GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

UNCHARTERED DEMOCRATIZATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

Explaining the Unlikely Democratization in Clan-Based Kyrgyzstan

Author: Erik Olof Gabriel Nyberg

Master's Thesis:	30 higher education credits
Programme:	Master's Programme in Political Science
Date:	2019-05-27
Supervisor:	Marina Nistotskaya
Words:	16 472

Abstract

This thesis examines the political development in Central Asia from the onset of independence in 1991 to 2011, with an in-depth focus on explaining Kyrgyzstan's democratic development in clan-based Central Asia, that is rarely discussed in research. I introduce a theoretical framework building on "democratization by state formation" by introducing and analyzing the difference between open-, and closed clan-governance systems. By tracing and bringing new empirical material from interviews in Kyrgyzstan and Sweden, the analysis was performed by doing a comparative historical analysis. The results from the analysis suggest that the assumption, proposition and hypothesis are correct and important to include in the analysis. It appears the Kyrgyzstan indeed had an open clan-governance system while the rest of the countries in Central Asia prolonged the Soviet styled authoritarian regime under closed clan-governance. This implies that rivalling and competing clan-networks in Kyrgyzstan could build up and secure their own power bases, in a system that required balancing between clan-networks. Whenever the executive in Kyrgyzstan would disturb the balance, excluding rivalling networks, this would eventually result in their removal. Democratization in 2011 was pushed to formalize the open clan-governance system as a way for clan-networks to secure their own access to the state. Nevertheless, this study also suggests that clan-structure as a key variable needs to be analyzed in relation to confounding factors in order to sufficiently explain democratization in Kyrgyzstan, especially economic level and state capacity in relation to the other Central Asian countries.

Keywords: *Democratization, Clan-Based Societies, Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan, Comparative Historical Analysis, Interviews*

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

With the demise and fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the former Soviet republics were catapulted into independence. With the renowned words of Francis Fukuyama, the end of the Cold War would signal the *End of History*, with the advent of western liberal democracy beckoning the endpoint of humanity's sociocultural evolution and the final form of human government (Fukuyama, 1992: 3). Despite these hopeful words, they would only hold true for a few of the former Soviet republics. Given the similar starting points and odds for the former republics, the trajectories for democratic development exhibited variation between the new states, yielding a perplexing and interesting phenomenon that Buck & Haas (2018: 26) describes as an 'analytical riddle'. While the Baltic states transitioned into democracies, the Central Asian States embarked on autocratic journeys, developing into strongholds for autocratic regimes.

Previous research on democratization has rarely dealt with explaining why especially Central Asia as a region has been immune to democratic development. All the countries are situated in the middle of Asia, far away from democratic neighbors, with close to no history of formal statehood or democracy. The populations are plagued by poverty, poor living standards and situated in a context of predominately Muslim societies. All of which are assumed to decrease the likelihood of democratization. However, the exceptive case of Kyrgyzstan adds to the analytical riddle proposed by Buck & Haas (2018: 26), as the country unexpectedly democratized in 2011, spreading hope in the overall autocratic context of Central Asia (Collins, 2011: 151155; Cummings & Norgaard, 2004: 690; Gyene, 2016: 187; Hess, 2010: 31-32; Marat, 2012: 325-326; Turovsky, 2011: 202). Kyrgyzstan can be described as somewhat of a democratic anomaly; a democracy in a clan-based society, that has rarely been discussed in previous research on democratization. The main interest for this thesis is why some clan-based societies are more successful in democratizing than others, by explaining why Kyrgyzstan was able to democratize instead of the other clan-based Central Asian countries. This article will argue that the key difference in the different trajectories of regime outcome in the clan-based Central Asian countries was the style of *open* or *closed clan-governance* in the construction of the new independent states. By performing a comparative historical analysis from 1991 to 2011, based on *elite-informant* interviews, this thesis will demonstrate that the style of *clan-governance* in Kyrgyzstan was different compared to the rest of the Central Asian countries from the onset of independence. This difference also contributed to a system in which politics

based on monopolization of power by one clan-network around the president, excluding clan-rivals would result in their ousting. However, the findings from this study will also demonstrate that explanations rooted in clannism have to be supported by confounding factors such as economy and state capacity to explain Kyrgyzstan's status as a democratic anomaly.

This thesis proceed as follows. First, it will outline previous research on what causes democratization. Second, it discusses problems with previous research followed by aim and research question. Third, the construction of the theoretical framework will be introduced in which I present a non-linear *four step phase* of "democratization by state formation" focusing on how the structure of clan-governance was developed in the newly independent regimes of Central Asia. The theoretical framework will provide the main assumption, proposition and hypothesis for this thesis. This section is followed by a discussion on research design and method before the comparative historical analysis, focusing on the political development in Kyrgyzstan. The comparative nature for this thesis will be performed by comparing the rest of the countries as shadow cases. The thesis will be summarized and closed with concluding remarks.

Figure 1 – Political Map of Central Asia

Map over the Central Asian Region. From: Research Gate https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Central-Asia-downloaded-from-http-wwwsairamtourismcom-ca-today-on_fig8_308522990

2. Previous Research: What Causes Democratization?

The question of: *What causes democratization?* appears to be an ever-burning question. When reviewing the field, previous research has been able to provide explanations that are either more likely or less likely to explain democratization, albeit, not without disagreement. As the famous *third wave of democratization* spread to Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990's, the universal *transition paradigm* was extended to explain democratization. The excessive trust in this theoretical model labelled almost all countries moving away from dictatorial rule as transitional. Democratization was assumed to unfold in a set of sequences, with the rapid emergence of new democratic systems coming to power through national elections. The following set of sequences that would emerge from the key generator over time; national elections would consolidate the reformed state institutions, regularize elections, strengthen civil society and the overall habituation of the society to adapt to the new 'rules of the game'; *democracy*. However, the 'blind trust' in elections often failed to account for the underlying conditions in transitional countries e.g. economy, political history, institutional legacies, ethnic make-ups, sociocultural traditions or other structural features that potentially might have major implications in either the onset or outcome of the transition process (Carothers, 2002, 6-9; Levitsky & Way, 2006: 381).

During the third wave, almost 100 countries were identified as transitional, however, the democratizing effect for many of them was not positive as many of the regimes would remain non-democratic (Carothers, 2002: 11; Levitsky & Way, 2006: 381). As the *transition paradigm* has become somewhat outdated, the research field on democratization has not. One of the most thoroughly explored relationships is between economic development and democratization. In quantitative research, the most frequently used independent variable in testing is *per capita gross domestic product*, causing cross-national levels on the dependent variable; *democracy*. However, despite abundant time-series data there is still ongoing debates whether income plays a causal role at all. The general tendency is a small positive effect; however, the distribution is quite wide with effects that are either strongly positive or negative. Przeworski & Limongi (1997: 165-167) and Przeworski et al (2000: 136-137) finds that increase in per capita GDP is not a causal factor in the process of democratization, instead transitions to democracy are themselves random events. Nevertheless, economic development and per capita income is the best predictor for the consolidation and survival of democracies (Przeworski et al, 2000: 137). Epstein et al (2006: 567) contrary demonstrates

that higher incomes per capita significantly increased the likelihood of enhancing the consolidation of democratic regimes, but also the promotion of transition from authoritarian to democratic systems. The underlying reasons for this are still unclear. The impact of economic growth appears to strengthen both democracies and non-democracies, while the impact of economic decline may undermine both (Coppedge, 2012a: 258-259; Munck, 2011: 335).

Some research has explained that the way regimes earn their income may as well impact the relationship between income and democracy. The *rentier state theory* assumes that the political, economic and social consequences in states with dependence on natural resource exports is harmful to democracy. Rentier states do not need to tax as much, relative to states with less dependence on natural resource exports. Freedom from levying taxes releases the state from accountability, instead the state can gain its acquiescence from distribution rather than taxation and representation. With the income from export, the ruling parties can build up capacity effectively repress opposition and maintain their hold on political power by distributing rents in return for support. Politics become dominated by distribution of resource rents, and not by ideology (Coppedge, 2012a: 280-281; Epstein et al, 2006: 563; Herb, 2005: 298; Jensen & Wantchekon, 2004: 818-819). As it appears that natural resources impede democracy in poorer states, Herb (2005: 311) finds that rentier states tend to be located in regions (sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East) where states, rentier states or not, suffer from undesirable political outcomes. Related to the relationship between rentier states and democracy, some scholars suggest that the need to raise taxes, may force even authoritarian governments to democratize. In resource rich authoritarian countries, the need to raise taxes is not as strong due to the income of natural resources. However, Ross (2004: 246-247) finds no support that a rise in taxes *per se* leads to democratization, but a rise in the price of government services is associated with democratization. The suggestion is that people in general does not rebel against taxation without representation, but against taxation without commensurate government services.

National characteristics such as religion, ethnicity and linguistic lines are characteristics that change slowly or little. Comparativists have demonstrated somewhat varying levels of associations between these features and democratization, nevertheless, religion appears to be a stronger predictor for democracy, or the absence of democracy compared to the other

national characteristics. Societies with higher levels of religious fractionalization are less politically stable: the regimes are less durable, and democracy is more likely to both fall and rise (Coppedge, 2012a: 293). Some studies have found that the larger the non-religious population, the lower the level of democracy will be (Barro, 1999: 177), others have demonstrated that with a larger catholic population, democracy is more likely to survive (Przeworski et al, 2000). Despite that these findings are statistically credible, they are not necessarily causal. Barro's (1999: 177) findings include China with a high level of a non-religious population. The lower level of democracy is most likely not encouraged by atheism, instead a third factor might be responsible such as communist rule. More studies have found that Muslim countries are less democratic, but also less likely to democratize due to a lack of separation between religion and politics, obstruction of individual freedoms and political equality, and lower levels of emancipatory support for democracy (Barro, 1999: 176; Brunkert et al, 2018: 22; Denk & Lethinen, 2018b: 127;).

Research dealing with *legacies of past colonialization* has not shown any significant impact in general on the level of democracy, the magnitude of change or the probability of regime change. Nevertheless, when differentiating among colonial powers, specifically British colonial legacy has repeatedly demonstrated a positive impact on the level of democracy, the magnitude of change and the probability of regime change (Barro, 1999: 182; Coppedge, 2012a: 294; Jensen & Wantchekon, 2004: 827). While research on legacies of past colonialization has not been very successful, previous studies dealing with *geographical diffusion* have demonstrated somewhat more satisfactory results. The most important source of linkage is geographic proximity. Countries in regions with western linkage and geographic proximity to the US or the EU, are more likely to have economic ties, intergovernmental contact, higher cross-border flows of people, organizations and information in relation to countries in less proximate areas. The greater proportion of democracies in a country's world region or among its adjacent neighbours, the likelihood of that country to become a democracy is higher and the likelihood of a breakdown is lower. The tendency is that countries adjust their regimes to match their neighbours in both directions (autocratic or democratic). Countries with neighbours that are transitioning into democracies are also more likely to transition themselves (Brinks & Coppedge, 2006: 482-483; Buck & Haas, 2018: 26-29; Denk & Lethinen, 2018a: 96-97; Gleditsch & Ward, 2006: 928-929; Hess, 2010: 29; Kopstein & Reilly, 2000: 36; Levitsky & Way, 2006: 384).

To summarize, the field on democratization incorporates a wide spectrum of different mechanisms that tries to explain why democratic transitions are present or absent. Although the field is far from new, there is no universal explanation nor strong consensus regarding what causes democratization. When reviewing the field *four* important insights are discernible. Firstly, as mentioned above, previous research demonstrates how complex democratization is, making it hard to generalize. While some explanations are supported by some studies, other studies find weaker or no support for them. Related to this discrepancy, which is mainly an issue within quantitative research, is the categorization of regime types that potentially affect the measurements and thusly the results. Take for example Przeworski et al (2000) results from the analysis of the relationship between modernization and democracy using a dichotomous categorization of regime types (autocracies and democracies), compared with Epstein et al (2006) employing a trichotomous categorization (democracies, autocracies and partial democracies). While they investigate the same relationship, their results are different. As the former concludes that increase in per capita GDP is not a causal factor in the process of democratization, the latter do find that an increase promotes a transition from authoritarianism to democracy. Secondly, a short-coming, also mainly from quantitative research, is that quantitative analysis has been useful in ruling out some candidates for explaining the persistent cross-national differences in democracy e.g. land area and ethnicity. However, it is not as successful in adjudicating among the hypotheses that are most likely to be correct.

Thirdly, most research does consider regional difference, nevertheless the tendency is to cluster large regions together in order to explain patterns, trajectories and variations on regime outcomes. A striking example, among possibly many, is to group post-communist and former Soviet Union societies, or Muslim countries together without providing detailed differences neither between nor within these societies (e.g. Brinks & Coppedge, 2006; Levitsky & Way, 2006; Epstein et al, 2006). By only including countries into a category based on the legacy of Soviet rule, the risk of excluding other important aspects of societal structure and history is higher. Fourthly, and related to the third insight, is that previous research on democratization has dealt little with categorizing and characterizing clan-based regimes and develop theories on how these regime types effect different trajectories of regime outcomes. Clan-based societies and clan-style pattern of group formation does appear to foster authoritarian regimes

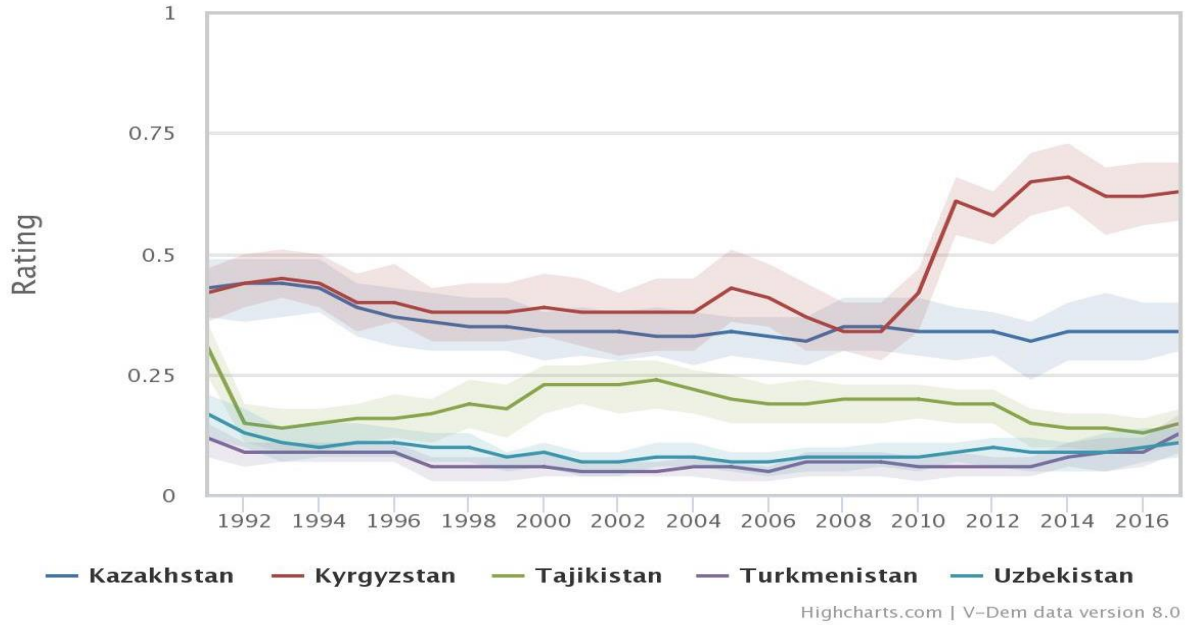
(Welzel, 2014: 34). However, the ambition with this thesis is to develop our understanding of why some clan-based societies democratize, that is rarely discussed in the literature. Despite Aagard Seeberg's (2018) interest in why some clan-based societies are more successful in democratizing than others, comparing the unlikely democratization in Mongolia with the autocratic Central Asian region, few attempts have been made to further explain this relationship. The next section will continue this interest, establishing the problem formulation for this thesis but also pointing out some infirmity with Aagard Seeberg's (2018) comparison.

3. Problem Formulation

As Aagard Seeberg's (2018) analysis of democratization in clan-based societies is a welcome attempt, his comparison between democratic Mongolia and autocratic Central Asia with an in-depth focus on Kyrgyzstan is not satisfactory. When the Soviet Union fell in 1991, the former Soviet Republics rapidly transitioned into new independent states. While the Baltic states transitioned to democracy, the Central Asian States embarked on autocratic journeys, becoming strongholds for autocratic regimes. As Aagard Seeberg (2018) is correct that Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan's trajectories on regime outcomes as clan-based societies was different in 1991, Kyrgyzstan would in 2011 deviate from its authoritarian path and transition into an *electoral democracy*[1]. The development in Kyrgyzstan provides the research field on democratization with a puzzle which requires further in-depth knowledge in why some clan-based societies are more successful in democratizing than others. Compared with the Central Asian region, Kyrgyzstan shares similar institutional blueprints inherited from the Soviet Union, share a clan-based societal structure, sharing religion and similar history, situated in a *potpourri* of autocratic states and is a Muslim dominated country (Collins, 2011: 151-155; Cummings & Norgaard, 2004: 690; Gyene, 2016: 187; Hess, 2010: 31-32; Marat, 2012: 325-326; Turovsky, 2011: 202).

[1] *Electoral Democracy;* This notion of democracy is based on Dahl's famous conceptualization of *polyarchy* which includes clean elections, universal suffrage, freedom of association, an elected executive, freedom of press and alternative sources of information. For further details, see; Robert. A. Dahl's "On Democracy".

Figure 2 – Liberal Democracy in Central Asia



Liberal Democracy measured as Liberal Component Index from; Note: V-Dem (2019) - https://www.v-dem.net/en/analysis/VariableGraph/

With this short background, this thesis can strengthen its claim to further investigate democratization in clan-based societies by excluding rival explanations from previous research on democratization. With 70 years of Soviet rule, the Central Asian countries had no prior experience with democracy, democratic stability or the organizational nor intellectual strive for independence (Collins, 2004: 246; Denison, 2012: 58-61; Gleason, 2001: 168-169; Gleason, 2002: 4-5; Siegel, 2018: 259). Kopstein & Reilly (2000: 36) argued close to 20 years ago that the Central Asian countries remained autocracies due to their isolation, politically and economically unstable neighbours and lack of outside sponsorship from prosperous and democratic states. However, as Kyrgyzstan was able to democratize in 2011, I will argue that the theories on democratic diffusion that are grounded in geographic proximity and ties to western countries are weak. Further, upon independence the Central Asian countries struggled with poverty and the populations have remained relatively poor[2], which gives little support for modernization theory to explain Kyrgyzstan's democratization.

In all the Central Asian countries, Islam is the dominant religious belief system. However, this should not, for well-grounded reasons be perceived as a confounding factor. Islam never

[2] See World Bank Indicator: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?end=2011&start=1991

had a strong influence prior to Soviet rule, and seven decades of Soviet education and socialization made the region secular. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, an upsurge of Islam was noticed amongst the population, however, religious political parties were banned and excluded from the political landscape (Olcott, 2014: 2). Instead, Islam and religious influence occupies a weak position in Central Asian societies ruling out rival explanations dealing with religion. One rival explanation that requires consideration is the dependency on natural resources. While Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan rely heavily on natural resources, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan does not have any significant natural resources. So, while the rentier state theory can be ruled out for understanding Kyrgyzstan's democratic breakthrough, the autocratic consolidation in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan might be a response to the countries' heavy reliance on natural resources[3].

3.1 Aim and Research Question

With previous research on democratization and the abovementioned problem formulation in mind, the understanding of why some clan-based societies are more successful in democratizing than others are theoretically and empirically weaker than previous studies of democratization. The overall aim for this thesis is to explain this relationship more in detail, examining how and why clan-based societies might affect different regime outcomes. The central research question for this thesis will be: *(Q) What clan-based societies are more likely to democratize than others?*

The distinctive contribution for this thesis is twofold: *theoretical* and *empirical. Theoretical* by establishing a theoretical framework combining "democratization by state formation" with clan-governance. *Empirical* by tracing and bringing new material from interviews to test the theory. Further, this thesis will b*e explanatory.* The overall purpose is to explain and identify the patterns and plausible relationships related to and shaping the phenomenon in question (Marshall & Rossman, 2016: 78). In 2002, Collins (2002: 141) encouraged the research community that most models for transitions towards democratization are most likely incorrect in the Central Asian cases, as none of the causal mechanisms elaborate an explanation to why the outcome is taking the form as it does. Further, Collins also stressed that Kyrgyzstan was the least likely among the post-communist countries to democratize. In order to acquire knowledge

[3] See World Bank Data Indicator: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.TOTL.RT.ZS

to explain the different trajectories in the region, in-depth knowledge reflecting on the informal role that clans play, shaping events and forming political realities was needed. This encouragment was stated in 2002, yet very little research has dealt with explaining if the role of clans was a key factor in Kyrgyz democratization. As an explanatory model this thesis will be *deductive* as the point of departure will be in theoretical preconceptions (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 4-6). The theory will be tested with the new empirical material that is collected from interviews in Kyrgyzstan and Sweden.

4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework builds on previous studies of *democratization by state formation*. The conventional perspective on democratization takes place in a *four-step phase* in which democratization is part of the process of state formation. The initial step of this phase is when a political regime in a "host country" exercise control over the society. The second phase in the process takes place during times of uncertainty, when the legitimacy of the political regime in a host country is challenged or weakened, either increasing the demands or likelihood of independence. In the third phase, actors start to change the domain of the host state by establishing a set of political institutions that are necessary for the establishment of a political order within the territory and over the population of the new state. These institutions constitute what is called the *initial regime* of the new state and can take on either democratic or autocratic qualities (Denk & Lethinen, 2018a: 72-73; Karl, 1990: 7-8). Normally, previous studies have argued that during the third phase, actors who are pro-democratic will use the opportunities to establish a set of democratic institutions in order to replace the autocratic institutions. Nevertheless, previous studies have argued that the outcome of this phase is uncertain, but if democratization is successful, actors will make decisions that will establish democratic institutions during the third phase. These new institutions are consolidated into a new state in the fourth and last phase, stabilizing political institutions that will shape the behaviour of the actors to adhere to the "only game in town" and not challenge the democratic institutions (Karl, 1990: 6-7; Munck & Leff, 1997: 343). In summary, the conventional perspective on democratization argues that a democratic regime replaces an autocratic regime as a result of the actions and decisions made by actors.

Yet, Denk & Lethinen (2018a: 73) claim that this process is not always linear. Some cases meet backlashes and reversed phases with returns to autocratic institutions replacing

democratic progress. In all the Central Asian countries (apart from Tajikistan), independence did have progressive tendencies, with promises of reform, advancement towards independent and free market economies and secular democratic governments. Especially Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan made notable progress striving towards public administrative reforms according to international standards. However, this progress was interrupted as the Soviet legacy would make itself reminded and all the countries would after independence once again be marked by authoritarianism (Gleason, 2001: 169-170; Gleason, 2002: 4-5).

Nevertheless, I will argue that the political institutions that establish the political order and shape the behaviour of actors, which takes place in the third phase of the theoretical framework, did vary between Kyrgyzstan and the rest of the Central Asian countries. Which resulted in a more democracy-conducive political order in Kyrgyzstan compared to the rest of the Central Asian countries, that ultimately resulted in Kyrgyz democratization in 2011. As such, the state formation in which a new state is created with a set of political institutions may have more or less democratic qualities by the time of independence.

Previous research and theories have emphasized that the mode of interactions during the creation and establishment of the new state affects the form of the post-transitional state. The odds for the emergence of democracy increase if there exists a more balanced pattern of elite competition, while the probability for democratic consolidation increases when democratic institutions that settle conflicts between elites are established and the major political actors accept to the democratic rules (Munck & Leff, 1997: 344-346). The pattern of authority established during state formation affects the balance of power. Previous studies have demonstrated that when the balance of power is symmetric, when all the actors can access the political and economic arena by their own capacity, it will increase the probability for democratization. And when the balance of power is asymmetric, when the situation favours the participation of some actors by excluding others it increases the probability of autocratization (De Rouen & Sobek, 2004: 316; Gurses & Mason, 2008: 329; Hartzell & Hoodie, 2003: 327-329; Joshi, 2010: 831).

Previous research and empirical analyses have also shown that there are different conditions that affect the balance of power during state formation. When *consensus* is the dominant condition during state formation, actors uphold, or intend to uphold a balance of power

between the actors. Actors will recognize the right of rivalling sides to participate and access politics and the state. When consensus is the dominant condition in state formation, actors are not divided into *conflicts*. Whereas when conflicts dominate state formation it creates different cleavages between groups and gives actors the reason to dominate and exclude other groups. Which in turn creates an asymmetric balance of power, which is more likely to result in autocratic rule (Denk & Lethinen, 2018a: 79; Fortna & Huang, 2012: 805; Gurses & Mason, 2008: 332-333; Joshi, 2010: 845).

4.1 Assumption - Clan-Governance

With abovementioned theoretical framework in mind, this thesis will continue by outlining the actors relevant for the Central Asian countries and the theoretical framework. Providing the major assumption, proposition and hypothesis for this thesis that will be analysed.

Prior to tsarist occupation and Soviet control over the Central Asian Republics, the social and organizational structure was divided into large tribal structures. During the Soviet era identities were transformed, breaking up large tribal structures into smaller clan-based networks. All over Central Asia, the onset of the 1920s and throughout Soviet control was marked by serious efforts from the Soviet Union to remove old ways of life. National characteristics, tribal structures and religious influence were deemed as sinful, challenging and undermining the new Soviet culture and ideology (Anderson, 1999: 10-12). The effects of Soviet control over Central Asia is best described by Anderson (1999: 17), explaining that *"(...) Soviet policies were having the same effect in turning the peoples of Central Asia into mankurts (slaves) with no memory of their history or language, and little realisation that they had a heritage which pre-dated 1917".* However, the clan-based networks and identities would remain salient in the region up until independence in 1991 (Collins, 2002: 141-142; Denison, 2012: 58; Gleason, 2002: 12; Pryde, 1994: 112). The conceptualization of clans and networks used for the theoretical framework rests upon the notion that clans are: *"(...) an informal organization compromising a network of individuals linked by kin-based bonds. Affective ties of kinship are its essence, constituting the identity and bonds of its organization. These bonds are both vertical and horizontal, linking elites and non-elites, and they reflect actual blood ties and fictive kinship, that is, constructed or metaphorical kinship based on close friendship or marriage bonds that redefine the boundaries of the genealogical unit"* (Collins, 2004: 231).

Members of a clan have a common organizational identity and network. Norms of loyalty, inclusion of members and exclusion of others reinforce the kin-based identity. With norms, there is a demand for reciprocity of exchange by support for clan-elites by non-elites. If these norms are repeated over time, the ties within the clan will be embedded and stronger and demarcate stricter boundaries between members within the network and non-members. Clan-elites are reliant on support from their network to remain or gain status, protect their group or access political and economic power. Non-elites need elites to assist them in finding jobs, accessing education, getting loans, producing social and political advancements, guaranteeing security or resolving disputes etc. (Collins, 2002: 142-143; Collins, 2004: 231-233).

By the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, clan-based networks in Central Asia could grow stronger as a response to the declining legitimacy of the host country (Soviet Union). However, this development was not confined to peaceful methods. What has become known as the *Osh-Riots* in Kyrgyzstan saw hundreds of dead in the southern town of Osh as clashes over clan-based and ethnic fractions developed into use of deadly force in 1990 (Pryde, 1994: 109; Radnitz, 2006: 136). In Tajikistan the inter-clan struggle and exclusion of other clans from accessing the political arena by first president Rahman Nabiyev led the country into a five-year long civil war. This development is congruent to theory on clans in transitional states. During times of uncertainty, when the legitimacy of formal institutions declines, and regimes become less stable or lack social trust. The identities of clans increase in importance. In a way, clan-based networks infiltrate the formal state for social, political and economic gains (Collins, 2004: 236). In all Central Asian countries, clan-based networks emerged as aspirants for political power with *clan governance* as the outcome. *Clan governance* should not be confused with ethnic, clientelist or regional politics. Clans are subethnic and although clans install a sense of identity like ethnic groups, the critical bond is not language or culture. Neither can it be based as clientelist as the horizontal or vertical bonds that link members are preserved despite changing economic conditions. Localism may help to preserve clan ties, albeit, clans are not essentially regional entities, as two or more clan-based ties may exist within the same geographical area (Collins, 2002: 143).

The first assumption I present, and test is that *clan-governance* emerged during independence. The informal and influential 'clan-politics' saw each president successfully accessing power, with clan-networks infiltrating and transforming formal institutions of the regimes. However,

the proposition that will follow is that there was a variation between the countries of how the balance of power in *clan governance* affected the qualities of the *initial regimes* during state formation in Central Asia.

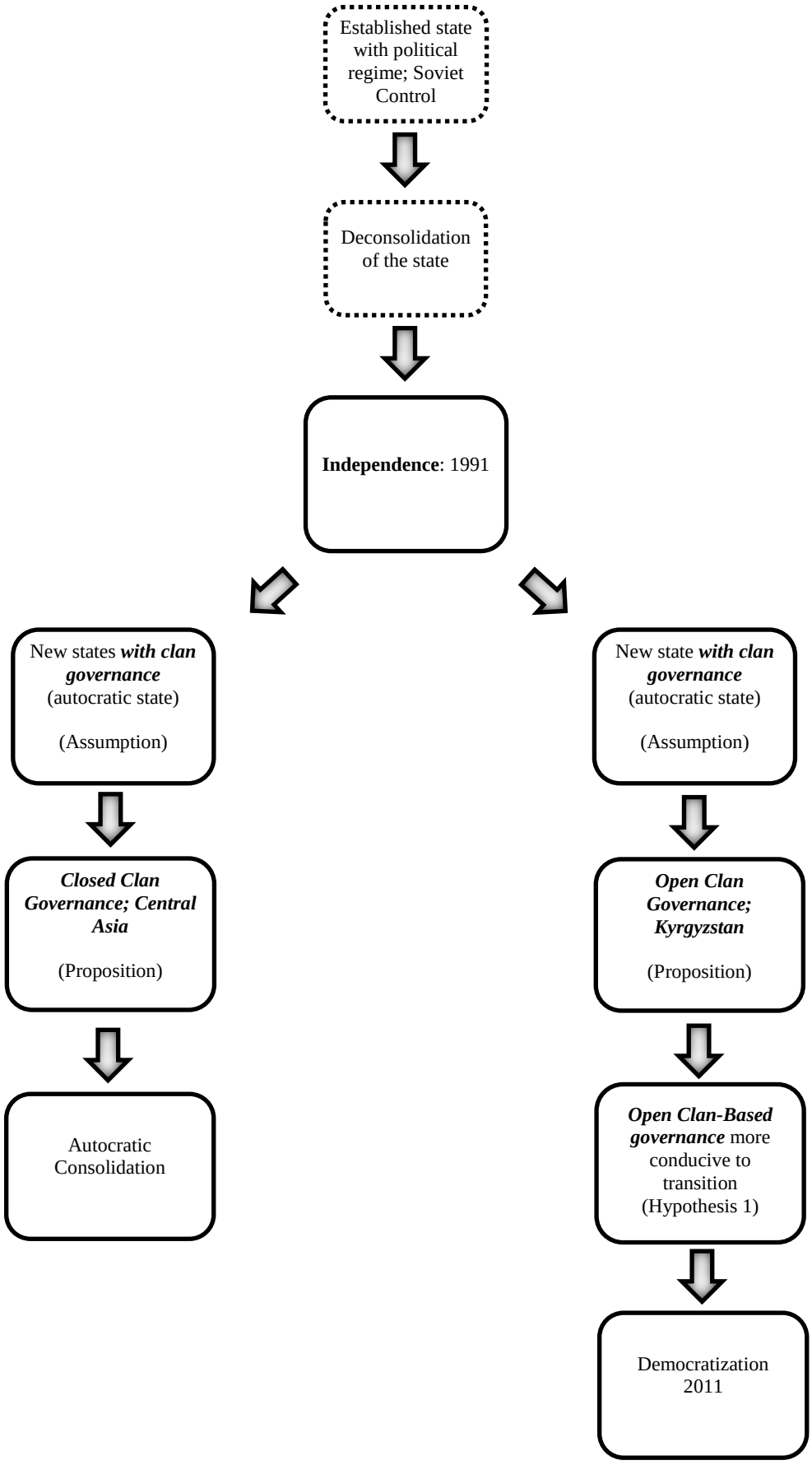
4.2 Proposition – Kyrgyzstan: *Open Clan-Governance*

The proposition I present, and test is that *clan-governance* is not favorable to democracy. The political-economic basis in clan-based societies in which clan-networks have the capacity to infiltrate and transform the formal institutions of the regime further enhances individuals ties to kin and strengthen animosity towards other clan-networks. This is because the struggle for power is conducive to feed your own network. When *clan-governance* becomes the "only game in town", access to political and economic resources is vital for elites to provide their own network with jobs, accessing education, getting loans, producing social and political advancements, guaranteeing security or resolving disputes etc. in exchange for support. As all clan-networks share the same concerns, competition over resources is more likely to strengthen animosity towards other clan-networks making it more likely to exclude them from political and economic power if possible. As all of the Central Asian Countries underwent economic hardship since independence, it is more likely that the network in power would risk losing everything if they failed to remain in power as the resources are scarce and the succeeding network would likely be inclined to exclude them from future access to power. Therefore, the style of *clan-governance* in Central Asia subsequent of independence took on autocratic qualities in their initial regimes, creating *closed clan-governance systems* in which the competition over power and resources are confined to the ruling clan-network and closed to rivalling clan-networks, ultimately consolidating the autocratic regime. Therefore, the pattern of authority established in the state formation created an asymmetric balance of power, based on *conflict* and not *consensus*, which according to previous research is conducive to autocratization.

However, I will argue and test that the *clan governance* in Kyrgyzstan would take on a *consensus* and more 'democracy-conducive' character of clan-governance; *open clan-governance*. While the other Central Asian leaders came straight out of top positions in the Communist Party, their position and support within the central authority was already in place, allowing them to continue the autocratic legacy from the Soviet Union in a *closed clan-governance* system (Gleason, 2001: 169-170; Gleason, 2002: 4-5; Pryde, 1994: 110). In other

words, the pattern of authority could remain from the Soviet Union, in which a ruling clan-network could establish a *closed clan-governance.* Meanwhile, the transition in Kyrgyzstan did not exhibit the same pattern. Instead, the transition would be based on *consensus* as the process of electing the first president (Askar Akayev), who was not a veteran of the Communist party, required balancing and inclusion of rivalling clan-networks to attain enough support (Akerman, 2002: 135-136; Karagiannis, 2009: 87). As the pattern of authority was based more on consensus and a balance of power, this is expected to enable other clan-networks to participate and access politics, resources and the state. In line with previous research, if the pattern of authority during state formation is rooted in a balance of power and *consensus*, this will increase the probability for democratization. Therefore, the *open clan-governance system* in Kyrgyzstan is expected to allow for more competition and not ruling by excluding rivalling clan-networks from power and access to resources, which enables rivalling clan-networks to become more powerful. From this, two important mechanisms are proposed to why this is more democracy conducive. Firstly, the reciprocal nature of clan-societies in which clan-elites rely on support from their network to remain or gain status and non-elites need clan-elites to provide them with socio-economic benefits. The access to the state and competition among and between clan-elites is beneficial to society as a whole. In other words, not only clan-elites have the incentive to protect and preserve the *open clan-governance system*, but non-elites as well as it provides them with benefits. Secondly, as the pattern of authority that is rooted in balance of power and *consensus* is expected to be more open, allowing for competition and access to the state, rivalling clan-networks can become more powerful than in the other Central Asian countries. Therefore, elites have the incentive, but also the capability to overthrow or challenge someone trying to disturb the *open clan-governance system*. As such, the *open clan-governance system* is more democracy conducive as all clan-networks seek to secure the balance of power, competition and access to the state. In summary, this provides this thesis with the central hypothesis that: *(H1) More open clan-based governance leads to a greater likelihood for democratization.*

Figure 3 – Overview of Assumptions and Hypothesis



5. Research Design

Since the rise of social sciences, comparative historical methods have had a long tradition of offering insights into important topics such as state building, warfare, revolutions, nationalism, technological development, globalization, secularism, regime change, democratization and more. Four main defining elements are central in the tradition of comparative historical methods. Two of the main elements are methodological as the tradition both employs within-case methods and comparative methods. The defining element of epistemology aims at pursuing social scientific insight accepting the possibility of gaining insight via comparative historical or other methods. Lastly, the unit of analysis within comparative historical methods focus more on aggregate social units. Traditionally, this has taken a structural view and explore meso-, and macro-level processes. In other words, processes involving multiple individuals and producing patterns of social relations e.g. states, social movements, classes, economies, religion and other macro-sociological concepts. Albeit, this does not necessarily reject the causal importance of individuals as structural and institutional environments shape individual actions (Lange, 2013: 5-11).

With the two first methodologically defining elements of comparative historical analysis, within-case methods and comparative methods, the division of *nomothetic* and *ideographic* explanations is crucial. Nomothetic explanations try to pursue insight that is generalizable and that can be applied to multiple cases, mostly used in comparative methodological traditions. Ideographic explanations instead try to pursue case-specific insight, exploring what happened in a specific case or what the characteristics were of a particular case by in-depth analysis of the case, mostly used in within-case methodological traditions (Lange, 2013: 15-17; Mahoney, 2000: 409; Sartori, 1991: 252-253). All things considered, the strength and main distinguishing characteristic of comparative historical analysis is: "(…) *that it combines diverse methods into one empirical analysis that spans the ideographic/nomothetic divide."* (Lange, 2013: 15). As a result, it has affinities with both nomothetic and ideographic methods. Comparative-historical methods use comparisons to gain insight into causal determinants and explore the characteristics and causes of a phenomenon. Comparative-historical researchers mostly focus on causal processes. The most common comparative methods used in comparative historical analysis are small-N comparisons, explaining how causal processes are similar and different by paying attention to the impact of context and causal mechanisms (Collier, 1993: 110-111; Lange, 2013: 29-31).

With this, one can start to discern and entangle why comparative historical analysis is a suitable method for this thesis. The bridging between nomothetic and ideographic explanations is central to this study. It is nomothetic in the sense that it is comparative over small-N comparisons including all the Central Asian countries, with an in-depth interest in pointing out differences and similarities. But it is also ideographic in the sense of how the case-specific context of Kyrgyzstan impacted the characteristics of the country and how this comparatively to the rest of the region resulted in the alternative outcome on the dependent variable; *democratization.* In line with Lijphart's reasoning, a comparative method is defined by the analysis of a small number of cases, with at least two observations. Too few to allow for the application of conventional statistical analysis and the number of cases is necessarily so restricted that the comparative methods need to be employed (Lijphart, 1971: 685). The focus on a small number of cases (small-N) is adopted one the one hand as a response to the framing of the problem formulation for this thesis where the focus is demarcated to political development in Central Asia in general, and Kyrgyzstan especially. On the other hand, it is also unchallenged because there exist relatively few instances of the phenomenon that display attributes similar enough. Further, the focus on small-N does not only legitimize the employment of comparative historical analysis, but also why this study should be conducted qualitatively. Another justification for the application of small-N can be drawn from Giovanni Sartori's classical contribution suggesting that the application of a concept to a broader set of cases might lead to *conceptual stretching*, with the risk of the meanings that are associated with the concept will not fit new or additional cases (Sartori, 1991: 249) The Central Asian countries share many similarities; former Soviet republics, autocratic and with clan-based societies. The selection of cases follows the logic of a *most similar system strategy*, including units that are similar or share as many properties as possible with the exception of the outcome to be investigated[4] (Coppedge, 2012b: 137; Sartori, 1991: 250; Skocpol & Somers, 1980: 183-184). Similar to most similar system strategy, the area approach is suitable in comparative methods by clustering and including characteristics that areas have in common. The strength is that political processes can be compared between units within the area composed of a common background of similar trait configuration (Lijphart, 1971: 688).

[4] See Figure 4.

When adopting small-N comparisons in comparative historical analysis, the researcher must deal with the problem of having more rival explanations to assess (Collier & Collier, 1991: 39; Collier, 1993: 106; Mahoney, 2000: 398). Ways to deal with the problem of having more rival explanations to assess can be found in experimental methods by applying experimental control. However, experimental methods in political science is often an ideal method with many practical and ethical impediments. Statistical methods may possess the merit of assessing rival explanations through statistical control (Collier, 1993: 106; Hancké, 2009: 80; Lijphart, 1971: 683-684; Sartori, 1991: 245). Albeit, the feasibility constraints, especially in a Central Asian context, makes it harder to collect large and reliable data to perform this form of analysis. Building on this argument, the explanatory dimensions in this thesis has so many factors making it harder to perform a quantitative analysis.

5.1 Shadow Cases

The inclusion of the other Central Asian countries in the qualitative historical analysis makes it comparative. However, due to time and resource constraints, and moreover constraints of accessing reliant information from interviews in the other countries because of their hard-line approach towards granting researchers visas, this thesis will treat the other Central Asian countries as *shadow cases.* In short, this allows the researcher to make a smaller, more focused bilateral comparison, offering insight and variation to the phenomena of interest, by comparing the focus unit of analysis 'in the shadow' of the other units (Hancké, 2009: 75-76). Instead of individually analysing each country, the Central Asian region and countries will be included as a shadow case, highlighting all relevant characteristics that are similar according to the *most similar system strategy* and explain how the combination of these characteristics add to the outcome (see: *Figure 4).* By employing the Central Asian region and countries as shadow cases, this thesis will alternately refer to the region as a whole entity and bring in examples from the individual contexts of the other countries (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

Figure 4 – Unit of analysis: Kyrgyzstan and the Central Asian Region.

Central Asia: **(Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan)**	**Kyrgyzstan**
Similar culture, language and history	Similar culture, language and history
Muslim majority	Muslim majority
Soviet rule	Soviet rule
Independence in 1991	Independence in 1991
Presidential	Presidential
Central Authority	Central Authority
Closed clan-governance	**Open** clan-governance
Autocracy	Democracy

6. Method and Data

Due to aforementioned lack of detailed research on why some clan-based societies are more successful in democratizing than others, and also because Central Asia as unit of analysis is relatively understudied, there is a lack of understanding the relationship between clan-based societies and democratization. One of the best ways to explain this lack of understanding is to conduct interviews. Interviews are useful when conducting research within an unexplored field, dealing with problem-formulations in order to extract and visualize how a certain phenomenon is shaped (Esaiasson et al, 2017: 261-262; Lilleker, 2003: 208). Also, as the analysis deals with recent history it is possible to attain information from interviews. Qualitative researchers within comparative historical analysis are likely to depend on *causal-process observations (CPO),* defined as: *"(...) insight or piece of data that provides information about context, process or mechanism, and that contributes distinctive leverage in causal inference".* (Lange, 2013: 2) CPO is data/evidence of what happened and why it happened the way it did, which can be gathered from a variety of primary and secondary sources. Interviews is primary data that is generated by the researcher, however, researchers within comparative historical analysis

usually combines primary data with secondary data such as newspapers, pre-existing analyses and government documents (Lange, 2013: 4). Between the 1st of April to the 11th of April I traveled to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to conduct in-depth, *elite-informant* interviews. Additional interviews were also conducted in Stockholm, Sweden between the 23rd of April to the 25th of April.

6.1 Selection of Interviewees

The selection of the interviewees is categorized as *elite-informant* interviews, composed of people who are uniquely able to be informative as they are influential, prominent, and well-informed in a certain area or have had the privilege to witness an event (Marshall & Rossman, 2016: 159). The selection of interviewees was iterative, with the aim of securing a spread of individuals that represent all the different types of groups that are significant for the topic or phenomenon (Della Porta, 2014: 240-241). The strategy of the selection followed the logic of *snow-ball sampling*, with informants recommending and pointing out other informants central to the topic (Esaiasson et al, 2017: 267). The first contacts were made with people at Georgetown University, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Institute for Security and Development Policy, Swedish Defense Research Agency and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. All initial contacts provided contacts with informants in Kyrgyzstan occupying positions within international organizations, academia, political activists and government. One barrier to overcome was the language difficulties, as most people in Kyrgyzstan does not speak English. Therefore, the selection had to overcome issues of feasibility constraints due to language constraints.

6.2 Structure of the interviews

The structure of the interviews is semi-structured with open-ended questions in an interview guide[5] covering relevant topics to enable a more detailed and fruitful discussion. The interview guide was structured in line with recommendations for conducting interviews from Della Porta (2014) and Esaiasson et al (2017). The first section of the interview guide includes socio-biographic questions in order to situate the interviewee in a wider context and to understand their responses better. The socio-biographic section is followed by substantive questions, also called *grand tour questions* phrased in a non-directive manner. So called *prompts* are also

[5] *Interview Guide* – The full interview guide is provided in Appendix I.

included in order to facilitate the discussion, to collect more detailed answers and to put the answers in contrasting situations (Della Porta, 2014: 236; Esaiasson et al, 2017: 274). Beforehand, all the interviewees were given information about the research, why they were selected and if desired, they were also given the opportunity to be informed about what types of questions that would be asked during the interview. These preparation steps follow Lilleker (2003: 209) recommendations for conducting interviews.

The input and perspective from the interviews will be a valuable source of data for this thesis, nevertheless, relying on data from interviews alone is troublesome regarding issues of validity. The most effective way of overcoming this issue is triangulation of the attained data, which is necessary to corroborate facts in order to determine the validity and reliability of the interviews. Corroboration of interviews is made by other independent material e.g. other interviews, research reports, annual reports etc. (Hancké, 2009: 104; Lilleker, 2003: 211-212). All the interviewees will be presented as anonymous because most of the respondents hold positions in either governmental institutions or international organization and do not want their personal and professional opinions to be revealed. In appendix 2 non-disclosure information about the interviewees is provided.

7. Analysis

7.1 Independence: The situation for Clans in Central Asia

Across Central Asia, independence in 1991 was initially met with unwilling acceptance. Nor the intellectual or motivational strive for independence was palpable. Instead the Central Asian countries were "*catapulted into independence"*, viewing the separation from Moscow as a great tragedy (Interview: K3, K8, S1, S2). All countries faced the issue of preparing and creating new institutions that could survive the separation from Moscow (Interview: S2). In Kyrgyzstan, the first secretary of the central committee of the communist party in Kyrgyzstan Absamat Masaliev was together with Apas Jumagulov the most likely candidates to steer the country into independence. In Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan the first presidents of the new independent countries had all come from the high rungs of the communist party (Gleason, 2001: 169-170; Gleason, 2002: 4-5; Interview: S2). However, in Kyrgyzstan; nor Masaliev or Jumagulov could secure enough support in parliament for their

policies and instead Askar Akayev, a research physicist from the *Sarybagysh Clan*[6] from the Chuy region of the north in Kyrgyzstan could secure a majority of the parliamentary votes and became the first president of independent Kyrgyzstan (Eschment & Grotz, 2001: 431).

Many of the interviews would argue that the process of selecting Akayev had crucial impacts for the political development in Kyrgyzstan (Interview: K3, K6, K7, K8, S1, S2). From a clan-governance point of view, the appointment of Akayev would initially lay the foundations for a more *open clan-governance system*. As Akayev was not merely a product of the Communist party, but also a research physicist, his approach was more liberal. Askar Akayev came from the Chuy-region of the north and was a compromised candidate with support from the north. The first secretary of the communist party, Absamat Masaliyev was from Osh in the south. When Akayev, instead of Masaliyev became president, there was a need to create a balance with the south and not exclude other networks from the south from power (Interview: K3, S2). By the onset of independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan set out to embrace a market economy, opened for freedom of speech, freedom of association and building relations with other countries (Interview: K2, K3, K4, K6, S1, S2). Growing up in the Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan and later being a liberal political activist, one of the interviewees would say that: *"We believed that the free market would take care of our problems. We believed in 'the end of history'."* (Interview: K3). A professor in political science would tell that the open system enabled autonomous elites in other clan-networks to build up their own economic sources of power which were hard to control from the central government making clan-networks outside of the ruling clan-network of Akayev powerful (Interview: K6). Clan-connections in the political life started to play out more clearly and gained more importance and relevance. Clans started to influence politics more extensively, parties became influenced and infiltrated by clan-networks. Appointments to important positions were made along clan-lines, not only from clans affiliated with Akayev but also from rivalling clan-networks (Interview: K1, K2, K3, K5, K6, K7). Clan-structures played an important role on the internal policy making process during the first years after independence: *"When there was a conflict between the executive (Akayev) and another elite, the executive could remove this person, however,*

[6] Kyrgyz clans are divided into three major groupings or wings; *sol (left), ong (right)* and *ichkilik (neither)*. Within each wing there are several clans determined by regional ties. The *ong* contains only one clan; the *Adygine*, while the *ichkilik* contains several clans. Both are confined to the south of Kyrgyzstan. The *sol* grouping contains numerous clans from the north and west of Kyrgyzstan, including the *Sarybagysh clan* (Akerman, 2002: 135-136; Karagiannis, 2009: 87).

replacing them with someone from the same clan from which the predecessor was from. In order to satisfy the clan. Disturbing the clan balance could be harmful." (Interview: K1). Initially, this supports both the assumption and proposition for this thesis. The pattern of authority at the time of independence and during state formation sought to create a balance of power rooted in consensus, which strengthen the proposition that the style of clan-governance in Kyrgyzstan was more open.

The pattern of authority in the other Central Asian countries would adopt a style of clan-governance rooted in conflict creating an asymmetric balance of power. A good example of the difference between Kyrgyzstan's open clan-governance and the closed clan-governance in the other Central Asian countries, is illustrated by the development in Tajikistan. The first president of the independent Tajikistan, and former first secretary of the communist party Rahman Nabiyev secured and monopolized power around his own network from the *Khujand Clan*. The *Khujand clan* controlled power in Tajikistan throughout the post-World War II period and was heavily affiliated with hard-line communism. When the constraint of soviet power was removed, the communist styled governing was prolonged under Nabiyev and the Khujand clan, excluding all other clan-networks from shaping a new, independent Tajikistan. Shortly after independence in 1991, the monopolization of power by Nabiyev and the Khujand Clan plunged the country into a civil war between different ethnic and clan-based factions that would not be solved until 1997 (Denison, 2012: 59; Fumagalli, 2007: 568; Ismaili.net, 1993; Interview: S2).

In Kazakhstan, the three major "umbrella clans" called *Zhuz* are composed of several local clans, so called *Ru*. The three major Zhuz are divided along three larger geographical units in Kazakhstan. The senior Zhuz (*Ulu*), the middle Zhuz (*Orta*) and the junior Zhuz (*Kishi*) prevails in the south, center/east and the north correspondingly (Oleinik et al, 2015: 189). From the 1960s to the 1980s the first secretary of the communist party Dinmukhamed Konayev promoted recruitments from his own senior Zhuz to elite positions. By the time of independence, there was an overrepresentation of senior Zhuz in power. When Nursultan Nazarbaev, the last first secretary of the communist party became president, recruitment along the senior Zhuz clan continued. By excluding predominately clan-members from the junior Zhuz, Nazarbaev was able to monopolize power around his own clan-network (Olcott, 2002: 29-30; Oleinik et al, 2015: 189-190; Schatz, 2005: 242). Therefore, *closed clan-governance*

was already the formal character of the system by the time of independence, facilitating the practice to continue. It was not until 1997, when the transfer of the capital from Almaty to Astana was complete, that members of the middle Zhuz were brought into power positions, creating an informal alliance between the senior and middle Zhuz (Schatz, 2005: 242).

In all the other Central Asian countries, balancing or inclusion of other clan-networks was never accomplished. Compared to Akayev in Kyrgyzstan; Nursultan Nazarbaev in Kazakhstan, Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan, Rahman Nabiyev and later Emomali Rahmon in Tajikistan and Saparmurat Niyazov in Turkmenistan all came from top positions in the communist party (Gleason, 2001: 169-170; Gleason, 2002: 4-5; Interview: S2). With independence, these former communist party bosses monopolized power quickly around their own clan-network and heavily repressed and excluded rivalling and competing clan-networks. This created a situation for few clan-networks, belonging to or supporting the ruling clan-network to control most of the resources and wealth. In comparison with Kyrgyzstan where other clan-networks could gain power by access to the state, clan-networks in the other Central Asian countries could not secure a similar position (Denison, 2012: 60; Interview: K1, K6). A good example of how Kyrgyzstan and Akayev (and later Bakiyev) had to face influential power from other clan-networks because of the *open clan-governance* can be traced to the fact that throughout the period of 1991 to 2013, one third of the 85 appointments made by the central authority, to the seven Kyrgyz administrative provinces were met with successful resistance from local clan-elites and their supporters (Anderson, 1999: 39-40). In 1992, Akayev attempted to remove the outspoken critic of the Akayev regime Bekmamat Osmanov from the Jalalabad Oblast who had reinforced his position by appointing his seven brothers to key posts. However, Akayev was unsuccessful in selecting someone loyal to himself as the power of other local clan-networks was too strong (Anderson, 1999: 40). In his article on cadre-rotation in Central Asia, Siegel (2018: 265) illustrates how the differences of the political systems could play out: *"(…) provincial governors in Kazakhstan who challenge the authority of the central government end up in jail, or in exile; in Kyrgyzstan, they end up in power, often in their own regions, and sometimes in the central government itself."*.

Before continuing the analysis, a few factors to why Kyrgyzstan's clan-governance was more open was provided in the interviews. It is not the aim or interest for this thesis to explain why it was more open compared to the rest of the Central Asian countries. However, future

research might find it useful to further investigate into the differences in the region. Among the most interesting factors, many of the interviews would suggest exogenous factors rooted in historical socio-demographic traditions. For example. the difference between nomadic and sedentary structures do appear to produce a different approach to authority. In a nomadic society like Kyrgyzstan, people have historically been characterized by their mobility and horizontal power-structure, making them less easily controlled by a strong central authority or a *Khan.* Conversely, sedentary societies like Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have a different approach to authority, with a history of being more easily exposed and vulnerable to strong rulers consolidating power (Tromble, 2017: 357-358; Interview: K1, K3, K7, K8, S1, S2). Another interesting factor is the informal division between the north and the south of Kyrgyzstan. The balance between the north and the south or between clan-networks from the north and the south is according to a diplomat and regional expert: "*(…) a century old understanding of the country."* (Interview: K7). If the balance of power is not sustained it poses a threat to the sovereignty of the country and some of the interviewees would suggest that the more *open clan-governance* and access to political power was a way to secure a balance between clans from the north and the south (Interview: K1, K2, K4, K5, K8).

Indeed, by the time of independence, clan-networks did emerge as a powerful and important factor influencing and infiltrating the political process of the initial regime during state formation. It is also evident that clan-governance did emerge in the initial regimes of all the states which supports the first assumption of this thesis. It also appears evident, in line with the proposition that clan-governance did exhibit variation in the different countries. Whereas in Kyrgyzstan, the clan-governance was more open allowing for more competition, enabling clan-networks to reinforce their own positions with access to political power, resources and wealth. Not only could clan-networks in Kyrgyzstan build up their own power bases, but they could also challenge and oppose the central authority. While in the other central Asian countries, clan-governance was subsequent of independence closed, enabling only one or a few clan-networks to access power, forcefully and effectively excluding rivalling networks.

Figure 5 – Overview clan-governance in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia

Central Asia: **(Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan)**	**Kyrgyzstan**
First president from the communist party	First president not from the communist party
Lack of liberal policies	Liberal policies
Hard control by the central government on clan-elites to build up their own economic sources of power	No, or little restrictions by the central government on clan-elites to build up their own economic sources of power
No bridging or balancing of competing clan-networks	Bridging and balancing of clans rooted in historical socio-demographic and geographic traditions
Closed clan-governance	**Open** clan-governance

7.2 Disturbing the balance: Askar Akayev

Even though Askar Akayev was rather progressive and liberal during the first years after independence and political competition was respected, gradually Akayev would destine Kyrgyzstan towards authoritarianism. Akayev became extensively more surrounded by his own clan-network trying to consolidate and monopolize power. Around 1995 and onwards, Akayev had become increasingly authoritarian and voices became increasingly vocal of the "clannish" regime of Akayev (Collins, 2004: 346; Interview: K1). In short, Akayev's development can be viewed as a deviation from the *open clan-governance* by disturbing the balance between the clan-networks that was created during independence, which would finally result in his ousting in the *Tulip revolution* in 2005.

In 1995, Akayev was re-elected with more than 70 % of the votes in elections that were deemed to be free and fair by the OSCE and other international observers (Eschment & Grotz, 2001: 433). As the political system was more open compared to the other Central Asian states and clan-networks had access to obtain their own power by economic resources, clan-politics was rising within the regime. With a poor economy and limited resources in the country the

struggle and competition for access to power became increasingly rampant for clans to strengthen and consolidate their own power bases (Collins, 2004: 224-225; Interview: K4). An elder of the Solto clan, and senior within the Kyrgyz regime would tell that everyone like him with access to the state faced the same pressure from people of their own network: "*(...) my people would reach out to me for their children to go to school, to solve problems or to get credit from the bank."* (Interview: K5). This demonstrates that access to resources not only increased the power of the individual elite of a clan. It also shows that the norms of loyalty and reciprocal pressure on the individual elite of a clan to provide their network with socio-economic benefits as proposed in the assumption and proposition was palpable: "*If the representative doesn't give back to the community it creates pressure on the representative not to be excluded from power as this will impede opportunities to remain in power.*" (Interview: K6). However, this situation would at the same time prove to obstruct Akayev's ability to further transform the political system and increase the power of democratic institutions from above as clan-networks opposed further reforms. The resistance to further reforms was a response to fears over that more democratic and liberal reforms would necessitate transparency. Which would obstruct the ability for clan-networks to openly use the obtained resources to fund their own networks. Also, further liberal reforms would most likely increase competition between clans over access to resources (Collins, 2004: 225-226; Interview: K6, S1, S2). This both support and contradict the assumption and proposition. It supports that the competition over resources did enhance the animosity towards other clan-networks, increasing the likelihood of clans wanting to exclude rivalling clans from political and economic power. But the rejection of more competition and liberal reforms contradict that the *open clan-governance* is more democracy-conducive.

It was against this backdrop in the mid-90s and onwards that Akayev started to deviate from the liberal progress, dividing his tenure into the *early Akayev* as a liberal and *late Akayev* as an authoritarian (Interview: K1, K6, K7, S2). Whether Akayev was truly a liberal as one of the interviewees was sceptical about: "*(...) we should not view him as merely an academic and outsider. He was a part of the establishment, he participated in Soviet and Communist life.*" (Interview: K3), or if he perceived the increasing role of clan-networks as a threat to his own clan is hard to determine. Nevertheless, *late Akayev's* policies and politics was becoming increasingly authoritarian. The constitutional amendment in 1996 concentrated more power in the hands of the executive while limiting the powers of the legislature. In July 1998, the

constitutional court decided to allow Akayev to run for a third term as president. In the presidential elections of 2000, Akayev was re-elected for a five-year term in what international observers described as flawed elections (BBC, 2019; Interview: K4, S1, S2). With the constitutional and electoral amendments, Akayev sought to exclude other clans, strengthening his own position in order to freely implement the policies he deemed necessary for Kyrgyzstan. Many would argue that the actions of *late Akayev* nullified the progress that was achieved during *early Akayev*. With the exclusion of other clan-networks, primarily southern clan-networks from the *ong* and *ichkilik* wings, Akayev was narrowing his base of power. As powerful groups, regions and clans were marginalized, Akayev's core group of clan and family members from mainly the *Sarybagysh clan* of the Chuy region in the north were becoming more powerful, extending control over key economic and political spheres (Interview: K1, K5, K6, K8, S2). By excluding other clan-networks from power, their access to resources was also cut. As a result, this was not only an issue for the clan-elites that held powerful positions, this also worsened the situation for the society as a whole, reliant on their clan-elites to provide them with socio-economic benefits. Especially in a country like Kyrgyzstan, plagued by economic indigence. In many ways, the actions and decisions made by *late Akayev* can be perceived as disturbing the balance by deviating from the balance of power rooted in consensus that was established during independence.

In March 2002, when the local deputy Azimbek Beknazarov from the southern town Asky was arrested for political reasons, local demonstrations against the central authorities sparked. The demonstrations would turn out to be deadly as the police decided to fire against the demonstrators, killing at least five people and arresting hundreds. The killings were viewed as an attempt by Akayev to purposely suppress and terrorize the people into submission. Akayev and the government initially tried to cover up the shootings by framing the fatalities as violent civil unrest, with protesters killing eachother. However, leaked video material of the demonstrations showed that the police had opened fire on the seemingly peaceful demonstrations. What followed was escalating political unrest and opposition. But instead of shutting down the opposition, Akayev decided to turn against the police and decided to trial the officers responsible for the shootings in order to calm the opposition. This decision showed that despite a desire suppress the population, Akayev could not guarantee the safety of the officers of his own authoritarian state (Fumagalli, 2007: 580; Interview: K3).

The events in Asky demonstrated that the people were not afraid to display their discontent with the authoritarian development. It also demonstrated the weakness of the authoritarian regime, failing to effectively repress the opposition. Compared to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan where the consolidation of power was defined to the boundaries of one ruling clan-network from the onset of independence, repressive mechanisms were stronger. In Turkmenistan, first president Saparmurat Niyazov possessed a strong repressive state apparatus. Appointments were made based on total loyalty along the lines of the dominant *Ahal Teke c*lan, which undermined institutions that could serve as power bases for opposition. The internal security forces directly under the president exercised control over all aspects of society discouraging dissent (Bohr, 2016: 20-21; Pike, 2017; Interview: K8). In Uzbekistan, first president Islam Karimov monopolized and consolidated power around his narrow circle of the large *Samarkand* clan (Denison, 2012: 59; Rotacher, 2006: 614; Interview: K2). On the 13th of May 2005 as a response to the imprisonment of 23 local businessmen in Andijon, local violence was initiated by locals, attacking state agents and occupying government buildings in what later became known as the *Andijon Incident.* The response from Karimov and his state forces led to the deadliest day in Uzbekistan's history as an independent state. The force demonstrated by Karimov articulated that opposition against the central authority would be brutally met (Megoran, 2008: 15-16).

As Niyazov in Turkmenistan, and Karimov in Uzbekistan had the capacity to counter opposition effectively and shut it down instilling fear in the population, Akayev did not demonstrate the same strength in the Asky shootings. Parallel with Akayev becoming more authoritarian, his family and clan-network becoming stronger, monopolizing power and excluding other networks, rivalling clans did not face the same threat to oppose Akayev as they would in the other countries (Interview: K1, K2. K4, K5, K6, K8, S1, S2). "*The other elites rejected to live according to rules that were engineered by the family and decided to protest.*" (Interview: K1). The final catalyst for the *Tulip Revolution* in 2005 was the flawed parliamentary elections in February. Technicalities disqualified many candidates from competing in the elections, leading to clan-elites losing their access to the state, meanwhile as the ruling clan-network surrounding Akayev increased their hold on power (Radnitz, 2006: 135-136). It is in the mobilization of the protests that clannism is most prominent: "*The revolutions were hired events. A small, kin-based circle of supporters were hired and organized to demonstrate. They were united over clans. The mobilization was paid, the core*

root was to help your own guy." (Interview: S1). With the general aim to oust Akayev, loosing candidates mobilized support within their own clan-networks with the motivation of loyalty and social obligation. This demonstrated the strength of the 'top-down' ties between clan-elites and non-elites within their own communities. Non-elites would look upon their local representatives losing power with dismay (Radnitz, 2006: 138). *"(...) politics was always about having access to the state for the elites. You have independent politicians who have core constituents that they represent and if they get elected, they have access to the state which gives them the ability to feed their networks. When the access to the state becomes narrower this ability disappears. So, the clan-elite perspective is important, because even if they lost access to the state resources, they still had a lot of authority over their networks and regions and could mobilize their support for demonstrations.*" (Interview: S2).

The mobilization of supporters of individual candidates was merged into broad movements spanning over clan-lines and the north-south divide of Kyrgyzstan. One of the most important movements to emerge was the People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan (NDK) formed by nine small parties infiltrated by influential clan-elites from the north and the south with no common platform. The revolution did not start in the capital of Bishkek but was initiated in the southern city of Jalalabad in March 2005 and was step-by-step exported to other cities. The coalition and cooperation of clan-networks became stronger and if one city was struggling or lacked the capacity to demonstrate, they would be augmented by other clan-networks from other villages, towns, cities or regions. The popular support for the revolution would eventually spread to the north and the capital Bishkek, sealing the fate of Akayev who was reluctant to use force against the people as he did in Asky, 2002. When Bishkek was overtaken by the popular mass movement, Akayev to fled to Moscow, submitting his official resignation in April 2005, making way for interim president Kurmanbek Bakiyev (Radnitz, 2006: 133-138; Marat, 2012: 331-334; Interview: K3, K4, K7, S1, S2). In line with the proposition for this thesis; the *Tulip Revolution* demonstrates that when the balance of power was disturbed, both clan-, and non-elites had incentives to protect and preserve the *open clan-governance system* to secure access to the state. It also demonstrates that the pattern of authority with balance of power rooted in consensus that was established during state formation, provided rivalling clan-networks with the power and capability to challenge Akayev and his clan-network trying to disturb it.

7.3 Disturbing the balance: Kurmanbek Bakiyev

Following the *Tulip Revolution*, Kurmanbek Bakiyev was seen as a consensus leader, with the ability to restore the bridging between clan-interests and return to the *open clan-governance*. Contrary to his predecessor, Bakiyev received most of his support from the south of Kyrgyzstan (Hale, 2011: 590; Marat, 2012: 331). Even though the appointment of Bakiyev was filled with optimism, the *late Akayev* style of clan-governance was continued under the rule of Bakiyev. Many of the interviews would argue that Bakiyev was even more autocratic, exercising control over close to all aspects of society. His support was narrow, surrounded by a big network of his own clan-network from Jalalabad in the south (Cooley, 2010: 301; Interview: K1, K2, K4, K5, K7). Among many prominent positions within his authoritarian state apparatus, Bakiyev appointed his brother, Janish Bakiyev as chief for the National Security Service (SNB). Despite no clear evidence of Bakiyev's involvement, his tenure as president witnessed several violent incidents, routinely intimidating journalists and political activists, murdering and imprisoning rivals and critics. One of the most outspoken rivals to Bakiyev, Omurbek Tekebayev was arrested in Warsaw in September 2006, for carrying heroin. The incident was widely regarded as arranged by the SNB by the orders of Bakiyev (BBC, 2005; Cooley, 2010: 301-302; Hale, 2011: 594; Interview: S2). It was clear in 2005 that Bakiyev did not learn from Akayev's mistake to deviate and disturb the balance between clans in the *open clan-governance* that was established during independence.

Just like Akayev, Bakiyev would use constitutional reforms to increase his own powers. This sort of practice mirrors the exercise used by Nursultan Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan. Nazarbayev has been the only president since independence. During his tenure he has increased his powers by incorporating constitutional amendments as a practice to secure the presidency. Enjoying enormous powers, being the arbitrator between the three branches of political authority; executive, legislative and judiciary. Nazarbayev and the senior *Zhuz* could control most aspects of political life (Sapanov, 2006: 77; Interview: S1). In October 2007, following constitutional changes, Bakiyev dissolved parliament and called for parliamentary elections. In the elections that followed, the Bakiyev's Ak-Jol party won close to all seats in parliament, effectively excluding most competition and access to the state. The presidential elections two years later saw Bakiyev continuing his grip on power as he secured his second term as president in what European monitors described as marred elections (Collins, 2011: 153; Hale, 2011: 593-594; Marat, 2012: 331-334). By prolonging the behaviour of *late*

Akayev, monopolizing power, excluding clans from access to power and resources and shutting down opposition with violent means, the anger amongst the population towards the Bakiyev regime was increasing. One of the most central figures within the Bakiyev regime, was the youngest son of Kurmanbek Bakiyev, Maksim Bakiyev. Appointed as chairman for the Central Agency for Investment and Development, Maksim Bakiyev could effectively conduct business on behalf of his father's interests acquiring and relocating state resources to strengthen the network surrounding the family. However, Maksim Bakiyev was never subtle in his actions or decisions, instead he was rather transparent with stealing money from the people (Cooley, 2010: 302; Nichol, 2011: 197; Interview: K1, K4, K7). *"He (Maksim Bakiyev) was never scared to show off his richness. He stole money from the people but was granted immunity as a member of the Bakiyev network.*" (Interview: K7).

In 2009, the Russian federation donated $300 million dollars to the National Bank of Kyrgyzstan (Cooley, 2010: 302). Meanwhile, Maksim Bakiyev created his own bank, the Asia Universal Bank (AUB) and transferred all the money making the AUB the new national bank of Kyrgyzstan (Cooley, 2010: 302; Interview: K5, K7). This sort of practice enabled the Bakiyev clan to buy large parts of the Kyrgyz business sector and privatize them for personal gains (Interview: K5, K7). In early April 2010, street protests were sparked with the goal of ending the Bakiyev clan filling up their own pockets, demanding the release of political prisoners, an end to constitutional changes restricting presidential powers, removal of the Bakiyev clan from government posts and the restoration of free speech (Collins, 2011: 154; Cooley, 2010: 303). As the *Tulip Revolution* in 2005 started in the south, as a response to Akayev's northern clan affiliations. The April uprisings in 2010 would start in the north, in the capital of Bishkek, primarily pushed by strong clan-elites who perceived Bakiyev's clan affiliations from the south as a threat (Cheterian, 2010: 21; Interview: K8). Just like Akayev, Bakiyev's ousting was because he had monopolized power, concentrated it around his own clan-network and excluded others from access to the state (Interview: K1, K2, K5, K7, K8, S1). *"Bakiyev didn't act according to the (balancing) logic. He was only extending his own networks power and influence from the south."* (Interview: K7). In many ways, history would repeat itself only five years after the *Tulip Revolution*. However, the April uprisings would result in relatively large-scale casualties[7] and property damage compared to the uprisings in

[7] The Health Ministry reported that 81 people had been killed and over 500 had sustained injuries.

2005, since the government security forces initially tried to violently shut down the protests. But as the protests grew stronger and the people could access and take over government buildings, Bakiyev saw no other option than to leave Bishkek, fleeing Kyrgyzstan to seek refuge in Belarus (Cooley, 2010: 302-303; Hale, 2011: 583; Nichol, 2011: 200-201).

7.4 Avoiding previous mistakes: Democratization

The question to why Kyrgyzstan was able to democratize after two authoritarian leaders and two revolutions remains unanswered hitherto. Also, the question to why not another leader like Akayev or Bakiyev accessed power is interesting. One of the most prominent explanations provided from the interviews is the new constitution of 2010 that was enacted under interim president Roza Otunbayeva. Just like *early Akayev*, Otunbayeva was perceived as a liberal. Her first changes were pro-democratic, re-instating an open and competitive playground for clans (Interview: K1, K5, K7, K8, S1, S2). One of the most important features in the 2010 constitution was to limit the presidential powers, avoiding the exercise of a violent regime and avoiding one group from monopolizing power again. In Article 61, the first and second paragraph states that the president can be elected for a term of 6 years without the possibility of re-election. Further, Article 114 introduced a new procedure for constitutional changes in which the parliament received more power over the process; calling and voting for constitutional changes (Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, 2010: 18/40). These two changes are clear examples of addressing the issues that were present under Akayev and Bakiyev; having a president who could change the constitution to secure and justify his position and prolonging his tenure to consolidate power. *"(…) there was a wide consensus that future decisions would avoid making the same mistakes of Akayev and Bakiyev*". (Interview: K7). These changes and progressive advancements were based on a general consensus among clans in order to avoid the developments of the past in the future (Interview: K6, K7, S1, S2). Also, the changes were intended to secure the balance between clan-networks, as the *closed clan-governance* style of politics under *late Akayev* and Bakiyev would imply being excluded from the political process and therefore access to state resources. One of the leading researchers on Central Asia suggested that the experiences for clan-networks under Akayev and Bakiyev was steering Kyrgyzstan towards democracy to: *"(…) ensure that everybody could get a piece the resources.*" (Interview: S2).

7.5 Discussion

The role of clans in Central Asia influenced the political trajectories by the onset of independence. In Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan the consolidation of power was exercised by one or a few clan-networks, spearheaded by former Communist Party bosses who excluded rivalling networks creating *closed clan-governance* structures. This supports the proposition made by this thesis. In Kyrgyzstan, it is evident that the role and structure for clans was considerably more open. What appears to be the most important outcome of the *open clan-governance* structure in Kyrgyzstan is the norm of balance between clan-networks. The balance of power implies inclusion which enables clan-elites to access state resources. With this access clan-networks can increase their own power and also reciprocate the support from their own clan-members by feeding their clan-networks with socio-economic benefits. What both (late) Akayev and Bakiyev appeared to do, ultimately resulting in their ousting, was disturbing the balance, monopolizing power around their own clan-networks and cutting off rivalling clan-networks access to politics and resources. This development towards *closed clan-governance* that has been present in all the other Central Asian countries since independence, did create reactions among the rivalling clan-networks and the population in general. However, while uprisings against the structure in the other Central Asian countries would result in repression, uprisings in Kyrgyzstan would result in the ousting of the president. This supports the proposition that the pattern of authority of balance of power rooted in consensus that was established during state formation creating the *open clan-governance* is more reactive to authoritarian developments. It seems to demonstrate that both clan-, and non-elites have a greater incentive to protect and preserve the *open clan-governance system* in order to secure access to the state and to restore the balance of power when someone challenge the system. It also indicates that the pattern of authority with balance of power rooted in consensus that was established during state formation made rivalling clan-networks more powerful. Providing them with the capability to overthrow and to challenge whenever someone tries to disturb the system.

The clearest example of how the response to the disturbance of the balance was articulated is found in where the uprisings started in Kyrgyzstan. When Akayev monopolized power around his northern clan-network, the demonstrations would be initiated by powerful and marginalized clan-elites from the south. Conversely, when Bakiyev monopolized power around his southern clan-network, the demonstrations would be initiated by powerful and

marginalized clan-elites from the north. The lessons from both Akayev and Bakiyev shows that when the balance of power is not sustained it is harmful for the country.

As the key explanatory variable, the role of clans and the comparison between *open*- and *closed-clan governance* is important. However, a discussion on why democratization occurred in Kyrgyzstan, without confounding factors would be erroneous. Firstly, many of the interviewees would respond that the more open clan-structure in Kyrgyzstan compared to the other Central Asian countries did affect the political trajectory resulting in democratization (Interview: K1, K6, K7, K8, S2). The *open clan-governance* structure that was established during state formation would enable clan-networks to access the state and its resources. With this access, clan-networks could become more powerful than rivalling clan-networks in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Clan-networks in Kyrgyzstan could also infiltrate and assume the role of the state and provide benefits to its networks. The disturbance of the balance in the *open clan-governance* structure would not only weaken clan-elites of rivalling clan-networks, it would also cut off access to the state which cuts off the flow of socio-economic benefits to the regular members of a clan-network. The 2010 constitution limiting the powers of the president, that ultimately would lead Kyrgyzstan to become a democracy, can be seen as an attempt to secure the balance of power exercised by clan-networks in the *open clan-governance system.* By doing so, Kyrgyzstan was also securing that no other executive would disturb the balance in the future. In this way, clans and local ties can played an important role on the democratization in Kyrgyzstan when they are equally competing forces. One might suggest that democratization in Kyrgyzstan was a way to formalize the *open clan-governance.*

However, saying that democratization happened *because* of the *open clan-governance* is at the moment dubious and requires further research. One must consider the economic factor, especially in comparison to the other Central Asian countries, with the exclusion of Tajikistan. As mentioned in the problem formulation for this thesis, explanations rooted in the *rentier state theory* cannot be excluded completely. As Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan relies heavily on income from oil and gas, their repressive state apparatuses are more effective. While Kyrgyzstan lacks significant income from natural resources and overall has been plagued by economic debility, the police regime capacity was never as strong compared to the other countries (Interview: S1). Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the

combination of the *open clan-governance* and a weaker repressive state capacity created a situation in which revolutions were more likely to occur. One of the interviewees would therefore argue that: "(…) *the main aspect is economic rather than clannism*." (Interview: S2).

In summary, the main hypothesis for this thesis that: (H1) *More open clan-based governance leads to a greater likelihood for democratization,* holds true. Nevertheless, arguing that clannism and especially *open clan-governance* is the reason to why Kyrgyzstan was able to democratize is harder to confirm. Indeed, the implications of the *open clan-governance* structure provides explanatory power and is most likely important to include in the analysis. However, to what extent *open clan-governance* play in relation to confounding factors such as economic factors and state capacity to build up an effective repressive state apparatus is harder to determine at this moment. It appears that it is not the *open clan-governance* system itself that pushed for democratization, but rather clan-networks securing their position and access within the *open clan-governance* system. Finally, by just including the two systems of *open* and *closed clan-governance,* the answer to the research question is that the former is more likely to democratize than the latter. However, this study finds that the *open clan-governance* system is favorable to democratization as democracy is a kind of formalization of the *open clan-governance* system. In which clan-networks aspire to secure the balance of power to secure their own access to the state.

8. Conclusion

This thesis started with the interest in why some clan-based societies are more successful in democratizing than others, with an in-depth interest in Kyrgyzstan's democratic transition in 2011. Previous research on democratization appear to be insufficient in explaining Kyrgyzstan's unlikely democratization in the overall autocratic context of Central Asia. This thesis coveted to explain this democratic anomaly, contributing to the research field by formulating a theory based on previous research on "democratization by state formation". Introducing and differentiating between *open* and *closed clan-governance* during state formation by the time of independence. In which the former was based on balance of power rooted in consensus during state formation, which is more conducive to democracy. The theoretical framework served to see how this might have influenced the different trajectories of regime outcomes in Central Asia. The main assumption for this thesis was that by the time of

independence *clan governance* emerged. The main proposition was that the style of *clan governance* in the Central Asian countries was different. In the other Central Asian countries, the pattern of authority was rooted in c*onflict* and an asymmetric balance of power in a *closed clan-governance system*, allowing for one or a few clan-networks to control power and exclude rivalling clan-networks. Which is conducive to autocratization. In Kyrgyzstan, the pattern of authority would instead take on the character of *open clan-governance*. In this system, the pattern of authority allowed for rivalling clan-networks to access power and compete for the state. The access to the state and competition among and between clan-elites is beneficial for the whole society as non-elites need clan-elites to provide them with socio-economic benefits, and clan-elites need non-elites to support them. As rivalling clan-networks in the *open clan-governance* have access to the state, I proposed that they have the capability to become more powerful. Altogether, both clan-elites and non-elites have the incentive to protect and preserve the *open clan-governance system* and the capability to overthrow or challenge someone trying to disturb the system. In sum, the main hypothesis for this thesis was that *More open clan-based governance leads to a greater likelihood for democratization.*

By conducting *elite-informant* interviews in Kyrgyzstan and Sweden, this thesis empirical contribution has traced and brought new material to test the theory. Performing a comparative historical analysis from 1991 to 2011 this study finds support for the assumption, proposition and hypothesis. It appears that the difference between *open* and *closed clan-governance* was correct in the Central Asian countries. This study finds that one of the most important outcomes of the *open clan-governance* system after independence was the more symmetric balance of power between clans. When the executive disturbed the balance, monopolizing power around his own clan-network at the expense of other clan networks, this would ultimately result in his ousting. This study suggests that clans and the comparison between *open* and *closed clan-governance* as a key explanatory variable to explain democratization in Kyrgyzstan is important. However, even though clans might play an important role in Central Asian politics, confounding factors need to be included in the analysis. Especially confounding factors rooted in comparing economic level and state capacity to effectively repress the opposition, all of which Kyrgyzstan compared to the other Central Asian countries lacked.

This study suggests that future research should focus on two implications from this study. Firstly, Kyrgyzstan is from 2011 and until today an electoral democracy, as defined by Dahl's

conceptualization of *polyarchy*. As this thesis shows that democratization in Kyrgyzstan was pushed to secure balancing between clans to secure access to the state and resources. Future research and predictions should focus on whether the balancing act between clan-networks to secure access to the state is detrimental for future developments towards *liberal democracy.* Secondly, as the constraints of time, funding and access made it hard to conduct interviews in the other Central Asian countries. Future research should aspire to attain data from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in order to perform a more thorough comparison of the countries in the region.

9. Appendix

9.1 Appendix I: Interview Guide

Theme 1 – Socio-biographic

Title:	
Nationality:	
Position:	
Tasks:	
Employment History:	

Theme 2 – Independence

- When the Soviet Union collapsed, what was the most striking change?
- In what ways?
- Was the change good or bad?
- With independence, how did the situation for networks based on local and family ties change?
- In what ways?
- How much influence did networks based on local and family ties exert during independence on the political process in Kyrgyzstan?
- How many competing or cooperating networks/groups were active during independence?
- Did they have different motives?
- If not focusing on networks based on local and family ties, which alternatives for political development were present?
- From 1991 to 2011, to what extent was political competition allowed during this period?
- Did it change during this period?
- In what ways?
- Were the actions of the central government determined/constrained by the interests of the networks people like Akayev/Bakiyev were from?

- How was the response from other networks?
- To what extent was other networks based on local and family ties restrained by the central authority?
- How did/does a relationship between a voter and politician look?
- Ideology?
- Kinship ties?

Theme 3 – 2005 & 2010 and Democratization

- (Show the figure on democratization) In 2011, Kyrgyzstan transitioned, why was this development possible?
- How was discontent with economic, politics and the central authority expressed, by the people and by the elite?
- Can you provide an example/event of when discontent was expressed more severely?
- What was different in the 2010 revolution compared to the 2005 revolution?
- Was the mobilization of people to demonstrate orchestrated by the elite or was it truly a people's movement?
- Why did they demonstrate?
- How many competing or cooperating networks/groups were active in the democratization process?
- Which factors do you ascribe as being most important in the democratization process?
- In your own words, to what extent would you say that localism (networks based in local and family ties) played an important role in democratizing?
- Do you believe the story?

9.2 Appendix 2: Interviewees

Interview:	Information:	Date:	Abbreviation:
Interview 1	*Diplomat. Professional career as a regional expert in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.*	*2019-04-03*	*K1*
Interview 2	*Member of Parliament. Politician.*	*2019-04-03*	*K2*
Interview 3	*Political Activist. Presidential Candidate in one of the presidential elections.*	*2019-04-04*	*K3*
Interview 4	*Human rights activist. Presidential candidate in one of the presidential elections.*	*2019-04-05*	*K4*
Interview 5	*Head of a Kyrgyz ministry. Professor.*	*2019-04-08*	*K5*
Interview 6	*Professor. Focus on Democratization*	*2019-04-08*	*K6*
Interview 7	*Diplomat. Regional expert on Central Asia. Working for an International Organization.*	*2019-04-11*	*K7*
Interview 8	*Diplomat. Regional Expert on Central Asia, primarily Uzbekistan and*	*2019-04-11*	*K8*

	Kyrgyzstan. Working for an International Organization.		
Interview 9	*Doctorate in Security and Development. Regional Expert.*	*2019-04-24*	*S1*
Interview 10	*Professor Regional Expert*	*2019-04-25*	*S2*

10. Bibliography

Aagard Seeberg, Michael. (2018). "Democratization in Clan-Based Societies: *Explaining the Mongolian Anomaly*". Democratization. Vol. 25. No. 5. pp. 843-863.

Abbott, Andrew. (1992). "From Causes to Events: *Notes on Narrative Positivism"*. Sociological Methods and Research: SAGE Publications. Vol. 20. No. 4. pp. 428-455.

Akerman, Ella. (2002). "Democratization in Central Asia: *Communism to Clannism*". Conflict, Security and Development. Vol. 2. No. 1. pp. 133-144.

Alvesson, Mats. & Sköldberg, Kaj. (2009). "Reflexive Methodology: *New Vistas for Qualitative Research*". 2nd Edition. SAGE Publications Ltd. London. United Kingdom.

Ambrosio, Thomas. (2015). "Leadership Succession in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan*: Regime Survival after Nazarbayev and Karimov*". Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies. Vol. 17. No. 1. pp. 49-67. DOI: 10.1080/19448953.2014.986381

Anderson, John. (1999). "Kyrgyzstan: *Central Asia's Island of Democracy?*". Harwood Academic Publishers. Amsterdam. Netherlands.

Auty, Richard. (2003). "Natural Resources and 'Gradual' Reform in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan". Natural Resources Forum No. 27. pp. 255–266.

Barro, J. Robert. (1999). "Determinants of Democracy". Journal of Political Economy. Vol. 107. No. 6. pp. 158-183.

BBC. (2005). "Kyrgyz Jail Unrest Claim Lives". Found at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4395106.stm (2019-05-14).

BBC. (2019). "Kyrgyzstan Profile: *Timeline*". Found at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16185772 (2019-05-08).

Bjorvatn, Kjetil. Farzanegan, R. Mohammad. & Schneider, Friedrich. (2012). "Resource Curse and Power Balance: *Evidence From Oil-Rich Countries*". World Development. Vol. 40. No. 7. pp. 1308-1316

Bohr, Annette. (2016). "Turkmenistan: *Power, Politics and Petro-Authoritarianism*". Chatham House. The Institute of International Affairs. pp. 4-94.

Brinks, Daniel. & Coppedge, Michael. (2006). "Diffusion Is No Illusion: *Neighbor Emulation in the Third Wave of Democracy".* Comparative Political Studies. Vol. 39. No. 4. pp. 463-489.

Brooks, M. Sarah. & Kurtz, J. Marcus. (2016).” Oil and Democracy: *Endogenous Natural Resources and the Political "Resource Curse"*". International Organization Foundation. Vol. 70. pp. 279-311

Brunkert, Lennart. Kruse, Stefan. & Welzel, Christian (2018). "A Tale of Culture-Bound Regime Evolution: *The Centennial Democratic Trend and Its Recent Reversal*". Democratization. pp. 1-22

Buck, Andrew. & Haas, Jeffrey. (2018). "Coalitional Configurations: *A Structural Analysis of Democratization in the Former Soviet Union*". Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization Vol. 26. No. 1. pp. 25-54

Carothers, Thomas. (2002). "The End of the Transition Paradigm". Journal of Democracy. Vol. 13. No. 1. pp. 5-21.

Cheterian, Vicken. (2010). "Kyrgyzstan: *Central Asia's Island of Instability*". Survival. Global Politics and Strategy. Vol. 52. No. 5. pp. 21-27.

Collier, B. Ruth. & Collier, David. (1991). "Shaping the Political Arena: *Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*". Princeton University Press. Oxford. United Kingdom.

Collier, David. (1993). "The Comparative Method". In: Ada. W. Finifter (ed) Political Science: The State of the Discipline II. pp. 105-119. American Political Science Association. Washington D.C.

Collins, Kathleen. (2002). "Clans, Pacts and Politics in Central Asia". Journal of Democracy. Vol. 13. No. 3. pp. 137-152.

Collins, Kathleen. (2004). "Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia". Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Collins, Kathleen. (2004). "The Logic of Clan Politics: *Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories*". World Politics. Vol. 56 No. 2. pp. 224-261.

Collins, Kathleen. (2011). "Kyrgyzstan's Latest Revolution". Journal of Democracy. Vol. 22. No. 3. pp. 150-164. John Hopkins University Press.

Constitution of Kyrgyzstan. (2010). "Kyrgyzstan's Constitution of 2010". Translated and provided by Oxford University Press. Found at: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Kyrgyz_Republic_2010.pdf (2019-05-15).

Cooley, Alexander. (2010). "Kyrgyzstan on the Brink". Current History. No. 109. pp. 301-307.

Coppedge, Michael. (2012a). “Quantitative Testing”. In: Michael Coppedge (ed) Democratization and Research Methods. pp. 257-309. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Coppedge, Michael. (2012b). “Democratization and Research Methods”. Strategies for Social Inquiry. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. United Kingdom

Cummings, N. Sally. & Norgaard, Ole. (2004). “Conceptualizing State Capacity: *Comparing Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*”. Political Studies. Vol. 52. pp. 685-708.

Della Porta, Donatella. (2014). ”In-Depth Interviews”. In: Donatella Della Porta (ed) Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research. pp. 228-263. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

Denison, Michael. (2012). “Identity Politics in Central Asia”. Asian Affairs. Vol. 34. No. 1. pp. 58-64.

Denison, Michael. (2009). “The Art of the Impossible: *Political Symbolism, and the Creation of National Identity and Collective Memory in Post-Soviet Turkmenistan*”. Europe-Asia Studies. Vol. 61. No. 7. pp. 1167-1187, DOI: 10.1080/09668130903068715

Denk, Thomas. & Lethinen, Sarah. (2018a). “Paths to Independence and Democracy”. In: Thomas Denk & Sarah Lethinen (ed) State Formation and Democratization. pp. 71-108. Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91749-8_5

Denk, Thomas. & Lethinen, Sarah. (2018b). “The Legacy of Initial Regimes”. In: Thomas Denk & Sarah Lethinen (ed) State Formation and Democratization. pp. 109-138. Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91749-8_5

De Rouen, R. Karl. & Sobek, David. (2004). ”The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome”. Journal of Peace Research. Vol. 41. No. 3. pp. 303-320.

Epstein, L. David. Bates, Robert. Goldstone, Jack. Kristensen, Ida. & O’Halloran, Sharyn. (2006). “Democratic Transitions”. American Journal of Political Science. Vol. 50. No. 3. pp. 551-569.

Esaiasson, Peter.Giljam, Mikael. Oscarsson, Henrik. Towns, Ann. & Wägnerud, Lena. (2017). “Metodpraktikan: *Konsten Att Studera Samhälle, Individ och Marknad”.* Wolters Kluwer Sverige. Stockholm.

Escment, Beate. & Grotz, Florian. (2001). “Kyrgyzstan”. In: Dieter Nohlen, Florian Grotz & Christof Hartmann (ed) Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook: Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia. pp. 431-454. Oxford University Press.

Fortna, P. Virginia. & Huang, Reyko. (2012). “Democratization After Civil War: *A Brush Clearing Exercise*”. International Studies Quarterly. Vol. 56. No. 4. pp. 801-808.

Fukuyama, Francis. (1989). “The End of History?”. The National Interest. JSTOR. No. 16. pp. 3-18.

Fumagalli, Matteo. (2007). “Framing Ethnic Minority Mobilisation in Central Asia: *The Cases of Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*”. Europe-Asia Studies. Vol. 59. No. 4. pp. 567-590.

Gleason, Gregory. (2001). “Foreign Policy and Domestic Reform in Central Asia”. Central Asia Survey. Vol. 20. No. 2. pp. 167-182.

Gleason, Gregory. (2002). “The Politics of Counter Insurgency in Central Asia. Problems of Post-Communism. Vol. 49. No. 2. pp. 3-14.

Gleditsch, S. Kristian. & Ward, D. Michael. (2006). “Diffusion and the International Context of Democratization”. International Organization. Vol. 60. pp. 911-933.

Gurses, Mehmet. & Mason, T. David. (2008). “Democracy Out of Anarchy: *The Prospects for Civil-War Democracy*”. Social Science Quarterly. Vol. 89. No. 3. pp. 315-336.

Gyene, I. Pál. (2016). “’Rentier States’ or the Relationship Between Regime Stability and Exercising Power in Post-Soviet Central Asia”. Society and Economy. Vol. 34. No. 2. pp. 171-191. DOI: 10.1556/204.2016.38.2.3

Hale, E. Henry. (2011). “Formal Constitutions in Informal Politics: *Institutions and Democratization in Post-Soviet Eurasia*”. World Politics. Vol. 63. No. 4. pp. 581-617.

Hancké, Bob. (2009). “Intelligent Research Design: *A Guide for Beginning Researchers in the Social Sciences*”. Oxford University Press. Oxford. United Kingdom.

Hartzell, Caroline. & Hoodie, Matthew. (2003). “Institutionalizing Peace: *Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management*”. American Journal of Political Science. Vol. 47. No. 2. pp. 318-332.

Herb, Michael. (2005). “No Representation Without Taxation? *Rents, Development, and Democracy*”. Comparative Politics. Vol. 37. No. 3. pp. 297-316.

Hess, Steve. (2010). “Protests, Parties, and Presidential Succession”. Problems of Post-Communism. Vol. 57 No. 1. pp. 28-39

Ismaili.net. (1993). “Language and Ethnicity Issues in Tajikistan”. Found at: http://ismaili.net/mirrors/112_tajik/tajkethn.html (2019-05-02).

Jensen, Nathan. & Wantchekon, Leonard. (2004). ”Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa”. Comparative Political Studies. Vol. 37. No. 7. pp. 816-841.

Joshi, Madhav. (2010). “Post-Civil War Democratization: *Promotion of Democracy in Post-Civil War States, 1946-2005*”. Democratization. Vol. 17. No. 5. pp. 826-855.

Karagiannis, Emmanuel. (2009). ”Political Islam in Central Asia: *The Challenge of Hizb-Ut-Tahrir*”. Routledge. Abingdon. United Kingdom.

Karl, L. Terry. (1990). “Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America”. Comparative Politics. Vol. 23. No. 1. pp. 1-21.

Kopstein, S. Jeffrey. & Reilly, A. David. (2000). “Geographic Diffusion and the Transformation of the Post-Communist World”. World Politics. Vol. 53. No. 1. pp. 1-37.

Lange, Mathew (ed). (2013). “Comparative Historical Methods”. Sage Publications Ltd. London.

Levitsky, Steven. & Way, A. Lucan. (2006). “Linkage Versus Leverage: *Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change*”. Comparative Politics. Vol. 38. No. 4. pp. 379-400.

Lijphart, Arend. (1971). “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method”. The American Political Science Review. Vol. 65. No. 3. pp. 682-693.

Lilleker, G. Darren. (2003). ”Interviewing the Political Elite: *Navigating a Potential Minefield*”. Politics. Vol. 23. No. 3. pp. 207-214.

Mahoney, James. (2000). “Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis”. Sociological Methods and Research. Vol. 28. No. 4. pp. 387-424.

Mahoney, James. (2001). “Path-Dependent Explanations of Regime Change: *Central America in Comparative Perspective*”. Studies in Comparative International Development. Vol. 36. No. 1. pp. 111-141.

Marat, Erica. (2012). ”Kyrgyzstan: *A Parliamentary System Based on Inter-Elite Consensus*”. Demokratizatsiya. pp. 325-344.

Marshall, Catherine. & Rossman, B. Gretchen. (2016). “Designing Qualitative Research”. Sixth Edition. SAGE Publications Inc.

Megoran, Nick. (2008). “Framing Andijon, Narrating the Nation: *Islam Karimov’s Account of the Events of 13 May 2005*”. Central Asia Survey. Vol. 27. No. 1. pp. 15-31.

Munck, L. Gerardo. (2011). “Democratic Theory after Transitions from Authoritarian Rule”. Perspectives on Politics. Vol. 9. No. 2. pp. 333-343.

Munck, L. Gerardo. & Leff, S. Carol. (1997). “Modes of Transition and Democratization: *South America and Eastern Europe in Comparative Perspective*”. Comparative Politics. Vol. 29. No. 3. pp. 343-362.

Nichol, Jim. (2011). “The April 2010 Coup in Kyrgyzstan: *Context and Implications for U.S. Interests*”. Russia, China and Eurasia. Vol. 27. No. 2. pp. 195-210.

Olcott, B. Martha. (1992). “Central Asia’s Catapult to Independence”. Foreign Affairs. Vol.70. pp. 108-130.

Olcott, B. Martha. (2002). “Kazakhstan: *Unfulfilled Promise”*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Olcott, B. Martha. (2014). “Religion and State Policy in Central Asia”. The Review of Faith & International Affairs. Vol. 12. No. 4. pp. 1-15.

O’Lear, Shannon. (2007). “Azerbaijan's Resource Wealth: *Political Legitimacy and Public Opinion*”. The Geographical Journal, Vol. 173, No. 3. pp. 207-223

Oleinik, Anton. Yermekov, Momysh. & Kautbekov, Zharas. (2015). “Power Distance, Sub-Ethnic Groups, and Teams of Civil Servants: *Overlooked Factors of Administrative Reform in Kazakhstan?”*. Public Policy and Administration. SAGE Publications. Vol. 30. No. 2. pp. 182-205.

Pike, John. (2017). “Turkmenistan: *Tribes*”. Global Security. Found at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/turkmen-tribes.htm (2019-05-09).

Pryde, Ian. (1994). “Kyrgyzstan: *The Trials of Independence”.* Journal of Democracy. Vol. 5. No. 1. pp. 109-120.

Przeworski, Adam. & Limongi, Fernando. (1997). “Modernization: *Theories and Facts”*. World Politics. Vol. 49. No. 2. pp. 155-183.

Przeworski, Adam. Alvarez, E. Michael. Cheibub, A. José. & Limongi, Fernando. (2000). “Democracy and Development: *Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*”. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Radnitz, Scott. (2006). “What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?”. Journal of Democracy. Vol. 17. No. 2. pp. 132-144.

Ross, L. Michael. (2004). “Does Taxation Lead to Representation?”. British Journal of Political Science. Vol. 34. pp. 229-249.

Rotacher, Albrecht. (2006). “The New Central Asia: *The Creation of Nations*”. Springer. New York University Press.

Sapanov, Saifolla. (2006). “Elections in Kazakhstan”. Himalayan and Central Asian Studies. Vol. 10. No. 4. pp. 77-83.

Sartori, Giovanni. (1991). “Comparing and Miscomparing”. Journal of Theoretical Politics. Vol. 3. No. 3. pp. 243-257.

Schatz, Edward. (2005). “Reconceptualizing Clans: Kinship Networks and Statehood in Kazakhstan. Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity. Vol. 33. No. 2. pp. 231–254.

Siegel, David. (2018). “The Political Logic of Cadre Rotation in Post-Soviet Central Asia”. Problems of Post-Communism. Vol.65. No. 4. pp. 253-270.

Skocpol, Theda. & Somers, Margaret. (1980). “The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry”. Comparative Studies in Society and History. Vol. 22. No. 2. pp. 174-197.

Tromble, Rebekah. (2017). “From Nomadic Traditionalists to Sedentary Scripturalists?”. Problems of Post-Communism. Vol. 64. No. 6. pp. 356-369.

Turovsky, Rostislav. (2011). “Party Systems in Post-Soviet States: *The Shaping of Political Competition*”. Perspectives on European Politics and Society. Vol. 12 No. 2. pp. 197-213. DOI: 10.1080/15705854.2011.572645

V-Dem. (2019). “Liberal Component Index”. Graph of the Central Asian Region. Found at: https://www.v-dem.net/en/analysis/VariableGraph/ (2019-03-05).

Welzel, Christian. (2014). “Evolution, Empowerment, and Emancipation: *How Societies Climb the Freedom Ladder”*. World Development. Vol. 64. pp. 33-51.