production, respectively. Their economic potential, in turn, automatically increased and reinforced their political importance. In contrast, the oblasts comprising “historic” regions 3, 4 and 5 were accorded little economic value and hence political prestige. The majority of Uzbekistan’s rural population was concentrated in these regions and fertile land was scarce, making them less suitable for either building industry or producing large quantities of agricultural goods. Samarkand was an exception; it contained an area (Dzhizak rayon) with great agricultural potential since fertile land was abundant and population density low. Over time, all oblasts with an abundance of fertile land gained politically significance in Uzbekistan for their economic contribution to a republic which alone produced “three-quarters of the Central Asian cotton crop.”

Most importantly, political cadre recruitment created a new basis for distinction among the five “historic” regions and, along with them, produced new inter-regional rivalries for power and prestige in the republic. Tashkent and Ferghana continued to be viewed by the Soviet regime as politically distinct regions from which republican leaders would emerge. Indeed, these two regions have not only provided Moscow with the majority of its cadres since the 1930s, they have been the “source of its most loyal and devoted native cadres.” Their political importance was reinforced by their aforementioned economic potential. Thus, these two regions -- Tashkent and Ferghana -- consistently enjoyed the largest share of political positions at the republic level during the Soviet period, due to their “cooperation” with the Bolsheviks during the Civil War, their comparatively large numbers of workers, and their aforementioned real and potential contribution to agricultural production. Meanwhile, the Soviet regime viewed indigenous elites from Bukhara and Khorezm, former seats of the Bukhara and Khivan Khanates, with suspicion, and considered those from the southern region (Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya) too backward to be reliable or effective republican leaders.

Samarkand Oblast, once again, stands out as somewhat of an exception. Samarkand was the first capital city of Uzbekistan and remained so until 1930. Even after this, its university was considered an important training place for new political cadre. Yet, Samarkand fell out of political favor by the 1930s. It is not clear why, though this may be related to the fall of Faizulla Khodzhaev -- one of the earliest Central Asian leaders who was a native of the Samarkand/Bukhara region. As mentioned above, Ferghana won the favor of Moscow primarily for its real and potential contribution to the production of cotton in Uzbekistan. It was in large part for this reason that Samarkand later regained its former status in the republic, since it encompassed an area (Dzhizak rayon) which eventually rivaled Ferghana’s contribution to the republic’s cotton output each year.
With the increasing importance of Uzbekistan’s role in cotton production following World War II, the Samarkand region’s economic importance -- and hence its political prominence -- increased dramatically. With the promotion of Sharaf Rashidov to republican first party secretary in 1959 Samarkand Oblast was catapulted into direct political competition with the Tashkent and Fergana regions. From that moment forward, power-sharing at the republican level essentially became a political triangle.\textsuperscript{94} [Refer to Table 3.6 (below).] Rashidov was a native of Samarkand Oblast (specifically, Dzhizak rayon) and had risen up through this region’s political power lines. Like his predecessors, he deliberately surrounded himself primarily with leaders from his own region. Unlike previous Uzbek first party secretaries, however, he accomplished this in a very overt manner and used this patronage system in direct defiance of Moscow.\textsuperscript{95}

\textbf{Table 3.6 here.}

Rashidov’s long tenure (1959-83) is also significant because of the role it played in reinforcing regional and local leaders’ political affiliation with their respective regions. Similar to the Usbulaliev era in Kyrgyzstan, during this time regional and local-level officials spent their entire careers serving within the same region, where they were able to consolidate an enduring political power base.\textsuperscript{96} This is indicative of the widespread practice, both before and after Rashidov’s reign, for oblast first secretaries to be promoted from within the region in which they serve and to remain in their posts, on average, for more than six years, though the majority held their position for more than ten years. [Refer to Table 3.7 below.] Moreover, he actually created a new administrative-territorial division -- Dzhizak Oblast -- in order to provide an extended base of patronage for his native rayon.

\textbf{Table 3.7 here.}

After Rashidov’s death in 1983, he was succeeded by leaders who had followed a more “traditional” career path through Fergana and Tashkent. They consciously shifted the balance of power in the republic back in favor of their own regions, though much less conspicuously than Rashidov. As part of this trend, his immediate successor, Rafik Nishanov, actually abolished Dzhizak Oblast. However, this by no means diminished the role of the Dzhizak rayon or Samarkand Oblast in Uzbek SSR politics. In fact, this triangular power struggle continued even after independence. Uzbekistan’s first president, Islam Karimov, who is a native of Samarkand, has filled [many] key positions in the republic with fellow Samakandis since he assumed office in 1991. The following year, Tashkent elites tried to oust Karimov and re-establish their own region’s political dominance but failed. The leader of this “coup” -- former Vice-president Shukrullo Mirsaidov -- has been jailed since and, in response, Karimov initiated a political coalition with Ferghana instead.

The manifestation of these economic institutions and cadre recruitment policy within the oblasts also contributed to the consolidation and politicization of new regional identities. Both facilitated the maintenance of traditional patron-client relations, with the regional leader as the chief distributor and his supporters as the principle benefactors. Moreover, minorities with titular status in nearby republics represented only a small portion of the population within each region in Uzbekistan, and yet were politically and economically integrated. In addition, political positions at the local and regional levels were shared with minorities. For example, beginning in
the 1920s, there was a concerted effort to increase the number of minorities at all levels of the Communist Party and, toward this end, schools were built to provide instruction in their native languages. Russians in particular held the bulk of positions in the military and industrial sectors, which gave them a strong economic as well as political presence in Tashkent as well as Ferghana. Meanwhile, Uzbeks controlled the production and distribution of the republic’s main crop (cotton) and sold privately-grown produce on the black market.

Thus, as in Kyrgyzstan, the sum result of Soviet policies and institutions in Uzbekistan was to form two separate but related political arenas in which elites could realistically compete. The first involved competition between regions (and hence regional leaders) over the allocation of republic-level political and economic resources. The second arena encompassed local-level and regional-level leaders within the regions. This became an especially important arena for leaders from those regions with little chance of being promoted to republican-level positions. Both served to create and reinforce political identification with a particular Soviet-created region.

**The Soviet Legacy and Regional Cleavages in Kazakhstan**

The experience of Kazakhstan differs from both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in that the Soviet legacy simultaneously promoted cleavages based on region and nationality. Administrative structures and economic policies which encouraged Russian in-migration and settlement largely in the northeastern part of the republic slowly institutionalized the ethnic and territorial division of Kazakhstan between Russians and Kazakhs. The fact that Soviets clearly viewed Kazakhstan as a half-Kazakh, half-Russian republic almost from the beginning in and of itself fostered national divisions. At the same time, however, oblast boundaries drew lines between Russians as well as Kazakhs. The result was the creation and reinforcement of regional identities within and across both nationalities.

Similar to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, historical and geographical divisions among the Kazakhs existed before both the Russian conquests and the dawn of Soviet rule. Following the death of Qasim Khan, who held together a political union of the Kazakh people under his rule from roughly the end of the fifteenth century through the latter half of the sixteenth century, the Kazakh Khanate began to break-up and was eventually replaced by three independent Kazakh hordes. These hordes -- the Greater, Middle and Lesser -- were actually three separate confederations of nomadic tribes, each of which had a unique internal structure and was ruled by its own elected khan. Moreover, each was concentrated on a separate part of the territory comprising present-day Kazakhstan: the Greater Horde occupied the southeastern part, stretching from the eastern shores of Lake Balkhash to the banks of the Syr-Darya River; the central part, roughly from the Aral Sea to the northern shores of Lake Balkhash, belonged to the Middle Horde; and the khan of the Lesser Horde ruled over lands in the western part.

Under the Russian and then Soviet Regime, the Kazakh Hordes were once again “reunited” in a single system of governance, yet remained politically divided and eventually subdivided into administrative units. Unable to defend themselves against hostile neighbors, the Middle and Lesser Hordes accepted Russian suzerainty in the 1730’s. It was not until Russia launched a general invasion into Central Asia in the 1860s and 70’s, however, that the lands of the Greater Horde also became an extension of the Russian Empire. At the start of the October 1917
Revolution, the territory of the Lesser and Middle Hordes was spread across four Russian provinces (guberniy) -- Uralsk, Turgai, Akmolinsk, and Semipalatinsk -- while the Greater Horde’s lands was divided into the Syr-Darya and Semirech’e provinces in Turkestan. The combined territory of all three Kazakh hordes was incorporated into a Kazakh titular republic following the Bolshevik’s national delimitation of Central Asia in 1924 and the reformulation of the Kazakh ASSR in 1925.

This territory was later subdivided into fourteen administrative-territorial units, none of which were commensurate with the territory that any one horde had originally occupied. The historically-recognized territory of the hordes, however, did correspond to large blocks of oblasts in Kazakhstan by virtue of their geographical location: the Greater Horde’s territory overlaps with most of the oblasts comprising southern Kazakhstan, and part of eastern Kazakhstan; the Middle Horde’s territory is approximately commensurate with the oblasts comprising Northern Kazakhstan; the Lesser Horde’s territory includes the remainder of oblasts in northern and western Kazakhstan. Over the course of the next 65 years, these existing units changed from okrugs to oblasts and five new units were added, yet Kazakhstan’s administrative divisions remained relatively unchanged throughout the Soviet period. In contrast to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan’s administrative-territorial structure underwent three major changes. First, in the 1930s, the original fifteen okrugs were replaced by oblasts. Second, at the end of the 1950s, two new oblasts were created (Taldy-Kurgan out of Alma-ata and Turgay out of Kustanay and Tselinograd), bringing the total number of oblasts to seventeen. Finally, in the 1970s, two more new oblasts were created (Mangyshlak out of Gur’yev and Dzezhkagan out of Karaganda), bringing the total to nineteen at the time of independence.

In demarcating the internal boundaries of Kazakhstan, the Soviets paid close attention not only to the economic and geographical features of this vast territory but also to the clan divisions among the Kazakhs themselves. In fact, following the Bolshevik Revolution the Soviet regime relied on traditional authority structures within the clan system in order to bring the Kazakh population under its control. Even as Kazakhs were increasingly sedentarized and forcibly collectivized in the 1930s, clan networks remained intact. Indeed, as late as the 1950s, it was common to find kolkhozes and sovkhozes comprised of the members of an entire clan.

Thus, as in neighboring Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, within each of the administrative-territorial units (oblasts) Kazakh clans remained essentially intact while larger traditional configurations (i.e. tribes, historic regions, and hordes) were divided. This had a similar effect of transferring clan loyalties, and eventually identities, from tribal units to oblasts. For their part, regional leaders immediately began to dispense the political and economic resources placed under their control on a clan basis within their oblasts. In fact, this behavior was so prevalent that they were severely chastised and sometimes dismissed for these practices by authorities in Moscow as early as the 1940s through the 1980s. Clans also increasingly tied their fortunes to the farms, rayons, and oblasts in which they resided as Soviet leaders usurped traditional authority and they came to recognize that political and economic rewards were distributed on a territorial basis. During collectivization, for example, land was confiscated from the only individuals traditionally allowed to acquire land ownership -- kinship group leaders (or, bays) -- and, along with it, their status.
While the original Kazakh national republic successfully incorporated over 90% of the Kazakh population, the Kazakh ASSR and the Kazakh SSR that succeeded it were far from an exclusively Kazakh national republic. First of all, Russian settlements in the northern and eastern part of the republic date back to the late 1860’s and were even extended into the western part in the 1880s. Secondly, when the Kazakh ASSR was formed in 1925, it acquired some lands that belonged to the Cossacks of the Urals, Orenburg, and Siberia, and when Kazakhstan officially became a union republic in December 1936, it included some additional northeastern territory ceded by Russia. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the economic policies of the Soviet government deliberately promoted the large influx of Russians and other Slavs into Kazakhstan throughout the Soviet period. In the pre-war era, Russians were brought in to modernize agriculture and livestock husbandry and in the 1960s, under Nikita Khrushchev, they were needed to carry out the expansion of agriculture. Thus, as Table 3.8 (below) illustrates, in 1926, the Kazakhs represented 57.6% of the republic’s total population, by 1959 only 30% of the population, and by 1989 they had become a minority in their own national republic, representing less than 40% of the republic’s total population. Over time, the republic had also become geographically divided between Kazakhs and Russians: Russians became a majority in most of the northern and eastern parts of the republic, while Kazakhs remained numerically strong in the south and west.

**Table 3.8 here**

Oblast boundaries also came to encompass Kazakh as well as Russian majorities. In comparison to the administrative-territorial divisions within Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan which aimed for a majority of the titular nationality in each oblast, there was only a minimal effort to retain a Kazakh majority in every region of the Kazakh SSR. The large concentration of Russian settlers in the north and east as well as the proximity of Kazakhstan’s borders to RSFSR made this difficult, but not impossible. In fact, only two oblasts had a Russian rather than Kazakh majority from their inception (in the 1920s) -- North Kazakhstan and East Kazakhstan. The six others in which Russians enjoyed a majority at independence developed gradually as Russians continued to migrate into the republic and settle almost exclusively in the north and east (except for Karaganda and the capital) largely for economic reasons. [Refer to Table 3.8 above.] Indeed, economic considerations were equally if not more important than ethnic ones in determining and maintaining internal boundaries in Kazakhstan.

Economic institutions and policies in Soviet Kazakhstan reinforced the geographical separation between Kazakhs and Russians, and created yet another line of demarcation between Russian-dominated regions and Kazakh-dominated regions. The system of economic specialization divided the republic into essentially four parts, which produced four discernible regional economic blocs: 1) the southern bloc was predominantly agricultural, including cotton production and animal husbandry, 2) the northern bloc contained the bulk of leading industrial sectors in Kazakhstan -- ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy and coal mining, 3) the eastern bloc served as a primary testing ground for nuclear weapons, and 4) the western bloc provided the main source of oil and gas, which was processed in southern Russia. This amounted to a regional as well as ethnic division of labor, since Russian regions were responsible for the industrial sectors and Russians provided the majority of industrial laborers, while Kazakh regions comprised most of the republic’s agricultural base and Kazakhs provided most of the
unskilled labor. Moreover, the significant economic distinctions between the regions of Kazakhstan, whether Russian or Kazakh, had a significant influence on the nature of their relationship to the republican government and Moscow.\textsuperscript{117}

Cadre recruitment policy served to further solidify and politicize these regional and national divisions. The implementation of \textit{korenizatsiia} is a case in point. Whereas in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the nativization of cadre was meant primarily for the titular nationality, in Kazakhstan it included Russians as well as other Slavs. In fact, due to what Soviet officials declared as the shortage of “prepared” or “qualified” native Kazakh cadre Russians initially held a disproportionate number of republican-level posts.\textsuperscript{118} Thus, for nearly the first half of the Kazakh SSR’s existence, the first party secretaries of this republic were Russians. Kazakhs, meanwhile, gradually came to dominate the Soviet administration at the local levels; in fact, this became the focus of korenizatsiia as a way to train native cadre. The shortage of “trusted cadre” among the Kazakhs also meant that, in contrast to the republican-level leadership, local level leaders were seldom rotated.\textsuperscript{119}

This had two significant effects. First, it created political tension between the Russian and Kazakh elite, each of who complained bitterly of the other’s dominance in the republic.\textsuperscript{120} As mentioned above, in the first half of the republic’s existence Russians were over-represented in republican leadership positions. Yet, the number of Kazakh leaders at the regional and local level continued to grow [rapidly] until, by the 1950s, they too were over-represented in the republican party and government organs. The appointment of the first Kazakh (Dinmukhamed A. Kunaev) to serve as Kazakhstan’s first party secretary in 1960 exacerbated this situation by deliberately using his position to give preferences to Kazakhs over Russians in the republic, and to move them into many key positions in administration.\textsuperscript{121} Second, it contributed to the development of patron-client relations on a regional basis. The fact that leadership at the republican level was rotated frequently while sub-national turnover was relatively slow in Kazakhstan meant that “the natural place for patronage groups to acquire some stability [was] at the oblast level and below.” This not only “presented a challenge to the more transient republican leadership,” it created a need for Russians to become part of these patronage networks and for Kazakhs to expand theirs to include Russians.\textsuperscript{122}

Meanwhile, the recruitment of cadre within the oblasts fostered regional political identities regardless of nationality. Beginning in the 1920s, the Soviet regime utilized clan networks as a basis for recruiting and promoting Kazakh cadre within the various oblasts.\textsuperscript{123} Moreover, traditional clan leaders dominated local representative organs and turned local and regional-level elections into inter-clan competitions.\textsuperscript{124} Kazakh clans thus began to compete for power on a regional basis, and hence, eventually became attached to a certain village, farm, rayon, and oblast rather than tribe. This phenomenon was not limited to Kazakhs. Russians were as likely to advance politically within Russian-dominant regions as Kazakhs were within Kazakh-dominant regions.\textsuperscript{125} In fact, the expressed goal of \textit{korenizatsiia} when it began in the 1920s was that the composition of governing bodies at each level of government (village, farm, rayon, and oblast) should reflect the majority nationality residing there.\textsuperscript{126} As a result, “the Russians who participated actively became absorbed in the various clan and regionally based networks that dominated the different oblasts.”\textsuperscript{127} Moreover, as in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, regional leaders spent the bulk of their careers in the same oblast and/or [were rarely transferred outside of a
particular] regional bloc (i.e. southern, northern, western, or eastern), where they could build-up strong patron-client networks irrespective of nationality.\textsuperscript{128} [Refer to Table 3.9 below.] Elites of both nationalities, therefore, had a political stake in their respective oblasts.

Table 3.9 here

The trend toward regionalization of both nationalities seems to have reached its height in the 1960s when oblast heads of Kazakh as well as Russian regions began to assert their independence and to deal directly with Moscow rather than through the republican first party secretary.\textsuperscript{129} Kazakhs and Russians alike became increasingly isolated according to regional affiliation. This isolation was particularly acute during the latter half of the 1980s through independence when “each region, while strengthening itself internally, conducted its economic management and cultural-ethnic development as it wished.”\textsuperscript{130}

In sum, the Soviet institutional and policy legacy in Kazakhstan promoted three, rather than two, arenas of political competition: first, between regional leaders of different nationalities; second, among regions that encompassed both nationalities; and third, within regions between members of both nationalities. The first two arenas were centered around the distribution of republican-level resources, including political positions as well as economic goods and revenue. The third was based on competition for political and economic posts at the oblast-level. In other words, the Soviet regime fostered incentives for Russians and Kazakhs to invest in a national identity as well as a regional one. Thus, it unwittingly created cross-cutting cleavages which lent themselves to stability rather than conflict following independence.

Regionalism, Political Stability, and Institutional Continuity

It is perhaps no surprise, particularly to weathered observers of post-Soviet politics, that the Soviet legacy has not yet been washed away from Central Asia’s newly independent shores. The predominance of regional political identities, however, is not merely an indication that policy and institutional legacies matter. Rather, regionalism is an exciting discovery because it reveals the exact mechanism by which these legacies were transferred from the past into the present and the profound nature of their impact on subsequent political development. By privileging political affiliations based on region over those based on kinship (i.e. tribe), religion, or nationality in Central Asia, Soviet rule not only made the emergence of tribal, religious, and national identities after independence unlikely, it greatly reduced the potential for violent conflict during the transition. Regionalism has contributed to political stability in Central Asia precisely because it has ensured an important degree of continuity with the Soviet system.\textsuperscript{131} Under Soviet rule, the regional balance of power served as an effective, mutually-recognized, and widely-accepted mechanism for distributing political and economic resources and resolving political conflict peacefully. After independence, it provided the baseline for constructing new state institutions.

The predominance of regional political identities in Central Asia should also not be viewed as a sign that the effects of the Soviet system, however profound, cannot erode over time. In the same way that Soviet policies and institutions created structural incentives for individuals to shift their political identities from tribal and Islamic to regional, and then to personally invest in this
identity over time, new institutions can foster the adoption of new identities or the reemergence of pre-existing ones. Yet, identities, like institutions, are slow to change precisely because they entail a great degree of personal investment. This is the key insight of the HI approach. By depicting political identities as investments that individuals consciously make in response to their institutional surroundings and unconsciously maintain, it locates the sources of institutional continuity in transitional states. In Central Asia, for example, political elites built their primary political and economic resource base according to regional affiliation. The continuation of regionalism, therefore, was crucial to maintaining their power base, and hence, political and economic status. This illuminates why the Central Asian leaders want to encode a regionally-based balance of power onto new electoral systems, even if their own relative power is diminished within it.
### TABLE 3.1: SALIENCE OF REGIONAL POLITICAL CLEAVAGES AMONG LEADERS IN CENTRAL ASIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC OF QUESTIONS</th>
<th>KAZAKHSTAN</th>
<th>KYRGYZSTAN</th>
<th>UZBEKISTAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Source of Political Support</strong></td>
<td>• Region in which most recently held office: 90%</td>
<td>• Region in which most recently held office: 90%</td>
<td>• Region in which most recently held office: 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Members of Nationality: 63%</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Political Party: 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Responsibility of Executive Branch</strong></td>
<td>• Maintain National Unity: 90%</td>
<td>• Maintain National Unity: 97%</td>
<td>• Maintain National Unity: 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mediate between Regional Rivalries: 92%</td>
<td>• Mediate between Regional Rivalries: 91%</td>
<td>• Mediate between Regional Rivalries: 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Task of the New Parliament</strong></td>
<td>• Allocate national resources to the regions: 92%</td>
<td>• Allocate national resources to the regions: 91%</td>
<td>• Allocate national resources to the regions: 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pass laws to advance regional interests: 79%</td>
<td>• Advance regional interests: 86%</td>
<td>• Pass laws to advance regional interests: 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basis for Coalitions in New Parliament</strong></td>
<td>• Regional: 83%</td>
<td>• Regional: 87%</td>
<td>• Regional: 88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proper Role of Political Parties</strong></td>
<td>• Promote Regional Interests: 83%</td>
<td>• Promote Regional Interests: 81%</td>
<td>• Promote Regional Interests: 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote Interests of own Nationality: 58%</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Support the President: 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greatest Obstacle to Democratization</strong></td>
<td>• Concern for Regional rather than National Interests: 90%</td>
<td>• Concern for Regional rather than National Interest: 81%</td>
<td>• Concern for Regional rather than National Interest: 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greatest Threat to Stability</strong></td>
<td>• Loss of territorial integrity and inter-regional civil war: 98%</td>
<td>• Loss of territorial integrity and inter-regional civil war: 98%</td>
<td>• Loss of territorial integrity and inter-regional civil war: 98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Sample size includes: 35 political leaders and activists from 5 out of Kyrgyzstan’s 6 oblasts; 42 political leaders and activists from Uzbekistan’s 12 oblasts; and 48 political leaders and activists from 9 out of Kazakhstan’s 19 oblasts. Interviewees were not limited in their responses. This table includes only the responses to interview questions that more than 50% of those interviewed gave.
FIGURE 3.1: SOVIET ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS
FIGURE 3.2: KYRGYZ TRIBES
TABLE 3.2: THE ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE OF KYRGYZSTAN
### TABLE 3.3: FIRST PARTY SECRETARIES OF THE KIRGHIZ SSR, 1937-1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>REGION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. K. Amosov</td>
<td>1937-1938</td>
<td>Frunze (Chu) Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. V. Vagov</td>
<td>1938-1945</td>
<td>Osh Obast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. S. Bogolyubov</td>
<td>1945-1950</td>
<td>Frunze (Chu) Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. R. Razzakov</td>
<td>1950-1961</td>
<td>Osh Obast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Usubaliev</td>
<td>1961-1985</td>
<td>Naryn Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absamat Masaliev</td>
<td>1985-1990</td>
<td>Osh Oblast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3.4: TENURE OF FIRST PARTY SECRETARIES IN KIRGYZSTAN, 1950s-90s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBLAST</th>
<th>AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS POSITION HELD</th>
<th>% WHO HELD A PREVIOUS POSITION IN SAME OBLAST</th>
<th>% WHO SPENT ENTIRE CAREER IN EITHER NORTH OR SOUTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frunze</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issyk-Kul</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalal-Abad</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naryn</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osh</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talas</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.61</strong></td>
<td><strong>83%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SOURCE: See Appendix III.*
FIGURE 3.3: UZBEK REGIONS
TABLE 3.5: THE ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE OF UZBEKISTAN
TABLE 3.6: FIRST PARTY SECRETARIES OF THE UZBEK SSR, 1924-1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>YEARS IN OFFICE</th>
<th>REGION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akmal Ikramov</td>
<td>1924-1937</td>
<td>Tashkent Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usman Yusupov</td>
<td>1937-1950*</td>
<td>Ferghana Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amin Irmatovich Niiazov</td>
<td>1950-1955**</td>
<td>Ferghana Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuritdin Mukhitdinov</td>
<td>1955-1957</td>
<td>Tashkent Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabir Kamalov</td>
<td>1957-1959</td>
<td>Tashkent Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharif Rashidov</td>
<td>1959-1983</td>
<td>Samarkand Oblast***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inamdzhan Usmankhodzhaev</td>
<td>1983-1988</td>
<td>Ferghana Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafik Nishanov</td>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>Tashkent Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam Karimov</td>
<td>1989-1991</td>
<td>Samarkand Oblast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Dismissed in 1950 for “activities detrimental to party administration.” [Handbook of Central Asia (1956), p890.]

** Spent all of party career in Ferghana Oblast. Dismissed in 1955 for “agricultural shortcomings.” This and biographical information can be found in: Handbook of Central Asia, 1956, p896-7.

*** It is important to note here that he came from the Dzhizak Raion, which served as the basis for Dzhizak Oblast.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBLAST</th>
<th>AVE. NO. OF YEARS POSITION HELD</th>
<th>LONGEST NUMBER OF YEARS POSITION HELD</th>
<th>% HELD PREVIOUS POSITION IN SAME OBLAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andijon</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukhara</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzhizak</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferghana</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karakalpak ASSR</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashkadarya</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khorezm</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namangan</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navoi</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samarkand</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surkhandarya</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrdarya</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tashkent</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.23</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>61%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Appendix III
### TABLE 3.8: ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF KAZAKHSTAN BY OBLAST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aktyubinsk</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gur’yev</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ural’sk (West Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokchetav</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kustanay</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tselinograd North</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karaganda</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alma-ata</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimkent (South Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzhambul</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyzl-Orda</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavlodar</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semipalatinsk</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kazakhstan</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KAZAKHSTAN</strong></td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 3.9: TENURE OF FIRST PARTY SECRETARIES IN KAZAKHSTAN, 1950s-90s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBLAST</th>
<th>AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS POSITION HELD</th>
<th>PREVIOUS POSITION HELD IN SAME OBLAST</th>
<th>PREVIOUS POSITION HELD IN ADJACENT OBLAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aktyubinsk</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alma-Ata</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atyrau (Gur’yev)</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimkent (South Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kazakhstan</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzhambul</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzhezkazgan</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karaganda</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokchetav</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kustanai</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyzl-Orda</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangistau (Shevchenko)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kazakhstan</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavlodar</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semipalatinsk</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taldy-Kurgan</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tselinograd (Akmolinskii)</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turgai (Arkalyk)</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ural’sk (West Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.66</strong></td>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
<td><strong>29%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Appendix III
WORKS CITED


Bennigsen, Alexandre. (1979). Several nations or one people? Survey, XXIV, 3 (Summer), pp. 51-64.


Kosakov, I. (Year??). *Ob osedanii kochevogo i polukochevogo naseleniia sovetskogo vostoka. Revolutsiya i natsional'nosti*, 5, pp. 49-59.


NOTES

1 See, for example, Bennigsen and Wimbush, 1985, Karpat, 1983, and Rywkin, 1982.
2 See, for example, Haghayegdi, 1994, Kaumkin, 1994, Olcott, 1993 and 1994, Rumer and Rumer, 1992, and Suny, 1993. “Liberation” is, of course, a gross exaggeration since the leaders of the Central Asian republics supported the coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991 and an overwhelming majority of the population in these republics voted to remain part of the Soviet Union thereafter.
3 See, for example, Fierman, 1991.
4 This is also true of incidents occurring just before independence, including the infamous conflicts in Ferghana Oblast in the Summer of 1989 and Osh Oblast in the Summer of 1990, which took place between members of the titular and non-titular nationalities but, according to local accounts, were largely concerned with political and economic resource distribution within a particular region, or oblast. See, for example, Elebeyeva, et. al. (1991).
5 A survey conducted in 1993 found that there was generally a very low level of popular identification with or support for Islam, though the highest number of “believers” were concentrated in the Ferghana Valley. See chapter by Nancy Lubin in Roi, 1995. The Ferghana Valley spans across the northeastern Uzbekistan, southern Kyrgyzstan, and part of Tajikistan. The most recent violence in southern Kyrgyzstan in 1999 and 2000 was caused by the spillover of the civil war from Afghanistan rather than by indigenous Islamic political movements.
6 Laitin, 1998, p. 17. Borrowing in part from Laitin (who borrows from Rom Harré and John Greenwood), I define political identity as the set of “beliefs, principles, and commitments” that frame one’s understanding of his/her role in politics and political interests. See Laitin, 1998, p. 11, esp. footnote no. 8.
7 A tribe is an ethnically homogeneous socio-political unit based on kinship, often composed of several clans. It is thus distinct from clan in that it is much larger and often serves an explicitly political purpose. In the Middle East, for example, tribes were often formed within ethnic groups to provide for defense. See chapters by Bassam Tibi and Thomas Barfield in Khoury and Kostiner, 1990.
8 For an historical treatment of the tribal structure in Central Asian, see Barthold, 1922. For a more contemporary rendition, see Porkhomovskii, 1994), p. 17.
9 The Tajiks are an exception, since they are of Persian descent.
10 Under the Tsar, it was not a widespread practice to forcibly assimilate the non-Russian population of Central Asia, although Russian troops did force some Kazakhs and Kyrgyz to sedentarize.
11 At the time this study was conducted, Kyrgyzstan was sub-divided into 6 oblasts; Uzbekistan was comprised of 12 oblasts and the Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic (AR); and Kazakhstan contained 19 oblasts. Greater detail and specific empirical evidence for each country is provided in Chapters five through seven.
12 Interviews were conducted by the author between December 1993 and August 1995.
13 Chapters five, six, and seven enumerate the differences in elite preferences for each country.
14 See, for example, Fearon and Laitin, 1996.
15 See, for example, Giuliano, 2000 and Posner, 1998, chapter two.
16 For the classic rendition of a primordialist account, see Geertz, 1963.
17 The most famous and well-written of such interpretations is D’Encausse, 1981. On Central Asia specifically, see Fierman, 1991 and Lubin, 1981.
18 See, for example, Bennigsen and Wimbush, 1985, Karpat, 1983, and Rywkin, 1982.
21 The titular nationality is simply the major ethnic group after whom each former Soviet republic was named – e.g. Kazakhs in Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbeks in Uzbekistan. At independence, Kazakhs represented a little over 40 percent of Kazakhstan’s population, Kyrgyz comprised 57 per cent of Kyrgyzstan’s population, and more than 75 percent of the population in Uzbekistan consists of Uzbeks.
23 See, for example, Beissinger, 1992, and Roeder, 1991.
24 See, for example, Fearon, 1994, and Weingast, 1993.
26 In addition to those cited above, see Comaroff, 1991. For a discussion of Central Asia in particular, see Kaumkin, 1994.
27 To view ethnic identity in essentialist terms is neither surprising nor problematic for primordialists. Yet, it is also common in constructivist and instrumentalist accounts that claim to have a more enlightened view of ethnic identity formation and mobilization (Giuliano, 2000).
Still another way to think about the role of history and institutions in constraining identity choice is that the state both creates a specific “menu” of identities from which to choose, and makes one identity on this menu particularly appetizing. See Posner, 1998, chapter two.

This is one of the key differences between the historical institutionalist and instrumentalist approaches. Instrumentalists would expect individuals to shed their identities once there exists a better alternative, whereas historical institutionalists recognize that individuals are constrained from doing so by their past and/or attachment to a particular identity. In other words, both approaches consider identity to be malleable, but under different time horizons; the former views identity as a strategic category, while the latter views it as a subconscious investment.


The Central Asian republics were the last to declare their independence from the Soviet Union, and did so only reluctantly. Moreover, with the possible exception of Tajikistan, none have witnessed a proliferation of Islamic social or political organizations.

The Soviet Union was divided administratively into fifteen national (or union) republics (SSRs), each of which were further subdivided into oblasts (regions), rayons (districts), gorods (cities), and villages. Many union republics also contained autonomous republics (ASSRs) and autonomous oblasts (AOs), and krais (territories) which were further subdivided into oblasts or okruhs, rayons, cities, and villages. See Figure 3.1 for details.

See, for example, Wheeler, 1964, pp. 97, 111, 111-12, and Olcott, 1995, pp. 112-14.

See, for example, Slezkine, 1994, p247.

See, for example, Archival documents of the Uzbek SSR, 1921a, 1991b and 1922.

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan became SSRs in 1924, Tajikistan followed in 1929, and Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan were elevated to SSR status in 1936.

Materialy po Rayonirovaniyu Kirghizii, 1927; Obrazovanie Kirghizskoi ASSR, pp8-14; and Obrazovanie Kirghizskoi SSR, 1939.

Materialy po rayonirovaniyu Kazakhstana, 1928.

Materialy po rayonirovaniyu Uzbekistan, 1926.

These collective farms were commonly referred to in the Soviet literature as the rodovoy kolkhoz. See Winner, 1963, pp. 355-56.


Persistent accusations of “localism” and “corruption” in the Central Asian republics throughout the Soviet period were aimed directly at this phenomenon. While patronage systems existed throughout the former Soviet Union. Only in Central Asia (and Transcaucasia), was this phenomenon widespread and based on ethnic criteria. For general discussions pertaining to this, see Bennigsen, 1979, Critchlow, 1988, and Suny, 1993.

Lipovsky, 1995; Rumor, 1989.

Rumor, 1989.


See, for example, Kuchkin, 1962, Chapter VII.


Winner, 1963.


Handbook of Central Asia, 1956, p. 825.


ibid.

Handbook of Central Asia, 1956, p. 766. The predominant pattern in Central Asia was that a member of the titular nationality would occupy the top position in the republic and at the oblast-level and in large cities; the second post, however, was almost always reserved for a member of the non-titular nationality.

ibid., pp766-767. This was also due to the fact that the lack of a national elite meant that korenizatsiya was initially pursued vigorously at the local level and mostly in the cultural sphere. See, e.g. Olivier, 1990.

It should be noted here that oblast first secretary was an elective post (from within the local Communist Party), which “was not always a mere fiction” since the Soviet regime was aware that officials sent from outside the oblast lacked the necessary popular support to enact central policy in the periphery. On this point, see Rigby, 1978, p. 4.

See chapters by Jim Critchlow and Donald S. Carlisle in Fierman, 1991.

Arabic was replaced by Latin script in 1930 and then Cyrillic in 1940. An alternative interpretation of this linguistic policy is that the Soviet regime was merely trying to facilitate their assimilation to the Russian language. For the Soviet rationale behind the unveiling of women, see, Massel 1974.

One of the ways in which the Soviet regime accomplished this was to secularize traditional Islamic holidays and to turn them into an official celebration of socialism.

Although the Communist Party official relaxed its restrictions on religion in the late Brezhnev period and explicitly allowed the practice of religion under Gorbachev, these reforms did not penetrate the Central Asian republics. Rather, local elites strictly adhered to old norms.

For a discussion of the formal versus informal Islam in the Soviet Union, see, for example, Bennigson and Lemercier-Quelguejay, 1967, and D’Encausse, 1993.

There are northern and southern Kyrgyz dialects, which some ethnographers argue became exaggerated with increased contact between the southern Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks in the Ferghana Valley. See, e.g., V. Lokard, *Kyrgyz Ferganskoj Dolini*, 1994, Chapter 4; and Abramzon, 1971, pp29-31.

There are conflicting versions over how both the northern and southern parts of Kyrgyzstan were initially incorporated into Russian territory. Soviet historians claim that northern as well as southern Kyrgyz clans began actively opposing the Kokand Khanate, which imposed a heavy tax burden, in the early 1800s and petitioned to the Russians for assistance. See, for example, Khasanov, 1950, and *Kirghizskaia SSR Entsiklopedia*, 1982, pp19-24. More recent accounts claim that the Russians invaded the territory under the Khan’s rule and provoked local rebellions.


*Materiâly po Rayonirovaniiu Kirghizii*, 1927; *Obrazovanie Kirghizskoi ASSR*, pp8-14. Economic factors and the existence of other national minorities (especially Russians and Uzbeks) were also considerations in drawing these new boundaries.

*Obrazovanie Kirghizskoi Sovietskoi Sotsialisticheskoj Respubliki*, 1939.

Kosakov, *Year??* and Bogdanov, *Year??*.

The capital city, Pishpek, was renamed Frunze in 1936 in memory of Mikhail Vasil’evich Frunze, a primary advocate of the Soviet government in the formative years of the Kyrgyz Republic. After independence, the city was renamed Bishkek, and the oblast became Chu Oblast.


Ibid. This was particularly pronounced during Usbuliev’s long tenure as CP first party secretary.

Rumer, 1989, p. 148. These clans have become diluted over time due to marriage and the expansion of patronage networks to include friends and colleagues, yet the system of power-sharing remains an important institution.

This was reiterated in numerous interviews with the author in northern and southern Kyrgyzstan. See also, Weinthal, 1998, chapter five.

Author’s interviews with members of President Akayev’s cabinet, northern and southern regional officials, and political party activists in the north and south.

Ibid. In fact, many claim that the regional leaders’ failure to maintain this balance is the real reason behind the violent conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh during the summer of 1990, not ethnic tensions, which is the commonly cited cause among Western academics.

Interviews with southern regional officials and political party activists.

See, for example, Djeenbekov, 1993, p5.


Carlisle, 1991, pp. 96-98. Figure 3.3 is from p. 97.


*Materiâly po Rayonirovaniiu Uzbekistana*, 1926.


Lipovsky, 1995, p534.


*Ocherki istorii*, 1968, chapter four.
95 Critchlow, 1991, p137. Moscow “regularly condemned” localism in Uzbekistan as a form of recruitment to political positions (Ibid., p. 141).
98 For a detailed description of the division of labor in Uzbekistan, see Lubin, 1984.
99 Olcott, 1995, chapter one, pp3-27.
100 Kapekova and Tashenov, 1994, pp. 95-110, and Porkhomovskiy, 1994, p. 17. In Kazakh, these three hordes are known as Ulu Juz, Orta Juz and Kishi Juz; in Russian, they are called the Starshii, Srednii and Mladshii Zhuz. For the sake of simplicity, I will use the English version (above).
102 Refer to Metodologiia Rayionirovaniaiia Kazakhstana, 1928.
103 Refer to the map on page 6 in Akiner, 1995.
105 Refer to Metodologiia Rayionirovaniaiia Kazakhstana, 1928.
107 Winner, 1963, pp355-373. After the Soviet regime discovered this in the 1960s, there was a deliberate effort to diversify the ethnicity on farms (e.g. by amalgamating them) in order to reduce the predominance of kinship-based patronage networks. See, e.g., Cleary, pp. 387-388.
110 Kazakhs represented only a little over 57 percent of their titular republic’s population from its inception in the 1920s, though over 90 percent of the Kazakh population in Central Asia resided within its boundaries. See Khakimov, 1965, pp. 236-37.
111 Wheeler, 1964, pp. 76-77.
113 It should also be mentioned here that there was a great decrease in Kazakh population in the 1930s due to the collectivization of agriculture under Stalin, which amounted to forced sedentarization and the extermination of a way of life for the Kazakhs.
114 Cleary, 1993, p. 231.
115 Materialy po rainirovanie Kazakhstana, 1938.
116 See, for example, Rumer, 1989, pp. 19-20.
117 Kuznetsova, 1981, chapter twelve.
118 See Kuchkin, 1962, pp. 315, 326-327, and The Role of the Kazakhs in the Administration of Kazakhstan, 1955, pp. 245-246.
119 Handbook of Central Asia, 1956, pp. 766-768.
120 See Kuchkin, 1962, pp. 317-18.
122 Cleary, p351.
125 Korenizatsiya Sovetskogo Apparata v Kazakhstane, 1951, p. 205.
126 Kuchkin, 1962, p. 311.
128 John Miller comments on this recurring pattern in Kazakhstan in Miller, 1983, p. 87.
131 The civil war in Tajikistan -- the only Central Asian state to encounter large-scale violent conflict after independence -- should, conversely, be attributed to the breakdown of regional power sharing. See Pauline Jones Luong, “The Soviet Legacy and Regional Stability in Central Asia,” paper presented at the Harvard-MIT JOSPOD Colloquium on Colonialism and Ethnic Conflict, November 1998.