



What factors explain divergent paths of political regimes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan?

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Research Puzzle

- 1) Over the centuries, the whole region of Central Asia historically associated with states that had strong autocratic form of governing.
- 2) Medieval times of standing of major nation states have coincided with the colonial policy pursued by Russian Empire.
- 3) Both of them have emerged under the power of Communist party.



R U S S I A

KAZAKHSTAN

CHINA

KYRGYZSTAN

UZBEKISTAN

TURKMENISTAN

TAJIKISTAN

AZERBAIJAN

GEORGIA

ARMENIA

Caspian Sea

Aral Sea

Lake Balkhash

Moscow

Nizhniy Novgorod

Kazan'

Yekaterinburg

Omsk

Novosibirsk

Ufa

Chelyabinsk

Petropavlovsk

Saratov

Samara

Qostanay (Kostanay)

Pavlodar

Semey (Semipalatinsk)

Volgograd

Oral (Ural'sk)

Aqtöbe (Aktobe)

Qaraghandy (Karaganda)

Astrakhan'

Atyraū (Atyrau)

Saryshaghan (Saryshagan)

Baykonur Cosmodrome

Groznyy

Aqtau (Aktau)

Qyzylorda (Kyzylorda)

Almaty

Tbilisi

Yerevan

Xankandi

Baku

Türkmenbashi

Nebitdag

Dashhowuz

Urganch

Nukus

Bukhoro

Samargand

Tashkent

Shymkent

Taraz

Talas

Bishkek

Andijon

Osh

Khudzhand

Dushanbe

Kashi

Aksu

Research Puzzle

- All the present post-soviet states inherited common political past, in terms of communist party structure and similar social backgrounds.
- Hence, it is reasonable to unify them at this particular point of time, right after the collapse of USSR, and make a sense of starting point to analyze the divergent paths of political regimes.

- **Limitation:**

It is important to note that I focus only on 2 countries of the Region:

Kazakhstan & Kyrgyzstan.

- **Assumption:**

- First of all, as preliminary studies shows, that Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan chose very similar way of development of their political organization:
- strong political power of one single leader, or group of elite at the top of governing

• Why important?

- Kyrgyz society already went through two Revolutions, and finally, became a state with a parliamentary form of governing.
- Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan both have shared the common past, nowadays resulted with completely different political regimes and political outcomes.
- The research of causal links of divergence between these two states could help identify the factors, which contributed to the political stability in Kazakhstan, while some of them facilitated mass uprisings in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, the study of such kind of deviation helps us to create some kind of suggestions how to prevent emergence of civil confrontations in the future.

- The **paper aims** to examine the main causes, which lie behind the divergent development of political regimes in two countries.
- Possible controlling factors:
 - popularity ratings of the President,
 - the ethnicity structure,
 - the political culture of people in terms of their reactions to particular social changes and its consequences,
 - the level of foreign presence
 - corruption level in each state
 - unemployment rate

- **3 Independent Variables:**

- Political Culture
- Corruption Rate
- Clan Politics

- **Research Question:**
- “In which ways political culture of people, level of corruption, and particular influence of clan pacts explain the divergent path of political development in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan?”

- **Conceptualization:**
- **political culture** itself is a very ambiguous notion and is similar issue to mentality
- political culture of people is “the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*)
- The notion evolves some kind of social code inherited by nature.

- **Conceptualization:**
- **Corruption** relates on dependence of state officials on financial attraction to perform desired solutions on particular issues.
- In this paper, corruption will be measured in terms of certain level of state officials in the hierarchy of power, which could be possibly corrupted.

- **Conceptualization:**

- According to Collins: “A **clan** is an informal social institution in which actual or notional kinship based on blood or marriage forms the central bond among members. (Collins, 2002)
- Clans are identity networks consisting of an extensive web of horizontal and vertical kin-based relations.
- Interest is to research the ability of clans to generate the real impact on decision making processes

- **Dependent Variable:**

- The outcome we interested to study is the presence or absence of stable political regime
- presence of stable political regime means ability of existing authorities to provide democratic and constitutional shifts of power, basically by adopting free and fair public elections of its' President

- **Hypothesis:**

- H1: I propose that, as more people naturally aggressive, then political instability within the state more likely to occur.
- H2: As highly political actors corrupted toward the top, than it is more likely that the ruling elite will fall.
- H3: existence of informal institution of clans and different influence of them over state internal decision-making procedures facilitated the divergence of political regimes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Most similar system design format:

Preliminary results:

Mentality (political culture):

“It’s easier to govern 300 Uzbeks than three Kyrgyz.”

In general, as a nation, Kyrgyz people characterized as “the most insubordinate, rebellious, and mutinous nation.”

(Eugene Huskey and Gulnara Iskakova, 2010)

- It is important to note, that political culture of people, first of all, directly affects specific behavior of opposition, and then determine the relationship between class and opposition, which finally, produces original effect on the stability of political regimes of any leader.
- intervening variable such as behavior of opposition in both states appeared after the analysis of first independent variable
- Higher tension ———> likely unstable regime
- Lower tension ———> likely stable regime

- According to Kennedy: President Nazarbayev's forms of governing makes impossible to Kazakh opposition to form somehow sustainable body to restrain the oppression toward them. There is an insightful link between Kyrgyz experiences that President Nazarbayev cleverly took advantage from. (Kennedy,2006)
- There are no evidences of persistent fights of opposition against the representatives of local authorities. People do not protest on streets of the cities as well.

- **Corruption rates:**

- On a scale of 10 (highly clean) to 0 (highly corrupt), Kyrgyzstan had an average rating of 2.2 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index between 1991 since the country gained independence until 2007 (Marat, 2007)
- In fact, Kyrgyz political authority throughout history was highly assimilated with criminalized groups of the society.

- Thus, both Presidency periods, particularly of Akayev and Bakiyev, were mentioned in close ties with criminality members and extremely high levels of corruption. For example, Marat states: “Bakiyev and his rival Felix Kulov who then held Prime Minister Office were supported by competing criminal groups as well. (Marat, 2008)

- According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, Kazakhstan has an average rating of 7.6. That is fairly high indicator. (Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index)
- This figure shows that Kazakhstan has relatively corruption free environment in government organizations.
- Also, this index is three times higher, in comparison with Kyrgyzstan.

- It is important to note, that the political establishment of Kazakhstan never have been accused on the relation with criminalized groups or bribe attempts.
- Therefore, the low level of corruption also contributes to the healthier and advanced level of political development.
- To sum up, as we can see from above arguments, high corruption levels also can enforce people become angry as it was in Kyrgyzstan. In contrast, low corruption rates in Kazakhstan promotes for the more stable social and political growth of the pole. Thus, this argument again supports the initial hypothesis of divergent path of political regimes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

• **Clan Politics**

- Despite the norms of loyalty, the main norm clans demand is reciprocity of exchange.
- In other words, clans characterized by hierarchical structure, where both elites and non-elites members coexist and interdependent from each other. In this way, elites always need support from the entire network of their clans to maintain their status, to protect their group, and to gain power at political battles within the country. Then, non-elite members need clan leaders to help them in finding jobs, access to education, provide security for entire clan positions, and many other activities, which require patronage from higher layers of hierarchy. (Kathleen Collins, 2004)

- According to Collins: “As the Soviet system collapsed, clans – informal political identities based on kin or fictive kin bonds – emerged as political actors.
- Clan politics – the politics of informal competition and deal making between clans and in pursuit of clan interests – has had profound effects on the political trajectories of these regimes.”(Collins, 2004)

- Saltanat Berdikееva argues that lack of national unity and national ideology in Kyrgyzstan contributed for the further division of society along regional, tribe, and clan lines. (Berdikееva, 2006)
- The situation further worsens, when key position in Government and most profitable state resources went only to pro-Akayev clans. In this way, discontent of opposing southern and eastern clans increased to that level, when they began arming themselves in the event of clash with Akayev. (Collins, 2004)

- It is essential to note, that Kazakh clan division is represented by three hordes (zhuz): Elder, Middle, and Younger zhuzes. The present political map of Kazakhstan highly dominated by representatives of Elder and Middle clans.
- This way, in order to preserve the political stability within the state, President Nazarbayev allows clan elites to compete for power. In contrast to Kyrgyz case, taking into account importance of clan politics, President Nazarbayev, at the same time, prevents excessive strengthening of any of these three clans.
- Thus, President Nazarbayev plays the role of main regulator in check and balances mechanism to ensure a peaceful and effective way of governance and balance among competing clan elites.

- According to Schatz: "Nazarbaev's main strategy for clan balancing was to rotate regional governors (akims) frequently, who served at Nazarbaev's behest. From 1991 to 2000, these akims served, on average, 23.5 months in office."(Schatz, 2005)
- However, Schatz argue that it is impossible to eliminate particularly strong clan influence at the local level. As Schatz claims:" In South Kazakhstan region, local subethnic patronage networks ensnared members of the lucrative extractive industries, who had a stake in the region's oil refinery." Thus, President Nazarbayev does not interfere in the regional scale clan politics, compensated by stable regional self-governance. (Schatz, 2005)

• **Conclusions:**

- Thus, more aggressive mentality of Kyrgyz people contributed to the instability occurred in their country.
- In addition, significantly higher level of corruption rates in state administration positions +
- inability of country leaders to efficiently frame the clan politics promoted for a greater instability of political regime in Kyrgyzstan, and partially caused civil clashes within the state.

- **Future studies:**

- Gather data and run the regression model
- Include factors of economic development
- Include case study of Ukraine

Thank you for your Attention !