Competitive Elections in Authoritarian States

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Weak States, Strong Elites, and Fractional Societies in Central Asia and Beyond

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Abstract
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Why do some authoritarian states have competitive elections? This study shows that whenever there is a balance of power between candidates, competitiveness will ensue. Electoral fraud is often widespread in autocratic states, but if no single candidate or party is in a position to monopolize electoral support, the elections will be competitive.

The contribution here is to analyze the relative strength of all actors involved in a parliamentary election and to show that electoral returns reflect district-level balances of power, even in autocracies. Three main sources of candidate-level electoral power are identified: state, market, and society. State-affiliated candidates in authoritarian states perform well due to favorable treatment by state institutions. Market actors perform well due to financial resources. Market actors arise when economic reforms create a class of entrepreneurs that defend their interests by running for public office, often challenging state sanctioned candidates. The strength of candidates capitalizing on social cleavages, here mainly defined as 'clan' or ethnic, is found to be exaggerated in the literature. This study also shows that competitiveness is not necessarily caused by foreign 'democratic interventions' or civil society engagement in the electoral process.

Furthermore, competitive elections matter because they can severely destabilize the regime, as was the case in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. However, electoral competitiveness that is the result of an intra-elite balance of power should not be confused with democracy. This form of *raw competitiveness*, where clientelism is pervasive and accountability mechanisms are weak, is an affront to the democratic ideal. For those of us who advocate democracy and genuine political participation, competitive authoritarian regimes can be used as an informative cautionary tale. Power matters, and especially so in authoritarian states. Understanding the logic behind competitive authoritarianism helps us revise strategies for lasting democratic reforms.

Keywords: electoral competitiveness, authoritarianism, parliamentary elections, candidates, clientelism, political parties, market reform, privatization, clan, ethnicity, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan

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Note on Transliteration and Names

For transliteration in this book I have used The United States Board on Geographic Names and the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use (BGN/PCGN) system. The BGN/PCGN system is relatively intuitive for Anglophones to read and pronounce. I use a simplified form of the system to render English versions of Russian names, typically converting ё to yo, simplifying -iy and -yy endings to -y, and omitting apostrophes for ъ and ь. However, for some frequently occurring words I decided to keep the apostrophe, like in *oblast'*.

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Chapter 1: Competitive Elections in Authoritarian States

Why do some authoritarian states have competitive elections? It is hardly because autocratic rulers prefer unpredictable competitive politics. After all, an autocrat is defined as such largely because their insistence on severe limits to political participation. In this study, I will show that elections in autocracies become competitive simply because the balance of power between elites is such that neither the state nor its challengers can monopolize electoral power.

In a world where all countries organize some kind of elections, understanding why electoral outcomes differ under conditions of autocracy becomes a central question. A growing number of authoritarian regimes organize elections that display surprising levels of competitiveness. Unfortunately the field of political science was for a long time blind to the issue of elections in non-democratic contexts.[1] In fact, there are a number of historical reference cases for the existence of competitive authoritarianism. For example, elections throughout much of Europe were rather competitive already in the 19th century even if the regimes were not fully democratic (Mair, 1997). It turns out that competitive authoritarianism is actually the most common regime type in the modern era (Przeworski, 2009).

Examining electoral dynamics in autocracies is not only relevant due to its historical importance, but also because elections affect regime stability. This is not the topic of the book, but suffice to note that there is no agreement in the literature about the effects of elections on autocracies. It has been argued that historically competitive elections and 'oligarchical' competition contributed to the eventual development of consolidated democracies (Diamond, 2002). In more detailed studies of elections in the developing world, it has been shown that repeated elections have a positive effect on the development of democratic norms as well as of human freedoms (Lindberg, 2006). Elections in and of themselves can also facilitate interaction between oppositional forces and therefore destabilize the regime (Lindberg, 2009). Quickly glancing through the real world of cases, we see that while some

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[1] For instance Diamond notes that, 'Juan Linz's encyclopedic Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes (originally published in 1975) contains barely a mention of multiparty electoral competition within authoritarian regimes', see DIAMOND, L. (2002) Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy,* 13**,** 21-35.

hybrid regimes develop into democracies (Mexico, Ghana), others turn more authoritarian (Belarus, Russia), even if they continue to organize elections.

The view that elections lead to democracy has been challenged by scholars that instead claim that elections in autocracies are associated with regime durability (Geddes, 1999). Since few autocrats control enough resources to govern alone, power sharing of some sort is often required. Under this line of reasoning, the rationale for autocrats to organize elections is that elections efficiently distribute the spoils of office (Boix and Svolik, 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006). Elections might therefore be a good tool for autocrats, if they can manage the unpredictability associated with them.

While this book does not seek to wade into the debates about the consequences of elections in autocracies, these consequences do suggest the importance of the central purpose of this study: understanding the logic of these elections. It turns out that patterns of competitiveness do seem to explain how the post-electoral protests emerged in the case of Kyrgyzstan in 2005. An election can help oppositional forces coordinate political mobilization and under certain circumstances even topple the autocrat. At the time of the legislative elections in 2005, there was no well-organized oppositional movement in Kyrgyzstan and no one thought that President Askar Akaev could be seriously threatened.

After a very competitive first round of elections, protests began in districts that had been initially competitive and the second round thereafter provided anti-presidential forces with an organizational logic to sustain their protests and coordinate on post-electoral challenges.[2] These disparate forces later came together in the capital of Bishkek and stormed the White House in an episode that came to be known as the 'Tulip Revolution' (Radnitz, 2006b).[3]

The argument about the effects of elections goes to show that elections in autocracies are indeed worthy of scholarly attention. The relevance of the topic is therefore beyond doubt. Whether or not elections have any effect on regime stability is not, however, the topic of this study. The focus is instead on elections themselves and more specifically on the variation in terms of competitiveness. In order to understand the specific role that elections play in authoritarian states we need to examine the electoral process in great detail. The outcome in terms of regime stability is therefore secondary.

The fact that elections turn competitive even if the process is fraught with irregularities is clearly a puzzle for the scholarly community. Elections in autocracies are supposed to be predictable contests in which the ruling elites capture seats without allowing for destabilizing challenges. The classical

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[2] Quantitative evidence for this is analyzed in the concluding chapter of the book and in appendices XII and XIII.
[3] Quotation marks are used here since it is disputed whether the events constitute a revolution or a coup. From here on the quotation marks will be left out.

explanation for the emergence of competitive politics, or democracy, focuses on structural factors like economic development, urbanization, education (Lipset, 1959, Huntington, 1968, Moore, 1966). Here competitive politics is thought to emerge when certain structural conditions create the conditions for contestation. A more recent approach is to focus on the capacity of authoritarian state institutions and linkages to the West (Levitsky and Way, 2002, Levitsky and Way, 2010). Here competitiveness emerges due to weaknesses in the coercive apparatus of the state and international pressure.

In this study, I show that an exclusive focus on the state misses the central role that societal actors play. I will argue that we need to analyze both the state and society in order to understand why competitiveness emerges in autocracies. Macro-level factors like economic development play a role, but only to the extent that they benefit one or another electoral actor.

Authoritarian state capacity is clearly a key variable, as is the capacity of non-state elites. On the one hand, if the state is weak, but the society is weaker still, electoral outcomes will be predictable and non-competitive. On the other hand, if non-state actors are sufficiently strong on their own, then state elites faces the prospect of electoral challenges. Where alternative elites are strong enough on their own to mount a serious challenge, the outcome will be competitive.

The contributions of this study are threefold. First, a conceptual distinction is made between the institutional preconditions for electoral contestation, separating out an autocratic context from a democratic one, and electoral outcomes. The preconditions for contestation in an autocracy are severely limited by the use of both formal and informal state institutions. Electoral competitiveness is here understood as a particular election outcome in which the margin of victory between the winner and the loser is small. In this context, a competitive authoritarian state is one in which state institutions disregard internationally recognized election standards, but nevertheless fail to rein in competitiveness.

The second contribution is to focus on sub-national micro-level dynamics. Too often studies of electoral politics rely on crude aggregate level measures of questionable validity and reliability. In this book, the focus is on individual candidates that constitute the central actors in most elections. The approach is to analyze the relative strength of all the actors involved in a race and to show that electoral returns reflect the district-level balance of power, even if the context is authoritarian.

Finally, two main sources of candidate-level electoral power are identified: state and market. *Ceteris paribus*, state-affiliated candidates in authoritarian regimes perform well due to favorable treatment by state institutions. By contrast, market actors perform well due to relative financial autonomy. The study illustrates how market reforms create a class of entrepreneurs that defend their interests by running for public office, often challenging state sanctioned candidates. Conflict (or lack thereof) between candidates with

these two types of resources is what helps to explain patterns of competitiveness in an autocracy. Testing for alternatives, I find that the role of societal cleavages, here mainly defined as 'clan' and/or ethnic, is exaggerated in the literature.[4] The study also confirms that competitiveness did not result from an active civil society or other 'democratic' interventions. The distribution of power resources is the most critical determinant of competitiveness.

The argument advanced here is that wherever resource-laden candidates decide to enter a race, the outcome depends on the number of such candidates. If there is only one strong candidate, then elections will be non-competitive. By default the favorite to win a particular electoral contest in an autocracy is a pro-governmental candidate. However, if two or more candidates with strong resources run against each other, the outcome will be competitive. In such a contest, all imaginable techniques are used by state- and market-affiliated candidates alike. Voters are both intimidated and lured with material rewards. Election officials are pressured and election observers are harassed. Needless to say, such elections do not meet democratic standards, but nevertheless contain an element of unpredictability and results largely reflect the balance of power between different elites. Such elections are elite-led contests in which power resources structure the battle. A central line of inquiry therefore is what specifically constitutes a source of power in a particular authoritarian context.

Many of the features that earlier scholarly work has emphasized fit well with the theoretical model that I propose. A focus on the micro-dynamics of parliamentary elections allows us to spell out the mechanisms whereby certain factors affect patterns of competitiveness. For instance, the coercive capacity of the state translates into an electoral asset for pro-governmental candidates. Economic development on the other hand has the potential of empowering a class of entrepreneurs that could potentially challenge the pro-governmental forces. The study thus specifies the mechanism behind the co-variation that modernization theorists found between economic development and political pluralism.[5] Macro-level factors have an effect on the distribution of power resources in a society and this in turn has consequences for individual level cost-benefit analyses when it comes to putting forth a candidature.

The focus in this study is on parliamentary elections and particular district level electoral outcomes. The focus is not on the consequences of elections

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[4] Quotation marks are here used to indicate that I do not agree with how the term has been used in the literature COLLINS, K. (2003) The political role of clans in Central Asia. *Comparative Politics,* 35**,** 171-190, COLLINS, K. (2006) *Clan politics and regime transition in Central Asia,* New York, Cambridge University Press. Throughout the book the 'clan' concept is reserved for discursively present informal organizations based kin-based bonds, and not other informal phenomena. For an explicit critique of how the concept has been misused see chapter six.
[5] Lipset argued that the mechanism was from a diversification of the economy to the development of democracy supporting norms.

on regime attributes, like stability or developmental capacity. For a complete analysis of electoral dynamics, both presidential and local elections would also have to be considered. The reason for only examining legislative elections is that this usually is the first arena where competitiveness is felt in authoritarian states. Autocratic presidents might allow for legislative competitiveness even if elections for the executive are tightly controlled.

It is important to note that the kind of electoral competitiveness that this study focuses on cannot be equated with democracy. Local level patrons that do not necessarily have any intention of promoting democratic and efficient governance often hijack the electoral process in competitive authoritarian states. The extreme weakness of political parties and the dominance of clientelism means that contestation never achieve the 'robustness' needed for it to deliver positive developmental outcomes (Grzymala-Busse, 2007). Thus in order to understand the limits of 'democratic' experiments in the developing world, we first need to understand what goes on in elections in competitive authoritarian states.

This study examines in detail how parliamentary elections play out on the district and polling station level in Kyrgyzstan. Examining the micro-foundations of electoral politics is especially relevant in weak states, where central authorities are unable to fully govern the territory. I intend to explain why it is that elections in the non-democratic regime of Kyrgyzstan became so intensely competitive. This explanation in turns helps us understand why certain countries seemingly fail to consolidate authoritarian rule, however hard they try.

Institutional pre-conditions and electoral outcomes

Contestation and competition are key elements in any definition of regime type (Dahl, 1971, Schumpeter, 1976, Przeworski, 2000, Huntington, 1991). In terms of electoral politics it is important to distinguish between the institutional preconditions for competition and the actual election outcome. The concept of competitive authoritarianism implies that, on the one hand, the regime is authoritarian and thus places restrictions on political competition. On the other hand, such a regime is paradoxically competitive in terms of electoral returns.

Institutional preconditions for electoral competitiveness can be defined as preconditions that allow for free and fair elections. These include the right to freely campaign for office, the absence of large-scale falsification of electoral results, and an even playing field in terms of media coverage. In democracies, state-sanctioned rules and practices allow for free and fair competition, while in autocracies they do not. Preconditions are here understood

to include both formal and informal institutions.[6] The concept of *Competitiveness* on the other hand refers to a particular electoral outcome characterized by the existence of two or more candidates or parties that 'obtain close returns and win on thin margins' (Sartori, 2005).

Preconditions have traditionally been viewed as determining whether or not competitiveness can emerge at all.[7] Sartori's take on preconditions is that not only do candidates need to be allowed to run, but that they need to be free to run 'without fear and with equal rights' (Sartori, 2005).[8] These conditions are prerequisites for *democratic competitiveness*. However, it turns out that elections can indeed be very competitive even in the absence of a level playing field (Hermet et al., 1978, Schedler, 2009, Levitsky and Way, 2010). Such competitiveness is not necessarily democratic, but it is nevertheless competitiveness in the sense of two or more candidates obtaining close returns. Separating out the pre-conditions from electoral outcomes opens up for four different ways that a regime can be constituted in terms of electoral politics.

Table 1. Electoral Cycle 'Regime' Typology

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2"></td><td colspan="2">DEMOCRACY
As an Institutional
Precondition for Competitiveness</td></tr>
<tr><td>No</td><td>Yes</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">COMPETITIVENESS
As an Electoral
Outcome</td><td>No</td><td>Non-Competitive
Authoritarian</td><td>Non-Competitive
Democracy</td></tr>
<tr><td>Yes</td><td>Competitive
Authoritarian</td><td>Competitive
Democracy</td></tr>
</table>

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[6] Throughout the text I will refer to preconditions and unless otherwise specified this refers to the institutional context in which elections are conducted. Structural preconditions refer to the same phenomenon.

[7] 'Competitiveness presupposes competition (as a structure) and is something to be measured in outcome', see SARTORI, G. (2005) *Parties and party systems: A framework for analysis,* Colchester, European Consortium for Politcal Research.

[8] Other scholars have identified what they call the 'minimum conditions necessary' for electoral competition: The potential for competition exists for a given election when (a) opposition is allowed; (b) multiple parties are legal; and (c) more than one candidate is allowed on the ballot, see HYDE, S. & MARINOV, N. (2009) National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy: Which Elections Can Be Lost? *Work in progress.* Others, still, define an 'uneven playing field' as regimes where state institutions are widely politicized, media access is uneven, and administrative and financial resources of the public sector are used for political purposes by the incumbents, see LEVITSKY, S. & WAY, L. A. (2010) *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

Many traditional conceptualizations of regime types merge these two dimensions (Dahl, 1971, Przeworski, 2000). Dahl and Huntington both consider civil liberties as well as free, fair, and competitive elections as joint procedural minimum conditions for democracy (Dahl, 1971, Huntington, 1991).[9] In a world where many regimes combine elements of both autocracy and democracy, such a simple formulation is rendered less useful, however. Since all regimes organize elections of some sort, the distinction between preconditions for 'free and fair' contestation and actual election outcomes becomes essential. Competitive elections in a democracy are not the same as competitive elections in an autocracy. Nor is the lack of competitiveness the same in a democracy as in an autocracy. In a regime that allows for democratic competition the lack of competitiveness is a sign of popular incumbents. A party winning with a wide margin in a democracy means that the party enjoys widespread popular support. In an autocracy on the other hand, the lack of competitiveness is a sign of incumbents' capacity to coerce and suppress the opposition.

The role of the state is central in determining the rules of the game. Democratic rulers have made a choice to allow for relatively free contestation by leveling the political field (Sartori, 2005). Rigging the contest in favor of one actor or the other violates this requirement. The extent to which an election is 'rigged' is often difficult to determine, but aggregate level institutional characteristics of a regime are a good first proxy. Whether or not a regime really allows for competition is therefore something that is known prior to Election Day.

In today's world only a handful of authoritarian regimes organize elections that do not fulfill the minimum conditions for competition (Hyde and Marinov, 2009).[10] Note that the distinction between regimes that allow for fair competition, i.e. democracies, and regimes that do not is here understood as an *ex ante* characteristic that is known prior to a particular election. Competitiveness on the other hand can only be determined after the election has been held, based on election returns.

In most cases we know prior to the start of an electoral campaign whether or not the regime is autocratic. Paradoxically, the actual election outcome might end up being competitive even if the regime does not allow for 'free and fair' competition. This is because autocracies differ greatly in terms of their ability to control electoral processes. Some more 'capable' autocrats have no trouble in delivering supermajorities for their own preferred candi-

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[9] Dahl does not explicitly mention 'competitive elections', but this is how he is referred to by some, see LEVITSKY, S. & WAY, L. A. (2010) *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War,* New York, Cambridge University Press.
[10] These include China, Cuba, Saudi Arabia.

dates (Jordan, Singapore).[11] Other autocracies frequently experience fierce electoral battles (Kyrgyzstan, Zimbabwe).

Conceptualizing regimes along the axis of autocracy/democracy and competitiveness/non-competitiveness is not new (Levitsky and Way, 2002, Diamond, 2002, Carothers, 2002, Ottaway, 2003, Schedler, 2006). But most scholars do not explicitly separate out the electoral outcome (competitiveness) dimension from the pre-conditions, as I do. Others have used non-descript adjectives like *semi* or *pseudo* to describe regimes types that combine contestation and political control (Ottaway, 2003, Diamond et al., 1995). The term *Electoral Authoritarianism* is also used to describe regimes that are less than democratic but still organize elections (Schedler, 2009). However, since most regimes in the world organize elections the term becomes less useful if no specifications are provided for the term electoral.[12] The interesting thing is not that authoritarian regimes organize elections, but rather that elections in such settings vary in their degree of competitiveness.

Some works focus on whether elections were unfair in the sense of candidates being barred or electoral abuse being widespread, civil liberties being violated, or the playing field being uneven in the sense of state institutions being politicized, uneven access to the media, or uneven access to material and political resources (Levitsky and Way, 2010). This work does not, however, include any assessment of whether the regime is *de facto* competitive in terms of election returns. I would argue that the list of features mentioned above can be considered as pre-conditions, i.e. whether or not the elections take place in a democracy or an autocracy. However, as I will show, competitiveness can emerge both under conditions of democracy and autocracy. It is therefore analytically essential that we make a distinction between the pre-conditions and electoral outcomes.

Competitiveness is determined by examining detailed election results. Some works in the field use election returns, but fail to do so systematically (Diamond, 2002). My interest is not in solving the conceptual problematique surrounding regime typologies (Collier and Levitsky, 1997). The conceptualization of electoral cycles, or regimes if you will, along the lines of pre-

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[11] Some scholars would include such cases as *Full Authoritarianism*, where, 'no viable channels exist for opposition to contest legally for executive power', see LEVITSKY, S. & WAY, L. A. (2010) *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

[12] Sometimes the term 'electoral' is used in a way that suggests that what is really meant is competitiveness, as when Schedler defines 'electoral' with the adjectives participatory, competitive, or meaningful, stating that 'elections matter, and matter a lot, even in contexts of authoritarian manipulation', see SCHEDLER, A. (2006) *The Logic of Electoral Authoritarianism,* London, Lynne Rienner Publishers. Analyzing regimes along the axis of electoral and authoritarian makes Walle pose the seemingly absurd question 'How Electoral, How Authoritarian?', see WALLE, N. V. D. (2006) Tipping Games: When Do Opposition Parties Coalesce? IN SCHEDLER, A. (Ed.) *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition.* London, Lynne Rienner Publishers. I would rather ask, how competitive, how authoritarian?

conditions and outcomes serves the purpose of contextualizing the case of Kyrgyzstan, which will be the main focus of the study. I will argue that Kyrgyzstan is a good case for studying competitiveness in an authoritarian setting.

In order to say something meaningful about an electoral process in an autocracy where data is scarce and unreliable, it is important to bring the study to a level where there are observable implications of the theory presented. The approach in this book is to use sub-national election districts as the unit of analysis.

Beyond aggregate level measures

> For those interested in discerning how third-world so-cieties are ruled and the influence of politics on social change, the local level often holds the richest and most instructive hints (Migdal, 2001).

Recently there has been a trend in the social sciences to move beyond aggregate national level measures. This can be seen in both economics and political science, where lately there has been a shift to micro-data in the form of individual, household, or firm data. Arguably subjective regime rankings, like the ones by Freedom House, are inherently problematic (Munck and Verkuilen, 2002). The same goes for measures of electoral competitiveness.

Using aggregate national level measures is associated with several challenges. First, national averages might hide relevant sub-national patterns. For instance, a country with high aggregate levels of competitiveness might be divided into two equally non-competitive regions (Blais and Lago, 2009, Gibson, 2005). Even if ultimately the national level average is the most important in terms of who has a majority in the parliament, sub-national patterns need to be examined if the interest is competitiveness as such. The fact that national averages 'lie' is not a new argument in political science (Linz and De Miguel, 1966, Rokkan et al., 1970).[13] This critique is especially relevant in internally heterogeneous countries, a characteristic that many countries in the developing world share.

Secondly, studying competitiveness using countries as units of analysis is difficult in terms of research design, since there are a lot of relevant contextual variables that differ among countries. Electoral systems, party systems, cleavage structures, and historical legacy all matter immensely for how elections are fought and won. Choosing a single country and focusing on the sub-national level allows us to control many of the factors since in effect we are holding them constant. Additionally because the sub-national units chosen can be numerous, it allows for a sufficiently large sample to use statisti-

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[13] So-called 'whole-nation bias'.

cal methods. This also helps with the problem of 'many variables, small N' (Collier and Mahon Jr, 1993, Lijphart, 1971).

Focusing on the national level is thus not enough for the purposes of this book. What is warranted is a micro analytical approach, or to use a phrase from the literature, to 'scale down' (Snyder, 2001). As I will show, in some countries elections have been very competitive even if the scholarly community assessed them as non-competitive at the aggregate level. Scaling-down allows us to test hypotheses about why competitive authoritarianism emerges, theories that were developed for the study of countries as a whole (King et al., 1994).

Moving from the national aggregate level to the district level is therefore ideal, but caution needs to be applied when moving in the opposite direction, from the district to the national level. Competitive elections at the district level mean that competitiveness must exist at the aggregate level. For instance, in a country with two parties and ten districts, the aggregate level will directly match district level patterns. If the pro-governmental party gets 55 percent in five districts and 45 in the other five it means that all of the districts as well as the aggregate level will be competitive. However, the opposite is not true. The aggregate level could also be competitive if the pro-governmental party gets 100 percent in five districts and zero percent in all the others. In this latter scenario competitiveness at the district level would be non-existent, while at the aggregate level it would be perfect. In cases of non-competitiveness at the district level, we therefore need to examine whether or not a pro-governmental candidate won the district. If this is the case, then competitiveness at the aggregate level would indeed by low. On the other hand if one of the districts was won handedly by an oppositional candidate, this would contribute to aggregate level competitiveness. The effect on the aggregate level is therefore conditional on who wins the district.

Explaining why certain election districts become competitive is therefore not the same as explaining why the aggregate national level becomes competitive. A non-competitive district in an autocracy is by default one in which the pro-governmental candidate wins. On the one hand, if an oppositional candidate in an autocracy wins a particular district by a large margin it makes the district non-competitive, while still contributing to the aggregate level competitiveness of the regime. A non-competitive district won by a pro-governmental candidate does not. On the other hand, a competitive district, whoever wins, always contributes to national level competitiveness. Caution is therefore needed when determining whether or not the regime at the national level is competitive. In most authoritarian cases, however, the possibility of an oppositional candidate monopolizing electoral support in a district is next to nil, even if theoretically possible. The default model of electoral dynamics in an autocracy is that districts are non-competitive. If the government-sanctioned candidate faces a strong electoral challenge then the

district will turn competitive. And this in turn will make the national level dynamics appear a bit more competitive as well. The problem of moving between the sub-national level and the national level is for the most part a theoretical one, as we will see when examining the Central Asian cases.

Summary and structure of the book

This study will show that state affiliated candidates perform well due to favorable treatment by state institutions, but that such support is not associated with a reduction in competitiveness. Market actors, on the other hand, perform well due to financial resources. The combination of two or more resource-laden candidates is what leads to competitive electoral outcomes. The study illustrates how market reforms create a class of entrepreneurs that defend their interests by running for public office, often challenging state sanctioned candidates. Clan and ethnic cleavages are found to be exaggerated in the literature. The study also confirms that competitiveness did not result from an active civil society or other 'democratic' interventions.

The book in its entirety focuses on explaining electoral competitiveness under conditions of autocracy. In this introductory chapter, the focus has been on the dependent variable, electoral competitiveness, and the puzzle that it constitutes in authoritarian states. I have argued for the need to separate competitiveness as an electoral outcome from institutional preconditions. These two dimensions will later be used to identify the population of competitive authoritarian cases. The empirical puzzle here is that electoral competitiveness exists even in settings that do not really allow for it. Such competitiveness is relevant in and of itself, since it differs fundamentally from electoral contestation in democracies. Furthermore, electoral dynamics are also a key mechanism in many of the abrupt regime turnovers that was witnessed in the 2000s.

Chapter Two outlines three central explanations for micro-level electoral dynamics: authoritarian state capacity, market actor empowerment, and societal cleavages. The empirical analysis throughout the study will operate on two fundamentally different levels. First, there will be an analysis of individual candidates and the sources of electoral power at the district level. Second, information about candidates will be translated into district level variables that can explain the emergence of competitiveness.

For individual candidates the three attributes of state, market and society constitute electoral assets. The capacity of state institutions is a central variable in all authoritarian regimes. This is especially relevant in competitive authoritarian regimes where control over the political process is incomplete. Market actors are an important class of individuals in understanding regime dynamics in such cases. Financial resources and incentives often structure electoral battles and the extent to which there is room for private entrepre-

neurs to stake out a profitable business is an important and overlooked explanation for competitiveness. Societal cleavages, whether ethnic of tribal, can also hypothetically translate into particular electoral outcomes. If there is diversity on the district level in terms of identities, electoral politics provide political entrepreneurs with an opportunity to exploit these. Voting along ethnic and sub-ethnic lines could thus be the third explanation for competitiveness.

Chapter Three addresses the specific methodological considerations that went into this research project. The validity of the competitiveness measure is discussed both empirically, using global databases of constituency level electoral returns, and theoretically. The selection of Kyrgyzstan is motivated as a product of it being a consistently competitive case in a region of solidly authoritarian regimes. Details about the data collection strategies and the validity and reliability of the measures are given. Model specification for the quantitative testing is addressed. Both linear OLS multiple regression models and logistic regression estimation techniques will be used throughout the book.

Chapter Four is the first substantive empirical chapter where the role of the state in authoritarian elections is examined in detail. In authoritarian states the state plays a key role in structuring electoral contests and therefore it makes sense to begin the empirical part of the study with an examination of the relative importance of state affiliation for individual candidates in Kyrgyzstan. Here a short introduction to the history of elections in post-independence Kyrgyzstan is given. The main focus is on the consequences of state intervention for district wide dynamics.

The role of economic elites is the topic of Chapter Five. Both candidate and district level models are introduced that build on the findings from the previous chapter. When the performance of businessmen and financially resourced individuals is examined, the consequences of these characteristics for patterns of district level competitiveness are shown to be decisive. Interestingly, economic elites in the case of Kyrgyzstan in 2005 seem to have been cautious about committing to the pro-presidential platform in an attempt to hedge their bets. Some economic elites actually managed to monopolize electoral support, but not always as pro-presidential candidates.

Chapter Six is the final empirical chapter where the 'clan politics' hypothesis is addressed in great detail. The backdrop is provided by theoretical considerations about the importance of societal cleavages in structuring electoral battles in newly independent countries. The final district level model builds on the findings in the previous two chapters.

In Chapter Seven I broaden the view and examine both earlier and later elections in the case of Kyrgyzstan. District level data of competitiveness confirms that the 1995 and 2000 electoral cycles also were extremely competitive and therefore that the 2005 elections were not unique in the history of Kyrgyzstan. After this, the other countries of Central Eurasia are catego-

rized and analyzed. Here I show that that competitiveness was high even in the unlikely case of Azerbaijan. However, in this case the authorities managed competitiveness better and as a consequence no serious challenges to the regime followed.

The final chapter, Chapter Eight, summarizes the argument and opens up the discussion about the consequences of competitive elections in autocracies. The focus in the final words of the book are on the dramatic days following the first round of elections in Kyrgyzstan in February 2005. Here it is demonstrated that competitive elections were a central mechanism that structured the post-electoral protest movement in Kyrgyzstan, thus confirming the relevance of studying the micro-dynamics of elections in autocracies.

Chapter 2: Weak State, Strong Market, and Fractional Societies

Having established the conceptual distinctions that allow us to identify competitive authoritarian cases, we are now ready to explore explanations for this puzzling regime type. The approach is to study sub-national manifestations of electoral competitiveness. This chapter outlines the main explanations for competitiveness at the district level. Even if the focus is on the sub-national district level, references to general theories about regimes will be made throughout. This chapter presents the logic behind the elite balance of power model and addresses the three main sets of hypotheses in separate sections.

The fundamental question of this study is under what conditions elections become competitive. There are obviously some basic requirements that need to be fulfilled for competitiveness to emerge at any level.

> The potential for competition exists for a given election when (a) opposition is allowed; (b) multiple parties are legal; and (c) more than one candidate is allowed on the ballot (Hyde and Marinov, 2009).

These proximate causes for competition do not reveal much. Arguably the potential for competitiveness requires multiple candidates, but since this requirement is fulfilled in most of today's autocracies the real question becomes what are the underlying conditions that lead to competitive electoral outcomes.

As already noted, there are explanations that focus on the capacity of authoritarian state institutions and the international context (Levitsky and Way, 2002, Levitsky and Way, 2010). Others focus on structural conditions like economic development, urbanization, literacy (Lipset, 1959, Lipset, 1994). I will instead shift the focus to the balance of power between elites and specify the mechanisms whereby a particular factor affects electoral outcomes. Autocratic state capacity is clearly an electoral asset for parties and candidates affiliated with the state. It is also clear that for competitiveness to emerge, someone needs to challenge the default favorite to win, which in an autocracy is whoever is sanctioned by the state. Certain structural conditions, like the existence of private property and markets, have an impact in so far as they empower potential challengers.

An assumption in this study is that if challengers to the pro-governmental candidate are not sufficiently strong, competitiveness will not emerge. Therefore we need to establish what constitutes a 'resource' for individual candidates and whether or not there are several such resource-laden candidates per district. The distribution of power resources in a country is indeed central for competitiveness to emerge (Vanhanen, 1997, Vanhanen, 1977).[14] For instance, in an oil-rich country with a weak private sector, there is not much room for autonomous action outside the immediate control of the ruling elite.[15] On the other hand in a country where central authorities rely on a much broader source of revenues and elites operate mainly outside the main state-led industries, the distribution of resources is very different. This stylized narrative is of great relevance in the Central Eurasian cases where there are countries with an abundance of oil and gas resources (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan), as well as countries with decentralized and largely privatized markets (Kyrgyzstan, Armenia).[16]

Elections in authoritarian states come in many different forms, and too often we analyze them without paying sufficient attention to the micro-dynamics at play.[17] In order to understand elections in any regime, I argue that we need to analyze the key components in any election: *Candidates*. This is standard procedure in the study of elections in mature democracies, but in more authoritarian regimes we often fail to examine the constituent parts of elections in any detail.[18] Supposedly the reason is that elections under such circumstances are regarded as orchestrated exercises where the results never yield any surprises. Focusing on a central set of actors, candidates, is essential in autocracies where oppositional parties often face restrictions and where mobilization often is elite-led.

This chapter will focus on three main sets of hypotheses that explain district level patterns of electoral contestation in authoritarian states. For the sake of simplicity I refer to these as the state, market, and society hypotheses. This chapter introduces the hypotheses and elaborates on the theoretical underpinnings behind them.

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[14] Or 'the relative strength of classes' in Vanhanen's terminology.

[15] Such a system can be described as a 'single-pyramid' clientelistic model, see HALE, H. E. (2011) Formal Constitutions in Informal Politics Institutions and Democratization in Post-Soviet Eurasia. *Columbia University's Comparative Politics Research Workshop.*

[16] By Central Eurasia I refer to the former Sovier republics in Central Asia and South Caucasus.

[17] 'We argue that these tendencies [to use methods imported from the study of genuinely democratic elections] have kept political scientists from asking a wide range of questions about the micro-level dynamics of authoritarian elections and the ways in which they differ systematically from each other', see GANDHI, J. & LUST-OKAR, E. (2009) Elections under authoritarianism. *Annual Review of Political Science,* 12**,** 403-422.

[18] For instance in the first 10 years of post-communist studies not a single detailed study of electoral politics has been conducted in the most authoritarian countries of Central Asia and South Caucasus, see TUCKER, J. (2002) The First Decade Of Post-Communist Elections And Voting: What Have We Studied, And How Have We Studied It? Ibid.5**,** 271-304.

In an authoritarian country, the *State* is above all characterized by the co-ercive capacity and the bureaucratic or infrastructural power it possesses. A relatively weak state could explain why competitiveness emerges. The *Market* is understood as a mechanism for the allocation of resources and an en-abler of economic autonomy and personal wealth. Successful businessmen might be the only actors capable of mounting a challenge to the state affili-ated candidates, thereby causing competitiveness. Finally, the *Society* is the social fabric that connects individuals, here focusing on the ties of ethnicity and kinship. Ethnic and sub-ethnic fractionalization could be an alternative explanation for competitive electoral outcomes. Analyzing these factors separately allows me to spell out the specific mechanisms whereby each component affects electoral contestation at the sub-national level. All these three features constitute *sources of electoral power* for individual candidates and as such they have the potential of contributing to competitiveness.

Since the object of study is Kyrgyzstan, there is a special emphasis on ex-planations in the post-communist literature. More details about the logic of case selection will be provided in the methodology chapter.

Post-Soviet aggregate level explanations in literature

The post-communist experience has received a lot of attention in the schol-arly community, not the least because of the 'experiment-like' conditions when twenty-seven countries that share a similar institutional setup fall apart at roughly the same time. In most of the Eastern European cases, authoritari-anism was astoundingly refuted and the regimes are nowadays more or less democratic. The main explanations for this in the literature are historical legacy, civil society, political society, rule of law, bureaucratic structure, and economic society (Linz and Stepan, 1996, Kitschelt, 1999); 'democratic' and nationalist mass mobilization (Bunce, 2003); balance-of-power between the old and new elites (McFaul, 2002, Przeworski, 1991, Roeder, 2001); and incumbent capacity in the form of authoritarian state power, elite organiza-tion, and know-how (Way, 2005).

In most quantitative studies focusing on the post-communist cases, an ac-tual election outcome is the object of study, with hypotheses concentrating on the role of a particular societal cleavage (Moser, 1999b, Wyman et al., 1995, Szelenyi et al., 1996, Birch, 1995); economic conditions (Colton, 1996, Colton, 2000, Fidrmuc, 2000, Powers and Cox, 1997); or electoral institutions (Moser, 1999a, Gabel, 1995, Golosov, 1999, Ishiyama, 1994). Competitiveness as such is never specifically the main focus, even if the *Effective Number of Parties* is sometimes used as the dependent variable (Moser, 1999a, Likhtenchtein and Yargomskaya, 2005). The party system is arguably a crucial variable in the world of stable democracies where party loyalties are strong and governing coalitions matter. However, in the context of autocracies the interesting thing about elections is whether or not they are

competitive at all, and not necessarily the actual structure of that competition, whether it is a two-party or multi-party contest.

Interestingly, to this date there are no detailed studies of electoral politics in the poorest and the most authoritarian parts of the former Soviet Union.[19] Early studies of elections in the post-Communist sphere have been dominated by single-country studies of Russia (Tucker, 2002).[20] However, elections could actually be considered even more important in some of the ignored countries, like Georgia or Kyrgyzstan, where competitive elections clearly contributed to the 'colored revolutions'.[21]

In the comparative politics literature a model for national level regimes has been presented in which the cyclical nature of elite contestation and consolidation is highlighted (Hale, 2005b). Hale's focus is on the institutions of *patronal presidentialism* and elite interaction. Patronal here refers to the exercise of political authority beyond formal powers, mostly through informal selective transfers. At the base of most electoral challenges, there is an elite calculation about the relative power of the incumbent. Why run if there is no chance of winning?[22] The argument is that elite disunity leads to oscillating equilibria, while elite unity can lead to either consolidated democratic or authoritarian regimes (Hale, 2005b).[23]

Some claim that the early post-Soviet balance of power between the *ancien régime* and its challengers in early 1990s is a good 'predictor' of ensuing regime type (McFaul, 2002). Where there was uncertainty in terms of the balance of power, political liberalization often followed, whereas if the old guard was in a dominant position the regime would stay autocratic. However, in Tajikistan for instance, where power was allegedly unevenly distributed, the regime ended up solidly authoritarian (Collins, 2006). Kyrgyzstan on the other hand did 'democratize' even if the balance of power is said to have been in favor of the ancien régime (McFaul, 2002). Furthermore, a case like Azerbaijan, where the balance of power was more even, actually ended up solidly authoritarian after a few early years of turmoil. This means that either the balance of power argument is wrong or misspecified in the literature.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the balance of power has changed fundamentally in several of the cases. This is especially apparent in the resource rich countries of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, both of which did reach

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[19] 'Elections in places such as Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Armenia may not be as free or fair as their counterparts in Central Europe, but these elections must still have something to offer social scientists' Ibid.

[20] Poland is another case that has gotten significant attention.

[21] For more on this see the concluding chapter.

[22] As it turns out there are other reasons for running, like setting oneself up for being bought up. This will be described in detail in later chapters.

[23] Hale cites Rustow: 'movement toward liberal democracy is more likely to emerge from political stalemate than from the victory of one side', RUSTOW, D. (1970) Transitions to democracy: Toward a dynamic model. *Comparative Politics,* 2**,** 337-363.

the 'partly free' category at an earlier point in their post-Soviet history, only to slide back to a more authoritarian mode later.[24] Some ruling elites are able to consolidate power (Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan), while others fail (Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan), resulting in more 'pluralistic' regimes. The balance of power argument needs to be specified with an eye on specific capacities that allow for authoritarian consolidation. Those that highlight the importance of state coercive capacity tend to ignore the other side of the coin: the strength of societal actors.

Kyrgyzstan and its immediate neighborhood

In order to further contextualize the case of Kyrgyzstan, a brief discussion of regime types in Central Asia is important. The five former Soviet republics of Central Asia consistently perform poorly in terms of a range of 'democracy' indicators. This area was always the least developed of the 15 constituent republics of the Soviet Union, both economically and politically. In terms of regime type, the general pattern is one of authoritarian consolidation after the early years of post-independence fluctuation. However, Kyrgyzstan already started to diverge from its neighbors in the early 1990s. At first Kyrgyzstan made some serious democratic advances only to fall back into a more autocratic mode of governance starting in mid 1990s.

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[24] According to the Freedom House categorization of free, partly free, and not free countries.

Figure 1. Authoritarian Consolidation in Central Eurasia
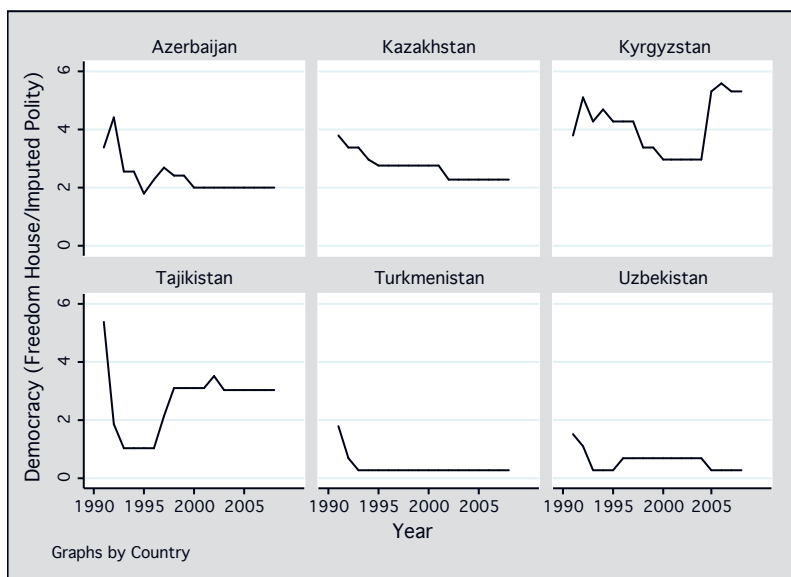
There are no satisfying explanations for why Kyrgyzstan initially became more democratic (Collins, 2002, Jones Luong, 2002, McMann, 2006). McMann has a theoretically relevant argument about the conditions for political activism in different regions of a country, comparing sub-national units in Russia and Kyrgyzstan. Her focus on economic autonomy of political entrepreneurs is never applied to the national level though.[25] In Central Asia, there are popular perceptions about the Kyrgyz being 'freedom loving' and historically fragmented into groups of 'nomads' that will not submit to a centralized authoritarian rule.[26] Historically the Kyrgyz have indeed managed their affairs using consultative 'proto-democratic' processes.[27] But the arguments about the political culture of the Kyrgyz only take us so far in

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[25] More recent doctoral work has studied political mobilization and economic elites, see RADNITZ, S. (2006a) It Takes More than a Village: Mobilization, Networks, and the State in Central Asia. *Department of Political Science.* Cambridge, Massachusetts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, SPECTOR, R. A. (2009) Protecting Property: The Politics of Bazaars in Kyrgyzstan. *Political Science.* Berkeley, University of California, Berkeley.

[26] The 40 tribes were even incorporated into the new post-independent flag of Kyrgyzstan. At the center of the flag there is a sun whose rays count is 40.

[27] President Akaev is said to have alluded to this in an interview after the adoption of the new constitution in 1993, when talking about the, 'the election of khans and processes of consultation within clan structures during pre-Soviet times', see ANDERSON, J. (1999) *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's island of democracy?,* Amsterdam, Overseas Publishers Association.

understanding regime trajectories in the region. After all, the Turkmen of Turkmenistan also have a past involving pastoral nomadism, but the regime remains one of the most autocratic in the world.

In terms of electoral politics the last Soviet era elections opened up the entire region to contestation, following a general trend in the Soviet Union. The first impetus to this political liberalization came from Moscow and the western-most republics of the Soviet Union. That is, there was no significant bottom-up demand for democratization in the Central Asian cases. Here one should note that the popular majority in the peripheral republics of the Soviet Union were not necessarily in favor of democracy at the time of the break-up (Pop-Eleches, 2009). Those favoring political liberalization were actually urban middle classes and economic agents that were positioned to benefit from so-called democratic reforms. This suggests that political liberalization in Central Asia is more the result of incumbent-elite interaction than popular demands for representation and distribution.

The deteriorating socio-economic situation also contributed to regime instability in early 1990s. For instance in Kyrgyzstan there was widespread dissatisfaction among the populace with socio-economic developments like unemployment and lack of housing. In parts of Kyrgyzstan there were also ethnic tensions between the titular Kyrgyz and the Slavic and Uzbek population which also fuelled demands for representation and change (Huskey, 1995). The fact that similar tendencies were found in the other Central Asian cases disqualifies this as explanation for Kyrgyzstan.

In the wake of the 1990 parliamentary elections tensions between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbek in the south escalated into a full blown ethnic riot (Tishkov, 1995). The fact that the Kyrgyz state was unable to contain such violence was an indication of how porous and incapacitated the Soviet inherited state institutions were, which in turn invited political entrepreneurs to challenge the republican communist leadership. In the fall of 1990 the new parliament failed to agree who should occupy the newly created office of the Presidency.

What makes Kyrgyzstan interesting in early 1990s compared to its neighbors is that the first post-independence president was a political outsider, an academic by the name of Askar Akaev. He emerged as a compromise candidate when the parliament elected in 1990 failed to elect the Communist Party first secretary as the president. The pattern in the neighboring states was rather different. A new order was established in Kazakhstan under the auspices of Nursultan Nazarbaev, already back in the summer of 1989; in Uzbekistan under Islam Karimov, also in the summer of 1989; in Turkmenistan under Saparmurat Niyazov in early 1990. The case of Tajikistan is somewhat different. The late Soviet era first secretary of the Communist Party, the equivalent of the President, Kakhar Makhkamov was removed in 1991, right before Tajikistan was declared independent. Politics was explicitly competi-

tive in only Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and in the latter case it eventually led to an open civil war.[28]

The most intuitively appealing explanation for this kind of competitiveness can be borrowed from a study of another former Soviet Republic: Moldova (Way, 2002). Way argues that Moldova is essentially a case of failed authoritarianism and not, as the popular perception would have it, a struggling democracy. Such a regime type is common in weak states because the 'government is too fragmented and the state is too weak to impose authoritarian rule'. As a matter of fact, the power vacuum in Kyrgyzstan in late 1980s is well documented and largely due to the displacement of corrupt officials, as a part of Gorbachev's purge of corrupt officials (*glasnost'* and the ensuing *chistka*) (Collins, 2006). A clear majority of the higher-level officials are said to have lost their positions in these clean-ups (Huskey, 1995, Anderson, 1999).[29]

There had been similar purges of republican level officials in all the other Soviet republics, but by August 1991, when they declared themselves independent, the leaders in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan were all firmly in control. This argument, focusing on the consolidation of power under a new leader follows the work of Hale and can explain the cyclical nature of some regimes. Regime transitions happen when a leader is new and has not yet consolidated power or when a leader is at the end of his career, i.e. a lame-duck (Hale, 2005b). The political opening witnessed in the late Soviet period in the Kyrgyz republic would here be explained by the fact that a new first secretary, Absamat Masaliev, that had been appointed in late 1985, failed to consolidate power due to resistance from the northern regions of the country (Anderson, 1999, Collins, 2006). This can be contrasted with the first secretaries appointed in late 1980s in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. In all of these cases, new leaders managed to consolidate power and therefore remain in office during the transition to independence. The break-up of the Soviet Union, which came as an exogenous shock to the Central Asian states, destabilized the weakest regimes with the most vulnerable leaders, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The purpose of this study is not, however, to explain Kyrgyzstan's early 'democratization' in the early 1990s, but rather the failure of the authoritarian consolidation in mid 2000s through the prism of sub-national election districts. I will argue that the structural features of the Kyrgyz economy made the country more vulnerable to elite fragmentation than its Central Asian counterparts. This was the case in the late Soviet period, as well as in

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[28] For instance in Tajikistan in the first post-independence Presidential elections the winner, Rakhmon Nabiev, only got 58 percent of the votes, see ATKIN, M. (1994) *Tajiks and the Persian world,* Boulder, CO, Westview Press.
[29] Huskey claims that 80 percent is the right figures, citing 'Report by Kirghiz CP First Secretary Masaliev', FBIS, 5 February 1986. Anderson notes that 75 percent of leading republican and regional officials were removed.

the 2000s. President Akaev might have been a 'democrat', but his selection as the president in 1990 is more symptomatic of elite fragmentation than of a 'democratic' predisposition of the Kyrgyz. Indeed, by the end of the last millennium, regimes in Central Asia had converged around a non-democratic regime type.[30] Only the Akaev regime failed to ultimately sustain this mode of governance. The explanation for this is the topic of the book at hand. That is, why do elections turn competitive even if they occur under a regime type that can only be classified as authoritarian?

A model of elite balance of power

Traditional democratic theory has viewed elections as a way to legitimize government and to solve distributive conflicts (Dahl, 1971). The ruler, be it a king, a military commander, or any other form of autocrat, is forced to share the spoils with the 'people'. This can be done by including representatives from the 'people' in the decision making process. In this model elections are forced upon the ruler by societal demands. The history of enfranchisement illustrates this logic perfectly. In the absolute monarchies of 1700 and 1800 in Europe voting was expanded to the emerging bourgeois classes (Tilly, 2004). Later in late 19th century the organized labor movement put pressure on rulers for further expansion of suffrage. Expanding electoral choice was therefore the result of credible threats to the existing order. Ruling elites allowed for elections simply due to the fact that otherwise the excluded social forces might revolt.

Barrington Moore outlined the bargaining game between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy in Europe since the 15th century as a key explanation of democracy (Moore, 1966). To simplify one can divide actors into three different groupings: the rich, the middle class, and the poor.[31] The model that Moore advocates as an explanation for the emergence of democracy relies on dynamics between the rich, i.e. the aristocracy, and the bourgeoisie, a 'middle-class' of sorts. The 'poor', or the peasants in Moore's terminology, do not play a decisive role in bringing about democracy. Revolts by the 'poor' result in non-democratic forms of government, like that of communism in Russia or China.[32] Be that as it may, I will here adopt a somewhat revised

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[30] All countries had a Freedom House score of 6-7 on the 1-7 political rights scale in 2000.

[31] This corresponds to the three-class model proposed by Acemoglu and Robinson, see ACEMOGLU, D. & ROBINSON, J. (2006) Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy. *Cambridge et al.*

[32] Or in the words of Karl 'To date, no stable political democracy has resulted from regimes transitions in which mass actors have gained control even momentarily over traditional ruling classes', see KARL, T. (1990) Dilemmas of democratization in Latin America. *Comparative Politics,* 23**,** 1-21.. Other scholars, however, have argued that the 'poor' and the working class do indeed play an important role in bringing about democracy THERBORN, G. (1997) The rule of capital and the rise of democracy. *Classes and elites in democracy and*

terminology: rulers, alternative elites, and the general public. In the historical literature the Monarch is the ruler, the alternative elites are the 'bourgeoisie', and the general public are the 'poor' masses. In this model politics becomes competitive whenever the latter two groups are powerful enough to challenge the ruler.

The thesis presented here is therefore that politics turn competitive whenever there is a balance of forces between different groups of actors. What constitutes a power resource for actors can be material resources, organizational capacities, or motivational factors like ideology or identity. Figure 2 illustrates the logic of electoral politics in this theory using an arrow diagram.

Figure 2. Stylized Causal Diagram

Alternative sources of Power → Balance of Power → Competitive Elections
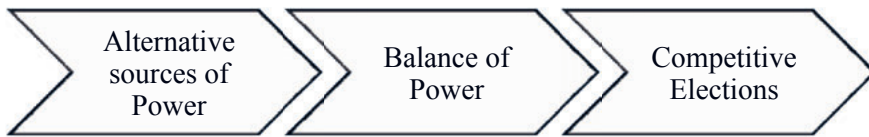
Tautological as it might seem the power resources of candidates matter for electoral performance. This is the case even if authorities do not allow for free and fair elections. In a simplified two-player model competitiveness is thus a result of there being a balance of power between two strong candidates. There are essentially three different scenarios in terms of competitiveness,

I. Imbalance in favor of ruler: Non-competitive Autocracy
II. Balance between ruler and challenger: Competitive Authoritarianism
III. Imbalance in favor of challenger: Non-competitive 'Democracy'

The first scenario is the default model for electoral outcomes in autocracies. Here the candidate affiliated with the ruler wins without any serious challenges. In the second scenario competitiveness emerges as a consequence of a balance of power between whoever is affiliated with the ruler and the challenger. Finally, if the challenger wins in an authoritarian context the result is non-competitiveness. On the aggregate national level such a scenario means that we might need to re-evaluate the regime categorization. According to a

democratization: a collection of readings, 134, RUESCHEMEYER, D., STEPHENS, E. & STEPHENS, J. (2000) Capitalist development and democracy. *Sociological worlds: comparative and historical readings on society*, 243.

minimalist conceptualization of democracy a key requirement is turnover in power (Przeworski, 2000). When a challenger is allowed to win, the regime might indeed be non-competitive democratic, and not autocratic. Since the focus here is on the sub-national level such a scenario is less relevant. The two first scenarios are both applicable to both the district level and the aggregate national level.

The central component of competitive elections in this model is the existence of a plurality of resource-laden candidates. The first step in the study of electoral competitiveness should therefore be to establish what constitutes a power resource for an individual candidate or party in a particular context. Once this is done we can examine the balance of power between the actors involved.

Again, the main unit of analysis in this study is not the national level but the sub-national election district level. In a Single-Member District (SMD) under autocracy, the ruler equivalent is the state sanctioned candidate, the alternative elites are national or SMD level challengers and the general public are the district voters. If a particular candidate has a monopoly over political, economic, and social power in a district, we would not expect the election to be competitive. Political, economic, and social *sources of power* in turn determine the *strength of candidates*. I will argue that whenever there is more than one candidate that can draw on any of these sources of power the contest will be competitive.

Studying elections – identifying explanations at the micro-level

The goal here is to dig deeper into the mechanisms behind competitiveness by examining sub-national electoral dynamics. After all, most elections are fought at the local level, vote-by-vote, village-by-village, town-by-town.[33]

Questions are raised as to why so many candidates register to run even in the presence of strong state affiliated candidates. On the one hand, these individual may be 'democrats', those that believe in the democratic process and really want to make a change. More often than not these people have been exposed to foreign aid in one form or the other. International NGOs and foreign governments encourage active participation in politics by conducting trainings, supporting political parties etc. On the other hand, and as I will argue in the book, it also makes perfect sense for well-resourced candidates to run for office even if they know they will lose. In many developing countries where economic opportunities are limited and the rule of law is in its infancy it makes perfect sense for ambitious individuals to 'challenge' authorities and incumbents by registering as candidates. This challenge might not be based on a rational calculation about the probability of being

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[33] Or in the famous phrase by Tip O'Neill, The former U.S. Speaker of the House, 'All politics is local'.

elected, but rather on the opportunity to extract concessions from those in power. Elections under such circumstances become a signaling game in which the relative power of different elite segments is measured.

Some of the hypotheses generated in the American politics literature are of relevance to the study of electoral politics even in authoritarian contexts.[34] In terms of data, much of the 'industry' relies on voting data in the Congress, so-called roll call votes (Poole and Rosenthal, 2000, Rice, 1928, Cooper and Young, 2002). Needless to say, such an approach is highly problematic within the context of weak institutions that characterize much of the developing world. Census and survey data have also been used in the American tradition, as well as presidential election returns, which proxy for 'ideology'. In terms of level of analysis, some works study national or state level aggregate dynamics over time (Kramer, 1971, Abramowitz, 1988), while others have focused on the district level (Carson et al., 2001, Dubin, 1998). One major challenge in using methods developed for the study of consolidated democracies in the study of authoritarian elections is that elections play a very different role in autocracies. Instead of being the vehicles for representing popular preferences, MPs in autocracies are more often pawns of the autocratic machinery.

The policy-bias in much of the literature is another problematic concern since legislative elections in autocracies are, for most part, not about policy or actual legislative matters. In Downs' classical model of spatial competition candidates offer policies to voters along a single 'ideological' dimension. For each voter there is a preferred policy, or 'ideal point' (Downs, 1957). In the literature on American politics, much is made of the ideological position of candidates and their responsiveness to district level preferences (Ansolabehere et al., 2001, Ansolabehere and Snyder Jr, 2002). However, in an authoritarian context, as I will show, electoral dynamics are more about inter-elite dynamics than about responsiveness to the constituency specific desires of the general public.

In the literature on electoral politics in established democracies it has been shown that incumbency, financial resources, and social cleavages matter for electoral performance. In the American literature the focus is on individual candidates, which perfectly matches my approach for studying elections in authoritarian cases.[35] Being affiliated with state structures in the sense of incumbency is recognized as being increasingly important in American politics (Ansolabehere and Snyder Jr, 2002). There is a long history of studying 'machine politics' or even more specifically 'state-bribery', i.e. when the control of public properties and processes, like election com-

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[34] There are naturally also certain specifics, like the well-entrenched two-party system, that are less relevant in many places around the world.
[35] It has been shown that candidates are more important than the national scene or state level characteristics, see ABRAMOWITZ, A. I. (1988) Explaining Senate election outcomes. *The American Political Science Review,* 82**,** 385-403.

missions, are used to skew the electoral field (Key, 1942, Key, 1989). Most of the machine politics literature focuses on political parties as machines and not explicitly on state institutions, however (Scott, 1969).

In terms of financial resources it has been shown that campaign spending matters most for challengers, as one would expect (Abramowitz, 1988, Morton and Cameron, 1992).[36] One of the mechanisms of money, apart from the obvious effects on ability to spend on advertising, is the finding that rich candidates might deter 'quality challengers' from running against them (Epstein and Zemsky, 1995).[37] The argument here is that financial resources transmit signals about candidate quality or policies (Potters et al., 1997)

Cleavages are another factor that many studies of electoral politics and especially the literature on party systems has focused on (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967a). For instance, it has been shown that ethno-cultural divisions were a central organizing logic in the emergence of the American party system (McCormick, 1974). In terms of electoral returns, it turns out that district diversity has a negative effect on margin of victory, i.e. making socially heterogeneous districts more competitive (Koetzle, 1998).[38]

The rest of this chapter will spell out three main hypotheses. These are identified based on both the general literature about electoral politics, as well as specific work on the Central Asian region. Furthermore, candidates themselves, when asked, confirmed that these three factors were the major sources of electoral power for individual candidates.[39] The sequencing of the hypothesis tests is derived from the fact that the state is the central actor in autocratic elections. Any account of electoral politics under non-democratic conditions needs to start with an analysis of the specific role that the authoritarian state plays in 'managing' electoral uncertainty. In general, elections in autocracies are non-competitive and it is here assumed that this is exactly how autocrats want it to be. If the state is incapable of controlling electoral contestation, then competitiveness ensues. An alternative hypothesis would be that competitiveness is not as much about state capacity as it is about the capacity of alternative elites.

If alternative elites are strong enough to challenge authorities, the result will be a competitive election. In an authoritarian context the most relevant assets are material resources (market) and identity networks (society). The

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[36] Actually for the House of Representatives, the effect of incumbent spending is nil, see STRATMANN, T. (2005) Some talk: Money in politics. A (partial) review of the literature. *Policy Challenges and Political Responses*, 135-156.

[37] The deterrence effect of 'war chests' has been disputed by others, see GOODLIFFE, J. (2001) The effect of war chests on challenger entry in US house elections. *American Journal of Political Science,* 45, 830-844.

[38] Other argue that there is no relationship to competitiveness, see BOND, J. R. (1983) The Influence of Constituency Diversity on Electoral Competition in Voting for Congress, 1974-78. *Legislative Studies Quarterly,* 8, 201-217.

[39] For more information on the candidate survey see methodology chapter and the empirical chapters, 4-6.

hypothesis about the role of market mechanisms and businessmen will follow after the section on the state. Finally, the society hypothesis will be presented with references to both the literature and to the specifics of the Kyrgyzstan case.

The State in authoritarian elections

The most central actor in terms of electoral politics in autocracies is undoubtedly the state. First of all, per definition an autocrat does not open up the political process to unfettered competition. In a competitive authoritarian state, the ruler does allow for limited contestation in the sense of allowing candidates and parties to field their candidates and to campaign for votes. In such a context the outcome of the election is determined by the capacity of the state to deliver a certain election result. Assuming that autocrats want to rein in competition, or at least make it less unpredictable, elections should be less competitive in parts of the country where the control of the state is strong. A strong and capable state makes elections predictable and beneficial to the authorities. Therefore the 'State' explanation for electoral competitiveness concerns the lack of capacity in terms of controlling the process.

State capacity in terms of coordinating elite behavior is therefore an essential variable. The focus in the literature has been on both the coercive capacity of the state and the organizational capacity, and specifically the role of pro-regime parties. For the autocrat an election is a question of attracting strong candidates as well as deterring strong challengers. An autocrat that succeeds on these two accounts can look forward to a predictable and rather non-competitive election.

The rationale for autocrats is clear. Unpredictable electoral contests can be detrimental to their own power base and allow for challengers to coordinate their actions. It has been shown that even materially weak rulers can prevail in contexts where oppositional coordination is absent (Simpser, 2005). Therefore the state apparatus tries, to the best of its ability, to 'manage' all phases of the electoral process. The ruler sanctions certain candidates and these candidates are given the support of the state in the campaign. Candidates affiliated with the state in such a manner should therefore receive a higher vote share and be more likely to get elected. This in turn would mean that the district as a whole should be less competitive.

Furthermore, it is widely accepted that whenever incumbents organize elections they have tremendous advantages through their monopolies of state resources and the means of coercion (Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009). Incumbent rulers in all types of regimes benefit from access to state resources. The key difference is to what extent state support is systematic and distorting. The ruler is usually conceptualized as the one possessing tools of coercion (Hafner-Burton et al., 2010). But, in most circumstances it is too costly for a

state to use repression in order to deliver a desired election result. 'Luckily' for the autocrat there are more subtle and efficient ways of delivering predictable outcomes, like ballot rigging and vote buying (Lehoucq, 2003). However, states do differ in their capacity to utilize these techniques. In the post-communist context it should be noted that the communist era state apparatus came well equipped to deliver desirable election outcomes. After all, elections were conducted all through the Soviet period, even if not much choice was given to the electorate.

The capacity of the state to deliver a desirable result also depends on the voters themselves. Even if elections in non-democracies are imperfect in terms of democratic standards, they do empower voters. However, voting behavior in autocracies is often driven by patronage and clientelism. This means that in states where patronage is centralized into a single-pyramid structure, control over the electoral process is better. The archetype of a single-pyramid structure can be found in a resource rich country where extraction is centralized and the incentive for the elites and voters alike is to align themselves with central authorities.[40] However, it is not unheard of that voters want to punish poor incumbent performance.

In general voters in a non-democracy are very careful not to upset central authorities.[41] This does not mean that they always vote for the pro-presidential candidates, however; they might instead vote for someone that is perceived to be close to the regime, but somewhat independent.[42] This latter point is especially relevant in the post-Soviet space. Voting for an explicitly oppositional candidate entails risking punishment, either collectively, or individually, as the secrecy of the vote is not generally guaranteed. If the voter's intention is to maximize personal benefits, the calculation is based on whether the candidate can deliver or not. In a context of a very weak central government, it might make more sense to trust local patrons instead of government affiliated candidates, as long as these patrons are not openly threatening the central government.

What if the explanation for competitiveness is simply that autocrats benefit from competitive elections? It has been documented that elections in authoritarian contexts do play an important role in terms of elite selection.

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[40] The concept of single-pyramid and multiple-pyramid is borrowed from Hale, see HALE, H. E. (2011) Formal Constitutions in Informal Politics Institutions and Democratization in Post-Soviet Eurasia. *Columbia University's Comparative Politics Research Workshop.*

[41] Magaloni's term for this is *tragic brilliance*, where 'Citizens' choices are free, yet they are constrained by a series of strategic dilemmas that compel them to remain loyal to the regime', see MAGALONI, B. (2006) *Voting for autocracy: Hegemonic party survival and its demise in Mexico,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

[42] 'Indeed, voters seem willing to cast their votes for nonincumbents, as long as those candidates are seen as close to ruling elites (Lust-Okar 2006, 2008a), and as I discuss below, ruling elites may actually prefer a high degree of turnover in parliament', see GANDHI, J. & LUST-OKAR, E. (2009) Elections under authoritarianism. *Annual Review of Political Science,* 12**,** 403-422.

Competitive elections ensure that the most 'popular' elites get elected and this clearly has its benefits for the ruler. The threat of revolt increases if the populace does not appreciate elected representatives. An autocrat could naturally simply appoint elite members to important positions, and often they do, but elections provide another, possibly more cost-efficient, way for elite selection. Elections are also an efficient tool to divide the opposition in that controlling the candidate selection phase allows for targeting certain oppositional figures and excluding them, while others, those allowed to run, become even more invested in the regime (Lust-Okar, 2005). Also rulers might prefer turnover to be high since it curtails the possibility of strong oppositional leaders emerging in the parliament. Thus allowing for competition or actually encouraging competitiveness might be a conscious strategy favored by authorities. Holding competitive elections also appeals to the international community, and for small aid dependent countries it might therefore outweigh the negatives associated with competitiveness.

The argument in this study, however, is that autocracies end up competitive not because it benefits the ruler, but rather because of relative state weakness. 'Relative' here refers to the relative power of alternative elites. As the case of Kyrgyzstan in 2005 will show, competitiveness in weak autocracies does not benefit the ruler.

Before moving on to non-state sources of electoral power, let me shortly illustrate the role of the post-Soviet state in electoral politics.

Post-Soviet electoral manipulation

All fifteen Soviet republics shared similar electoral institutions at the time of the breakup. This included a well-equipped and experienced communist party, politicized electoral management bodies, single-member majoritarian electoral systems, and 'sectoral' candidate nomination privileges.[43] Elections in the Soviet Union were widely viewed with cynicism and contempt (Hill, 1972, Hill, 1976, Tedin, 1994, Friedgut, 1979, Jacobs, 1970, Zaslavsky and Brym, 1978, White, 1985, Roeder, 1989). The electoral systems started to diverge already prior to the decisive 1990 elections, however (CSCE, 1990, Colton, 1990, Helf and Hahn, 1992, Huber and Kelley, 1991).[44] In some of the westernmost republics, like the Baltic States, the Supreme Soviet elections in the spring of 1990 were heavily contested by the popular fronts and the communist party was already seriously discredited (Ishiyama, 1993). In Central Asia on the other hand the elections were completely dominated by state structures and the ruling party (Huskey, 1995). In these cases, the

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[43] Trade unions, residential committees, and the Academy of Sciences.
[44] Note that the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) report on 'Elections in the Baltic States and Soviet Republics' does not contain any details on elections in Central Asia.

communist party was abolished, relabeled, and in some cases later reinstated. In these early years there was a lot of experimentation with different institutional designs (Jones Luong, 2002).

The role of central authorities in 'managing' electoral uncertainty is prominent in the literature on the post-communist cases (Colton and McFaul, 2003, Myagkov et al., 2005, Wilson, 2005). This is understandable since elections prior to the breakup were fully controlled by the communist party and the bureaucratic apparatus of the regime (Friedgut, 1979). However, as I will show, in the post-communist era the playing field was leveled in several cases. This does not mean that elections all of sudden became free and fair, but rather that the tools of manipulation were more widely available due to the power vacuum left by the once almighty communist party apparatus. Despite this, affiliation with state structures continued to be a good source of strength in times of elections, even if space had opened up for challengers.

Determining the true extent of electoral fraud, especially in the first few years of post-Soviet politics has been very difficult. As a rule, no detailed election returns were made public and the use of aggregate level returns to analyze patterns of fraud is inherently problematic (Filippov et al., 1996). From the mid-1990s, data becomes more available and it has been shown, for instance, that fraud was especially widespread in the 'ethnic republics' of Tatarstan, Dagestan, and Bashkortostan (Myagkov et al., 2005). The preferred methods seem to have involved everything from ballot stuffing to outright manipulation of the tabulation process. Likewise, the impressive turnout figures that were common in the post-Soviet space follow a similar logic, if one that at first seems counterintuitive. Votes for the president or his party were often artificially inflated even if it was clear from the start who would win. This is simply because local elites wanted to please the center by delivering super-majorities (Myagkov et al., 2005).[45] This suggests that the role of state-local elite interactions is essential in understanding micro-level electoral dynamics in the post-Soviet region.

The state and elections in Central Asia

Authorities can decide whether to allow for an open-ended and 'free' candidate selection process or to instead control the process through registration requirements. In former Soviet Republics candidate selection and especially de-registration has been a favored strategy by authorities. In Kyrgyzstan the institutional bargain favored regional and local bosses at the expense of central authorities, while in Uzbekistan it was the other way around (Jones Luong, 2002). In Kyrgyzstan a two-round single-member district (SMD) system in which worker's collectives and residential committees could nominate candidates prevailed, while in Uzbekistan a single-round system

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[45] In the words of Myagkov, 'local elites who sought to curry favor with the powers-that-be'.

with centralized, presidentially sanctioned political parties were given the exclusive right to nominate candidates.

On the one hand, Uzbekistan's tactic of centralizing the process by only allowing for a few political parties severely reduces the unpredictability of the contest, if not competitiveness.[46] In countries like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, the actual election outcome came down to what happens on election day at the district level. In Tajikistan central authorities in the post-conflict setting managed to deliver pro-presidential majorities through the use of administrative resources and patronage. It seems like authorities in Kyrgyzstan were not able to dictate the outcomes of electoral races around the country to the same extent.

A central variable here is coercive state capacity. The Central Asian states inherited an all-encompassing state that suffered from infrastructural weaknesses. In terms of implementing economic and social programs, there were significant weaknesses in all five cases (Roeder, 2001, Cummings and Norgaard, 2004). Where they differed was more on the coercive capacity variable. The civil war in Tajikistan in early 1990s or the so-called Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan illustrates state weakness in Central Asia. The latter illustrated that the Kyrgyz state was not *de facto* a state in the Weberian sense. Authorities in Kyrgyzstan had given up *de facto* local control in some parts of the country. The local power brokers that were awarded a free pass were local strongmen with only weak ties to the authorities.[47]

Elections in Central Asia have never fully lived up to international standards.[48] In terms of elections, state institutions are heavily dominating the electoral process.[49] This is what one local scholar said about elections in Kyrgyzstan

> Parliamentary and presidential polls in 2000 had shown that the ruling elite was willing and able to manipulate the electoral process and the results. That the manipulation was blatant stirred more resentment and discontent, which fuelled the sporadic protests and mass meetings in various parts of the country, with greater intensity in the south (Abazov, 2007).

This quote illustrates that the bureaucratic apparatus of the president was heavily involved in delivering a desirable election outcome. The quote also shows that authorities had to grapple with geographically concentrated pro-

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[46] No detailed disaggregated results have ever been published from Uzbekistan.
[47] For instance, Bayaman Erkinbaev in Southern Kyrgyzstan (chapter 5). For more on criminalization of the state, see BAYART, J., ELLIS, S. & HIBOU, B. (1999) *The criminalization of the state in Africa*, James Currey.
[48] Not a single OSCE Election Observation report explicitly uses the code words 'free and fair' in describing the elections.
[49] Also see coding of OSCE Reports, see KELLEY, J. G. & KOLEV, K. (2010) Election Quality and International Observation 1975-2004: Two New Datasets. Durham, NC, Duke University.

tests. In the spring 2005 elections President Akaev's favored strategy seems to have been picking strong district level individuals, some of them getting the official sanction of the pro-presidential party, while others got administrative support, even if not formally nominated by any party. This decentralized strategy that essentially allowed for district level dynamics to determine the outcome, later came to haunt the Akaev regime.[50] All throughout the electoral cycle the Akaev apparatus interfered with the process (Mambetaliev and Junusov, 2005, OSCE, 2005a, Koalitsia, 2005).

Perhaps President Akaev thought that the bureaucratic apparatus could still deliver without the presence of a strong pro-presidential party. In the 1995 and 2000 elections there were no serious attempts to establish such a party, while in preparation for the 2005 elections Akaev's daughter Bermet established *Alga Kyrgyzstan*. It is possible that Akaev had realized the perils of a decentralized no-party electoral regime in which local bosses were allowed to reign relatively free. Even with this new pro-presidential party, however, competitiveness was not much reduced.[51] The fact that the pro-presidential party did not nominate a candidate in each of the 75 districts is in itself an indication of the weakness of central authorities under Akaev. If state resources are indeed insufficient in explaining competitiveness patterns, we need to examine the many challengers to Akaev sanctioned candidates.

Market actors and electoral politics

The state does not operate in a vacuum. National and local level elites are central players in keeping the regime stable. The relative power of the state in relation to societal actors is a central topic in this study. The most resource-laden elites are often those that possess material wealth. Since we know that money matters in politics it would seem crucial for the authorities to keep economic elites in line. However, the state might not be capable of controlling all elite segments in an election. For instance, denying strong local elites the right to run for office could result in an anti-incumbent backlash.

The relationship between capitalism and democracy is a long-standing debate in the social sciences (Schumpeter, 1976, Dahl, 1971, Moore, 1966, Przeworski, 1991, Lipset, 1959, Przeworski, 2004, Boix and Stokes, 2003, Frye, 2010). Dahl would argue that, 'private ownership is neither necessary nor a sufficient condition for a pluralistic social order', while Moore would emphasize the role of an independent class of town dwellers as 'indispensa-

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[50] The elections ended up facilitating anti-Akaev protest coordination around the country. For more see concluding chapter.

[51] Down to an effective number of candidates of three candidates in 2005 compared to 3.3 in 2000 and 3.8 in 1995, see appendix V.

ble element in the growth of parliamentary democracy'. However, there is agreement on the fact that economic development results in power being distributed more widely and that this in turn might have an effect on the probability of democracy (Dahl, 1971).

It is widely known that financial resources play a central role in elections all over the world (Austin et al., 2003, Alexander and Federman, 1989). Financially strong candidates pose challenges to candidates sanctioned by the authorities. Therefore rich candidates that are sufficiently autonomous from the authorities have the potential to drive up the level of competitiveness.

It turns out that state actors are not the only ones able to influence election outcomes through illegitimate means. In studies of elections in 19th century Europe, it has been shown that economic elites have used fraudulent means in order to secure electoral success (Anderson, 2000). This should come as no surprise as the stakes were often high in these early European elections. The interesting question is whether these economic elites were anti or pro-government in orientation. In the late 19th century economic elites were, for the most part, affiliated with incumbent political parties and therefore they could be considered a largely pro-governmental bloc. So it seems as if the interests of the central authorities and the district level economic elites might have aligned. Interestingly, it has actually been shown that districts in which the distribution of assets and incomes were unequal were in general less competitive (Ziblatt, 2009). It all comes down to which side district level wealthy individuals committed themselves. In the European experience of the late 19th century wealthy individuals feared the emerging popular movements. They therefore aligned themselves with conservative governing parties and together sought to control the contests, at least in the regions where the relative balance of power was in their favor.

What if the interest of economic elites were not aligned with the authorities? Such a setup could potentially open up a fierce electoral contest in which the resources of both sides would be fully mobilized. The state would use all the powers of state institutions, including patronage and outright rigging attempts, while anti-government economic elites would use their financial resources to lure voters and perhaps even bribe polling station officials. This stylized historical narrative leads us to the second hypothesis explaining competitiveness. Taking a cue from Moore, one could stipulate that 'no private property, no competitiveness' (Moore, 1966).[52]

We all know that regime type is statistically associated with market economy and economic prosperity, but the direction of the causality remains in dispute. Many scholars would argue that democracies once established tend to enact rule of law regimes that protect property rights etc., therefore treating democracy as the causal factor for 'capitalism'. Here I argue that the causality on the sub-national level works in the other direction. A diversified

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[52] 'No bourgeois, no democracy'.

market based economy (non-command) is a pre-requisite for competitiveness.

This argument finds support in the history of democratization. Historically political liberalization started with fundamental changes in underlying economic structure, perhaps caused by technological advances. Absolutist monarchs that fully controlled their subjects had few incentives to grant voting or property rights to anyone but a limited group of people. This feudal logic was challenged when an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie emerged in the wake of industrialization. As a consequence rulers had to compromise or face revolutionary challenges. This long drawn-out process eventually led to the establishment of a rights regime that protected private property. The changing balance of power in 18th and 19th century Europe favored the bourgeoisie and later the emerging working class at the expense of the ruling aristocratic class.

> …the Marxist thesis that a vigorous and independent class of town dwellers has been an indispensable element in the growth of parliamentary democracy. No bourgeois, no democracy (Moore, 1966)

The important lesson from Marx and Moore is not whether or not there exists a bourgeoisie. Indeed, the relevance of Moore's democracy prerequisite has been challenged in the post-Soviet context with the plain fact that the Soviet system managed to purge society of an 'old-school' bourgeoisie (Roeder, 2001). This simplistic falsification of the theory does not do Moore justice, however. As noted above, the class of bourgeoisie in a European 18th and 19th century context was above all a balancing power to the aristocracy. When parliamentary representation was first institutionalized, it was as a consequence of bargaining between a fading aristocracy, still formally in charge, and an emerging entrepreneurial class, the bourgeoisie. The peasant or labor majorities did not seriously mount any challenges until the age of industrialization. The French revolution in 1789 and the earlier Glorious Revolution in England in 1688 were all a consequence of a changing power balance in the society.[53]

> History clearly confirms .....[that]....modern democracy rose along with capitalism, and in causal connection with it.....modern democracy is a product of the capitalist process (Schumpeter, 1976)

In a post Cold War context the set of classes and actors are different as is much else. However, the fact remains that private property and market economy seems to be associated with democratic institutions, seemingly confirming the thesis about capitalism and democracy.

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[53] This is admittedly a historical-materialist interpretation of these events.

The market and elections in Central Asia

Former Soviet republics adopted different strategies when it comes to dismantling the Soviet era command economy. As can be seen in the graph, in countries like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan there was a lot of continuity with the previous system, while in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan radical privatization and deregulation reforms were enacted. All of this had consequences for the balance of power among different societal actors (Junisbai, 2009).

Figure 3. Privatization Scores, EBRD, 1990-2008

Graphs by Country
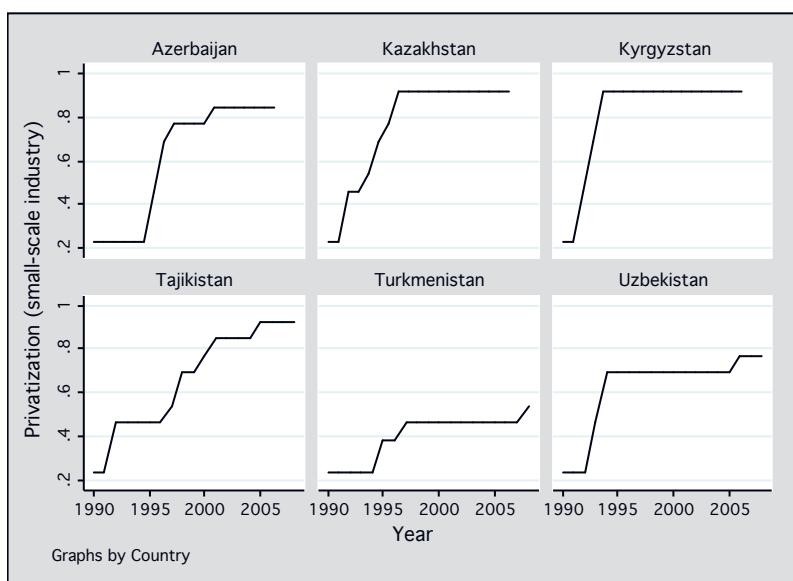
Source: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).
Note: The small-scale industry privatization is only one of several sub-scores coded by the Bank.

Uzbekistan had its capital-intensive cotton production and distribution networks (Ilkhamov, 2004). The centralized nature of the Uzbek economy had serious consequences for political maneuvering at the local level. Under a centralized economy, elections are not competitive, since both the elites and the masses in such systems are more dependent on state institutions for business opportunities, employment, and benefits.

The early economic reforms in Kyrgyzstan, as illustrated by the graph, remain a puzzle (Gurgen, 1999, Pomfret and Anderson, 2001). President Akaev, a trained physicist, openly adopted a discourse of market liberalization (Akaev, 2001). The international pressure for reforms was intense from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Regardless, a new class of wealthy individuals was created from the resulting reforms.

These individuals ended up playing a key role in post-independence politics of the country. As I will show, in the 2005 elections several of the richest individuals in Kyrgyzstan decided to run for office and many of them were not directly affiliated with President Akaev.

As a matter of fact, many of them already held a seat in the parliament. In some districts these actors seem to have helped generate higher levels of competitiveness, while in other districts wealthy candidates actually managed to completely monopolize the contests. This indicates that the existence of wealthy candidates is not necessarily a recipe for sub-national level competitiveness. This just goes to show that in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, the state had already lost the power to monopolize politics in many locations around the country. The existence of wealthy individuals that openly challenged the authorities and also managed to monopolize electoral contests locally tells us a lot about the capacity of the Akaev regime prior to the break down.

Concrete examples are three candidates that managed to get rid of all other competitors prior to the beginning of elections.[54] Interestingly, none of them were explicitly government-affiliated. These candidates were all independently rich and also had experience from sectors relating to violence, which are the traditional domain and monopoly of the state. Two of them were former interior ministry officials and one of them was a well-known bandit, aka 'mafia' boss. For these candidates, money alone was perhaps not the decisive factor, but clearly contributed to their 'autonomy' in relation to central authorities. When financial resources are combined with private coercive capacity, the degree of autonomy is indeed very high. This was quite apparent to all observers of the 2005 electoral cycle.

Societal cleavages and electoral politics

Perhaps the role of market elites and economic autonomy is exaggerated as a balancing force to the authoritarian state. The third and final hypothesis is an alternative to the market hypothesis. It might well be that in an authoritarian state social ties are what explain the relative strength of alternative elites.

The literature on social cleavages and electoral politics is a long established sub-field in comparative politics (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967b, Lijphart, 1999, Mozaffar et al., 2003, Posner, 2004, Neto and Cox, 1997, Zielinski, 2002). Ethnic heterogeneity has often been considered an unfavorable condition for democracy (Horowitz, 2000, Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972). Rustow, for one, held that a shared common national identity was essential to democracy (Rustow, 1970). The argument is that political liberalization creates chances for opportunistic elites to mobilize their constituencies, which in turns create intense communal conflict. The high level of conflict makes the

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[54] Bayaman Erkinbaev in Batken, Baibolov in Bishkek, and Alisher Sabyrov in Osh.

society ungovernable and either causes society to breakdown or causes a powerful institution, like the military, to step in to impose authoritarian order. The focus in this book, however, is not on the long-term effect on propensity for and intensity of ethnic conflict, but rather on the role ethnic voting plays in explaining competitiveness in autocracies. These theories indeed suggest that ethnic heterogeneity is associated with competitiveness, even if the final outcome is the reestablishment of an autocratic mode of governance.

In the context of weak and unstable party systems, voters use ethnic cues to come up with a qualified guess about future behavior of candidates. If there is only limited information available about candidates and coalitions, it would simply be too costly for individual voters to keep up with changing candidate affiliations and platforms (Chandra, 2007). When a voting decision needs to be made by someone that does not necessarily preoccupy themselves much with politics, identity categories all of a sudden become useful *uncertainty-reduction devices* (Hale, 2008). This implies that elections turn competitive in autocracies if there is ethnic heterogeneity.

For the most part this literature has focused on ethnicity and 'large-group' identities. It has been shown that certain institutional setups, like proportional electoral systems, are more conducive to the management of ethnic tensions (Cohen, 1997). In a post-Soviet context ethnicity has been shown to be a good predictor of voting behavior in some circumstances (Birch, 1995). However, in a study of sub-national units, identity categories are not necessarily the most relevant variable. Ethnic identities in the sense of nationality are not the only relevant cleavages in the post-Soviet space. Here I will instead focus on a peculiar form of social cleavage - namely tribal or clan cleavages. These kinds of cleavages are said to be important in many countries in the developing world (Khoury and Kostiner, 1990, Schapera, 1956). In most developing countries, a sense of nationhood is weakly developed and sub-national identities are more strongly articulated.[55] Note, however, that it has been shown that the politicization of identity categories depends on the institutional setup (Posner, 2007).

In the literature on Central Asia kinship-based clans have been highlighted (Abazov et al., 2000, Collins, 2006, Collins, 2002, Schatz, 2004). The clan logic allegedly explains the pattern of vote dispersion, especially in

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[55] 'While the new nations must wrestle with problems of political coordination which arise out of a plurality of citizen identifications, modernization may not minimize the number of such identifications, see KESSELMAN, M. & ROSENTHAL, D. B. (1974) Local power and comparative politics. *Comparative Politics Series.* Sage Publications Ltd. In the words of another famous scholar, 'Thus, it is the very process of the formation of a sovereign civil state that, among other things, stimulates sentiments of parochialism, communalism, racialism, and so on, because it introduces in to society a valuable new prize over which to fight and a frightening new force with which to contend' GEERTZ, C. (1963) *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa,* New York, The Free Press.

rural areas.[56] The fact that Kyrgyzstan, one of the most tribal societies in Central Asia, has experienced far more competitive politics than its neighbors suggests that there might be a causal link between tribal heterogeneity and competitiveness.

If state or market resources are not enough for a candidate to do well at the voting booth, then perhaps identity politics could be the missing variable? The third and final hypothesis suggests that strong ties based on kinship constitute a resource for candidates. The consequences for district level competitiveness would therefore be dictated by the degree of fractionalization in the district. In a district where the proportion of kinship groups is roughly equal, competitiveness would ensue.

It should be noted that the discourse on 'kinship' and clan is a heavily contested one in the social sciences. On the one hand, there are political scientists bringing these concepts into the study of political phenomena, as in the literature on clan politics in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia (Collins, 2006, Collins, 2004, Schatz, 2004, Roy, 2000).

> Clan, tribal, and regional factionalism is very much a key to the political life of the republics of Central Asia (Roy, 2000).

On the other hand, there are anthropological work of different strands which developed a critical discourse on these concepts in the later half of the 20th century (Kuper, 2004[1982], Schneider, 2004[1972]). Even though many scholars have dismissed the concept of kinship as an analytical category it continues to be used by others.

> Kinship…does not correspond to any cultural category known to man (Schneider, 2004).

For a political scientist it can at first seem a bit alien to study the subject, since it is a field of study that anthropology has monopolized. As a matter of fact, the study of kinship is one of the few topics that anthropology has managed to make its own (Parkin and Stone, 2004).

Central Asia as a region is interesting since it is dominated by steppe landscape, mountains and only limited amounts of arable land along the rivers. There are many prejudices about the general models of Eurasian pastoral nomadic societies (Khazanov, 1984). Often these societies are perceived as segmented societies where groups act as corporate units. But already in 1986 Lindholm stated that 'the Central Asian clan structure was long since func-

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[56] 'I talked with local leaders that had come in to vote for their twenty or thirty closest relatives… [] … the widespread practice of voting for personalistic leaders along clan lines … [] …The Central Asian elections offers just one example of clan politics' COLLINS, K. (2006) *Clan politics and regime transition in Central Asia,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

tionally disintegrated by the hierarchical tendencies it held within itself' (Lindholm, 1986).

As I will show the literature on clans and the role of kinship is conceptually misleading. I define clan narrowly in order to avoid confusion with other informal phenomena like clientelism, corruption, or organized criminal activity. The defining element of a clan is that it is a network of individuals linked by kin-based bonds. It is this affective tie of kinship that is crucial in understanding the difference between clans and other informal institutions like clientelistic networks, or mafias. The definition used here is that a clan is an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin-based bonds, either real or imagined. In the Kyrgyz context I will be using the emic categories of *uruu* and *uruk*.[57]

Since rural areas are surprisingly competitive in Kyrgyzstan any comprehensive explanation would indeed need to account for rural dynamics as well. Rural areas all over the developing world are characterized by more 'traditional' modes of interaction in which informal institutions of family, kinship, and ethnicity play a larger role. If the baseline level of district competitiveness in the post-Soviet space is non-competitive with a single strong pro-governmental candidate then perhaps district level kinship identities might explain why so many challenging candidates perform so well. In a rural district with several salient identity categories these might be utilized as *uncertainty-reduction devices* in an election. That is identities might be mobilized for political purposes as a way to communicate reliability to fellow identity group members. Simply put, members of an ethnic or sub-ethnic (clan) group would vote for someone from their own group.

Societal cleavages and elections in Kyrgyzstan

> I talked with local leaders that had come in to vote for their twenty or thirty closest relatives… [] … the widespread practice of voting for personalistic leaders along clan lines … [] …The Central Asian elections offers just one example of clan politics (Collins, 2006).

First we need to establish what a clan is and what it is not. The explanatory power of clans when it comes to electoral competitiveness concerns the strength of kinship-based bonds, especially in rural Kyrgyzstan. There seems to be a lot of misunderstandings in describing kinship relations and politics in Kyrgyzstan. Both local and international media often refer to clans without specifying what exactly is being referred to. For instance in the spring of 2010 when President Bakiev was removed from power, international media reports frequently referred to clans playing a role, always without defining

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[57] More about this in chapter six.

what a clan is.[58] Many talked about the Bakiev clan without specifying if they referred to his siblings and sons, which would have been 'family', or to the actual *uruu* of Bakiev, *Teeit*.[59] Some of this confusion can also be found in more academic writings on politics in the region.[60]

Let me be clear from the beginning. The immediate family of the ousted President Bakiev does not constitute a clan in the Kyrgyz terminology. A clan in the sense of *uruk* (or *uruk*) is a very specific thing in Kyrgyzstan. Yes, Bakiev escaped to his native home village, which actually bears the name of his *uruu*, Teiit. But having loyal supporters in one's home village does not necessarily qualify as clan politics. This happens everywhere, but only in a poor developing country like Kyrgyzstan is the clan terminology immediately deployed. The dynamic in Kyrgyzstan is rather one of regional north/south character, which is based on historical, geographical, and demographic factors, and not necessarily on clans.

The theoretically interesting question concerns identity politics. Here I will not directly address why it is that certain identity categories (ethnic, religious, tribal) become politicized. Scholars have pointed out that there is a constructivist element to the emergence of salient identity categories (Anderson, 1983, Hale, 2008, Brubaker, 1996, Posner, 2004). The fact that clan plays such a prominent role in both scholarly and journalistic work on the region indicates that these identity categories are already politicized. This being the case, the question becomes do these kinship-based communities really act as groups and to what extent does this explain electoral dynamics at the districts level?[61]

Chapter conclusions

In this chapter I have outlined the three central explanations for micro-level electoral dynamics: authoritarian state capacity, market actor empowerment, and societal cleavages. The theoretical foundations for all three sets of hypotheses are well established in the literature. Before I turn to the empirical

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[58] On April 9 FT wrote 'clans urged to put aside differences', as if there existed kinship based groups that were directly involved in the events, *Financial Times*, Isabel Gorst, Apr 9, 2010. Russian television also reported that the essence of what had happened was that 'one clan replaces another one', Bishkek Diary: Face to face with Kyrgyz rioters, April 12, 2010.

[59] In the respectable New York Times they reproduced an AP story stating 'violent protests fed by anger over corruption permeating the Bakiyev clan', see Ousting a Kyrgyz Leader Means Ousting His Family, *New York Times*, April 14, 2010.

[60] Collins refers to the Chui clan, see COLLINS, K. (2006) *Clan politics and regime transition in Central Asia,* New York, Cambridge University Press. Local academics also made similar misleading statements, see ABAZOV, R. (2003a) Kyrgyzstan. *Nations in transit.* New York, Freedom House.

[61] Which is the equivalent of Tilly's question, 'do communities act' (Tilly, 1973).

analysis of individual candidates and district dynamics there are some methodological considerations that need to be addressed.

Chapter 3: Methods for Studying Candidates and Districts

Before further details are given about the micro-dynamics of elections in the fascinating case of Kyrgyzstan, some methodological concerns need to be addressed. This chapter addresses the specific methodological considerations that went into this study. The validity of the competitiveness measures are discussed both theoretically and through the use of global databases of constituency level electoral returns. The rationale for studying Kyrgyzstan in detail is spelled out, as are details about the data collection strategies.

The empirical analysis throughout the study will operate on two fundamentally different levels. First, there will be an analysis of individual candidates and the sources of electoral power at the district level. The main interest here is to explain individual level candidate performance. This is interesting since the effects of district level competitiveness are directly associated with the vote shares of the candidates in the district.

The main focus though is on district wide dynamics and the question of whether or not a district is competitive. Information about candidates will be translated into district level hypotheses that can be tested quantitatively. At the end of this chapter, I present model specifications for the quantitative testing that will follow in the substantive chapters.

Competitiveness operationalized

Whether or not an electoral unit is competitive depends on what exactly we mean by competitiveness. In the first chapter, electoral competitiveness was defined as a contest in which the margin of victory is small and a simple dummy for whether or not the winner's vote share was less than 60 percent was used as a proxy for it.

First, let me be clear about the unit of analysis. Theoretically it could be anything from the micro-level polling station (precinct), the aggregate level village, town, Single-Member District (SMD), or even the country level. In this particular study the main focus is on the district level in a majoritarian single-member district system. Secondly, it should be noted that competitiveness measures can be ranked by how much information they contain.

In the introductory chapter, I used a 60 percent winner's vote share cut-off as a simple dummy for competitiveness. A district in which the winner gets more than 60 percent the vote in an election is generally not very competitive. Other thresholds could be envisioned, but such a dummy is arguably a straightforward, intuitive measure that works well in authoritarian contexts, where the winner usually receives a supermajority. However, such a simple measure does not use any other data points aside from the winner's vote share. Some might argue that competitiveness is a *relational* attribute of an electoral unit and that we therefore need a measure that captures the relationship between the top two candidates rather than a single data point.

The margin of victory measures the distance between the winner and the candidate or party that came in second (Blais and Lago, 2009, Franklin, 2004). But an election in which more than two candidates participate might actually require us to take into consideration the vote share of all candidates. *The Effective Number of Parties* (ENP) is such a measure and it essentially captures fractionalization of the vote (Taagepera and Shugart, 1989). The ENP measure is problematic, since a higher score does not necessarily mean that competitiveness is higher. An election in which there are two effective candidates is not inherently less competitive than one in which there are three. The vote is more fragmented, but once a certain threshold level of ENP is passed there are not necessarily any additional effects on competitiveness. Some scholars have argued that a threshold of 1.7 ENP is a useful competitiveness threshold (Schedler, 2004).

Whenever explicitly analyzing fractionalization, I will use two different versions of the effective number of parties measure. The original Taagepera version will be labeled ENC (T) and the adjusted one, which takes into consideration the effects of the winner's vote share on the overall score, will be labeled ENC (D) (Dunleavy and Boucek, 2003).[62]

Sub-national competitiveness worldwide

Let me illustrate patterns of sub-national contestation using real world data. This will also help us contextualize the case of Kyrgyzstan in terms of district level competitiveness.

Recently there has been a surge in the number of databases that include detailed sub-national level election results. Currently there are two databases that contain both historical and more recent constituency-level results,[63] The Constituency-Level Elections (CLE) dataset by Brancati and the Constituency-Level Elections Archive (CLEA) by Caramani et. al. These databases cover

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[62] For more on the formulas and a discussion of the fractionalization measures see appendix II.
[63] For a review of both datasets, see GARCIA, C. (2011) Constituency-Level Elections and Constituency-Level Elections Archive Datasets. *APSA-CP Newsletter,* 22**,** 20-23.

more than 80 countries and in some cases go all the way back to the 1940s. The main focus of these datasets is established democracies, but the data is useful in order to understand the extent of competitiveness in Kyrgyzstan.

On average, the winner gets more than half of the votes. For instance elections in Unites States for the House of Representatives have a mean winner's vote share of almost two-thirds of the vote. The last column of Table 2 indicates the proportion of constituencies that are competitive using the simple 60 percent threshold. For instance in Estonia and Latvia all constituencies are competitive, while in Unites States less than half of the districts are competitive.

Table 2. Mean Competitiveness per Constituency Around the World, 1990-2006

Country	Win share (mean)	Observations (N)	Win share (st.dev.)	Proportion of Compet. units
Bosnia-Herzegovi.	37.2%	34	10.8%	100%
Estonia	28.6%	49	6.8%	100%
Latvia	26.8%	25	7.0%	100%
Trinidad and Tob.	65.7%	180	11.4%	99.4%
Sweden	41.4%	115	6.1%	99.1%
Bolivia	35.2%	172	10.3%	98.8%
Dominican Republ.	42.9%	30	4.9%	96.7%
Hungary	48.9%	1,213	7.8%	95.9%
Mexico	47.4%	644	7.5%	94.1%
Niger	45.2%	16	9.5%	93.8%
Romania	44.1%	336	11.3%	93.5%
Indonesia	39.9%	54	12.7%	88.9%
Slovenia	39.2%	18	22.7%	88.9%
Kyrgyzstan	**42.3%**	**270**	**15.8%**	**86.3%**
New Zealand	49.2%	231	8.8%	86.1%
Lithuania	46.1%	347	14.8%	83.3%
Czech Republic	53.4%	126	10.2%	79.4%
Botswana	60.0%	40	13.7%	55.0%
Mauritius	59.9%	42	9.1%	50.0%
Turkey	32.9%	324	8.6%	42.7%
United States	64.0%	2,906	13.0%	42.7%
Bermuda	66.0%	40	10.9%	30.0%
Total	53.8%	6,946	15.2%	69.8%

Source: Constituency-Level Elections (CLE) Dataset (Brancati, 2007) and for Kyrgyzstan author's own dataset.
Note: Presented in order of proportion of competitive constituencies (last column). The 60 percent winners' vote share competitiveness dummy is used in calculating the proportion of competitive constituencies.

In the existing datasets, there are only a couple of country-election years in which the regime was classified as autocratic, among them Niger 1999, Indonesia 1999, and Turkey 1995. Competitiveness was very high in all of

these cases both on the aggregate level and on the district level.[64] Interestingly, the proportion of competitive districts in Kyrgyzstan is close to levels in many multi-party democracies.

Validity

The measure that best captures the essence of district level competitiveness partly depends on the structure of the party system and other institutional features of an election, like electoral system or party system. Competitiveness in a well-established two-party system is not the same as competitiveness in a weak autocracy with non-existent parties. It is notable, however, that all the measures I have introduced so far are all strongly correlated.[65]

As indicated in the first chapter I will be using a simplified 60 percent threshold for identifying districts that are non-competitive. The question here is how does such a measure compare with the other more information intensive measures like the margin of victory or ENC.

Table 3. Comparison of Competitiveness Measures

Competitive 60% dummy	Metric	Winner's Vote Share	Margin of Victory	ENC (T)	ENC (D)
0	me	71.6%	44.5%	1.727	1.575
	sd	10.7%	18.6%	0.297	0.237
	min	60.0%	20.0%	1.000	1.000
	max	100.0%	100.0%	2.529	2.086
1	me	47.0%	13.2%	2.940	2.588
	sd	9.1%	9.5%	1.093	0.829
	min	15.8%	0.0%	1.924	1.796
	max	60.0%	48.1%	9.634	7.619

Source: CLE dataset containing a total of over 10,000 constituency-level observations (Brancati, 2007). $P < 0.10$, [**] $p < 0.05$, [***] $p < 0.01$

In non-competitive districts, i.e. the first four rows, the measures diverge a bit on the margin. For instance the number of effective candidates can be above two, even when using the adjusted version of ENC. On average, however, the effective number of candidates is less than 1.6 in these non-competitive districts. Also, the margin of victory can be as low as 20 percent, even if the district is non-competitive according to the 60 percent threshold. In well-established two-party systems, a margin of victory of 20 percent, as in one candidate getting 60 percent and the other 40, would indicate that competitiveness could be rated rather highly, however. This just goes to illustrate that these different measures are interrelated, but that they also capture slightly different dimensions of competitiveness.

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[64] Using winner's vote share/proportion of districts competitive (60 percent), in percent: Niger 45/94; Indonesia 40/89; and Turkey 30/100.
[65] For a correlation matrix of all the competitiveness measures see appendix II.

For our purposes the 60 percent threshold will suffice as the main measure of whether or not a district is competitive. Nonetheless, alternative cut offs and measures for the competitiveness dummy variable are also used as robustness checks. These include, other cut-offs levels for the winner's percentage vote share, a margin of victory cut-off at 50 percent, and ENC's around 1.5 or 1.7.

Case selection

As a first step in the empirical strategy, we need to sort out regimes that allow for competition from those that do not, i.e. distinguish autocratic conditions from democratic. This is important since we want to properly identify the population of competitive authoritarian states.

The problem here is that many of the existing measures conflate both institutional as well as electoral outcome variables into a single measure (Alvarez et al., 1996, Przeworski, 2000, Marshall et al., 2002, Kaufmann et al., 2007). One widely used minimalist operationalization of regime type is the ACPL democracy/autocracy dichotomy (Alvarez et al., 1996, Przeworski, 2000, Cheibub et al., 2010). Apart from whether or not executive and legislative elections are organized, this conceptualization also takes into consideration electoral outcomes in the sense of party pluralism, and more specifically in the alternation rule that requires the incumbents to have lost an election in order for the regime to qualify as a democracy.[66] As I want to separately analyze the preconditions from the actual election outcome, such an approach is not appropriate.

We need to find a measure of the conditions for electoral contestation. Therefore we need to consider a wider set of issues than merely whether or not elections are organized. We need to find an assessment of the structural conditions for contestation. One widely used conceptualization can be found in Polity IV, where a composite measure for *Institutionalized Autocracy* is provided. Here an additive autocracy scale is constructed based on both procedural features of the regime, like openness of executive recruitment and constraints on chief executive. The general idea is that 'autocracies sharply restrict or suppress competitive political participation' (Marshall et al., 2009). For our purposes, the sub-component *Competitiveness of Participation* is a parsimonious variable for identifying the pre-conditions for contestation.[67] This measure refers to the extent to which alternative preferences for

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[66] The same goes for the widely used five point ordinal variable *The Competitiveness of Participation* in the Polity dataset, see MARSHALL, M. G., JAGGERS, K. & GURR, T. R. (2002) Polity IV project: Political regime characteristics and transitions, 1800-2002. Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland College Park.
[67] This is the PARCOMP variable in the Polity IV data.

policy and leadership can be pursued in the political arena (Marshall et al., 2009). This is a five-point scale where regimes that repress and suppress competition are identified and separated out from cases that are factional, transitional, or competitive.

For the purposes of roughly dividing the world into two fundamentally different types of countries in terms of conditions for contestation, I could include all repressive and suppressive cases in the autocracy camp and all others as democracies. In this data, regimes that systematically harass political opposition are defined as suppressed (Marshall et al., 2009). An electoral outcome that is competitive under such circumstances is clearly puzzling. However, prohibiting contestation through repressive means is only one of many tools that autocrats use. A level playing field is not only a question of whether or not oppositional politicians are imprisoned, but also about the level of state intervention through the use of more subtle mechanisms like corruption and intimidation.

Freedom House provides a more comprehensive alternative in its political rights score. This measure takes into consideration, among other things, the quality of the electoral process, the right to organize, and governance (Freedom House, 2008).[68] These are for most parts procedural elements that come close to the concept of autocratic pre-conditions. Coding such a broad range of issues into a single variable allows for allegations about the reliability and subjectivity of the measure. Identifying whether or not a leading oppositional figure is in prison or not is clearly easier than judging the extent of government corruption. However, the good thing about the Freedom House political rights scale that it explicitly addresses both the formal and informal dimensions of a regime. Although Freedom House also publishes a civil liberties score that includes freedom of expression, individual rights, and rule of law, to mention a few components, these dimensions are even broader than the political rights score and can be more difficult to judge impartially. As a consequence, I do not use this measure.

For the purposes of categorizing the countries of the world I decided to go for a cut-off point of five on the Freedom House political rights scale to indicate whether the country is an autocracy, here understood as regime that does not allow for free and fair elections. Countries with a political rights score below five on the one to seven scale can be understood as *allowing for somewhat fair competition*, while countries with a score equal or larger than

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[68] The ratings process is based on a checklist of 10 political rights questions including three questions on the Electoral Process, four questions on Political Pluralism and Participation, and three questions on the Functioning of Government. Raw points are awarded to each of these questions on a scale of 0 to 4, where 0 points represents the smallest degree and 4 the greatest degree of rights or liberties present, see FREEDOM HOUSE (2008) Freedom in the world: Methodology (2008 edition). New York, Freedom House. Sub-components for the different dimensions of political rights have been published since 2005.

five do not.[69] Even with such a high threshold the autocracy category would include a few democracies, as defined by Przeworski et al.[70] If anything, this means that I underestimate the number of countries that do not allow for competition since these cases could be considered fulfilling the requirements for competition. Picking another cut-off point, say at four, would mean that an even higher share of autocracies could be considered democracies.[71] Since the interest here is in countries that really do not allow for free and fair competition, I would rather restrict my sample to cases that display severe limits political participation instead of including cases that could be considered democracies.

Examining the data using this new autocracy dummy, it turns out that since early 1970s around half of the countries in the world have at some point qualified for the label autocracy, as defined here.[72]

Now moving to the outcome variable, electoral competitiveness, it should be noted that developing a formal index of competitiveness in authoritarian states has been called for, none currently exists and cruder proxies must be used instead.[73] The simplest proxy is to measure the outcome variable of competitiveness by examining how fractional electoral support was in a country. Standard measures of competitiveness include margin of victory or *Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties* (Taagepera and Shugart, 1989, Franklin, 2004, Cox, 1987, Dunleavy and Boucek, 2003). Most people would agree that an election is competitive if the winning party receives less than half of the votes. The same goes for cases where the effective number of parties is above two.[74]

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[69] Here the variable is lagged by one year indicating the 'pre-existing' conditions for competition prior to an electoral cycle. Other scholars put the cut-off in a similar range: 'Generally, electoral authoritarian regimes range from 4.0 to 6.0 on the combined seven-point scale', see DIAMOND, L. (2002) Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy,* 13**,** 21-35.

[70] Less than two percent of the non-competitive country-election year observations are coded as democracies according to the rules by Przeworski. Such cases include Armenia (several years between 1991-2008), Kenya (1998-2001), Kyrgyzstan (2005-2008), and Nicaragua (1985-1989).

[71] Some actually operationalize *electoral authoritarian* regimes using the cut-off at 3 on the political rights scale, see SCHEDLER, A. (2009) Electoral authoritarianism. *The SAGE handbook of comparative politics***,** 381, HOWARD, M. M. & ROESSLER, P. G. (2006) Liberalizing electoral outcomes in competitive authoritarian regimes. *American Journal of Political Science,* 50**,** 365-381. This approach probably means that most European cases of early 'democracy' in the 20th century probably would not qualify as democracies.

[72] 137 out of 208 countries coded, a total of 2,754 country-year observations out of a total of 6,176. The 137 number is misleading though since some countries have been coded separately: both USSR and Russia; North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and Vietnam; etc.

[73] 'Although I do not use any mathematical formula to combine these three indicators and the Freedom House scores, a formal index of authoritarian competitiveness is worth developing', see DIAMOND, L. (2002) Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy,* 13**,** 21-35.

[74] This measure comes close to *The Competitiveness of Participation* in the Polity dataset, even if this measure includes a precondition (repression) and an outcome component, see MARSHALL, M. G., JAGGERS, K. & GURR, T. R. (2002) Polity IV project: Political regime characteristics and transitions, 1800-2002. Center for International Development and

Throughout the text I use several different thresholds of margin of victory to measure competitiveness, but a simple cut-off point at 60 percent is the primary one, because it is a measure that errs on the side of caution in terms of competitiveness. With this kind of dummy, the risk of false positives is relatively low since elections with the winners receiving less than 60 percent usually are rather competitive. A higher cut-off point, say at 70 or 75 percent would include cases that might not have been competitive.[75] A cut-off point at 60 percent exaggerates the number of non-competitive cases. An election in which the winner gets 61 percent would by this measure be considered non-competitive. This might be misleading especially in well-established two-party systems where one of the parties always gets more than half of the votes and often significantly more.[76] However, since the interest here is in authoritarian countries where party systems often are weakly developed the 60 percent cut-off serves as a simple proxy.

The main point is not to come up with the ultimate operationalization of competition nor of competitiveness, but rather to roughly identify the population of competitive authoritarian cases. The approach outlined above assigns the label 'authoritarian', and competitiveness in a cautious manner restricting the population to cases that are really authoritarian and really competitive. These cases are the most puzzling since competitiveness would be expected to be lower in cases that more fiercely resist liberalizing politics, i.e. in more authoritarian states.

There are some data issues that also need to be addressed. Official election results in non-democratic settings have been considered problematic since we do not know the extent to which they reflect popular preferences (Schedler, 2006). The issue here is that authorities tend to manipulate electoral processes. However, as I will argue, manipulation is not a 'tool' only available to authorities, but rather a technique used by incumbents and challengers alike. This means that elections in competitive authoritarian states are not as much about 'popular preferences' as about intra-elite competition. As I will show, elections turn competitive when challengers are sufficiently

Conflict Management at the University of Maryland College Park. 85 percent of the observations are classified as competitive or 'transitional' Polity. It has been suggested that the Non-competitiveness threshold in terms of *ENP* is around 1.7, see SCHEDLER, A. (2004) Degrees and patterns of party competition in electoral autocracies. Mexico City, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas.

[75] 70 percent is used in some studies, see HOWARD, M. M. & ROESSLER, P. G. (2006) Liberalizing electoral outcomes in competitive authoritarian regimes. *American Journal of Political Science,* 50**,** 365-381. Others use 75 percent, see DIAMOND, L. (2002) Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy,* 13**,** 21-35, BECK, T., CLARKE, G., GROFF, A., KEEFER, P. & WALSH, P. (2001) New tools in comparative political economy: The Database of Political Institutions. *The World Bank Economic Review,* 15**,** 165-176.

[76] In United States congressional elections the average winners' vote share is 65 percent with a mean *ENP* score of 1.87. More than half of the districts would be deemed non-competitive using a 60 percent threshold. Source: Constituency-Level Dataset, see BRANCATI, D. (2007) Constituency-level elections (CLE) dataset. Cambridge, Harvard University.

strong to balance the machinations of central authorities. Competitive elections in autocracies are thus not necessarily about 'democracy' as much as about 'oligopoly'.[77]

Competitiveness is a relational attribute, the relation between two or more competing parties or candidates. The focus should not be on the vote share of the opposition or the government, but instead on the relative distance between the winner and the loser in an election.[78] The problem with using vote share of the opposition as a measure of competitiveness is that the elections themselves could be uncompetitive if the opposition managed to win in a landslide. If this were to happen in an autocracy, it would not be an autocracy anymore, but rather a democracy since power is shifting through elections.[79]

Types of regimes

Let us now examine how autocracy and competitiveness are distributed globally. The purpose here is to identify the population of competitive authoritarian cases and to situate the case of Kyrgyzstan.

Having coded both competition and competitiveness for all the countries in the world since early 1970s, we can see that only a handful fall in the competitive authoritarian group, as defined here.[80] The pattern globally is clear. As tautological as it seems, countries that do not allow for fair competition are generally not competitive.[81] The pattern is the same even if we use a more inclusive definition of autocracy and competitiveness, with a cut-off point at four and a competitiveness threshold at 75 percent. On the other hand, in countries where competition is allowed a particular election outcome can be either competitive or not. On average though the average winner's vote share in autocracies, as defined by the author, is 84 percent, while in democracies it is 42 percent. Not surprisingly countries that allow for fair competition are more often competitive. However, in the most recent decade the number of competitive authoritarian regimes has increased to constitute seven percent of all election year observations, up from four percent in 1990 and less than one percent in the 1980s.[82]

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[77] This in turn comes close to Schumpeter's definition of democracy.
[78] Diamond considers the vote share of the President to be a 'clear sign of hegemony' the inverse being the vote share for the challenging presidential candidate, see DIAMOND, L. (2002) Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy,* 13**,** 21-35.
[79] This is equal to the 'alteration rule', see PRZEWORSKI, A. (2000) *Democracy and development: Political institutions and well-being in the world, 1950-1990,* New York, Cambridge University Press.
[80] For a full list of the cases of competitive authoritarianism, see appendix I.
[81] A cross-tabulation yields a Pearson X^2 of 324.78 and a probability of = 0.000.
[82] These figures might be skewed by data limitations the further back in history we go. For the 1980s there are only 141 country-election year observations, while in the 1990s 198 and in the 2000s 234.

Table 4. Regime Typology, Parliamentary Electoral Cycles, 1972-2009

DEMOCRACY
As an Institutional
Pre-Condition for Competitiveness

		No	Yes
COMPETITIVENNESS As an Electoral Outcome	No	Non-Competitive Authoritarian $N = 125$ Jordan (2007), Singapore (2006), Tunisia (2004)	Non-Competitive Democracy $N = 44$ Georgia (2008), Malaysia (2008), Namibia (2004)
	Yes	Competitive Authoritarian $N = 25$ Zimbabwe, (2004), Kyrgyzstan (2005), Cambodia (2008), Peru (2000)	Competitive Democracy $N = 443$ Argentina (2003), Mexico (2006), Ukraine (2007), Thailand (2005), Venezuela (2005)

Source: Database on Political Institutions, World Bank, December 2010 updated version (Beck et al., 2001). The unit (*N*) here is country-election year (legislative).
Note: Competition is here measured with a cut-off at five on the Freedom House political rights scare, with countries with a score of five or above being defined as authoritarian cases. This variable is here lagged with one year in order to capture the background conditions under which the elections were held. Competitiveness is a dummy indicating whether or not the largest party got less than 60 percent.[83] Country cases listed are selected from the most recent electoral cycles in the non-Western world and in a way that covers a broad geographical area.

The paradoxical cases are those in the lower left-hand corner, the cases of competitive authoritarianism. In these cases, the winning party's vote share is 40 percent on average and the second best performing party gets almost a quarter of the votes.[84] The *Effective Number of Parties* is above four confirming a high degree of vote dispersion.

In studying the phenomenon of competitive elections in authoritarian settings, there are several central variables that we need to account for. The objective in this study is to provide a detailed analysis of a particular case that could enable further development of theories of elections in authoritarian states. In order to achieve this, we need to go beyond aggregate level measures of questionable validity and reliability and select a representative case of competitive authoritarianism.

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[83] Using the 50 percent threshold leaves out Ghana 2008 and Kenya 2007 from the competitive category, which is clearly misleading. But using a higher threshold of say 66 percent would include many non-competitive cases in the competitive category.
[84] See appendix I.

The case of Kyrgyzstan

The rationale for studying a single country in great detail is that one can control for certain structural features like electoral system and leadership qualities of the president more easily. Furthermore a focus on candidates as actors requires a more data intensive approach that cannot be replicated in other countries due to financial and time constraints. When selecting Kyrgyzstan as the primary case the rationale was two-pronged. First, the post-Soviet region was identified as overrepresented in the competitive authoritarian category.[85] Second, Kyrgyzstan was identified as a solidly authoritarian case with a political rights score of six and consistently high levels of competitiveness irrespective of the operationalization and the data source. Therefore there cannot be any doubt about Kyrgyzstan being both autocratic and competitive, which is exactly the kind of case that we want to study. Third, borrowing from modernization theory Kyrgyzstan can also be considered one of the least likely cases of competitiveness due to it being one of the poorest, least educated, least industrialized, and most distant former Soviet republics.[86]

The fact that all 15 non-Baltic former Soviet republics have so many commonalities due to 70 years of Soviet rule also makes this an ideal sub-set for comparisons. There are important legacies in terms of party systems, electoral systems, security apparatuses, and overall administrative procedures that we can control for. Even if the region contains many competitive authoritarian regimes, it also provides sufficient variation on our dependent variable *electoral competitiveness*. Consequently, there are both competitive and non-competitive cases in this region, as well as democratic and authoritarian cases.

Examining electoral competitiveness in the post-Soviet region in the 2003-2007 electoral cycle reveals that the largest party's share of the seats has been over 50 percent, on average. The data on vote shares and seat shares is problematic though due to the number of un-affiliated 'independent' candidates. In any case, Kyrgyzstan does seem to be very competitive in 2005 with the largest party receiving less than a third of the seats. Before I evaluate whether this correctly reflects sub-national level patterns, I want to present aggregate level measure for the other post-Soviet cases in Central Eurasia, all of whom can be considered good reference cases due to 70 years of Soviet rule.

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[85] Constituting 20 percent of the competitive authoritarian cases, see appendix I.
[86] From a Western perspective that is.

Table 5. Comparison of Aggregate and District Level Measures, Eurasia, 2003-2007

Country and Year	Political Rights	Largest Party (% seats)	SMD Winner's Vote Share (mean)	ENC (D) per SMD (mean)
Armenia 2003	4	25.2%	.	.
Armenia 2007	5	48.9%	46.4%	1.88
Azerbaijan 2005	6	48.8%	49.2%	3.01
Belarus 2004	6	89.1%	73.9%	1.79
Georgia 2003	4	25.3%	54.7%	2.94
Kazakhstan 2004	6	54.5%	.	.
Kazakhstan 2007	6	100%	n/a	n/a
Kyrgyzstan 2005	**6**	**29.3%**	**47.2%**	**2.80**
Kyrgyzstan 2007	5	78.9%	.	.
Moldova 2005	3	55.4%	n/a	n/a
Russia 2003	5	49.6%	41.7%	3.88
Russia 2007	6	70.0%	n/a	n/a
Tajikistan 2005	6	87.3%	77.2%	1.48
Ukraine 2002	4	49.8%	35.7%	.
Ukraine 2006	3	41.3%	47.8%	3.06
Ukraine 2007	3	38.9%	n/a	n/a
Uzbekistan 2004	7	34.2%	.	.
Total	4.94	54.5%	52.7%	2.60

Source: Central Election Commissions, IFES, and IPU.
Note: The Political Rights (Freedom House) score is from the year prior to the election. Seat share for the largest party calculated based on the official results reported immediately after the elections. For Belarus where the president does not officially have his own party the 'Independents' category was used as the 'largest party'. Sub-national statistics are only presented for the SMD component in mixed systems. N/a indicates that there was no SMD component in the elections

In selecting a case for a detailed study, I wanted to pick a case that showed all the signs of fierce and 'real' electoral competitiveness. This can be defined as a case with consistently high measures of competitiveness. I also wanted to pick a regime that was solidly in the authoritarian camp. The regime type in Kyrgyzstan prior to the 2005 elections cannot be described as anything but authoritarian. A political rights score of six on the one to seven Freedom House scale since 2000 clearly indicate that the authorities had no intention of allowing for free and fair contestation. In Russia in 2003 for instance, where competitiveness was also seemingly high, the political rights score was five.[87] In a global comparison with regimes that have a score of six or seven on the political rights scale Kyrgyzstan turns out to be one of the

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[87] And in 2007 when Russia had an even worse political rights score the electoral system switched to PR, which again, does not allow for the same kind of local mechanisms as a SMD system.

most competitive cases.[88] Countries with six or seven on the political rights scale post a winner's vote share averaging 90 percent, while in Kyrgyzstan the winner's share has consistently been below 50 percent.[89]

Focusing on the SMD component of legislative elections in the region allows us to assess the validity of aggregate level measures and the importance of sub-unit analysis. Competitiveness is predictably rather low in the most authoritarian cases. But even in these cases there are 'pockets of competitiveness'. Interestingly, in Tajikistan there were at least two candidates in all of the 41 SMDs, but the winner got a majority of the votes in all but one SMD. In Belarus on the other hand, there were only two districts where the winner got less than half of the votes. In these two least competitive countries the aggregate level measures and district level measures thus seem to correspond.

In other cases competitiveness was consistently measured as high, even if 'pockets of non-competitiveness' existed. For instance, three out of the 75 SMDs in Kyrgyzstan had only one candidate. And in Georgia two of the 75 SMDs had only one candidate and in seven other districts the winner got more than 90 percent. In Russia in 2003, on the other hand not a single district had only one candidate and no winner got more than 82 percent.

There is also a surprising case of high competitiveness where the national level results seem to indicate non-competitiveness. Examining SMDs suggests that Azerbaijan in 2005 was very competitive with the average winner's vote share being less than 50 percent and 20 MPs out of 114 got elected with less than a third of the vote. This is truly remarkable considering that in terms of democratic credentials Azerbaijan always performs poorly. Azerbaijan therefore is a good reference case for the study of competitive authoritarianism.

District level competitiveness in Kyrgyzstan

In the case of Kyrgyzstan in 2005 the effective number of candidates was distributed geographically in the 75 single-member districts in a manner summarized by Map 1.

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[88] 'Regimes closer to the less repressive score (4.0) allow more political pluralism and civic space, and hence are more likely to be competitive authoritarian' DIAMOND, L. (2002) Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy,* 13**,** 21-35.
[89] According to Database on Political Institutions BECK, T., CLARKE, G., GROFF, A., KEEFER, P. & WALSH, P. (2001) New tools in comparative political economy: The Database of Political Institutions. *The World Bank Economic Review,* 15**,** 165-176.

Map 1. Effective Number of Candidates (ENC) per SMD, February 2005

ENC per SMD
(3.41,5.96] (18)
(2.67,3.41] (19)
(2.13,2.67] (19)
[1.07,2.12] (19)
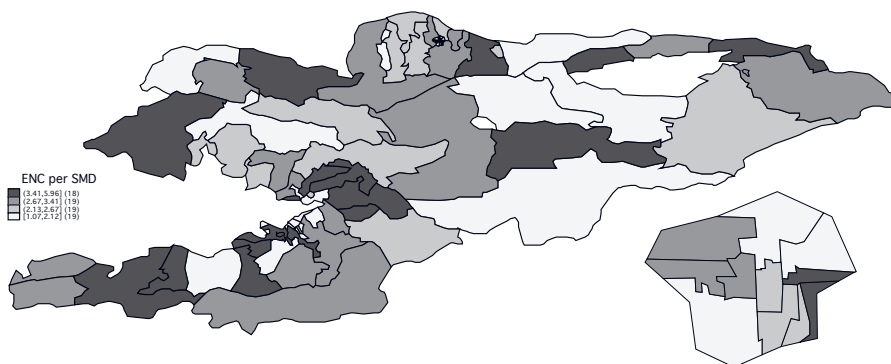
Source: Central Election Commission, Kyrgyzstan. Boundaries for SMDs were drawn by the author using ArcGIS.
Note: ENC (D) used. The districts in the capital city of Bishkek are shown as a separate graphic in the lower right-hand corner. The clear white area in the upper right-hand corner is Lake Issyk-Kul and not a district.

Here we can see that non-competitive and competitive districts were spread out all over the country. In the southwestern parts of the country surrounding Uzbekistan and the Fergana valley, there are a lot of SMDs with many effective candidates.

When talking about the structure of competition we are interested in the dispersion element. This fractionalization measure is naturally very useful when analyzing relationship to other forms of fractionalization, for instance ethnic or tribal fractionalization.

Kyrgyzstan data reliability and validity

For the purposes of this study I will use five main sources of information: official election results, public candidate information, representative candidate survey, interviews, and journalistic accounts. In a poor autocracy, data availability is a pressing concern. In the comparative politics literature on the region there is not a single quantitative study on elections, which is at least partly a function of data scarcity. In addition, politics was long considered to be almost exclusively of an informal type in the region and therefore difficult to quantify.

Official electoral returns

Even if multi-party elections have been conducted in the region since 1990, not a single study has used election results for hypothesis testing. In this section I will show that official election results in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 provide a unique window into the workings of competitive authoritarian elections. The official results actually tell us something substantive about what is going on at the polling station on Election Day.

This is not to say that votes in non-democracies really reflect the 'will of the people'. In some cases electoral returns are not a good gauge of popular preferences, but rather of inter-elite balances of power. Resourceful local level elites mediate election results in competitive authoritarian states. More often than not, voters are tied up in patron-client relationships that structure voting behavior and leaves little room for individual preferences.

The good thing about the case of Kyrgyzstan is that in the post Tulip Revolution period in the spring of 2005 the new rulers allowed for the publication of a book containing a lot of information about election observation, campaign funding, district boundaries, district level results, court cases etc (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 2006). In an interview with the person in charge of the information department at the CEC at the time revealed that the logic of this transparency effort was at least partly to illustrate how corrupt the electoral process was under President Akaev.[90] It turns out, however, that Kyrgyzstan had published similar reports after the 1995 and the 2000 elections (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 2006, Tsentralnaya Komissia, 2001, Tsentralnaya Komissia, 1996).

There are several ways to validate officially reported election statistics. Lately the use of statistical assumptions about the distribution of digits has emerged as a straightforward, albeit limited, tool in electoral forensics (Beber and Scacco, 2008, Mebane, 2010, Mebane and Kalinin, 2009). The idea here is that the digits in the vote totals reported for any party should follow a particular distribution if not falsified. For instance if there are a lot more zeroes, ones, and fives reported for any party it raises doubts about whether there was interference by election officials in the tabulation of votes.

This technique requires disaggregated polling station level data, which tends not to be published in authoritarian states. There is not such data for the 2005 elections in Kyrgyzstan. Actually the only two cases of complete transparency in terms of the results were the 'first ever democratic' elections in Kyrgyzstan in October 2010 and the not so democratic parliamentary elections in neighboring Kazakhstan in August 2007.[91] Analysis of the frequency

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[90] Interview, Nina Mukhina, Bishkek, August 3, 2007.
[91] These two cases are the only two known to the author. In the Kazakhstan case the disaggregated results were later taken down from the CEC website and in the April 2011 presidential elections no detailed results were made public.

of the second and last digit supports the thesis that the 2010 elections in Kyrgyzstan were less fraudulent than the 2007 elections in Kazakhstan (Sjoberg, 2011). An examination of the aggregate SMD level data for all the candidates in the 2005 elections in Kyrgyzstan, including the 'against all' category, indicate that there are some irregularities in how the second digit is distributed.[92]

Another way to validate official election results is the use of parallel vote tabulation (PVT) by domestic observers or exit polls. In the case of Kyrgyzstan at the time of the 2005 election there was a well-established domestic umbrella organization of NGOs called Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society (*Koalitsia* for short).[93] For the 2005 elections they mobilized almost 1,300 observers spread to cover a majority of the 75 Single-Member Districts in the country and on average over three quarters of the polling stations.[94] No data from their PVT was ever compiled centrally, but the author obtained data on the types of procedural violations for 33 districts.

The elections were also observed by an international election observation mission from the Warsaw based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, a branch of the Organization for Security and Development in Europe (OSCE). There were a total of 175 short-term observers scattered throughout the country covering 65 of the 75 SMDs and a total of 707 polling stations on Election Day. In total these observers covered almost 40 percent of the polling stations.

Interestingly, there is a huge discrepancy between how the general public perceived of the elections and how international observers assessed the process on Election Day. While 76 percent of respondents in a post-revolutionary survey on April 2005 considered the elections as having been unfair, less than 15 percent of the international observers gave an overall assessment of 'bad' or 'very bad' (IRI, 2005).[95]

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[92] The distribution deviates from the expected Benford's distribution, with a Pearson's X^2 p-value of 0.0285. There is no indication of fraud if only the last digit is examined.

[93] Short from *Koalitsiya Za Demokratiyu i Grazhdanskoe Obshchestvo.*

[94] See table. According to official CEC data *Koalitsia* only had observers in 46 SMDs, see TSENTRALNAYA KOMISSIA, P. V. (2006) *Vibori Deputatov Jogorku Kenesha Kirgiskoi Respubliki: Tsifri i fakti 2005,* Bishkek, Tsentralnaya Komissia pa Viboram i Provedeniyu Referendumov Kirgiskoi Respubliki (Central Election Commission). The NGO *Koalitsia*, in its own documentation indicates that they observed 60 SMDs.

[95] On the aggregate (country) level 37 percent consider elections as having been 'completely unfair', while 39 percent only 'unfair'.

Table 6. Observer Coverage and Attitudes About Fairness of Elections (in %), 2005

Topic	All	Bish-kek	Chui	Issyk-Kul	Na-ryn	Talas	Jalal-abad	Osh	Bat-ken
Domestic obs. (% of ps)	77.3	90.9	83.3	95.5	88.6	86.4	77.4	52.7	80.5
Internat. obs. (% of ps)	37.7	99.0	35.6	26.7	32.6	20.6	17.1	29.1	28.4
Fair (survey)	22.0	14.0	26.0	19.0	13.0	29.0	35.0	18.0	25.0
Unfair (survey)	76.0	82.0	71.0	80.0	87.0	71.0	64.0	82.0	73.0
Good elections (osce)	86.6	87.9	91.1	96.0	88.3	89.7	88.4	74.5	95.2
Very bad elect. (osce)	8.7	11.6	8.4	2.7	12.0	10.3	10.6	9.8	2.0

Source: Substantial assessments from the International Election Observation Mission (Odihr EOM) and survey data from IRI, April 2005.
Note: All figures are percentages. First two rows indicate the proportion (%) of polling stations observed by domestic and international. The rest of the table is based on public opinion survey data and OSCE observer assessments.

With respect to potential electoral fraud, there is also no correspondence between where the revolution started, Jalalabad, and the level of 'unfairness' reported by the general public. But in data from the domestic observers on the degree of explicit falsification efforts the two worst performing SMDs were indeed located in Jalalabad *oblast'*.

Finally, if the official CEC data was completely fabricated then we would not be able to explain the variation in terms of individual level vote share performance nor district level dynamics. As I will show, electoral dynamics can be studied with standard quantitative techniques, even if the context is authoritarian. This illustrates that election results are not 'completely fabricated', but rather reflect district level characteristics and the composition of individual candidates.

Furthermore, if the results were completely falsified by President Akaev and his administration then competitiveness would probably have been seriously suppressed. As it happened, in most of the 75 districts the reported votes led to a second round of elections. The second round turned out to be detrimental to the incumbent Akaev regime in that it provided a platform for sustained political mobilization around the country.[96] This line of reasoning does not mean that the campaigning was free and fair, it only stipulates that the officially reported votes largely reflect the ballots cast regardless of how the ballots ended up in the box.

Candidate profiles

The study of individual candidate attributes and its relationship with electoral performance is a well-established approach in the political science lit-

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[96] As I will show in the concluding chapter.

erature, especially in the field of American politics (Abramowitz, 1988, Epstein and Zemsky, 1995, Ansolabehere et al., 2001, Niemi et al., 1992). In studies of other industrialized countries the focus is more often on political parties, ideology, and policy differences (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967a, Mair, 1997). Data on the political background of candidates has also been used in the post-communist sphere (Hale, 2005c, Moser, 1999b, Golosov, 1999, Likhtenchtein and Yargomskaya, 2005).

For the purposes of this study a database was constructed with all 429 candidates that registered to run in the 2005 legislative elections by February 2005.[97] Out of these only 389 eventually participated in the elections according to the official results published by the Central Election Commission (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 2006).

One of this study's key variables, pro-presidential orientation, is somewhat difficult to determine in the context of the Kyrgyzstan party system circa 2005. Political parties did not technically nominate most of these candidates, largely due to the fact that registration of a candidacy was easier if registered as a 'self-nominated' (*samovydzheniya kandidatura*) candidate.

Indeed, out of the total of over six hundred candidates that were nominated by the January 18th deadline, political parties at national conventions nominated 227. Many of the candidates nominated later withdrew or failed to complete the registration, which entailed submitting documents to the district (SMD) level election committee. Three oppositional parties that had nominated a total of 125 candidates failed to register a single candidate, while the pro-presidential parties *Alga Kyrgyzstan* (Forward Kyrgyzstan) and *Adilet* (Fairness) managed to register most of their candidates. Party affiliation of candidates was recorded by the Central Election Committee (CEC) and verified by data from domestic observers.[98]

Incumbency was coded by using CEC data from previous election years (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 2001, Tsentralnaya Komissia, 1996). A database with all candidates from the 1995, 2000, and 2005 legislative elections was compiled containing close to 2,000 election year candidates names.[99] For incumbency and previous electoral success this larger database was consulted.

In terms of work related experience candidates were coded as belonging to one of the following categories, adopted from previous work on post-Soviet elites (Hughes, 2001). Table 7 shows the frequency of these categories in the CEC data.

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[97] According to the OSCE there were 425 registered, see OSCE (2005a) Kyrgyzstan 2005 Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.
[98] The NGO *Koalitsia* provided a list of candidates and party affiliations.
[99] Names not unique since many candidates ran more than once.

Table 7. Professional Categories Coding Scheme

11-Point Professional Category	Freq.	Percent
Political leaders	63	14.7%
Administrative managers	56	13.1%
Interest group officials	17	4.0%
Economic leaders	116	27.0%
Middle managers	30	7.0%
Employees and workers	20	4.7%
Professional leaders	19	4.4%
Professionals	7	1.6%
Marginals	29	6.8%
Political officials	3	0.7%
Administrative officials	32	7.5%
Other	37	8.6%
Total	429	100%

Source: Central Election Commission candidate registration data, provided by *Koalitsia*.
Note: Coded by author together with assistants.

The political leaders group includes Member of Parliament (MP); the administrative managers include higher-level state officials; administrative officials include lower level government officials; economic leaders include directors of state and private enterprises; middle managers include deputy directors down to section heads of enterprises.

Having experience from the private sector does not tell us much about the financial position of the candidate though. In a country like Kyrgyzstan where public records on taxation and income are scarce and incomplete, we have to rely on subjective assessments of personal wealth. The best available measure of whether a candidate was rich or not is a widely published list of the 100 richest persons in Kyrgyzstan, compiled by a local news portal one year prior to the 2005 parliamentary elections.[100] The 2004 list was the second time the list was published. The publishers are known for being serious investigative journalists. In terms of methodology, first the newspaper asked readers to submit proposals for the richest individuals. After half a year a short list was produced, which then was examined by a panel of experts. Over a thousand names were on the list originally, but only the top 100 were published.[101] 46 of the 389 candidates that eventually participated in the election were on this list (12 percent). The names on the list appear in alphabetical order and there is no ranking of wealth among the names on the list. Apart from the full name there is a short note about the profile of the person, for example indicating the type of business they are involved in.

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[100] See STAMOV, A. (2004) 100 Samykh Bogatykh Lyudei Kyrgyzstana 2004 Goda (The 100 Richest People in Kyrgyzstan). *Ferghana*. Osh, akipress.kg. The name of the author is most likely a pseudonym.
[101] I was not able to obtain the short-list containing all 1000 names.

In addition to these data sources, the ethnicity of the candidates was also coded by examining the name of the candidates. In general Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Slavic, and Korean names are fairly easy to distinguish. Local assistants did the coding, and the results were checked in a random fashion by the author.

Candidate survey and other interview data

Coding candidates based on available data sources is insufficient for the purposes of this study. Therefore I also conducted a candidate survey in a random selection of SMDs for the 2005 elections.

Overview

Sample selection was carried out through a random selection of Single-Member Districts (SMD) in the February 2005 Parliamentary Elections in Kyrgyzstan. All the candidates in the selected SMDs constituted the sample from which interviews were sought. The sample population is defined as all candidates that officially registered to run in parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. In the randomly selected SMDs there were a total of 263 candidates out of which 62 were interviewed making the response rate 24 percent. In addition I decided to backtrack and interview candidates in the randomly selected SMDs for earlier elections (2000 and 1995) as well. We also ended up using the questionnaire for candidates interviewed from non-randomly selected districts.

A total of 160 candidate interviews were conducted, a third by the author and the rest by local assistants. All the interviews were conducted in the spring and summer of 2008. Roughly half of the conducted interviews focused on the 2005 elections and the other half focused on the two previous electoral cycles (1995 and 2000)

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was constructed partly based on the previous experience of similar surveys (Hughes, 1997). The questionnaire contained 41 questions of which 15 were open-ended and 26 were multiple-choice questions.[102] There were also two additional 'commentary' type questions, where the interviewer noted the respondent's attitude towards certain questions. The questionnaire was prepared together with a local polling agency, Siar-Bishkek, a leading agency that has worked with the World Bank, UNDP, and NDI. Interviews were conducted in Russian or Kyrgyz. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face and the duration of the interviews was an hour on average.

Getting the candidates to agree to an interview was not always easy. This is partly due to intensifying political intimidation in the spring of 2008, right

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[102] For full list of questions, see appendix IV.

after the fraudulent pre-term parliamentary elections of December 2007 (OSCE, 2008). Furthermore some of the questions asked were of a sensitive nature, e.g. questions about identity politics and kinship networks. Local assistants entered the data from the interviews directly into an Internet based database allowing for continuous real time checks by the author.

Sample

In order to get a regionally representative sample of SMDs I generated a regionally stratified random sample. There are nine administrative regions (*oblast'*) or cities with equivalent status in Kyrgyzstan, and I randomly selected SMDs in all nine *oblast'* (regions). The total number of SMDs in the 2005 elections was 75, of which 40 were selected.[103]

Additionally, interviews using the same questionnaire were also conducted in five non-random SMDs that were of a particular interest for the argument. For instance, a clan prone mountainous district in the south, *Kara-Kulja* and a few other districts were added.[104] Whenever the candidate survey data is analyzed these non-random districts are not included.

Furthermore, in the selected SMDs, we decided to include all the by-elections that had been organized in the period 1995-2007.

Table 8. Number of Candidate Survey Interviews per Election Year

Election year	Frequency	Percent
1990	1	0.6%
1995	36	22.5%
2000	33	20.6%
2002	1	0.6%
2005	73	45.6%
2006	7	4.4%
2007	9	5.6%
Total	160	100%

Note: includes both random and non-random interviews.

All in all, we conducted 73 interviews with candidates from the February 2005 elections, which constitute 20 percent of the total number of candidates running that year. Only 62 of the candidates interviewed focusing on the 2005 elections were from randomly selected SMDs. This constitutes the sample that most of the analysis in this book is based on. Whenever I use interview results from the non-random portion of the sample I indicate this in the text.

Note that many of the candidates interviewed participated in several elections. However, each interview focused exclusively on a specific pre-

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[103] In cases where the number of SMDs per *oblast'* was uneven we selected at least half, i.e. in Talas there were three SMDs and we selected two of them.
[104] More about the selection rationale for these non-randomly selected SMDs later.

determined election. If we were to consider each time the respondent's took part in an election as the as a case in itself, we would have a 75% higher sample, a total of 282. In some cases the interviewer was able to focus on several years in one and the same interview.

The ethnic distribution among the respondents is largely proportional to the distribution in the population of candidates. 86 percent of all the candidates in the 2005 elections were Kyrgyz, while the Uzbek and Russian minorities constituted six percent each. In all of the 160 interviews collected the proportion of Kyrgyz is 91 percent, a number that goes down to 85 if only the random sample for 2005 is used.[105]

For the 2005 elections the population distribution in terms of gender was 90% male and 10% female. Our 2005 random sample slightly over-represents female candidates, with 15 percent being female, but in the 2000 and 1995 sample the number of interviewed females is substantially lower which means that the total sample (1995-2005) roughly reflects the population distribution.

Other interviews

The author also conducted 161 other interviews with stakeholders: bureaucrats, party members, NGO activists, journalists, and academics.

Table 9. Number of Other Interviews (non survey)

Region	Total interviews	Share of total
Batken	5	3.1%
Bishkek	69	42.9%
Chui	0	0.0%
Issyk-Kul	15	9.3%
Jalalabad	8	5.0%
Naryn	9	5.6%
Osh	27	16.8%
Osh City	23	14.3%
Talas	5	3.1%
Total	161	100%

As is often the case in a country like Kyrgyzstan where most of the political elites have a Bishkek address the number of interviews in the capital city far exceeds interviews elsewhere. This problem was consciously addressed by conducting the candidate survey in a random selection of districts all over

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[105] In a country as a whole there were 65 percent Kyrgyz, 14 percent Uzbek, 13 percent Russian, and a significant group of other ethnicities at the time of the first post-independence census REPUBLIC, T. N. S. C. O. T. K. (1999) Results of the First National Population Census of the Kyrgyz Republic of 1999. Bishkek, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

the country. The non-survey interviews are used to give background information and as anecdotal evidence on a particular subject.

Model specification

As a first step I construct a candidate-level model that seeks to explain individual level electoral performance. This is a necessary first step in determining what individual level characteristics affect electoral performance. Here the vote share of candidates is the dependent variable. After this, I model district (SMD) level competitiveness as a function of the configuration of different candidates per district. Below I address model specifications, the assumptions, and the functional form of the variables. More details will follow in the empirical chapters.

Candidate model

There are several challenges in using individual vote shares as the dependent variable in electoral studies. First of all, vote share is not theoretically unbounded since each candidate's vote share by necessity lies between 0 and 1. If much of the data is close to the bounds, as often happens in authoritarian settings, this will produce biased estimates.

Secondly, the assumption about statistical independence of observations is violated since the vote share of one candidate depends on the vote share of other candidates. Clearly the proportions for all candidates in a district must sum up to 1.

I will use a classical linear regression model where adjustments are made to the dependent variable and to the type of variance estimator. The problem of a bounded dependent variable is avoided by transforming it into a log-ratio using the natural logarithm of the ratio candidate vote share to the vote share received by all other candidates. Using a robust variance estimator clustered around election districts can solve the problem of non-independence in terms of vote shares per district. This compromise takes into account the fact that observations, here candidates' vote shares, are independent across SMDs but not within SMDs. In addition, a control for the number of candidates per district is included.

Model

A model is by necessity 'false' in the sense of never perfectly being able to represent complex real-world phenomena. However, statistical models provide a useful window through which we can increase our understanding of complex social realities. Model specification is the art of formalizing what a good model would look like given the specific object of study.

The equation for the candidate level model is,

$$Y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{ij1} + ... + \beta_k X_{ijk} + \varepsilon_{ij} \qquad [1]$$

where Y is the proportion of the vote for candidate i in district j.[106] The subscript k indicates the number of independent variables or regressors. The hypothesis that will be tested concern the three main sources of 'electoral power' at the district level: state affiliation, financial resources, and ethnic/kinship group proportion. The model we want to test can be simplified to,

$$Votes = \alpha + \beta_1 State + \beta_2 Market + \beta_3 Society + \varepsilon \qquad [2]$$

where state is measured by pro-presidential party orientation, market is measured by financial resources, and society is measured by a district level variable for the numerical strength of a candidate's ethnicity or kinship group. All of these main sets of variables will be further elaborated in the following chapters.

Finally, for some of the analysis at the candidate level I will deploy a binary logistic regression model where the interest is in the probability of being elected,

$$logit(\pi_{ij}) = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{ij} + ... + \beta_k X_{ijk} + \varepsilon_{ij} \qquad [3]$$

where we model the logit of the probability π of being elected for each candidate $(i, ..., n)$ in each district $(j, ..., 75)$. The estimator here is not OLS, but rather Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE).

District model

Ultimately the interest is in election districts as the unit of analysis. The candidate model is intended to establish which candidate level attributes are associated with higher vote shares and this insight will consequently be utilized to model district level dynamics. The interest here is in district level competitiveness, which can be understood as a continuum or as a binary categorical variable.

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[106] Actually the specific form of Y is given by, $\log(v/(1-v))$, where v is vote share for a particular candidate in a district.

This can be estimated using an OLS method,

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{i1} + \ldots + \beta_k X_{ik} + \varepsilon_i \qquad [4]$$

where Y is the competitiveness of district i ($i = 1, \ldots, 75$), and X_k is a collection of k independent variables. In the district model we also control for the number of candidates per district.

Hypothesis testing strategy

The following three chapters are structured around the three central sets of hypotheses for explaining electoral returns in autocracies: state, market, and society. Empirical testing will be conducted in stages beginning with the default model of the state as an electoral actor in autocracies. Any study of elections in a non-democracy should arguably account for the role that state institutions play in electoral dynamics. After having tested for state explanations both at the individual candidate level and the districts level, I add on market and society variables in the following two chapters. The model is thereby cumulatively built until we reach the full model in chapter seven.

The logic here is that the state is the default favorite to win and monopolize electoral support in an autocracy. After having established the specific role of the state in the Kyrgyzstan 2005 elections, we turn to the role of the most resource-laden alternative elites, market actors. Economically autonomous actors might be the only ones that can credibly challenge candidates sanctioned by an autocratic state. Finally, in the chapter about the role of societal ties we build on the findings in the state and market chapters and specify an alternative explanation examining district level societal fractionalization in terms of clan. The analysis always begins with the candidate level explanations and after having established this I move to specific district level hypotheses and tests.

Chapter 4: The Role of The State in Authoritarian Elections

The state is a central actor in elections all over the world. In mature democracies the state and its governing institutions make sure that elections are free and fair. In autocracies the role of the state is rather different. In an electoral cycle autocrats use state institutions to reduce the unpredictability associated with elections. In single member districts it is indeed very beneficial for an individual candidate to be associated with the power structures of the ruling elites. In general, state sanctioned candidates perform well, and this in turn tends to reduce competitiveness.

The role of state institutions in the transformation of the societies in Eurasia during the Soviet times was unprecedented. The capacity of the communist state apparatus depended heavily on coercion or the threat thereof. But the state also possessed infrastructural capacity to deliver public goods even to the most peripheral parts of the Union. This is of special relevance to Central Asia, where the communist era significantly modernized societies through education, industrialization, and infrastructure projects, large and small. The techniques that the Soviet state used to maintain order included both sticks and carrots. Sticks, in the sense of an ever-vigilant security apparatus that reached all corners of the Union. Disloyal behavior was severely punished. But state institutions also delivered direct benefits, 'carrots', to its citizens in the form of employment, public services, and the like. These very same 'techniques' continued to be used by state affiliated elites after the break-up of the Soviet Union.

In this chapter I will examine the electoral effects of state affiliation for both individual level electoral performance and district level performance. Candidates have rarely been studied in the post-Soviet space, even though arguably they constitute key actors in, often elite-led, mobilizations. The first section examines some overall patterns of competitiveness in Kyrgyzstan for the highest legislative body *Jogorku Kenesh*. After this follows a study of candidate typologies and individual level electoral performance in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. The final section examines election district (SMD) level dynamics explicitly.

Election districts in Kyrgyzstan

Elections have consistently been very competitive in one of the poorest and least likely cases for competitive politics in the post-communist area of Eurasia – Kyrgyzstan. Examining sub-national level data over time for Kyrgyzstan, it turns out that elections have been fiercely competitive ever since independence in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse. In the first ever parliamentary elections in independent Kyrgyzstan in 1995 there were on average almost nine candidates per district. The average winner's vote share was 38 percent and the *Effective Number of Parties* (or candidates) per districts was almost five. This is especially interesting since some leading scholars consider Kyrgyzstan to have been non-competitive in the early 1990s (Levitsky and Way, 2010).[107] Elections on the district level in Kyrgyzstan have been consistently competitive ever since the first multiparty elections were organized in 1995. Even after President Akaev started the phase of authoritarian consolidation, competitiveness remained high.[108] In the 2000 parliamentary elections, the average winners' vote share was still only 44 percent and the effective number of candidates per district was nearly four.

An assumption in my work is that elections in most authoritarian states are never completely falsified, in that completely fabricating electoral returns should not be possible. Some authoritarian regimes are very skillful in terms of completely controlling the electoral process, like Belarus or Uzbekistan, putting a lot of effort into making sure only certain kinds of candidates register to run.[109] While other authoritarian regimes do their best to control the process, or at least the outcome, they cannot completely rein in competitiveness. In these cases I argue that election results to a large extent reflect the bargaining power of each of the actors involved. In many authoritarian settings, local elites are simply too weak to balance the machinations of the repressive and cunning central state and its local allies, whereas in others they are more able to do so. Consequently, if the reported vote totals do not roughly correspond to votes cast, it is simply because a candidate was not able to defend her votes.

Local level election officials responsible for the execution of the election are rational human beings. They might have a mandate to deliver a certain result, but they do consider the costs associated with such an endeavor. Elections in Kyrgyzstan clearly illustrate this dynamic. When local non-state

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[107] Later in the decade Kyrgyzstan was labeled as a *Hegemonic Electoral Authoritarian* regime type, even if the average *Effective Number of Parties* per SMD was around three in the 2000 parliamentary elections, see DIAMOND, L. (2002) Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy,* 13**,** 21-35.

[108] As evidence for 'authoritarian consolidation' a quick glance at the Freedom House's political rights score tells us that the country went from a score of four in 1995 to six in 2000.

[109] This goes for all regimes with a score of seven on the political rights scale.

elites are strong and mobilized it becomes too costly for the ruler to completely neglect their strength. Admittedly, autocrats do in some instances simply decide to deliver a preferred result irrespective of the cost. This is especially so if the challengers are openly hostile to the autocrat. But only a foolish ruler would completely ignore the prospect of the backlash that such machinations could provoke. This means that in most cases, at the minimum, reported election results correspond to the intentions of district level power brokers, if not voters themselves.

The international context in 2003-2005 in the post-Soviet space was one of 'Colored Revolutions', but no one was seriously predicting a fundamental loss for President Akaev in Kyrgyzstan. The parliamentary elections in the spring of 2005 came during a period of increasing authoritarian tendencies. Akaev had all the incentives in the world to deliver a loyal body of MPs, but the elections instead ended up triggering a 'revolution'. Around the date of the first round there was certainly no unified and strong opposition political party challenging central authorities. What unfolded in the wake of the first round of elections remains a puzzle to this date.[110] The election itself was probably, from a procedural point of view, the best so far, even if it was still far from 'free and fair'. It is notable that a lot of the post-election mobilization took place in districts where incumbents or otherwise resource-laden candidates had lost a seat.

As already indicated in the previous chapter the 2005 *Jogorku Kenesh* elections in the first round were competitive all over the country. As a matter of fact, there were only a few districts that seem to have been completely non-competitive. What is even more striking in many of the districts where the winner got an overwhelming majority the orientation of the candidate was not necessarily pro-government. This seems to indicate that Akaev did indeed have trouble delivering for his own preferred candidates.

Again, the purpose of the study is to explain electoral *Competitiveness* on the district level in Kyrgyzstan. Most countries in the post Cold War era organize regular elections but the differences lie in how the unpredictability that comes with organizing elections is managed. The capacity to control an unpredictable process and therefore reduce risk to the incumbent regime is a key variable explaining regime patterns around the world. Not many leaders allow completely unfettered contestation. It turns out that leaders that allow for contestation often act out of a position of weakness. Essentially, contestation is allowed, because the ruler does not have the capacity to control the consequences of denying contestation.

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[110] Even if several laudable attempts have been made, see RADNITZ, S. (2010) *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

State resources and elections

Kyrgyzstan is interesting in that both the stick and the carrot were dismantled in the wake of the Soviet collapse. The security apparatus (hard stick) and tools to monitor and punish perceived 'anti-state' behavior faded in comparison to similar tools in the neighboring states. In Uzbekistan for instance the security apparatus continue to be heavily mobilized and their presence hard to ignore, even in the most peripheral areas of the country. In Kyrgyzstan on the other hand the military was weak and whatever remained of the once almighty Kyrgyz Soviet Republic KGB branch was ill equipped, underpaid, and not very motivated. This meant that leaders in Bishkek could not simply rely on the security apparatus to 'keep people in line' on Election Day. Nevertheless there have been attempts by authorities to use so-called black PR (*chornyi PR* in Russian*)* techniques to manipulate public opinion, much like elsewhere in the post-Soviet space (Wilson, 2005).[111]

In a state like Kyrgyzstan where the coercive capacity is weak, the ruler instead relies on more subtle forms of 'punishment' (soft stick). The public sector plays a special role in this context since it is still controlled by a large bureaucracy. Any deviant behavior by a doctor, teacher, or local level bureaucrat can be easily punished by the presidential administration. Challenging the president by running, campaigning, or simply voting against the favored pro-presidential candidate consequently comes with the risk of being fired. Since the public sector is still very large in Kyrgyzstan, this translates into a significant resource in an electoral campaign. Elsewhere in the post-Soviet area, it has been documented that in regions where many retirees receive state pensions, clientelism is more widespread, and electorally more successful (Hale, 2007).[112] My own experience with local level officials in Kyrgyzstan indicates that even if the president does not explicitly tell them to falsify the elections, local authorities often want to show the loyalty of their village to the central government by artificially increasing the votes of the president or his appointed candidate.[113]

In an election central authorities obviously have the power to approve candidates during the candidate registration phase. This is the gatekeeper function of the state. Many of the post-Soviet states put a lot of effort into

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[111] PR here refers to public relations. An example of black PR in Kyrgyzstan is the *Matrushka* gate scandal in which drugs were planted in the luggage of the brother of one of the main opposition figures, a case that the security apparatus later admitted LENTA (2006) Kirgizskie siloviki ushli v otstavku 'po moralnym soobrazheniyam' [Kyrgyz security officials have resigned 'on moral grounds']. Lenta.ru. Also, at the height of the authoritarian rule of President Bakiev, a tape showing the very same opposition figure in an adulterous encounter was distributed right before the elections in 2009.

[112] Clientelism is here somewhat problematically measured as the vote share received by the SMD candidate that was supported by the regional governor (Russia, Duma elections 1999).

[113] For instance the village head, *akim*, in Lenin Village in Kara-Suu during the July 2005 Presidential Elections, where the author was an OSCE Election Observer on Election Day.

blocking certain candidates. Kyrgyzstan is interesting in that it seemed unable or unwilling to block any but a few high-profile candidates.[114] Conversely it also put a lot of effort into selecting viable and loyal pro-governmental candidates. Signing these candidates up on the presidential party list, if such a party exists, or simply giving them implicit support as 'independent' self-nominated candidates takes care of this. Once candidates are registered it all comes down to campaigning and vote counting. State resources are important in terms of campaigning, for example, since schools and public buildings are often the only potential locations for rallies in many areas outside the capital city. Despite this, state affiliated candidate can more easily get access to *Dom Kultura* or to schools and hospitals around the district than their opponents.

Apart from these pre-election activities the state also has the capacity to conduct outright falsification of the electoral results through ballot stuffing or manipulation of result tabulation and reporting. Public officials clearly have an advantage in terms of influence over the actual voting process. This is especially relevant in the counting and tabulation phase of the process. In polling stations local authorities are often prohibited by law from directly engaging with election officials, but nevertheless often seem to pull the strings in the background. Polling station officials themselves are often public sector workers, and therefore dependency relations are structurally built into the process. If the chair of the polling station election commission, more often than not a local teacher, fails to 'deliver', then his/her job is potentially on the line. Since election observation by parties, local NGOs, and international organizations is so widespread nowadays, it has become increasingly difficult to falsify the results during regular voting hours. This means that the counting and tabulation process becomes more important. Here local authorities often have more power, since tabulation is often done at local administration facilities, where all polling station commission chairs arrive in the middle of the night on Election Day.

Coercion and threats come in many forms, as do more direct clientelistic transactions (dirty 'carrots'). Carrots in the form of targeted benefits to individuals or groups largely fall under the umbrella of 'vote buying'. State affiliated candidates can make credible promises of employment opportunities in the public sector, while businessmen can make credible commitments that require financial resources. It seems as if clientelism is especially prevalent in post-communist regimes with a *patrimonial* legacy, characterized by vertical chains of dependence, low rational-bureaucratic institutionalization, low tolerance for opposition outside the regime, etc. (Kitschelt, 1999).

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[114] Among others Roza Otunbaeva in 2005.

Table 10. State Resources Matrix

Sticks		Carrots	
Hard	Soft	Dirty	Clean
Coercive Power: Threat of force (intimidation)	Threat of dismissal or demotion and withdrawal of benefits	Selective transactions: Patronage and clientelism	SMD wide goods: Constituency service

State institutions can use these 'techniques' to deliver a desirable result in the pre-election candidate selection phase, as well as in the actual campaign, and finally on Election Day itself. *Patronage* is the use of state resources to provide jobs and services for political supporters (clienteles). Some scholars stipulate that weak incumbent rulers will use repression, while stronger rulers tend to use bribery or ballot fraud (Collier and Vicente, 2010). This might be the case elsewhere in the developing world, but in post-Soviet Central Asia it seems to be the other way around. Strong rulers like Karimov in Uzbekistan or Nazarbaev in Kazakhstan use elaborate repressive techniques to keep potential challengers in line. In Kyrgyzstan, where the incumbent ruler is generally weaker, they rely heavily on bribery and ballot fraud as a complement to selective repressive actions.

When people in the region talk about *upravliaemaia demokratiia*, 'managed democracy', they usually refer to the efforts of the presidential administration. The key resources at the disposal of state structures are so-called *adminresurs*, administrative resources that come in many different forms. While direct administrative resources are still being used in the sense of local level bureaucrats being told whom to vote for and what kind of results to deliver, an 'indirect' form are also increasingly being used. Controlling budgetary resources both nationally and locally also allows for selective delivery of goods to loyal voters (dirty carrots). Some scholars have argued that financial resources are not as important as administrative resources in the post-Soviet context.[115]

State affiliated candidates

In the elections in February 2005 there were a total of only 27 candidates from the party led by the daughter of President Akaev, *Alga Kyrgyzstan*.[116] Party affiliation of candidates was recorded by the Central Election Commit-

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[115] Speaking of the importance of administrative resources Wilson notes that 'Money helps, but is not essential' WILSON, A. (2005) *Virtual politics: faking democracy in the post-Soviet world,* New Haven, Yale University Press.

[116] Actually the number of candidates formally registered as *Alga* candidates was only 25, but here I have added both children of President Akaev as *Alga* candidates as well. Other scholars have also used the 27 *Alga* candidate figure, see RADNITZ, S. (2010) *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

tee (CEC) and coded as a simple dummy indicating whether or not the presidential party nominated the candidate. Here we focus on pro-presidential candidates since the topic at hand is the role of state affiliation. The fact that there are only 27 *Alga* nominated candidates, two on whom were President Askar Akaev's own children, indicate that either the president had a two-pronged strategy of splitting up the pro-presidential field, or he was simply unable to attract candidates to the party list.

Alga Kyrgyzstan was established in the fall of 2003 and was formally led by Rustam Nurmatov Mirzaevitch, a middle-aged businessman from the southern city of Uzgen.[117] The central player in the party, however, was the eldest daughter of the president, Bermet Akaeva (OSCE, 2005a). All candidates that wanted a party nomination had to be nominated at a formal party convention, but for some odd reason, the party did not nominate Bermet. The party chairman, Rustam, officially stated that Akaev's daughter was not a party member and could therefore not be nominated.[118] I have decided to treat Bermet as an *Alga* candidate, even if she was not officially nominated. There is hardly any doubt about her loyalty to her father and thus her pro-presidential orientation. Conceivably there are other 'hidden' *Alga* candidates as well, members or affiliates of the party, that were nominated as independents. There is no straightforward way of identifying them though since *Alga* ceased to exist after the election and there are no member lists available. The 27 *Alga* contenders included six incumbents, and the candidates were spread out over the country, with the highest proportional presence in the remote southern region of Batken.

There was also another party that could be considered a pro-presidential party, *Adilet*, which nominated an additional 11 candidates. This party was established in 1999 and in 2005 its leader was Toichubek Kasymov Kasymovich, an old school friend of Mairam Akaev, the president's wife.[119] In the 2000 elections the party was not allowed to register, even if it had a pro-presidential orientation already back then. The Ministry of Justice barred a total of five parties including *Adilet* and the oppositional Ar-Namys because they had been registered parties for less than a year (OSCE, 2000). At that time the leader of *Adilet* was the world-famous Kyrgyz author, Mr. Chingiz Aitmatov. . In the end, he ended up as the head of the pro-presidential Union of Democratic Forces' (UDF) list for the 15 seats available in the proportional (PR) component of the 2000 elections. In the PR elections the UDF

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[117] In a candidate survey interview with Nurmatov in 2008 he claimed that he himself had been a member of the political party Ar-Namys at the time and that he had participated in the Tulip Revolution as an anti-Akaev voice.

[118] She was nominated by 'by students of the National University the following day' FERGHANA (2005) Lidery post·sovetskih stran aktivno prodvigayut v bolshuyu politiku svoih detyei. ferghana.ru.

[119] See SARALAEVA, L. (2005) Kyrgyzstan: New Government, Old Faces. *Central Asia RCA*. Bishkek, Institute for War & Peace Reporting.

coalition came in second right after the Communist Party. Just prior to the 2005 elections Toichubek Kasymov had been appointed Head of the presidential administration, perhaps the most influential post in Kyrgyzstan after the presidency.[120] Other leading figures in the party included Kubanychbek Jumaliev and Altai Borubaev (Abazov, 2007).

The 11 *Adilet* candidates included three incumbents. Candidates were spread out roughly equally over the country's territory, not concentrated in any particular region. Interestingly, the coordination between these two explicitly pro-presidential parties was not complete. In a total of three districts there was a candidate from both *Alga* and *Adilet* (SMDs no. 14, 27, and 37). In each of these three cases, the *Alga* candidate far outperformed the *Adilet* candidate in the end.[121] In the analysis, I will use *Alga* affiliation as the default pro-presidential orientation. *Adilet* candidates will be analyzed separately. The logic here is that there was at the time of the elections only one 'real' pro-presidential party and thus it would be misleading to merge the two parties into an overall pro-presidential category.

There are also two other forms of state affiliation that we need to address. First there are those candidates that worked for state institutions in some capacity, here labeled as bureaucrats, or c*hinovniki*, a derogatory Russian term for public officials. The dummy variable *bureaucrat* is based on lumping together of the political officials and administrative categories in the professional categories given by the CEC data. Almost a quarter of the candidates fit this category, which does not include former Ministers or MPs. In Kyrgyzstan there is an abundance of candidates with bureaucratic experience, which means that in each district there could be more than one such candidate. As a matter of fact, in most districts this occurred and multiple bureaucratic candidates competed.

Secondly, there is incumbency. An incumbent MP is well positioned to utilize some of the same resources as explicitly state affiliated candidates simply because they already work within the system. At the time of the 2005 elections there were a total of 105 MPs, 90 of which had been elected in a SMD, and the rest of which came from the 15-seat nation-wide party list. Only about half of them decided to run for the 2005 elections. Interestingly, many of them ended up running against each other, leaving 28 districts without any incumbents defending seats. Incumbency was coded by using CEC data from previous election years (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 2001, Tsentralnaya Komissia, 1996). I coded a separate one-term and two-term

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[120] Previously reported that the son of the chief of staff Noordin Kasimov, who ran in one of the suburbs of Bishkek, voluntarily withdrew his candidacy, see ORLOVA, Y. (2005) Kyrgyzstan is preparing for parliamentary elections - On the eve of parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, dozens of areas of the country were left without leaders [Kirgiziya gotovitsya k parlamentskim vyboram v preddverii vyborov v parlament Kirgizii desyatki raionov respubliki ostalis bez rukovoditelyei]. RIA "Novosti".

[121] Mambetova Toktokan who ran for *Adilet* in no. 14 got less than one percent of the votes.

version of this variable. All the explanatory variables are simple binary dummy variables.

Interaction models

In terms of model specification there is an important issue that we need to address. A linear-additive regression model is not enough to capture candidate level dynamics since some of the individual level characteristics conceivably should have a different effect depending on the value on other candidate level variables. For instance, incumbency in a context of weak socio-economic development can be understood as a weak record while in office and thus not necessarily good for electoral performance. But if the incumbent happens to be affiliated with the pro-presidential party, then administrative resources might counter any negative incumbency effect.

The effect of incumbency could thus depend on the value of the pro-presidential *Alga* variable. This is best captured by an interaction model:

$$Votes = \alpha + \beta_1 Incumbency + \beta_2 Alga + \beta_{12} Incumbency*Alga + \varepsilon \qquad [5]$$

There has been a lot of confusion in the political science literature when it comes to interaction models (Braumoeller, 2004). The problem lies in the interpretation of the lower-order coefficients (β_1 and β_2)

> … lower-order coefficients are not quantities of direct interest for most hypothesis tests. Indeed, they often describe relationships that exist only outside of the range of the actual data (Braumoeller, 2004).

In my case the interpretation is made easier by the fact that all explanatory variables in the candidate models are dummies. Therefore the interpretation of lower-order coefficients is given as the effect of one (β_1 or β_2) when the interaction term equals zero. For example the effect of incumbency (β_1) can only be interpreted as the (partial) effect if the candidate is not nominated by *Alga*, i.e. when the interaction term is zero.

State – hypotheses for individual performance

The most straightforward way to determine the electoral effects of pro-governmental orientation is to compare the vote share of explicitly pro-governmental candidates with other candidates. Closeness to state structures can also be measured by examining the professional profile of candidates. Those that have worked for the state could potentially benefit from knowing the state apparatus from the inside. Finally, there are incumbency effects that approximate state affiliation, even if incumbency as such does not indicate pro-governmental orientation. In most well established electoral regimes, be

they democratic or authoritarian, pro-governmental effects can be studied by examining incumbency effect. Granted that the winning party forms the parliamentary support of the government most of the incumbents can be considered as pro-government.

The details of President Akaev's electoral strategy remain a mystery. As we will see there are indications that in some cases he sanctioned an *Alga/Adilet* candidate, and in others a non-party affiliated rich person. In any case in non-democracies, like Kyrgyzstan, it can be assumed that pro-governmental candidates get a higher vote share and therefore potentially contribute to reduced levels of competitiveness for the district as a whole. This rests on the assumption that authorities are indeed capable of delivering a desirable election outcome. In order to test this empirically the hypothesis need to be reformulated,

$(H_{1 - Cand.})$ Pro-presidential party support leads to more votes and a higher probability of being elected

Note that the level of analysis is here individual candidates and not election districts.

In addition to this specific measure of government orientation, I will present two additional hypotheses that tap into similar phenomena. In a hybrid regime where the central authorities are not able to completely control the whole territory it is possible that other forms of state support could be decisive. Perhaps the pro-presidential party is not active in all districts of the country. In order to capture the effects of lower level state support for a candidate's success I use positional data about the candidates. A candidate that has experience working for the state, nationally or locally, can be assumed to benefit from the same kinds of support that pro-presidential party support would entail. Therefore I can hypothesize that,

$(H_{1.1 - Cand.})$ Work experience as a bureaucrat leads to more votes and a higher probability of being elected

The argument is simply that someone that has seen the state apparatus from the inside, irrespective of level, could potentially tap into the same kind of techniques as a pro-presidential party candidate utilizes. If central authorities are not strong enough to deliver, perhaps local authorities or *rayon/oblast'* level state institutions like the police, schools etc. are. It can be assumed that candidates with experience as a bureaucrat should be in a good position to access and use these local level state electoral assets to perform better in the first round. There is even a Russian name for this mechanism, *adminresurs*, i.e. the use of public means to influence the election. This action is often coordinated by *oblast'* or *rayon* level officials responsible for budget heavy sectors like education, health, agriculture etc.

Finally, we want to know the effects of incumbency. As was noted above most of the time there will be more incumbents with a pro-governmental orientation running for re-election than opposition incumbents. This is especially so in non-democratic regimes where authorities dominate the political process. Since being an incumbent indicates a certain level of familiarity with state structures, it is here assumed that incumbents could also, potentially, utilize the same techniques as authorities do in terms of securing electoral success.

($H_{1.2 - Cand.}$) Incumbency leads to more votes and higher probability of being elected

The prediction of all of these hypotheses is that they all lead to better electoral performance. The mechanism whereby these three variables leads to higher vote shares is to be found in the use of administrative resources and other techniques that rely on the state apparatus to function. Again, pro-presidential candidates are not the only ones to get access to these techniques in a state like Kyrgyzstan. On a district level the central authorities might be weak and completely in the hand of local 'notables' (Wilson, 2005, Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007).[122]

Analysis of individual performance

Some would argue that many of the candidates in the 2005 elections were allowed to register simply because they were more or less pro-Akaev in orientation.[123] The explicit oppositional leaders, like Felix Kulov, Roza Otunbaeva, and Akylbek Japarov were not allowed to run. International observers noted that some candidates were de-registered due to minor technicalities and that the Election Code was applied inconsistently by some courts and Electoral Commissions (OSCE, 2005a). For instance there were five former diplomats that were unable to register as candidates, because the laws had been altered to require five years of in-country residency prior to registration. In a couple of cases, in SMD 34 and 75, there was a successful campaign for voting 'against all' as a protest action since a candidate had been deregistered.[124]

However, examining the candidate lists it is surprising how many more or less oppositional candidates were allowed to run: Bakiev, Beknazarov, and

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[122] A 'notable' can be anything from a traditional authority figure, to an incumbent, or a businessman.
[123] Phone interview, Edil Baisalov, December 22, 2010.
[124] For instance in SMD no. 34 the two-term MP and former Communist party boss, Turdakun Usubaliev lost due to a successful 'against all' campaign coordinated by de-registered candidates working together with local NGOs. Having the ability to vote 'against all' is a Soviet era legacy when there usually was only one candidate on the ballot.

Tekebaev were all allowed to take part in the elections even if they were all explicitly oppositional in orientation. This clearly indicates that Akaev was in no position to outright deny the electorate a choice. Before we present more detailed analysis of electoral performance accounting for these interactions, let us take a look at some simple descriptive data.

Table 11. Vote Share per State Category

State Category	N	Mean	St.dev	Min	Max
No State	220	13.7%	15.5%	0.1%	85.0%
Alga	27	44.7%	18.9%	9.9%	81.2%
Adilet	10	17.2%	14.6%	0.6%	49.8%
Incumbent	60	26.6%	20.2%	1.3%	96.2%
Bureaucrat	73	17.4%	14.5%	0.2%	64.9%
Total	389	18.6%	18.3%	0.1%	96.2%

Source: Central Election Commission (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 2006).
Note: Here the incumbent category does not include any of the *Alga* or *Adilet* candidates. The bureaucrat category does not include any of the *Alga*, *Adilet*, or incumbency categories. The categories are thus mutually exclusive, so the incumbency and bureaucrat categories include fewer candidates than in their original form.

At a first glance it seems as if *Alga* affiliated candidates and incumbents get much higher vote shares. This is only intended as a first description of the vote shares per state affiliation category, but here we can already see that presidential party nominees receive a much higher vote share. This is not sufficient to determine statistical significance however. Any statistical test would also need to control for the number of candidates per districts since this theoretically affects the level of competitiveness. There might also be a spurious relationship, which makes it appear that *Alga* candidates perform better even if in reality there is something else that causes the candidate to do well. For instance, in reality it could be that candidates in rural districts are getting higher votes shares and that all *Alga* candidates mostly ran in rural districts. Hypothetically, say that in rural districts there are only one or two candidates per district and that all *Alga* candidates were nominated in such districts. Had this been the case then it is not as affiliation with the presidential party that leads to higher vote shares, but rather being a candidate in a rural district. A multiple regression model controlling for number of candidates and urban districts takes care of this potential problem. As it turns out the data shows that *Alga* nominations were equally spread out over the country and the same goes for competitiveness and the number of candidates.

Results

The effect of being affiliated with *Alga* increases the vote share by 25 percent, when controlling for whether the district was in the capital city of Bishkek (urban), the number of candidates that were running, and all the

other state categories (Model 1). The causal link between *Alga* affiliation and vote share is not directly observed and the analysis can therefore easily be problematized. Perhaps *Alga* nominated candidates that it thought were strong and therefore the relationship between *Alga* and vote share is spurious. Controlling for other individual level factors, like economic resources, ameliorates this problem.[125] Data shows that there is no effect of being affiliated with the other pro-presidential party, *Adilet*. This seems to confirm that in the 2005 elections there was indeed only one 'real' pro-presidential party. Had *Adilet* been the receiver of *adminresurs* in the same way as *Alga*, surely this effect should be discernable in the candidate models.

There is a small effect of having experience as a bureaucrat and the effect from being an incumbent is both significant and rather large. An incumbent candidate gets 9 percent more votes in the first round, controlling for all the other factors (Model 1). The results are roughly the same irrespective of what form of the dependent variable we use (Models 1-4). This suggests that the kind of resources available to state affiliated candidates can indeed be good for electoral performance. Note, that all of these effects are significant even when controlling for the ethnicity of the candidate and the gender of the candidate.

In the second model we test for the interaction effect between pro-presidential orientation and incumbency. The results indicate that incumbent *Alga* candidates perform worse than non-incumbent *Alga* candidates in terms of vote share in the first round. This can be seen by examining the lower order coefficient *Alga* in the interaction model (2). The effect, .28, tells us that in the absence of incumbency, i.e. when the interaction term is zero, the effect of *Alga* is even higher than the equivalent effect in model one. This is interesting in that it suggests an accountability mechanism. It seems as if incumbent pro-presidential candidates are being punished at the voting booth.

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[125] For a full set of controls see the candidate model in the following chapter.

Table 12. Candidate Performance (per state category)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Vote share 1st round		Vote share divided by rest (log)		Elected dummy	
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Alga nominated	0.245***	0.281***	1.638***	1.907***	3.348***	3.166***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.19)	(0.21)	(0.57)	(0.61)
Adilet nominated	-0.009	-0.011	0.044	0.033	0.290	0.297
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.95)	(0.94)
Incumbent	0.089***	0.103***	0.914***	1.017***	0.869*	0.805*
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.34)	(0.36)
Bureaucrat	0.034+	0.035*	0.490**	0.495***	-0.071	-0.075
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.41)	(0.41)
Male	0.088***	0.089***	0.743***	0.752***	1.384+	1.336+
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.72)	(0.69)
Urban (Bishkek)	0.012	0.007	0.153	0.118	0.023	0.049
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.27)	(0.27)
Kyrgyz ethn.	0.033	0.033	0.437*	0.437*	0.098	0.092
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.41)	(0.41)
Candidates/SMD	-0.024***	-0.024***	-0.204***	-0.202***	-0.152***	-0.154***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Alga * Incumbent		-0.160**		-1.200***		
		(0.05)		(0.27)		
Constant	0.185***	0.180***	-2.238***	-2.276***	-2.486**	-2.408**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.76)	(0.75)
N	389	389	389	389	389	383
R^2	0.331	0.340	0.310	0.316	0.199	0.157

Note: Models 1-4 are linear regression models and 5-6 are logistical models. The dependent variable in models 1-2 is vote share in the original 0-1 format, in models 3-4 we use ln(votes/(1-votes)) as the dependent variable, and in models 5-6 a simple dummy for whether or not the candidate was elected. District (SMD) clustered robust standard errors in brackets. Significance levels + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. McFadden's pseudo R^2 used in the logistic models.

Vote share in the first round is not the only measure of electoral performance in a two-round system. I also analyzed success rates in terms of overall success at getting elected (models 5-6). It can be hypothesized that elections in a non-democracy can be competitive on the surface, but that in the end the pro-presidential forces always prevail. It turns out that *Alga* affiliation increases the probability of being elected by a stunning 66 percent.[126] Incumbency is also good for eventually being elected, and the combination of in-

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[126] The *Clarify* software in Stata uses stochastic simulation to generate 1,000 observations based on the model specifications, giving us the change in probability when *Alga* goes from zero to one, holding all other variables at their mean, see TOMZ, M., WITTENBERG, J. & KING, G. (2003) CLARIFY: Software for interpreting and presenting statistical results. Harvard University. Here the simulation is based on model 5.

cumbency and *Alga* guarantees eventual electoral success, as model six suggests. All of the *Alga* affiliated incumbents managed to get elected.[127]

Pro-presidential orientation is good for electoral performance, but the question remains: why are there so few candidates explicitly running for *Alga Kyrgyzstan*. For a more detailed understanding of the role of state structures in elections we need to take a closer look at some of the specific candidates. Remember, that the main techniques used for supporting state affiliated candidates are: 1) Manipulation of the electoral process; 2) Intimidation of those dependent on the public sector; and 3) *Patronage*. Data on manipulation is scarce, but protocols from international observers at the polling station level provide a good starting point. In terms of intimidation, the only metric suitable for quantitative analysis is data on withdrawals. The argument here is that candidates withdraw from races due to intimidation by the leading contenders in the SMD, who want to ensure a 'smoother election'. Finally, data on patronage is non-existent.

Examining OSCE Election Observation protocols and the overall assessment of the procedures in each of the observed polling station I have created an index of how bad the international observers ranked polling stations in the SMD.[128] I only include SMDs where OSCE observers monitored more than 10 percent of the polling stations during the Election Day. Whether or not there is a pro-presidential candidate running in the district does not make any difference in terms of the OSCE assessment of the election procedure.[129]

There were several allegations of intimidation, but none of the allegations allow us to fully determine the extent to which state affiliated candidates were behind the threats.

> Some teachers also alleged pressure to campaign for particular candidates favored by their management. In Osh, lecturers at a university told observers of being forced to mobilize students on behalf of certain candidates and of being threatened with job loss if they did not comply. Other teachers claimed that their salaries had been docked for a particular candidate's campaign fund and that they felt unable to complain formally about this for fear of losing their jobs. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM was not able to verify these claims (OSCE, 2005a).

Candidate interviews reveal that only a small minority of respondents who elaborated cited government affiliation as a reason for electoral success.[130] Furthermore in explaining poor electoral performance many respondents, 13

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[127] Stata automatically drops these six cases therefore the number of observations is only 383 in the last model.

[128] There is no quantitative data available from the domestic observers (Koalitsia) when it comes to assessments on the quality of the voting and counting.

[129] OSCE observed a total of 707 polling stations during the day out of a total of 2,160.

[130] We only have 11 observations here, with only two citing government affiliation as being the reason why a candidate did well.

out of 33, cited accountability and the fact that many incumbent MPs had failed to deliver to their constituencies.[131]

Another form of intimidation occurs when a candidate forces other candidates to withdraw. Remember that between the final day of registration and the actually printing of the ballot a total of 40 candidates withdrew. However, there is no relationship between withdrawals and presence of a pro-presidential candidate in the district. It is far more common for voters and especially public sector workers to be intimidated than actual candidates. We do not have detailed data on this, but anecdotally we know that this is a widespread practice in the post-Soviet area, where the state is still very influential. Even the head of the presidential administration, Toichubek Kasymov, admitted that some candidates try to use the state apparatus, or the 'budget sector' (*byudzhetnoi sfery*), to their benefit at the local level. [132]

Note that here we do not consider financial resources, *clientelism*, and vote buying as explicit state techniques. The following chapter deals directly with the role of such financial resources.

Candidate examples

In order to get a better understanding of the role of state affiliation, here I give a more detailed description of some of the pro-presidential nominees in the 2005 elections. In some cases, there seems to have been some competition for securing the *Alga* nomination, while in other cases strong candidates seemingly kept their distance to the Akaev apparatus. Yet in other cases close family associates to the Akaev's ran for *Adilet*, and not for *Alga*. In any case many candidates clearly chose not to affiliate themselves with Akaev, which in itself could be taken as an indication of the weakness of the regime.

In district number 13 in the most distant and impoverished southern corner of the country, in Batken *oblast'*, there were two candidates that allegedly sought an *Alga* nomination. Kanybek Joroev, a lawyer by training who at the time of the elections was the Chief of Staff of Batken *oblast'* state administration, was formally nominated by *Alga* at their congress in Bishkek. In an interview he revealed that the candidate that eventually won the district, Murat Juraev, had also tried to secure the *Alga* label. Murat himself did not want to elaborate on the candidate selection phase, but he did confirm that he was a member of *Alga* Kyrgyzstan at the time of the 2005 elections. This example illustrates a battle between a state affiliated candidate

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[131] Note here that in the candidate interview data there is no relationship between *Alga* affiliation, bureaucrat experience, and vote share in the first round. Several respondents however played down their party affiliation in the interviews therefore skewing the results.
[132] See ORLOVA, Y. (2005) Kyrgyzstan is preparing for parliamentary elections - On the eve of parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, dozens of areas of the country were left without leaders [Kirgiziya gotovitsya k parlamentskim vyboram v preddverii vyborov v parlament Kirgizii desyatki raionov respubliki ostalis bez rukovoditelyei]. RIA "Novosti".

with extensive experience from the administrative structures (Kanybek Joroev) and a local businessman who also sought to align himself with the authorities (Murat Juraev).[133] Batken *oblast'* actually had the highest number of *Alga* candidates perhaps indicating that the clout of *adminresurs* is bigger in peripheral districts.

Connections with the state apparatus clearly also helped both children of Akaev in their own campaign, Aidar receiving 80 percent of the vote in Kemin SMD, the birthplace of President Akaev. Bermet Akaeva on the other hand decided to run in Bishkek city and got 46 percent and was therefore forced into a second round, which she eventually won with only 54 percent of the vote. In some other instances Akaev family members put their names forward but later decided to withdraw. For instance in Talas district number 55, the sister of the president's wife registered to run but eventually withdrew. In that very same district there were two explicitly pro-presidential candidates, neither of whom ran for *Alga* Kyrgyzstan. We do not know the details about the candidate selection in this district, but perhaps the sister of the president's wife intended to run as an *Alga* candidate but later reconsidered when she found out the extent to which her opponents were resource-laden. Interestingly, in Talas *oblast'* bordering Kazakhstan there was not a single *Alga* candidate running. This is strange, because this is a northern district and Akaev was considered to be a northerner. It is stranger still because Mairam Akaeva, the wife of the president, has deep family roots in Talas.

The role played by the two children of Askar Akaev seems to have been central in candidate selection and also in the utilization of *adminresurs* on behalf of the candidates. In SMD no. 43, covering parts of Alai in Osh *oblast'*, there were two pro-presidential candidates, one of which was allegedly affiliated with Bermet and another with Aidar. In the end Akhmatbek Keldibekov, a 41-year old businessman with connections to Aidar, won the district. The main challenger, Nurgazy Aidarov, was the son-in-law of President Akaev's former Head of Administration and he is said to have been closer to Bermet. Neither of them was officially nominated by *Alga*. The winner, Keldibekov, actually revealed in an interview that he consciously stayed away from officially being nominated by *Alga* since the authority of Akaev and his family had already diminished. Keldibekov was nevertheless well positioned to tap into administrative resources, since he had been the chairman of the Social Fund since 2002.[134] One of the interviewed candidates told us that staff from the Social Fund had been used on behalf of the campaign, yet another variation on the theme of *adminresurs*.[135]

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[133] Kanybek Joroev later went on to become the Head of the Presidential Administration during the Bakiev presidency, while Murat was elected to the parliament in December 2007, as a member of SDPK.
[134] A public institution that makes small-scale public investments.
[135] Interview, candidate survey, respondent #62, 2005 elections, Osh.

From all of this it seems clear that candidates did not see the presidential party as an essential tool for getting elected. Conversely this is an striking finding in an autocracy where there is an explicitly pro-presidential party. The president himself perhaps had a hands-off approach to the party. It looks as if the president let his children and wife, together with the presidential administration sort out the details of the contest.[136]

What about the other pro-presidential party *Adilet*? Two leading figures of the party were serving in the government at the time of the elections, Toichubek Kasymov and Kubanychbek Jumaliev. Several of the *Adilet* candidates had been running successful campaigns in earlier elections as well. Five of the 11 *Adilet* nominated candidates had participated already in the 1995 elections, where on average they got 23 percent of the vote, and four of them also participated in the 2000 elections, receiving on average 37 percent of the vote. The most successful ones in 2005 Altai Borubaev in Talas no. 54 and Askarbek Ermatov in Bishkek district no. 10 did not face any competition from an *Alga* candidate. Borubaev had been the Speaker in the outgoing parliament and also had a direct kinship relation to the wife of the president. In an interview, Borubaev revealed that in the end the presidential apparatus rallied behind the local strongman, Bolotbek Sherniyazov, who eventually won the district with a 0.6 percent margin.[137] Here we have a relative of the Akaev family, Mr. Borubaev, who had been the Speaker of the parliament and who is an official candidate of one of the most pro-presidential parties, *Adilet*, yet in the final days of the campaign the presidential apparatus rallies behind another candidate.

This example illustrates the flexibility of the Akaev machinery in picking winners. The election campaign was used as an information source about candidate strength around the country. It can be stipulated that perhaps some of the incumbents were simply too hard to defend in the light of local disappointment with the socio-economic development. Whoever coordinated the pro-presidential efforts apparently made some strategic decisions throughout the campaign. Candidates that had been initially sanctioned were not necessarily unconditionally supported as the contest wore on.

In Bishkek district 10 Askarbek Ermatov also had the benefit of belonging to *Adilet*, but this turned out to be even less valuable. The district was eventually won by Yuri Danilov, a Russian with long experience in the electricity and gas sector (a so-called *energetik*) and Ermatov only got 12 percent of the votes. Another prominent *Adilet* candidate was an MP and business-

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[136] The first lady is said to have ordered Ravshan Jeenbekov to deregister as a candidate, which was a real shock for Ravshav and other observers because he was considered very close to the Akaev's, interview with Edil Baisalov, December 2010.

[137] In a candidate survey interview Borubaev said that the Akaev administration shifted their support Sherniyazov in the end. Borubaev's version is supported by a newspaper article about Talas politics FACTO, D. (2008) The attempts to stop the People's Kurultay in Talas or why Dastan Sarigulov said to leave Coordinative Council. *De Facto*. Bishkek.

man from Naryn *oblast'*, Kamchibek Joldoshbaev, who in 2005 ran for *Adilet* in Bishkek SMD 3.[138] Interestingly, he was challenged by an *Alga* nominated candidate, Toktaim Umetalieva, a state administrator originally from Talas. There were also two incumbents running, both of who received less than five percent of the votes. Joldoshbaev had participated in parliamentary elections in 1995 and 2000, but in his native Naryn. He was never elected, but he had always performed well receiving more than 20 percent of the votes.

During the election, pro-presidential forces were not completely united, and the desire by candidate to hedge their bets led to overlaps in pro-presidential candidates in certain districts. As we already know there are seven districts in which I identified two or more explicitly pro-presidential candidates.

Let me finally say a few words about the other state candidate categories. There are a total of 69 incumbents taking part in these elections in 47 different districts. As already noted there is actually some overlap in six of the candidates (which makes the relationship significant). Incumbency seems to have been a double-egged sword in the Kyrgyzstan context. Being an MP is in theory good in terms of access to resources and crucial networks. However, the pressure from the constituency in terms of delivering selective goods (club goods) is very high, especially in a situation of deteriorating socio-economic conditions. It can be hypothesized that in order for an incumbent to perform well in an election they also need to be independently rich, a topic which I return to in the next chapter.

There were actually twelve incumbent MPs that received less than 10 percent of the vote. It is conceivable that they registered but realized that the game was over well ahead of the first round and simply did not campaign actively. It is also possible that they did campaign actively and invested a lot of resources, but that they were simply too unpopular to get elected. One district in which I studied incumbency effects in detail was Ala-Buka in Jalalabad *oblast'*. Here the incumbent MP Kurmanbek Sharipov came only fifth in a race that local observers deemed very unpredictable.

So far, I have shown that being affiliated with the president was good for individual level performance, both in terms of first round vote share and in terms of eventually securing a seat. This holds as long as the candidate was not an incumbent. Pro-presidential incumbent MPs were punished at the booth and not a single one of them managed to get elected. Even for the other *Alga* candidates the first round of elections was no cakewalk. Many of

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[138] Joldoshbaev, a rich businessman and the winner of the best businessman award in 2000, was been handed the seat after doing quite well in the first round. Also, in the same article the source of Joldoshbaev's wealth is identified: 'After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the largest mine in the basin was given to a local businessman, Joldoshbaev, who was an Akaev ally ICG (2005a) Kyrgyzstan: A faltering state? Brussels, International Crisis Group.

them faced strong challengers and most of them were forced to go to a second round.

The difficulties faced by pro-presidential candidates in general may have been because coordination of pro-presidential forces was done in an ad-hoc manner and that *Alga* nomination was not the only avenue available for pro-presidential candidates. The rationale here is worth speculating about. Both the president and elites seemed to have hedged their bets by partly circumventing *Alga* Kyrgyzstan. Certainly, the environment was ripe for hedging, since there were significantly fewer seats available in 2005 and therefore the contest ended up being unpredictable. Coordination between any bloc of candidates was next to impossible due to the large number of strong potential candidates participating (including a higher number of incumbents than available seats), which further added to uncertainty.[139] Selecting a SMD to run was therefore like a market transaction between elites where costs and benefits were carefully calculated. The context was characterized by weak institutions, in the sense of weak political parties that made coordination more difficult and information scarcity with new and 'untested' district boundaries.

In terms of the democratic credentials of the elections it is worth noting that oppositional candidates were selectively barred from running, but that in the end the Akaevs were not able to deny registration to all non-presidentially affiliated candidates. There is anecdotal evidence of state structures having been heavily involved in 'delivering the vote' for their preferred candidates even where these candidates were not explicitly linked to the president. But it also seems like in some cases several pro-presidential candidates were allowed to play it out among themselves on the district level, without much interference from the center, as indicated by overlaps in pro-Akaev candidates per SMD.

State – hypotheses for district dynamics

Now that we have determined what effect state affiliation has for individual performance let us examine the effects of this on the election district as a whole. First we need to code each of the 75 SMDs according to how many state affiliated candidates there were per district. *Alga* party affiliation is the main state affiliation variable we are examining here. We already know from theories of elections in semi-authoritarian settings and from post-communist experiences that being affiliated with the incumbent regime and the pro-presidential party is beneficial to electoral performance.

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[139] 'Sherniyazov was going to run in Asanbaeva in Bishkek, and then in Kara-Bura, and he tells Babanov that this is my district. Babanov gives him 500 thousand US dollars', anonymous interview, Osh, December 6, 2007.

In transforming the candidate level data into a SMD database I simply counted the number of candidates per state category that ran in each SMD. The maximum number of *Alga* candidates in any district was one, but there could be up to five bureaucrats and as many as three incumbents per SMD.

We already know that elections in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 were very competitive. The fundamental question in this book is to explain this fact. Granted that being associated with the authorities is good for individual level electoral performance it could be that the absence of a pro-presidential candidate in a district opens up for more competitive outcomes.

Thus it can be hypothesized that in authoritarian states,

($H_{1.3-SMD}$) The lack (presence) of a pro-presidential candidate in a district increases (decreases) competitiveness

Note that we already have indications of pro-presidential candidates having had problems monopolizing electoral support in 2005. The hypothesis above rests on the assumption that central authorities are able to coordinate action and unite behind one pro-governmental candidate. Note that the hypothesis states that competitiveness is less likely only in cases where there is a single pro-presidential candidate. Granted that pro-presidential orientation is good for an individual candidate, two such candidates in the same district would, nevertheless, lead to an increase in the probability of competitiveness.

The fact that two-thirds of the districts were left without an *Alga* candidate already indicates that perhaps the Akaev regime was not capable of attracting strong candidates that were willing to run under the official *Alga* banner. In any case, here I hypothesize that in districts where the presidential apparatus decided to sanction a candidate, competitiveness will be lower. That is, the authorities would be able to reduce the uncertainty associated with elections and deliver a safe margin for their preferred candidate. This is the default hypothesis for electoral competitiveness in autocracies. Autocrats select candidates to run and ensure that they get elected in a predictable and non-competitive manner.

In terms of the number of bureaucrats and incumbents the hypothesis is,

($H_{1.4-SMD}$) The number of bureaucrats/incumbents has a positive effect on the probability of competitiveness

The idea here being that wherever there is more than one candidate that can utilize state resources or experiences, like bureaucrats and incumbents potentially can, the SMD will turn competitive.

Analysis of districts

The main question here concerns the effects of state support on the probability of an election district being *competitive*. When controlling for whether or not the SMD is urban, the level of socioeconomic development, and observer presence during Election Day, there is no effect on the probability of competitiveness in districts where there is an *Alga* candidate (Model 1-2). There is also no effect if ENC is used as the dependent variable. The 'default autocracy' hypothesis about state support leading to non-competitiveness, $H_{1.3}$, does therefore not find any support in this setting. This finding confirms that President Akaev was not in a position to deliver predictable and non-competitive results for his own preferred candidates.

Table 13. District (SMD) Level Competitiveness (State variables only)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	60% dummy		Margin of victory (log)	ENC (D)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Alga dummy	-0.214	0.231	-0.239	-0.045
	(0.59)	(0.70)	(0.31)	(0.25)
Incumbent (number of - count)		0.745	-0.220	0.269+
		(0.52)	(0.20)	(0.16)
Bureaucrat (number of - count)		0.545	0.066	0.242*
		(0.34)	(0.12)	(0.10)
Urban dummy (Bishkek)		-0.259	0.174	-0.058
		(1.66)	(0.74)	(0.60)
Socio-Economic index, amenities, 1999 census		0.020	0.030+	-0.012
		(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.01)
International Observer coverage (OSCE)		0.371	-0.624	0.631
		(1.68)	(0.79)	(0.63)
Domestic observer coverage (NGO)		-1.250	0.737*	-0.426
		(1.10)	(0.35)	(0.28)
Constant	1.466***	0.421	-3.267***	2.864***
	(0.37)	(1.80)	(0.75)	(0.60)
N	75	75	75	75
R^2	0.002	0.112	0.144	0.183

Note: The dependent variable in models 1-2 is a 60 percent competitiveness dummy and for the estimation we use logistic regression. In models 3-5 we use the margin of victory and the effective number of candidates (D) as the dependent variables and for estimation we use linear regression. An index of amenities per *rayon* was used to gauge socio-economic development per district. Data available only from the 1999 census. The International Observer dummy is the proportion of polling stations covered by the International Election Observation mission during Election Day and the NGO observer is the equivalent for the domestic observers, the NGO *Koalitsia*. Significance levels + $p<0.10$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$. McFadden's pseudo R^2 used in the logistic models.

The data also suggests that the number of incumbent candidates running in each district has a positive effect on the effective number of candidates. This is interesting in that it suggests an accountability effect where incumbent

MPs attract quality challengers and voters punish incumbents for performance while in office.[140] Furthermore, the number of bureaucrats also has a similar effect. Hypothesis $H_{1.4}$ therefore finds some support, even if only when using ENC as the dependent variable. This suggests elections were competitive because there were a plurality of incumbents and bureaucrats that took part in the race, even if not explicitly on a pro-presidential platform. In an autocracy this is a rare thing.

Surprisingly there is no significant effect on the probability of a district being competitive if there is an international election observation team in the district during Election Day. There is also no positive effect on competitiveness form the presence of a domestic observer. This is truly remarkable since the deterrence effect of an election observer has been suggested by other studies of the post-Soviet region (Hyde, 2007).

The fact that there is no significant effect of pro-governmental orientation essentially means that central authorities under Akaev were unable to 'manage' the electoral process by reducing the probability of competitiveness or the level of ENC. Several attempts were made to limit certain candidates from participating, using *adminresurs*, and outright falsification efforts. But in the end the apparatus of Akaev was not strong enough to seriously limit contestation.

The alternative explanation is that Akaev simply gave up on SMDs around the country and allowed for 'free' un-managed elections. This is not likely considering what was at stake in terms of Akaev's own future. Presidential elections were already scheduled for the fall and Akaev predictably wanted to secure a reliable, pro-presidential parliament. Interestingly, the four least competitive districts, all posting ENC below one and a half, had not a single pro-governmental candidate running in them. This means that the explanation for SMD level electoral monopoly, i.e. low competitiveness, is to be found elsewhere, and not in hypothesis $H_{1.3}$.

An interesting fact in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 was the change in electoral system and the reduction in the number of available seats. The number of incumbents was therefore much larger than the number of available seats and the redistricting also further contributed to the uncertainty. The presence of a single incumbent MP in a district seemed to attract quality challengers that increase the likelihood of the district being competitive. This indicates that incumbency in itself is clearly not enough to monopolize electoral support. Candidate interviews also reveal that many considered incumbency to be a good explanation for high levels of contestation.[141] Incumbents in 2005 at-

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[140] This is also something that candidates themselves brought up in the candidate survey interviews.

[141] For example respondent #37, 92, and 144. For instance, respondent #92 said 'I lost some votes because of being an deputy (MP). I had not helped the district enough and I had not spent enough time there'.

tracted strong opponents, probably due to high levels of dissatisfaction with the regime.

All of this shows that being affiliated with the state does not ensure a smooth and predictable race. If anything, quite the contrary. If a candidate affiliated with the president does not reduce competitiveness, then what does? The few cases of complete non-competitiveness, where only a single candidate ran for a seat, illustrate the combinations of resources that lead to complete consolidation of electoral support. In all three of the SMDs, 2, 16, and 45, the candidate was both an incumbent and a very rich individual.[142] Two of the others had experiences in sports, therefore qualifying for the label *sportsmen*, which during Soviet times was a very important venue for networking.

In the candidate survey we asked about the level of competitiveness and almost 70 percent agreed that competition in 2005 had indeed been fierce. When asked further about the explanation for this high level of contestation some respondents highlighted the fact that some candidates got support from the state, while others had their own resources (financial etc.). One respondent said that the reason the elections were competitive was because there were two pro-power (*pro-vlastnyi*) candidates and they both enjoyed administrative support.[143]

District examples

> 'It is very important to have a good friend or relative in the office of president, then you can be anything you want' (Jorobekov, SMD no. 47)

Let me illustrate district level dynamics with a few examples. There are four districts where the *Alga* candidate got less than a quarter of the votes. The candidates selected by *Alga* in these cases were clearly not strong enough to forestall challengers. It is highly likely that the Akaev apparatus realized this during the campaign, cut their losses, and put their administrative resources to work for one of the other non-*Alga* candidates. For instance in district 47 in Osh City a *Alga* party member came in last with less than three percent of the votes. Akaev might have been a weak president, but clearly he could have delivered more than three percent of the vote if he really had put his whole force behind the candidate from his own party, Temir Jorobekov. However, even if Jorobekov was a member of the *Alga* Party, he did not manage to get officially nominated by them. At the time of the elections he was the director for a development unit of Osh State University. In an inter-

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[142] Baibolov in SMD no. 2, Erkinbaev in no. 16, and Sabirov in no. 45.
[143] 'Because there were two candidates from pro-power (*Alga* and *Adilet*) and they got admin support', candidate survey, respondent #64, Osh, referring to SMD 37.

view he revealed that *Alga* actually had another preferred candidate in the district.

The elections themselves were 'transparent' (*prozrachnye*) even if financial resources and vote buying played a central role.[144] Another of the interviewed candidates from this district explained the high level of competitiveness by the fact that some candidate had money while others got support from the presidential administration.[145] The winner of the district was Aliyarbek Abzhaliev, a younger generation Kyrgyz *nachalnik* with work experience from the Customs Agency, both in Batken and at Manas Airport, two of the most valuable agencies for a customs official open to bribes.

In SMD no. 37, covering parts of Uzgen city on the edge of Ferghana valley, there were a total of 12 candidates. The leading pro-Akaev candidate in the district was Rustam Nurmatov, a middle-aged businessman from Uzgen.[146] As a matter of fact, he was the official leader of *Alga* Kyrgyzstan at the time of the elections. The district was won by a leading bureaucrat Zhantoro Satybaldiev who was the Minister for Transport and vice PM at the time of the 2005 elections. In an interview he indicated that all the other candidates were brought in to run against him.[147] Several candidates, however, indicated that Satybaldiev used his connections to the Akaev family and other political leaders in Bishkek to put pressure on other candidates.[148] Aaly Karashev, the *Adilet* nominated candidate complained that *Alga* Kyrgyzstan and the state apparatus had tried to crush him financially and 'morally'.[149] Most of the candidates highlighted the fact that some of the candidates, and particularly Satybaldiev, was a very rich man. This district shows that being nominated or formally sanctioned by any of the pro-governmental parties did not account for much in the end, granted that there was a strong non-*Alga* challenger.

In SMD no.14 in the town of Batken at the southernmost tip of Kyrgystan there was a rich incumbent MP, Arzybek Burkanov, who formally filed his candidacy as an *Alga* candidate. He was not born in the district, which could mean that he did not have the often discussed kinship ('clan') support in the district. He failed to win more than 23 percent in the first round, even though he spent a lot of money, constructing a local Mosque, among other things.[150] The winner of the first round was instead a well connected, but not finan-

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[144] According to both interviewed candidates.

[145] Alimbekov, candidates survey, who himself got almost 20 percent of the votes.

[146] In an candidate survey interview with Nurmatov in 2008 he claimed that he himself had been a member of the political party Ar-Namys at the time and that he had participated in the Tulip Revolution as an anti-Akaev voice.

[147] 'Because there were two candidates from pro-power (*Alga* and *Adilet*) and they got admin support. All other local candidates, from the villages were organized to run against me…', candidate survey interview with Satybaldiev, March 19, 2008.

[148] Karashev and Nurmatov responses to the question about competitiveness.

[149] Interview, candidate survey, 2005-elections, Osh.

[150] Interview, Karamat Orozova, Batken, June 17, 2006.

cially strong incumbent MP, Dosbol Nur Uulu, who later went on to become the Minster of Education in Bakiev's government. His lack of resources was noted by a local observer when speaking about the campaign, 'He talks a lot, but hasn't got any money'.[151]

Even if Dosbol got over 30 percent in the first round the *Alga* favored candidate, Burkanov, won the second round with just above 50 percent of the votes. In the candidate survey we only managed to get a hold of two of the worst performing candidates in this district, both of them women. They both confirm that there was a lot of falsification of the results in the districts.[152] One of them said that other candidates 'used dirty methods – food treats, organizing humanitarian assistance in the form of flour, built mosques, and repaired roads'. Another candidate said that other candidates 'threw all their personal and administrative resources for election victory', seemingly referring to Mr. Burkanov.

Finally, in Karakol town on the shore of Lake Issyk-Kul in the north, SMD no. 72, a female pro-presidential candidate, Dogdurkul Kendirbaeva, failed to get more than 15 percent of the votes. She was a regional bureaucrat at the time of the elections, but she had also ran back in 2000 and got eight percent of the votes. When asked to explain why the district was so competitive she referred to the other candidates being both experienced (incumbents, etc.) and resource-laden (successful businessman).

There seems to have been an attempt from the *oblast'* Governor's office to consolidate the field of candidates. One of the interviewed female candidates, Ryskulova Burulsun, revealed that the Governor had approached her and asked her to step down and work for the pro-presidential party, *Alga*, instead. In any case, the winner in the first round was an opposition minded, experienced candidate, Erkinbek Alymbekov.[153] He had never been elected, but he had run in both 1995 and 2000 as well. He was a local businessman that, according to his own words, adopted a 'soft position' between the pro-governmental *Alga* candidate and the explicitly oppositional incumbent MP, Bolot Baikozhoev. There was also another young businessman that invested a lot in the elections, Sabyr Japarov, who managed to get a quarter of the votes. Perhaps the fact that a woman associated with Akaev ran in the district itself attracted a lot of strong candidates. Independently strong male candidates might have seen a good opportunity to show their talents in a race that was unpredictable.

There were only two SMDs where an *Alga* candidate managed to monopolize electoral support and reduce ENC to less than 1.5. One of the districts was President Akaev's home village, in Eastern Chui *oblast'*. The

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[151] Ibid.
[152] One of the candidates, Muratova, says in the candidate survey: 'Many of the ballots after 8 PM were mysteriously and inexplicably cancelled by the electoral commission. Also, observers during the counting of votes were thrown out from polling stations'.
[153] Had ran for office, both parliament and Bishkek city council, a total of six times.

president's son, Aidar Akaev, got 80 percent of the votes in a contest with four other candidates. There was a fifth candidate nominated, but he withdrew prior to the first round. Aidar Akaev was both affiliated with the pro-presidential party and also one of the richest persons in the country.

The other district in which a pro-presidential candidate managed to monopolize electoral support was in the southern *oblast'* of Jalalabad, in SMD no. 27 Bazarkorgon-Suzak, where there was an Uzbek running, Mr. Khakimov Abdumutalip. He was nominated by *Alga Kyrgyzstan* and got 76 percent of the vote in the first round. Almost half of the residents in the SMD are of Uzbek nationality. His two opponents were both weak, none of them belonging to the richest 100 group, although Murataliev Zamirbek, also an Uzbek, managed to get 13 percent of the votes. At first there were actually five candidates nominated. After the first round of elections a local court, the Suzak District Court, cancelled the results arguing that the winner was a citizen of neighboring Uzbekistan. He eventually was awarded the seat, but according to local news sources his supporters' beat up the judge during the proceedings.[154]

State chapter conclusions

Elections are all about uncertainty (Przeworski, 1991).[155] The key challenge for an autocrat is to 'manage' or control this uncertainty. Some do it through repression, while others use more subtle means - bribery and manipulation of the electoral process. An autocrat that has a strong presidential party can centralize candidate selection and set up the candidate selection process in a way that reduces uncertainty. This is one of the institutional logics behind setting up pro-presidential parties in autocracies. Here I have shown, however, that Akaev lacked this resource and therefore could only manage the electoral process in an *ad hoc* manner. Contrary to what one would expect in an authoritarian state like Kyrgyzstan, state affiliation does not explain much of what is going on in an election.

Backing by the presidential apparatus can be a very important resource for a candidate. Being backed by Akaev and his entourage did not, however, guarantee an uncontested and predictable election. In several cases a pro-presidential candidate seems to have attracted challengers, rather than deterring them. It seems as if participating in elections was a natural thing for ambitious elites, even if the likelihood of actually getting elected was slim. The sheer number of candidates running and the resources invested indicate that the electoral process was a signaling game in which relative elite

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[154] Kyrgyz Weekly, an English language summary of main news, 6-12 Mar 2005 referring to reporting from AKIpress, Kabar, and Azattyk.
[155] Confer the concept of *institutionalized uncertainty*.

strength was measures and 'signaled' to central authorities. A candidate contemplating running for office might well know that chances of winning are minuscule. But if enough votes are amassed in the first round of elections, the candidate is well positioned to extract benefits from the winning candidate and/or authorities. This is especially relevant in two-round systems where the first round is a 'preliminary' contest that outlines the relative strength of candidates. For candidates not directly participating in the second round there is a good chance that one or both of the top-two candidates from the first round will approach them with treats of different kinds.

By the time of the 2005 elections there were many experienced candidates in Kyrgyzstan, some of whom had been elected while others had done well but failed. The introduction of regular local and national level elections in Kyrgyzstan produced a class of experienced campaigners and candidates. Incumbency is good for overall candidate performance, but it is no guarantee of electoral success. The development of *politeknology,* in the sense of campaign techniques, that was unleashed starting with the last Soviet era elections in 1990 made elections increasingly difficult for the presidential administration to manage, however hard they tried.

It seems like a lack of state capacity could explain, at least partly, the pattern of competitiveness observed. On closer inspection, however, it might not be as much about weak state capacity as such, but rather about societal strength. Societal strength can be operationalized in many different ways, but in the Kyrgyz context there is much talk about money and clans. Many businessmen decided to take part in the elections and many of the reports about the campaign refer to widespread practices of vote buying. This is the topic of the next chapter. The social structure of the Kyrgyz society is also often cited as an explanation for competitiveness. The Kyrgyz have traditionally been divided into different lineages (kinship groups) or clans, and in times of elections it is argued that these 'primordial' identities re-emerge and structure voting. This hypothesis is discussed in chapter 6

Chapter 5: Market Actors and Electoral Politics

Having established that state affiliation is an important, but not sufficiently exhaustive, explanation for patterns of competitiveness, I now turn to what I call market affiliation. By this I mean individual level financial resources and business experience derived from exposure to and success in the market sphere. For convenience I adopt a simplified terminology, using personal wealth or business experience as proxies for market affiliation.

Studying economic conditions for political participation is nothing new (Frye, 2010, Dahl, 1971). Earlier studies have shown that 'democratic' political activism in the post-Soviet space is dependent on relative economic autonomy (McMann, 2006). Kyrgyzstan is an interesting case of an aggressive market reformer that abruptly broke with Soviet era legacies.[156] Kyrgyzstan was one of the first former Soviet republics to join the World Trade Organization. All the neighboring countries adopted a much more gradual approach, if any economic liberalization occurred at all. Therefore the theoretical argument about economic autonomy being a prerequisite for political liberalization and contestation can help us understand why competitiveness was widespread in Kyrgyzstan, even at the height of authoritarian consolidation from 2000-2004, whereas it was non-existent elsewhere in Central Asia.[157]

Individuals that are able to make a living independently from government authorities risk less by taking part in politics. Conversely a state employee might think twice before exercising their democratic rights, at least if it means being openly oppositional. The question here is, borrowing from Sartori, what are the conditions for 'truly independent antagonists' to emerge (Sartori, 2005). I will argue that economic autonomy is indeed an important condition, but that activities by market affiliated elites are not necessarily more democratic than those of other elites, as some scholars would argue (McMann, 2006).

Elections are here conceptualized as bargaining game between different elites, even though they are not formally modeled. Studies of candidate profiles in other post-Soviet contexts have shown that candidates sanctioned by

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[156] See EBRD statistics in chapter 2, Figure 3.
[157] Kyrgyzstan had a Freedom House Political Rights score of 6 during these years, identical to that of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

financial-industrial groups do as well as those nominated by the best performing parties (Hale, 2005a). The fact that party substitutes like financial-industrial groups or governors' machines play such an important role for individual level performance in Russia illustrates that parties were indeed very weak in the post-Soviet space. The previous chapter illustrated that authorities were weak in the Kyrgyzstan context. Therefore a study of alternatives to political parties and bureaucratic machines is called for.

Market – hypotheses for individual performance

We have already established that there is a positive effect on electoral performance from all of the categories of state affiliation. Having established that state affiliation is an important factor, we now turn to the role played by financial resources. Looking back at the theoretical model, we recall that the baseline model in a non-democratic election contains a single pro-governmental candidate and that challengers are, by default, either in the opposition camp or un-affiliated. The pro-governmental candidate in such a setting is the favorite to win the election. Economic elites can therefore either affiliate themselves with the government, with the opposition, or as in several cases in Kyrgyzstan, remain un-affiliated.

In any case,

($H_{2-Cand.}$)   Market affiliated candidates get more votes and have a higher probability of being elected

The mechanism whereby financially strong candidates can increase their vote share involves: 1) Bribing potential challengers; 2) Clientelism and specifically vote buying; and 3) *Raw power* and the threat of violence. Data on these 'techniques' is limited, but survey evidence and anecdotes will be used throughout. Without evidence of the specific mechanisms that translate a particular candidate typology into votes we need to exercise caution in inferring patterns based on an analysis of electoral performance. Causality is, as always, difficult to determine, but if a particular category of market candidates consistently performs better we can infer that the mechanisms are one of the above.

Analysis of Individual Performance

There are a total of 48 individuals classified as rich that registered as candidates in January 2005. One of them, Maliev Arslanbek, got his candidature cancelled by a local court and instead he mounted an impressive 'against all' campaign in which two thirds of the electorate in the district voted for that

category. However, most rich candidates did not seem to have any problems registering.

There is some overlap in the state and market categories, many candidates belonging to more than one of group.[158] In order to explore this I will explore interaction effects between the *Alga* nomination and financial position of candidates.

Results

The analysis presented here builds on the findings in the chapter on state affiliation. For the sake of clarity, the first model is a reproduction of the state model in the previous chapter.

It turns out that being rich leads to a significantly higher vote share, irrespective of whether the candidate also is affiliated with the pro-presidential party (Model 3). The effect of pro-presidential orientation, in the sense of being nominated by *Alga*, still remains very strong throughout. In terms of other market categories, like businessmen (also referred to as top managers), there is no effect on vote share.

In terms of being elected, there is a strong effect of being rich, thus confirming that financially successful candidates do indeed play an important part in elections in Kyrgyzstan. However, *Alga* affiliation also remains important for electoral success and the interaction model further suggests that the combination of *Alga* and rich is an unbeatable combination, in that all such candidates get elected.[159] In terms of eventually getting elected, the effect of being rich is associated with a 31 percent increase in the probability of success.[160] But the effect of *Alga* affiliation is even stronger, an increase of 67 percent.

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[158] Nine out of the 48 rich candidates ran for *Alga*, which constitutes almost 20 percent.

[159] Stata automatically dropped the nine observations that were both *Alga* and incumbent. In Model 6 Stata also dropped 33 observations from the 'Professionals' category since this variable perfectly predicted failure.

[160] Simulated probabilities using the *Clarify* software in Stata (Model 5). All other explanatory values are here set at their mean.

Table 14. Candidate Performance, Full Specification[161]

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		Vote share divided by rest (log)			Elected dummy	
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Alga nominated	1.638***		1.498***	1.808***	3.456***	3.261***
	(0.19)		(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.63)	(0.66)
Adilet nominated	0.044		-0.159	-0.195	-0.181	-0.147
	(0.40)		(0.34)	(0.34)	(1.07)	(1.06)
Incumbent	0.914***		0.433*	0.434**	0.256	0.227
	(0.17)		(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.46)	(0.46)
Bureaucrat	0.490**		-0.118	-0.093	-0.822	-0.847
	(0.14)		(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.57)	(0.57)
Male	0.743***	0.761***	0.720***	0.732***	1.267+	1.216+
	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.68)	(0.65)
Urban (Bishkek)	0.153	0.176	0.136	0.121	-0.039	-0.015
	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.25)	(0.24)
Kyrgyz ethnicity	0.437*	0.338	0.374+	0.355+	-0.098	-0.056
	(0.20)	(0.23)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.44)	(0.45)
Candidates/SMD	-0.204***	-0.208***	-0.181***	-0.180***	-0.098*	-0.097*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)
100 Richest		1.283***	0.893***	1.052***	1.748***	1.663***
		(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.26)	(0.41)	(0.44)
Businessman		0.078	-0.272	-0.262	-0.235	-0.255
		(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.47)	(0.46)
Worker profile			-0.567*	-0.548*	-0.395	-0.425
			(0.26)	(0.25)	(0.57)	(0.57)
Professional prof.			-1.042***	-0.988**	-2.886***	
			(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.73)	
Other profile			-0.759**	-0.761**	-0.804	-0.800
			(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.59)	(0.58)
Muscle profile			0.668*	0.694*	1.429*	1.407*
			(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.64)	(0.65)
Alga * Rich				-1.025*		
				(0.42)		
Constant	-2.238***	-1.939***	-1.871***	-1.903***	-2.299**	-2.249**
	(0.28)	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.82)	(0.80)
N	389	389	389	389	389	356
R^2	0.310	0.251	0.382	0.387	0.279	0.197

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[161] This is the most complete version of the candidate level model. It is presented here in the market chapter since there is no candidate level 'clan' data and therefore the full model can be presented already in this chapter and not in the clan chapter.

Note: Models 1-4 are linear regression models and 5-6 are logistical models. The dependent variable in models 1-4 is ln(votes/(1-votes)) and in models 5-6 a simple dummy for whether or not the candidate was elected. Professional profile includes lawyers and doctors; Muscle profile stands for candidates that have experience from the security apparatus or the field of organized crime. District (SMD) clustered robust standard errors in brackets. None of the dummies have a correlation coefficient above .3 indicating that they do indeed capture separate qualities in candidates. Significance levels + $p<0.10$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$. McFadden's pseudo R^2 used in the logistic models.

There are two possible mechanisms whereby financial resources translate into impressive electoral performances that I want to highlight. First, a rich candidate can afford to bribe potential challengers and therefore clear the field prior to the actual election. In the context of Kyrgyzstan, however, it has been pointed out that the reason there is a large number of candidates in the first place is that it makes perfect sense to register as a candidate in a district where a rich candidate is running, since it opens up the potential for being bought off by the rich candidate.[162] Such 'challengers' are thus façade candidates that have no intention of investing resources in a race that will eventually be won by the rich candidate, but instead aim for a consolation prize in the form of money. Testing this hypothesis is difficult due to limited data on reasons for withdrawals. The available data does indicate that there is no difference in terms of the total number of candidates in a district where there is a rich candidate running.[163]

Furthermore we do know that 29 candidates withdrew between the period of the January candidate registration deadline and the first round of elections on February 27th.[164] In terms of these withdrawals, there is no effect of the presence of rich candidates.[165] But there is anecdotal evidence from two districts that rich candidates managed to outmaneuver challengers prior to the election (SMD 16 and 45).[166]

Secondly, rich candidates can theoretically afford to buy votes to a much larger extent than non-rich candidates. Vote buying is next to impossible to study in detail due to the clandestine nature of the phenomenon (Schaffer, 2007). There is opinion polling data about the attitudes towards vote buying disaggregated to the *oblast'* level. In Naryn for instance 86 percent say that vote buying is unacceptable, while the corresponding figure in Talas is 38 (IRI, 2005). To what extent attitudes reflect experiences with vote buying is

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[162] Interview, Nurlan Nabiev, Osh, October 3, 2007.

[163] When regressing the number of candidates on whether or not there was a single rich candidate in the district, we get a negative coefficient with a *P*-value of .245.

[164] 36 withdrew according to the OSCE, see OSCE (2005a) Kyrgyzstan 2005 Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

[165] No effect on either the number of withdrawals or the probability of a withdrawal.

[166] Interview, Nurlan Nabiev, Osh, October 3, 2007; Interview, Nazira (former UNDP staff), Jalalabad, March 13, 2008; and another person who works for an international organization, interviewed on the phone, April 14, 2008.

difficult to determine, but it can be hypothesized that in regions where vote buying is widespread voters enjoy the fact that they are being 'spoiled' by the elites for the time of elections. It might be that vote buying is not as prevalent in Naryn and therefore voters have not come to 'appreciate' it. In the candidate interviews over half of the respondents say that 'other' candidates used vote buying, while none of them admitted themselves using that technique. Nothing surprising here, but it does confirm that vote buying is indeed a widespread phenomenon, even if it is a sensitive one.

The controls indicate that male candidates perform better and that competition naturally is higher in districts with more candidates. As a matter of fact, in the March 2005 elected parliament in Kyrgyzstan, there was not a single female MP. During both Soviet times and the first 14 years of independence, there were always a significant number of female representatives. Note that the 'professional' category containing lawyers and doctors is one of the few significant negative factors. This needs to be contrasted with the Soviet era practice of having 'professionals' or what was often labeled the 'intelligentsia' play a central role as representatives (Embree, 1991). The probability of a doctor, lawyer, or any other 'professional' category candidate being elected is zero (Model 6).

Finally, there is the role of *raw power* or coercive power. Here I have created a dummy to indicate whether the candidate has either security apparatus experience or an organized crime profile. A local NGO coded 11 of the candidates as *Siloviki*, i.e. former security of military officials. I added three candidates that were coded as 'mafia' candidates based on newspaper reports.[167] This new variable does have a positive effect on electoral performance increasing the probability of being elected by 25 percent.[168] The 'muscle' variable will be given separate, additional attention at the end of this chapter.

Alternative explanations

None of the measures used here include data on actual campaigning activities at the district level. Thus these are all measures of potential sources for *candidate strength*. Whether or not the resources were actually used would require a much more intensive coding approach. Had data been available, I could have adopted the approach used by Hale in his study of the Russian Duma elections in 1999, where he coded whether governors and financial-industrial groups actually supported particular candidates (Hale, 2005c). None of this was possible in Kyrgyzstan due to data limitations.

There are also other alternative explanations for voting patterns at the district level. First of all, being associated with the opposition is a good predictor in many competitive authoritarian cases. The problem here is that the

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[167] These cases were widely reported, especially in the Russian language newspaper *Delo No*.
[168] Using *Clarify* for model 5.

political field in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 was not neatly divided into pro-government and oppositional forces. There were only a few nationally prominent so-called oppositional candidates and these did not belong to any one party or faction.[169] Again, since most candidates registered as independents, there is no simple way to identify these oppositional candidates. In the candidate surveys I did ask a question about the role of the respondent in the Tulip Revolution and almost half answered affirmatively when asked about their role in the events. This did not correlate with vote share in the first round when compared with other surveyed candidates, however.

We also have no complete data on the age or the educational background of the candidates. In the survey data, it seems as if age is negatively associated with performance. As for education, I coded a dummy for whether the candidate went to the major university, Kyrgyz State National University in Bishkek. Over a fifth of the respondents had this educational profile and this could potentially be an important networking variable since educational experience is such a formative component of a persons' life. Nonetheless, in the survey data there is no positive effect of this education dummy.

Finally there is the issue of clan and tribal affiliation. This hypothesis requires a chapter of its own due to the intricate nature of the phenomenon (see next chapter).

Candidate examples

In the first round of elections there were five wealthy candidates that got more than 75 percent of the votes. Interestingly, only one of them belonged to the pro-presidential party and only one of them had participated in the elections in 2000.[170] It thus seems as if a new breed of candidates with an arms-length distance to the authorities had emerged for the 2005 elections. We know that in general incumbents faced a lot of challenges and therefore it should not surprise us that many of the top performers in the first round were newcomers without any electoral luggage.

One of the richest individuals in Kyrgyzstan, Kubatbek Baibolov completely monopolized electoral support in Bishkek district no 2, Zhal.[171] At the time, Baibolov was a two-term incumbent and former head of the KGB intelligence service, who got involved in private business development in the early 1990s. There were actually no other candidates even registered for this district. In total there were three districts in Kyrgyzstan where there was only a single candidate running. However, in the two other, 16 and 45, several other candidates initially registered and later withdrew, with some indication

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[169] Also, being a representative of organized civil society could also bode well, but unfortunately there is no data on this for the complete set of candidates.

[170] The only rich person that ran for *Alga* was the son of President Akaev, Aidar Akaev.

[171] In 2010 after the 'Roza Revolution' he served as the Minister of Interior.

of intimidation and bribing. It remains a mystery why no other candidates registered in Baibolov's district. In any case, only a fool would seriously think he could win against a two-term incumbent former KGB head.

Maliev Arslanbek, as already noted, got his candidature cancelled by a local court and instead he mounted a successful 'Against All' campaign in which two thirds of the electorate in the end voted 'Against All', i.e. indirectly for Maliev, even if he was not technically on the ballot. In the re-run in May 2005 after the overthrow of Akaev, Maliev pulled off a stunning 98 percent of the vote and thus got elected. Maliev was also a two-term MP at the time of the elections and therefore both rich and experienced in electoral politics.

Another rich candidate was Omurbek Babanov who is said to have started out as an ordinary businessman, but later managed to get into the petroleum business through his contacts with Aidar Akaev, the son of the president.[172] He ran for office in his home region in Talas, where his dad had been a *kolkhoz* director during the Soviet era. He could easily have secured an *Alga* nomination if he had wanted to. Some observers actually indicated, however, that he consciously kept his distance from the Akaev family, at least politically, as a way of hedging his bets.[173] There were no officially nominated *Alga* candidates in the district where he ran, which might be taken as tacit Akaev support of Babanov and discouragement of *Alga* challengers by the presidential machinery in return for loyalty. In the actual campaign Babanov is said to have used his financial clout to distribute money.[174] He got 75 percent of the votes in the first round.

All of the findings so far tell us that money is indeed good for electoral performance. Note that the general public in Kyrgyzstan is rather poor and that there is also widespread resentment of corrupt rich elites.[175] Rich candidates do well, irrespective of their government affiliation. This is a fundamental point. In many authoritarian settings, rich candidates do not dare to openly challenge authorities. In Kyrgyzstan, rich candidates not only ran for office but in many cases they even succeeded in winning elections, even without being explicitly affiliated with the pro-presidential party

Finally, the data suggests that financial resources combined with coercive power (muscle) are an unbeatable combination. This is especially relevant in

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[172] Interview, anonymous, Bishkek, August 13, 2007. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic the name of the interviewee is here not disclosed. The information was verified from two other sources, interviewed in Talas in December 2007.
[173] Interview, anonymous, Osh, December 6, 2007.
[174] Interview, anonymous, Talas, December 15, 2007.
[175] For deteriorating socio-economic conditions, see HDRO (2010) Human Development Report 2010 - 20th Anniversary. The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development. *Human Development Report* New York. In a survey from April 2005 the main problem with the previous administration was corruption with 27 percent saying that this was the biggest failure of President Akaev, see IRI (2005) Kyrgyzstan National Voters Study. Bishkek, Conducted by Baltic Surveys Ltd./The Gallup Organization.

weak states where local districts level notables are able to sustain their own coercive apparatus. Relation to the authorities and financial resources are therefore crucial to individual candidates' hopes for elections in most countries. What ultimately interests us here, though, is the effect of these variables on competitiveness at the district level and not only for individual level performance.

Market – hypotheses for district dynamics

We know that financial resources are critical to winning elections all over the world, but the question of the relevance of money is especially pressing in semi-authoritarian settings, where challenging authorities is associated with high costs. If the system were fully authoritarian then the effects of money would not be as prominent since competition was not really allowed.

Recall that the baseline model in autocracies assumes that there will always be a candidate nominated by the pro-presidential party in the district. If so, then a non-government affiliated rich candidate increases the probability of competitiveness. This is based on the assumption, as confirmed by the previous analysis, which showed that pro-presidential candidates get more votes, as do rich candidates. Intuitively therefore, the existence of two such candidates, one from the pro-presidential party and another rich candidate, would lead to a more competitive election. However, as we have already shown in the case of Kyrgyzstan in 2005, the party system was very weak and most candidates ran as independents. As was shown in the previous chapter, there is no significant effect on the probability of competitiveness in the presence of an *Alga* affiliated candidate, even if theory would predict reduced levels of competitiveness in cases with a candidate sanctioned by the authorities. On the other hand, the opposition might run its best candidate in *Alga* districts thereby making them competitive.

In the absence of a pro-governmental candidate in a district, a resource-laden entrepreneur could potentially monopolize electoral support. However, a scenario where a businessman wins handily without necessarily being affiliated with the ruling elites is perplexing considering that the overall context is authoritarian. Note how extraordinary it is to have an electoral district in an autocracy in which the autocrat does not have any member of his own party running. And even more extraordinary is that there is another strong candidate, a rich individual that takes part in the election as an unaffiliated candidate.

In the Kyrgyzstan 2005 context, where we know that most SMDs were rather competitive, a financially strong candidate could potentially manage to consolidate electoral support and decrease the probability of competitiveness. This, however, is a hypothesis about non-competitiveness on the district level.

As in the previous chapter, by simply counting the number of market affiliated candidates per district a new variable was created, indicating the number of rich candidates per district. In half of all the SMDs, there was no rich candidate running at all. In 30 districts (40 percent), there was only a single rich candidate running. There were also seven districts where there were two rich candidates and one district where there were three rich candidates.

There are two problems with this straightforward *rich count per SMD* variable. First, since several of those that were on the 100 richest list also ran for the pro-presidential party such a variable might not capture the exclusive effect of financially resource-laden persons. Remember, in the previous chapter where an *Alga* dummy was used to predict the probability of competitiveness there was no significant SMD level effects of a pro-presidential candidate. However, this model did not distinguish between rich and poor *Alga* candidates.

One solution is to create a new version of the richest candidate variable that only counts those that were not nominated by *Alga*. Using this new variable means that we need to play down the number of financial resources (rich) since rich, *Alga* affiliated candidates were taken out of this new rich variable. The main hypothesis, however, is that competitiveness is caused by the presence of a rich candidate challenging a pro-presidential candidates and therefore the rich variable cannot overlap with the pro-presidential variable.

The second problem is that a single rich candidate in a district with no *Alga* candidates leads to a decrease in the probability of competitiveness. If a SMD contains more than one rich candidate we would expect high levels of competitiveness. A single rich candidate in a district is a good proxy for the existence of a strong candidate, since such a candidate apparently managed to deter other rich candidates from running. Conversely, in districts with more than one rich candidate, none of them managed to get the others to withdraw prior to the first round. Therefore we need to create a new variable only containing districts where a *single* rich candidate ran if we also want to explore the causes of non-competitiveness.

The main model about the emergence of competitive districts also requires some changes to the SMD model specifications.

Interaction model

The problem with the simple linear-additive model is due to interdependencies between the explanatory factors of state and market. The theory tested here - that competitiveness depends on the number of resource-laden candidate in a district - requires us to go beyond a linear-additive regression model, since the theory explicitly stipulates a linear-interactive relationship. A linear-additive model might capture some of the effects of state, market,

or society, on a district's competitiveness, but it would nevertheless be a misspecified model.

As already noted, the presence of a pro-presidential candidate in a district does not necessarily lead to more or less competitiveness. The same goes for financially strong candidates in the district. SMD dynamics are determined by the interactions between these kinds of candidate-level attributes. A linear-interactive model can best capture such effects where district competitiveness depends on how many different strong candidates there are per district.

The interaction model equation for the district level is given by,

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{i1} + \beta_2 X_{i2} + \beta_{12} X_{i1} * X_{i2} + \ldots + \beta_k X_{ik} + \varepsilon_i \qquad [6]$$

where Y is the competitiveness score of district i ($i = 1, \ldots, 75$), and X_k is a collection of k independent variables. This can, as an illustration, be reformulated using our substantive categories, where state and market are dummies for a single such candidate per district.

$$Competitive = \alpha + \beta_1 State + \beta_2 Market + \beta_{12} State * Market + \varepsilon \qquad [7]$$

Here a district would be competitive only if there was both a state affiliated and a financially resource-laden candidate competing in the same district. The interaction term (State*Market) should thus have a positive effect on competitiveness, while the lower-order coefficients should have the opposite effect in the absence of the other. If there is only one candidate belonging to either the state or the market category, competitiveness would thus be lower.

Here the idea is that the effect of a single rich candidate (β_2) on competitiveness depends on whether or not there is a pro-presidential candidate in the district. That is, the effect of β_2 depends on the level of X_{i2} (and vice-versa). Thus, the effect of a rich candidate depends on whether or not there is an *Alga* candidate in the district,

($H_{2.1 - SMD}$) In a district with an *Alga* candidate, the addition of a single rich (non-*Alga*) candidate increase the probability of competitiveness

Strongman

Another approach altogether is to aggregate the knowledge about individual candidates per district into a new predictor of district-level competitiveness. As we have already modeled candidate level performance, we could simply count the number of 'strong' candidates per district in order to predict whether or not the district will be competitive.

$$Competitive_i = \alpha + \beta_1 Strongmen + \varepsilon_i \qquad\qquad [8]$$

where *Strongmen* is a simple count of the number of resource-laden candidates per district. I coded two different versions of strongman variable. In one, only *Alga* or rich qualified a candidate for strongman status, since these two features were the strongest individual level predictors of electoral success. A more inclusive version of the strongman variable was also created, which included any of the significant candidate level attributes from the full specification. Thus, any candidate that was either an *Alga*, incumbent, rich, or belonged to the muscle category was counted as a strongman.

The number of strongmen per district should have an effect on competitiveness. However, the relationship between competitiveness and strongman status is not necessarily perfectly linear, since in the absence of strongmen (strongmen equals zero) competitiveness could conceivably be very high, while in cases with only one strongman competitiveness should be lower.

The curvilinearity can be captured by either a polynominal (quadratic) regression model or with a new dummy for districts where there is no strongman. Due to limitation in terms of the number of observations at the lower end of the scale, I adopted the second strategy. The hypothesis in terms of strongmen is thus,

($H_{2.2 - SMD}$) In a district with no single strongman, the probability of competitiveness is higher

This hypothesis can be understood as a general hypothesis for competitive election districts in autocracies. On the one hand, in the absence of a strongman candidate that managed to deter other strong challengers, the race becomes unpredictable and competitive. On the other hand, if there is only a single strongman running in a district, there will be a consolidation of electoral support behind this candidate and thus low levels of competitiveness. In SMDs with two or more strongmen competitiveness should instead be higher.

Analysis of districts

Examining the configuration of pro-presidential and rich candidates in each district, we see that there are 22 districts with a single *Alga* candidate and no rich (non-*Alga*) challengers. Conversely there are 21 districts with a single rich (non-*Alga*) candidate and no *Alga* contenders. These districts should have a lower degree of competitiveness. In 22 districts there are neither *Alga* nor rich (non-*Alga*) candidates, while in 10 districts there are more than two *strongmen.*

Table 15. Number of *Alga* and Rich Candidates per SMD

	Rich (non-*Alga*)				
Alga (27)	0	1	2	3	Total
0	21	22	4	1	48
1	22	4	1	0	27
Total	43	26	5	1	75

Note: Here the rich count variable only shows rich candidates that were not nominated by *Alga*.

In order to fully test the general hypothesis about the consequences of the absence of a single *Alga* or rich candidate running in a district on competitiveness, I created a dummy variable for districts with no such single strongman candidate, i.e. *Alga* $\neq$ 0 and rich $\neq$ 0.

First, there is a notable negative effect of a single rich candidate in a district in the absence of an *Alga* candidate (Model 1). This suggests that some rich candidates in Kyrgyzstan actually managed to monopolize electoral support, even if not supported by state institutions.[176] This is indeed a remarkable finding considering that authorities are supposed to be in control of the electoral process in autocracies.[177] Districts are, on average, likely to be competitive, as we know, but the presence of a single rich (non-*Alga*) candidate in the absence of an *Alga* candidate drives down the probability of this by 34 percent.[178] In this context, we need to remember that districts are on average very competitive in the 2005 elections. Since only 60 out of 75 districts were competitive, there is an 80 percent probability of an SMD being competitive.

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[176] Note that the richest dummy variable presented here is the rich category without the Alga affiliated rich candidates in order to distinguish between the *Alga* and the rich effect.

[177] The effect is not significant using the margin of victory version of the dependent variable. The coefficient points in the right direction, i.e. a rich candidate in the absence of an *Alga* candidate results in a larger margin of victory.

[178] Simulated probabilities for Model 1, using the *Clarify* software in Stata. All other explanatory values are here set at their mean.

Table 16. District Level Competitiveness (Integrated State and Market Variables)

	(1) 60 % dummy	(2) Margin of victory (log)	(3) 60 % dummy	(4) Margin of victory (log)	(5) 60 % dummy	(6) Margin of victory (log)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Richest 100 dummy (single)	-2.229* (0.97)	0.237 (0.35)				
Alga dummy	-1.474 (1.01)	-0.083 (0.36)				
Alga * Rich	2.078 (1.69)	-0.185 (0.74)				
Incumbent dummy (single)	1.581* (0.78)	-0.224 (0.30)				
Urban dummy (Bishkek)	-0.583 (1.84)	-0.013 (0.76)	0.208 (1.59)	-0.032 (0.72)	-1.532 (1.77)	0.338 (0.71)
Soc-Econ index (1999 census)	0.012 (0.04)	0.028+ (0.02)	0.004 (0.04)	0.028+ (0.02)	0.027 (0.04)	0.026+ (0.02)
International Observ. (OSCE)	1.308 (1.86)	-0.469 (0.79)	0.424 (1.60)	-0.489 (0.72)	1.191 (1.54)	-0.782 (0.71)
Domestic observer (NGO)	-1.960+ (1.15)	0.863* (0.36)	-1.498 (1.10)	0.813* (0.35)	-1.819 (1.16)	0.825* (0.34)
No single Alga /Rich candidate			1.421* (0.72)	-0.103 (0.29)		
No single Strongman					2.168** (0.71)	-0.594* (0.28)
Constant	3.013+ (1.82)	-3.450*** (0.70)	1.878 (1.62)	-3.400*** (0.65)	0.683 (1.71)	-2.957*** (0.66)
N	75	75	75	75	75	75
R^2	0.175	0.137	0.096	0.122	0.181	0.173

Note: Models 1, 3, 5 use a 60 percent competitiveness dummy and logistic regression. Models 2,4,6 use log margin of victory and linear regression. The Richest dummy presented here is the rich category without the *Alga* affiliated rich candidates. The 'No single strongman' variable is based on a count of the number of *Alga*, incumbent, rich, and muscle candidates per SMD. Significance levels + $p<0.10$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$. McFadden's pseudo R^2 used in the logistic models.

Second, the interaction term in the first model points in the expected direction, i.e. a district with both an *Alga* and a rich candidate is likely to be more competitive. However, this effect is not statistically significant.

Third and more importantly, Model 3 reveals that the absence of a single *Alga* or rich candidate does seem to have a significant and positive effect on the probability of competitiveness, thus rendering support to hypothesis $H_{2.2}$. This means that the lack of pre-electoral coordination between pro-presidential forces and economic elites set the stage for a competitive first round of elections. The two final models illustrate that if President Akaev had managed to attract strong candidates for the *Alga* party in all districts, in

essence a single strongman in each district, competitiveness would have been lower.

Finally, in terms of incumbency it is notable that districts containing a single incumbent candidate seeking reelection are 18 percent more likely to be competitive, an effect that is significant at the five percent level (Model 1). The incumbency effect is even more interesting considering the that argument about the cyclical nature of hybrid regimes could apply to individual SMDs and not just at the national level (Hale, 2005b). It turns out that the lack of an incumbent, which is the equivalent of no successor, is not associated with competitiveness. This means that the cyclical theory does not apply to the district level.

Here one could argue that the central dynamic is whether or not at the national level the ruler is strong or a lame-duck. If the central variable is elite cohesion and it is thought to depend on whether or not the president is a lame-duck, then perhaps candidate entry at the district level depends on national level dynamics. In the context of Kyrgyzstan in 2005, President Akaev had indeed signaled that he would not run in presidential elections scheduled for the fall, and thus he could be understood as a lame-duck. This does not explain why certain districts nevertheless were non-competitive. Furthermore, since Kyrgyzstan saw similar high levels of competitiveness in the 1995 and 2000 electoral cycle when Akaev was all but a lame-duck the explanation can be disqualified.

It is also notable that there is still no effect of the exposure to international observers on Election Day. Interestingly, the effect of domestic observer coverage of the district is going in the wrong direction, suggesting that there might be a selection bias in how the NGO *Koalitsia* allocated observers.[179]

District examples

Political power in a society like Kyrgyzstan is as much vested in informal institutions as in formal power relations. A more detailed analysis of the particular SMDs illustrates interactions between state and market resources.

For instance in SMDs no. 56 and 57 both of the winners were rich pro-governmental candidates, one of them running in the home district of President Akaev in Kemin, Chui *oblast'*. That candidate, the president's son, was clearly no ordinary district strongman. Talas district no. 56, Babanov's district, has already been analyzed in a previous section but suffice it to say that the combination of financial resources from the gasoline business, pro-government affiliation in the sense of being close to Aidar Akaev, and district level loyalties, as in the father having been a popular *Kolkhoz* director

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[179] More about this in next chapter.

during the Soviet era, clearly was enough to monopolize electoral support. In both of these districts there were no other pro-governmental candidates.

In Kara-Balta, district no. 67, there were several resource-laden candidates but ENC still did not exceed two. The winner of this district did a good job of fighting off apparently strong challengers. The winner was Taalaibek Subanbekov, a businessman that was not one of the 100 richest and neither was he an *Alga* candidate. At first it seems like a puzzle that someone like Subanbekov would do so well, especially considering that one of the challengers was Valery Dil, a rich former MP that in the previous elections got more than 40 percent of the votes. Dil was at the time the chairman of the German Council in Kyrgyzstan, an organization for the German Diaspora. Interestingly, however, due to a generous immigration policy by Germany of targeting those that could prove German ancestry, the number of Germans in Kyrgyzstan went down by 80 percent.[180] Dil also had the burden of being an incumbent in a context in which deteriorating socio-economic standards, and, especially pertinent in Kara-Balta, de-industrialization were pressing concerns. The other incumbent, Vladimir Tolokontsev, was a Russian *apparatchik* who in the 2000 elections got over 46 percent of the votes for a seat in the other chamber.

For both of these challengers the demographic changes that the town of Kara-Balta went through in the 1990s and early 2000s left them worse off. This was the context in which Subanbekov managed to get two-thirds of the vote. First of all, it turns out that Subanbekov was really close to Akaev even if not nominated by *Alga*. For several years prior to the 2005 elections Subanbekov's brother served as the Minister of Interior, one of the most powerful positions in any post-Soviet states. Subanbekov was not a formal *Alga* candidate, but it seems highly likely that he benefited from his family's affiliation with state institutions. Secondly, for both of the challengers, the demographic changes that the town of Kara-Balta went through in the 1990s and early 2000s left them worse off.

There are also a few other interesting cases of districts where vote dispersion was lower than we would have expected. For instance in SMD no. 3, in Bishkek, Kamchibek Zholdoshbaev from the pro-governmental party *Adilet* won in the first round, beating two incumbents.[181] In SMD no. 20 in the southern *oblast'* of Jalalabad a local celebrity politician, Azimbek Beknazarov won. This district had made international news back in 2002 when the Aksy massacre took place. Governmental forces clamped down on a local protest in which Beknazarov played a central role.[182]

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[180] Between 1989 and 1999.
[181] Candidate survey, Lyan Valerii, Bishkek.
[182] For a detailed study, see RADNITZ, S. (2010) *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

All of these cases illustrate the limitations with the standard state and market explanations. Some candidates are clearly stronger than others, and nowhere is this clearer than in the cases of explicit *Mafia* candidates.

Real *strongmen* – muscle

There is a particular type or resource-laden candidate that deserve a separate section, and that is financially successful individuals with a background in organized crime.[183] The main distinguishing feature for these candidates is their reliance on intimidation and the threat of violence. Some of the candidates, for example, had experience in racketeering from the early post-Soviet period (Kupatadze, 2008). Here I will focus on Bayaman Erkinbaev, one of the most high-profile criminal leaders engaged in electoral politics. He was never completely in the hands of the authorities, but rather was independent for at least the final years of his life. This is not to say that he was not used by central authorities at times whenever their interests coincided, however.

Bayaman Erkinbaev was born in the southern *rayon* Suzak, Jalalabad *oblast'*, in 1967. He attended Tashkent Agricultural Institute in the neighboring Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic and was considered a martial arts expert.[184] He married Cholpon Sultanbekova, herself born in Osh *oblast'*. Not much is known of his position during the final years of the Soviet Union, but in the early years of the 1990's he was active in local businesses in southern Kyrgyzstan benefiting from early privatizations.[185] He later went on to become a wealthy businessman and had a reputation for being an underworld leader, especially in the narcotics trade (Kupatadze, 2008).

He was first elected to the parliament's the upper chamber, the People's Representative Assembly, in 1995 from a Jalalabad election district. At the time of the 2005 elections he was the president of Kyrgyzstan's National Olympic Committee and was considered a strong southern profile, the only one who would 'dare to speak up'.[186] Indeed, his relationship with the ruling Akaev family gone bad relatively early due to conflicts over resources and influence (Graubner, 2005).[187] Consequently, during the so-called Tulip Revolution, he provided essential logistical and financial resources, among

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[183] It was already shown that the muscle variable that included both *mafia* and *siloviki* candidates had a positive effect on individual level electoral performance increasing the probability of being elected to 77 percent.

[184] This is where his reputation for being a *Sportsmen* (the word used in Russian) stems from.

[185] Among other things the tobacco-fermentation factory in Jany-Aryk in Jalalabad.

[186] Interview, Kairat Osmonaliev, April 4, 2008, Bishkek.

[187] Role in Akaev regime: 'Bayaman was promoted by the special services of Kyrgyzstan to balance the Uzbek organized crime groups in south and provide an appropriate means of alternative 'informal policing' and social control over the highly unstable Ferghana valley' KUPATADZE, A. (2008) Organized crime before and after the Tulip Revolution: the changing dynamics of upperworld-underworld networks. *Central Asian Survey,* 27**,** 279-299.

other things by utilizing his sports association, Alysh, to storm state offices in southern cities (Cornell, 2006). In the immediate aftermath of the revolution he established himself as a key player in the south, but as the presidential election approached, his role decreased along with the establishment of the Bakiev-Kulov tandem.[188]

Erkinbaev was later killed in September 2005 in Bishkek.[189] He had previously also been a target for assassination.[190] Some saw it as a political murder, but others as a result of a power struggle in the criminal underworld.[191] One interviewee claimed that it was either an internal fight within the southern mafia or that Rysbek Akhmatvaev, the northern criminal boss, had killed him.[192] According to another source it was claimed that Bakiev had him killed.[193] All in all there are at least six or seven different versions.

Kadamjai District no. 16 was situated in the southernmost *oblast'* of Kyrgyzstan, Batken. In 1995 Erkinbaev was elected from a different *oblast'* altogether. In that election, in Jalalabad, there were seven candidates, and Erkinbaev managed to get 47 percent of the votes in the first round. The constituency was nevertheless quite competitive with an ENC score of 3.2. In 2000, he chose to run in a Batken *oblast'* constituency, instead of his native Jalalabad region. In 2000, there were three candidates and Erkinbaev got 47 percent of the vote (again). The turnout in the 2000 elections was reportedly 66 percent. In the 2005 elections, the district was completely in the hands of the incumbent MP and private businessman Bayaman Erkinbaev. Already back in 2000 Erkinbaev had a fairly good grip on the constituency, as witnessed by his total of 47 percent of the vote in the first round, but by the time of the 2005 elections he was completely monopolizing the district. But this did not mean that there were no potential challengers. Initially several other candidates were nominated for the February 2005 first round of elections. Nonetheless, it seems as if Erkinbaev was able to out-maneuver all

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[188] The author was present in the southern city of Osh during the Presidential elections in July 2005. There was a demonstration outside of the Erkinbaev owned Alai hotel in the city center. The tensions were between Erkinbaev and proxies for the new Bakiev regime. Bayaman was also said to be unpopular with traders at the Kara-Suu bazaar since he had raised the rents, see IWPR (2005) Kyrgyz Politicians Feel Public's Wrath. *Central Asia RCA.* London, IWPR. In 2005 Bayaman had lost control of the Kara-Suu bazaar (the biggest in Central Asia) to Abdalim Zhunusov, who coincidentally got killed a couple of weeks before Bayaman in September 2005, see ORZALIEV, B. & ZYGAR, M. (2005) Revolution of Criminal Bosses. *Kommersant.* Moscow. Some observers claim that President Bakiev's brother, Akhmat, took the control over the Kara-Suu bazaar subsequently.
[189] 'Gunmen in Kyrgyzstan assassinate top legislator', International Herald Tribune, 23 Sept. 2005.
[190] 'was shot and slightly wounded in an assassination attempt in April', see ICG (2005a) Kyrgyzstan: A faltering state? Brussels, International Crisis Group.
[191] Ibid..
[192] Interview, Kairat Osmonaliev, April 15, 2008, Bishkek.
[193] Interview, anonymous, May 10, 2008, Bishkek. A politician interviewed in the spring of 2008 claimed that 'Erkinbaev called four times and cried that he had no protection'.

other candidates and consequently got 95 percent of the votes in the first round.

Of the candidates who entered, Abdullaev, the only non-Kyrgyz, was allegedly a façade candidate, while the other two were bought off.[194] Abdullaev was involved in the operations of the *Khalmion* market together with Erkinbaev's wife. The motivation for the two others that ran might have been simply to set themselves up for be being bought off.[195] A local boss like Erkinbaev has both financial resources at his disposal as well as coercive capacities. A threat from him is clearly something that anyone would take seriously.[196]Indeed, one of the candidates that eventually withdrew, Asrankulov, is said to have felt intimidated.[197] The same interview subject also revealed that Asrankulov was said to have received a car as a consolation prize from Erkinbaev. Later Asrankulov also ran for the village (*aiyl okmotu*) head position in the village of *Khalmion*, where one of Erkinbaev's bazaars was located. One of my local assistants, who was very familiar with Kadamjai, confirmed that Asrankulov had indeed felt intimidated.[198] Ms. Iliyazova, the deputy governor of Batken *oblast'* responsible for social affairs, was said to have received a brand new *Zhiguli* (Lada 2107) after she withdrew.[199] In 2005 the turnout was substantially higher, almost 80 percent, compared with 65 percent in the 2000 elections.[200] As for the campaigning, Erkinbaev was organizing games and local elders (*Aksakals*) would 'baptize' kids by lifting them up and naming them Bayaman.[201] Erkinbaev's success at mobilizing voters was such that subsequently, during the Tulip Revolution, he was a key player in the south.

Confirming the specifics of what really went on behind the scenes in the 2005 election in Kadamjai is next to impossible. The intention here has been to show a plausible story in which a cunning 'mafia boss' is able to reduce competitiveness through a combination of both stick and carrot, using both financial resources (Money) and private coercive capacity (Muscle). This constituency does not cease to amaze, even after Erkinbaev's death in the fall of 2005. In April 2006, there was a by-election organized to fill Erkinbaev's seat. His wife Cholpon Sultanbekova and a former MP, Nomanshan Arkabaev, fiercely fought their way to the second round. According to the

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[194] Interview, Nazira (former UNDP staff), Jalalabad, March 13, 2008; and another person who works for an international organization, interviewed on the phone, April 14, 2008.
[195] This was at least the interpretation given by several local interlocutors.
[196] 'People were simply afraid of Bayaman'. interview June 17, 2006, Batken.
[197] Interview, Nurlan Nabiev, April 15, 2008, Osh.
[198] Interview, anonymous, July 8, 2010.
[199] Interview, Nurlan Nabiev, April 15, 2008, Osh.
[200] It can also be noted that the officially reported turnout was substantially higher in the district than in the other five districts of Batken oblast'.
[201] Interview, anonymous, March 13, 2008.

Batken *oblast'* Election Commission chairman, the by-elections in 2006 were free and fair.[202]

Market chapter conclusions

What made the elections competitive in Kyrgyzstan was the presence of resource-laden candidates. This chapter has provided evidence that election results in Kyrgyzstan reflect underlying realities at the district level and that election results are not simply fabricated. Especially important for outcomes is the presence of independently strong candidates that decide to invest heavily in their own candidacy. This is something that is absent in Kyrgyzstan's neighboring states. Only a foolish businessman would challenge the supremacy of the autocratic machinery in Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan.

Rich candidates perform well, but even for them there is no easy route to monopolizing electoral support. Studies of mature democracies have shown that financial clout and the so-called *war chest*, i.e. the money available for the campaign, deters 'quality' challengers (Epstein and Zemsky, 1995). In Kyrgyzstan it is the other way around. A strong candidate attracts challengers in a signaling game that can be likened to a peacock courtship ritual. The favorite to win the race (the female peahen) will notice challengers (peacocks) that manage to gather at least several percentage points of the vote (an impressive display of feathers). Such a challenger will be recognized by the winning candidate ahead of the second round and possibly be bought off to decrease uncertainty if the challenger can make a credible commitment to deliver his votes to one of the candidates in the second round. The same logic works prior to the first round, when certain candidates register, but later decide to withdraw, before the first round begins. Therefore it makes perfect sense for an ambitious individual to take part in the election, even knowing that they will not get elected under any circumstances.

Incumbency is also no blessing. Many MPs seeking re-election faced stiff competition perhaps indicating 'accountability'. Support for this conclusion can be found both in the candidate level and SMD models, as well as in interviews with candidates themselves.

The failure to control the pre-election candidate selection phase is characteristic of weak authoritarian states. In the absence of such control, the plurality of strong candidates, whether state or market affiliated, is thus the main explanation for patterns of competitiveness. It seems as if the combination of weak institutions and lack of coordination makes elections chaotic and unpredictable in a country like Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, much of the variation in terms of SMD patterns of competitiveness remains to be ex-

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[202] Interview, Zhamalov Abazbek, chair of the *Oblast'* Election Commission, June 17, 2006, Batken.

plained. The role of identity categories, like ethnic or tribal is an often-mentioned issue when it comes to Central Asian politics. This phenomenon requires a chapter of its own.

Chapter 6: Societal Cleavages and Ethnic Voting

If state or market resources are not enough to explain variation in terms of election outcomes, then perhaps identity politics could be the missing variable? Here we want to test they hypothesis that strong ties based on kinship constitute a resource for candidates and that district level kinship inter-group fractionalization is directly related to electoral returns. The proportion of kinship groups in a SMD would therefore be reflected in the number of effective candidates.

Much of this book is inspired by an attempt to take informal institutions seriously. Third wave democratization scholars have long pointed out the need to move beyond an exclusive focus on 'parchment' institutions (O'Donnell, 1996). In the case of Central Asia several scholars have argued that clans, as an informal institution, dominates politics (Abazov et al., 2000, Collins, 2006, Collins, 2002). The clan logic allegedly explains the pattern of vote dispersion, especially in rural areas. As I will show the literature on clans and the role of kinship is conceptually misleading and to this day not properly specified.

The literature on social cleavages and electoral politics is a long established sub-field in comparative politics (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967a, Lijphart, 1977). Ethnic heterogeneity has often been considered an unfavorable condition for democracy (Horowitz, 1993, Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972). The argument has been that political liberalization opens up opportunities for elites to mobilize their constituencies, which in turns creates intense communal conflict. The level of conflict makes the society ungovernable and it either breaks down or a powerful institution, like the military, steps in to impose authoritarian order. The interest here though is not in dynamics under democracy, but rather in competitive authoritarianism. The literature does indeed stipulate that ethnic voting is a common occurrence.

Here I will focus on a peculiar form of social cleavage namely tribal or clan cleavages. This kind of cleavage is said to be important in many countries in the developing world (Schapera, 1956, Khoury and Kostiner, 1990). In most developing countries a sense of nationhood is weakly developed and

sub-national identities are more articulated.[203] The clan logic allegedly explains the pattern of vote dispersion, especially in rural areas.[204] The fact that Kyrgyzstan, one of the most tribal societies in Central Asia, has experienced far more competitive politics than its neighbors suggests that there might be a causal link between tribal heterogeneity and competitiveness.[205]

The predictions of the clan politics hypotheses are straightforward, but have hitherto neither been fully operationalized nor empirically tested. In a context with weak and unstable party systems, voters can use ethnic cues to come up with a qualified guess about the future behavior of candidates. If there is only limited information available about candidates and coalitions, it would simply be too costly for the individual voter to keep up with changing candidate affiliations and platforms. When a voting decision needs to be made by someone that does not necessarily preoccupy themselves much with politics, identity categories might become useful *uncertainty-reduction devices* (Hale, 2008).

The chapter begins with a much-needed conceptual clarification about clans and informal institutions. Here we also use candidate survey evidence to illustrate what a clan really means for the Kyrgyz themselves. The specific relationship between numerical strength of a 'kinship group' and electoral returns is also addressed by examining both candidate and district level effects.

In this third and final empirical chapter on the 2005 elections in Kyrgyzstan the full model of explaining district level competitiveness will be presented. The model builds on the findings of the two earlier chapters on state and market.

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[203] 'While the new nations must wrestle with problems of political coordination which arise out of a plurality of citizen identifications, modernization may not minimize the number of such identifications', see KESSELMAN, M. & ROSENTHAL, D. B. (1974) Local power and comparative politics. *Comparative Politics Series.* Sage Publications Ltd. Or in the words of another famous scholar, 'Thus, it is the very process of the formation of a sovereign civil state that, among other things, stimulates sentiments of parochialism, communalism, racialism, and so on, because it introduces in to society a valuable new prize over which to fight and a frightening new force with which to contend GEERTZ, C. (1963) *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa,* New York, The Free Press.
[204] 'I talked with local leaders that had come in to vote for their twenty or thirty closest relatives… [] … the widespread practice of voting for personalistic leaders along clan lines … [] …The Central Asian elections offers just one example of clan politics' COLLINS, K. (2006) *Clan politics and regime transition in Central Asia,* New York, Cambridge University Press.
[205] For more on the relative importance of tribes and clans in the history of Kyrgyzstan see KHAZANOV, A. M. (1984) *Nomads and the Outside World,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Clan identities in Kyrgyzstan

First we need to establish what a clan really is in the Central Asian and Kyrgyz context. I define clan narrowly in order to avoid confusion with other informal phenomena like clientelism, nepotism, corruption, or organized criminal activity. A clan is an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin-based bonds, either real or imagined. This definition emphasizes demonstrable kinship ties as contrasted with more metaphorical conceptualizations that also include non-kinship connections.

In the political science literature, the concept of a 'clan' in Kyrgyzstan has been used in an overly metaphorical way (Abazov, 2003b, Collins, 2006).[206] This way of using the concept can be confusing. In some writings on regionalism and localism in Kyrgyzstan, the concept of clans has been equated with larger territorial concepts like north and south, for instance,

> Kyrgyzstan's clans… are bound by informal arrangements and rules, and their power is based on representing regional interests. The so-called northern clan represents the Chui, Issyk-Kol, Naryn, and Talas oblasts region, while the so-called southern clan represents the Batken, Dzhalal-Abad, and Osh oblast (Abazov, 2003a).

In the quote the concept of a clan is used to denote a vast geographical territory that would never be associated with a kinship group in the Kyrgyz sense. Also, there was never a genealogical narrative of relatedness that covered such areas like north or south. Other authors refers to the 'Issyk-Kul Clan' and the 'Chui Clan', which is clearly misleading since these are purely administrative *oblast'* units (Collins, 2006). In this chapter, I focus on the explicit kinship component of clan politics and examine exactly what a clan is and what its effects on politics are, if any. This will be done without conflating the concept up with other informal phenomena.

A key dimension in the study of sub-national groups like clans is the extent to which they are groups that coordinate action and have an existence beyond the lives of particular members (i.e. to what extent they are corporate groups). Note that under the definition used here clans are indeed organizations, i.e. groups 'conceived as entities and cast as actors' (Brubaker, 2003). This is not uncontroversial. Some scholars seem to consider clans in Central Asia as corporate groups, as actors, while others have refuted this (Gullette, 2006a). The genealogical narrative surrounding kinship categories is a central component, however. All definitions of a clan include a reference to 'real or imagined kinship'. Whether a genealogical relationship is real or imagined is not the point. What matters is if this relationship is discursively

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[206] Again, as noted in the first chapter, I do not agree with how the term has been used in this literature, therefore the quotation mark. Throughout this dissertation the 'clan' concept is reserved for discursively present informal organizations based kin-based bonds.

articulated. It is therefore required that people be aware of these relationships in order for them to exist.[207]

The semantics of tribe and clan in Kyrgyzstan

The concept of clan is a loaded term in English. I use quotations marks throughout the chapter to indicate the contested notions surrounding this term. As in many other nomadic cultures the Kyrgyz were once organized according to tribal rules and traditions (Khazanov, 1984). On the highest sub-national level the Kara-Kyrgyz (today known as the Kyrgyz) were divided into two big confederations (wings) of tribes: Sol kanat – the left wing; and Ong kanat – the right wing.

On the next level we have the tribes or tribal unions. Historically the Kyrgyz social structure was made up of around 40 tribal unions (*uruu* in Kyrgyz). There is disagreement as to whether these groups were necessarily based on real kinship ties or only imaginary kinship.[208] Tribes in this context are essentially groups of clans or meta-clans. Lastly we have clans (*uruk* in Kyrgyz), which are patrilinear units whose members descend from a common known ancestor.[209] In my work I have decided to use the English word clan to denote any relevant level, be it *uruu* or *uruk*, since it is the most commonly used English concept in the literature on the region.[210]

As I will show in the case of Kyrgyzstan a clan is indeed something specific to the titular nationality. A clan in Kyrgyz denotes a nameable patrilineage, which comes with an elaborated set of stories and founding myths. The most cited level is that of *uruu*, like for instance the Sarybagysh, the *uruu* of the previous President Askar Akaev and the Teiit, the *uruu* of the President Kurmanbek Bakiev.

The candidate survey that was conducted specifically for the purposes of this study contained ten questions related to issues of kinship and genealogy.[211] It turns out that among the Kyrgyz there does not seem to be much confusion concerning the phenomenon itself.[212] Candidates and voters interviewed had quick and clear-cut answers to most of the genealogical questions, indicating that these are indeed issues about which people have active

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[207] While conducting the survey it occasionally happened that the respondent asked what clan I belong to.

[208] See TEMIRKULOV, A. (2004) Tribalism, Social Conflict, and State-Building in the Kyrgyz Republic. *Berliner Osteuropa Info*.

[209] An *uruk* is a 'lineage' in the strict sense of the word, see BEYER, J. (2006) Revitalisation, Invention and Continued Existence of the Kyrgyz Aksakal Courts: Listening to Pluralistic Accounts of History. *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law,* 53**,** 141-176.

[210] More on the concept and its equivalent terms in English and Russian, see appendix VIII.

[211] For more on the survey design, sample, and specific questions see appendix IV.

[212] Questions about explicit Kyrgyz phenomena like *uruu*, *uruk*, and *Aksakals* were only asked of the Kyrgyz respondents in the candidate survey.

knowledge.[213] As part of the survey we wanted candidates to place themselves in one of the Abramzon tribal/clan categories. The idea here was to verify whether the often cited Abramzon pre-1917 taxonomy has any relevance today and to determine whether genealogical knowledge indeed is axiomatic (Abramzon, 1963).[214]

Fully three out of four candidates immediately placed themselves in one of the Abramzon's *uruu* categories. This demonstrates the continued relevance of the Abramzon pre-revolutionary taxonomy to contemporary Kyrgyzs. It is also notable that only one respondent did not have an immediate reply to this question indicating that much thought was not needed for responding to this question.[215] How about voters, how do they identify themselves in terms of *uruu* categories? Almost all of the surveyed rural voters had a straightforward answer to this question.[216] A majority of them placed themselves in an Abramzon category. So it seems as if clan identification is indeed axiomatic in Kyrgyzstan, and especially so in rural areas.

Knowing one's own *uruu* is one thing, but it still does not tell us much about the overall genealogical literacy among the Kyrgyz. It turns out that a clear majority of the candidates claim that they also knew the *uruu* identity of all the other candidates in their election district. Candidates also believed that the majority of the voters always know the *uruu* identity of all the candidates in the district. Furthermore, if we ask the voters themselves we get an even higher percent saying they 'always', over 60 percent. Clearly both the elites and the masses possess a lot of genealogical knowledge. Kyrgyz candidates all have an *uruu* identity. Clearly both the elites and the masses possess a lot of genealogical knowledge, and this is something that everyone, candidates and voters, is aware of. This does not mean that they 'represent' the *uruu*, understood as having been selected by clan elders' to defend the interests of the *uruu*, however. Such a conclusion is problematic in that it suggests that these identity categories are constituted as groups, as actors, which they might not be.

Clan – an informal institution?

So far we have exclusively focused on the genealogical narrative dimension of clans. Let us now turn to the more intriguing question of the effect that all of this has on electoral dynamics. In terms of the early stages of an electoral

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[213] This might especially be true of political entrepreneurs that need to legitimize their candidacy as a representative of a particular discursively constructed 'mythic' kinship group.
[214] As evidence of being often cited I note that during fieldwork this exact taxonomy was published in one of the local Kyrgyz language newspapers (*Agyn*, October, 2008). For more see data appendix IX.
[215] As for the next level in the assumed clan taxonomy, when asked about *uruk* only one out of 50 answered with a recognizable geographical term, while two others claimed not to know.
[216] Two out of 80 answered 'Do not know'.

campaign the first stage is the candidate selection phase. One candidate described how authorities played the *uruu* card by highlighting the role of clan identities: 'Four candidates from my own *uruu* were put against me'.[217] This respondent went on to say that this is what is meant by *'Politeknologi pa Kyrgyz'*, i.e. a peculiar Kyrgyz technique of manipulating elections. Here a leading candidate from a large *uruu* was challenged by several others from the very same *uruu* in an apparent attempt to split the vote. This is an anecdotal indication that there is no clan discipline in the sense of selecting only one candidate per clan. Perhaps there was a time (pre-Soviet) when these kinship units engaged in coordinated action, nominating representatives etc., but this might not be the case in contemporary Kyrgyzstan.

A key thing in any campaign is to have a lot of loyal followers in one's election district. You need local activists that will do the hard work of convincing others to vote for you, organize events, and in general defend your interests as a candidate, serve on election commissions, observe the voting etc. Electoral campaigns all over the world provide a good opportunity for candidates to reactivate their networks and ask their friends, relatives and colleagues for favors. To elaborate on this we asked the candidates to identify the most important categories of people involved in their campaign. We gave them five categories to choose from, one of them being relatives. Two choices were allowed. Almost 75 percent included relatives as one of the two most important groups of people in their campaigning.[218] Unfortunately there is no comparable data from other countries, but anecdotally we know that close relatives often play an active role in campaigning.

Some said that an *uruu* loyalty meant that there was a lot of free (cheap) labor for the candidates in their constituencies, (i.e. fellow *uruu* members were used for campaigning without remuneration). It is therefore hardly surprising that only a few chose local state officials or business colleagues as their most important human assets in the campaign. After all, local state officials are prohibited by law from participating in campaign work. Businessmen on the other hand could potentially be a sensitive category, since the influence of money on elections is not considered ethically correct. Furthermore, with extremely weak parties, it should not surprise anyone that less than ten percent of subjects picked fellow party members as the most valuable category of people. Also, predictably the percentage relying on relatives is much higher in rural election districts[219]

Local elders, *Aksakals* in Kyrgyz, are also said to be involved in campaigning, with one in five candidates admitting that they are very impor-

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[217] Interview, candidate survey, Beshenaly Nurdinov, 2000 elections, Naryn.
[218] The other options were colleagues, friends, party members, local authorities, business associates.
[219] Note that 'relatives' is not necessarily the same as *uruu*. For relatives we used the Russian noun *Rodstvennik*.

tant.[220] In fact, none of the rural Kyrgyz respondents claimed that they were completely irrelevant. In the candidate survey covering all years, the following roles were ascribed to local elders: gather and talk; nominate candidates; decision-making; campaign; coordinate vote buying. Most candidates note that *Aksakals* engage in deliberation, even if the outcome is not always a binding decision. Less than ten percent of respondents indicated that elders play a role in the distribution of material resources (vote buying), and only a couple of respondents admitted that *Aksakals* actually participate in candidate selection. In general they do not themselves run for office, even if local residents definitely would refer to older MPs as an Aksakal.

Among voters in our rural sample 80 percent say that *Aksakals* actively participate in the election campaign. A candidate in a rural district in Kyrgyzstan would naturally meet up with local strongmen, be they young or old. There are indications of patron-client relationships that developed between village level intermediaries (*Aksakals* or the like) and prospective MPs. Some chose to use the clan language in describing this dynamic. For instance in Batken *oblast'* where a candidate in the 2006 by-elections said:

> I organized meetings in every village as well as in every individual clan (*uruk*). Every clan needs its own meeting.[221]

Based on this, one might think that once a 'representative' of a certain clan is convinced he will be able to deliver the vote on behalf of the clan. This is misleading since it assumes that there are clan representatives' that actually possess the tools to enforce compliance among fellow clan members.

Clan politics – a model

Clan politics in my narrow definition is conceptualized along two axes, clan coordination and clan voting.

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[220] *Aksakal* literally translates as white beard and it indicates local respected elders. In mid 1990s President Akaev revitalized the old traditional Kyrgyz institution of *Aksakal* courts, as an official organ of the Kyrgyz state BEYER, J. (2006) Revitalisation, Invention and Continued Existence of the Kyrgyz Aksakal Courts: Listening to Pluralistic Accounts of History. *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law,* 53**,** 141-176.
[221] Candidate Survey, Sultanbekova Cholpon Aalievna, the wife of the murdered 'mafia' boss, Bayaman Erkinbaev, 2006 by-elections, Batken.

Table 17. Clan Politics Typology Matrix

CLAN
VOTING

		Yes	No
CLAN COORDINATION	**Yes**	Strong	Irrelevant
	No	Weak	None

The strong version of the hypothesis treats clans as corporate groups that coordinate action through specified hierarchies, decision-making, and enforcement capacities. The idea being that clans are actually doing things, i.e. that they constitute actors as such. I here stipulate that if clans really were groups, then they would act strategically during pre-election candidate selection and bargaining with other relevant clans in a district.[222] Clans would also be able to enforce compliance among clan members once a single clan candidate has been selected. Clan politics in this sense explicitly treats the clan as an informal institution rather than a behavioral regularity (Helmke and Levitsky, 2006). Strong clan politics can thus be hypothesized to imply that

($H_{3 - uruu}$)   Each clan (*uruu*) nominates only one candidate per election district

and correspondingly in terms of voting,

($H_{3.1 - uruu}$)   All clan (*uruu*) members vote for someone from their own *uruu*

The argument here is that if clans really are constituted as informal organizations they should both engage in pre-election candidate selection and once a candidate is selected they should be able to enforce *uruu* wide compliance in voting.

Clan coordination interlude

If we find that several candidates run from the same *uruu* it can be taken as evidence against the strong clan politics hypothesis. Of course it is possible that the leadership of a clan is cunning enough to give the appearance of a lack of clan coordination, but only as a façade. For instance a junior clan

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[222] Which is what some authors actually argue occurs, see COLLINS, K. (2006) *Clan politics and regime transition in Central Asia,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

member might be encouraged to run in the first round in order to split the field, but she would then be expected to rally behind the common *uruu* candidate in the second round.

All these predictions would theoretically depend of the relative size of the clan in the district. When we asked candidates to estimate their *uruu* size over 60 percent claimed that they belonged to an *uruu* with less than 30 percent of the district population. Only a fifth of the interviewed Kyrgyz candidates admitted that they belong to a majority *uruu*. Due to the sensitivity of *uruu* mathematics it is conceivable that these numbers are low estimates, however. One way to find out is to compare estimates from two candidates from the same *uruu*. Unfortunately we only have two such cases in the interview data. In SMD no. 18 in Ala-Buka there were two candidates from the same *uruu* and one of them estimated the size of the *uruu* to be 50-69 percent of the district, while the other said 10-29 percent. But in Batken district no. 15, both candidates agreed about the proportion of their *uruu* in their district. This indicates that the estimates about *uruu* proportions from candidates must be taken as only rough approximations.

To compensate for the weaknesses in using candidates' own assessments of the numerical strength of their clan, we asked local experts to estimate *uruu* proportions per village grouping, *aiyl okmotu*, in a selected set of SMDs that represent critical clan cases.[223] These are all districts in which the great majority of voters were Kyrgyz. Since *uruu* is a unique Kyrgyz phenomenon, I wanted to study it without the interference of potential interethnic dynamics. These seven districts are treated here as critical cases in the sense of being those most likely to demonstrate clan politics.

In the selected seven SMDs there are a total of 88 different *uruus*, but candidates from only 17 *uruus* took part in the first round of elections. The size of the *uruu* is a strong predictor of whether or not there will be a candidate from an *uruu*.[224] The interesting part in terms of clan coordination is whether or not there is a single candidate nominated by each clan (H_3). Out of the 17 *uruus* that were 'represented' on the ballot in these districts there were seven *uruus* that had only one candidate nominated in each district.

In cases where there is a majority *uruu* it would sense for them to nominate a common candidate. In SMD no. 35 in Naryn the majority *uruu* filed nine candidates at first indicating a complete lack of coordination. But the

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[223] An *aiyl okmotu* is the lowest level administrative unit in Kyrgyzstan and it comprises a group of small villages. In 1999 there were 459 such units in the whole of Kyrgyzstan. An *aiyl okmotu* is technically a rural executive committee, or executive branch of the rural or village kenesh, which administers local community functions, see ALYMKULOV, E. & KULATOV, M. (2001) Local government in the Kyrgyz Republic. IN MUNTEANU, I. & POPA, V. (Eds.) *Developing New Rules in the Old Environment. Local Governments in Eastern Europe, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia.* Budapest, Open Society Institute. For more on case selection see data appendix IX.

[224] In a logistical regression the effect is positive and significant at the 0.1 percent level with an R^2 of 38 percent.

minority Mongoldor (18 percent) candidate was the only one from his *uruu*. In most of the districts, there were several candidates nominated from each *uruu*. In Kara-Kulja (no. 36) for instance there were two candidates from the Böru clan and two from Tengizbai. The majority Bargy clan did not even field any candidates in this race. If the Böru had been able to coordinate their behavior they might have stood a chance, but since there were two candidates they would hypothetically split the votes. Also, the Tengizbai challenger, a young journalist, did not seem to be intimidated by the presence of a MP from his own clan. In Ala-Buka (no. 18) there were several candidates from the same *uruu*, both from Bagysh and Mongol. In interviews it was revealed that the winner in this district was always from the village of *Birinchimai* (May 1st). This could be a purely territorial dynamic, though, and not one necessarily tied to kinship.

So it seems as if most *uruus* do not come up with a consensus candidate to be the representative of the *uruu*. It also seems as if there were no effective sanctioning mechanisms for clans to use in order to come up with such a candidate. Local elders might meet up and discuss these issues, but these were not usually meetings for members from a single *uruu*. Also, even if they came up with a consensus candidate they would also have to get fellow *uruu* members to cast their vote for the candidate.

A weaker version of the clan politics hypothesis does not require any kind of clan coordination. In this version, clans are not considered to be groups as such. Here, an *uruu* identity is essentially an identity category, not an organization or an informal institution. Weak clan politics means that voters respond to *uruu* loyalties, which candidates can exploit. Voting for someone from one's own *uruu* is thus a behavioral regularity and not necessarily an institution. For the district (SMD) as a whole the weak clan politics hypothesis can be stated as,

($H_{3.2 - SMD}$) There is a positive linear relationship between inter-clan fractionalization per SMD and vote dispersion (ENC)

or in terms of probability of competitiveness,

($H_{3.3 - SMD}$) Competitiveness is more likely in districts where inter-clan fractionalization is higher

The interest here is in the proportion of different *uruus* per district and the consequences for electoral outcomes. There are also two other possibilities in the matrix, namely that clan elites coordinate and therefore constitute actors, but that there is no discipline among the *uruu* members. In this version any decision by elders attempting to project an *uruu* consensus is irrelevant, since they do not have power over fellow clan members and cannot induce out-

comes. The fourth and final possibility is that there is neither coordination nor voting along clan lines, i.e. that clan politics does not exist in any form.

Localism – specifying an alternative explanation

As an alternative to the kinship focused clan hypotheses one could stipulate that birth location is more important than 'real of imagined' kinship. Examining where candidates were born in Kyrgyzstan it is notable that people are not usually born in the heartland district (*rayon*) of their own *uruu*.[225] Even if we use region (*oblast'*) to code both heartland and where the candidate was born, only around 30 percent were actually born in the same *oblast'* as their *uruu* heartland. This indicates that over the years there has been a lot of movement of clans in Kyrgyzstan. Indeed *uruus* are not concentrated to historical heartlands, but rather spread out over the whole country.

An interesting question here is the relevance of all of this to where prospective candidates decide to run. One can juxtapose the importance of immediate experience in the district where one intends to run with 'real or imagined' kinship affiliation. For instance being born somewhere can be taken as a good proxy of 'experience with the district' (immediacy). The localism hypothesis can be stated as,

($H_{3.4 – Cand.}$) Candidates running in a district where they were born get more votes and have a higher probability of being elected

On the other hand the importance of fellow *uruu* members also needs to be considered. Running for a seat from a single-member district that covers the heartland of one's *uruu* could hypothetically mean a lot of *uruu* recognition and possibly *uruu* loyalty. It turns out that around half of the Kyrgyz candidates run in the heartland *rayon* of their own *uruu*, even if they do not necessarily live there. Again if we use *oblast'* as our regional proxy the number goes up to 70 percent. This means that most candidates do indeed run in the vicinity of their native clan region and not in the region where they were born.[226]

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[225] By 'heartland' I here refer to the geographical area that is associated with the *uruu*. Irrespective of sample, only around 10 percent were born in the same *Rayon* as they indicated as the heartland. Over 85 percent of the candidates did not run in the same oblast' as they were born in. Using *rayon* level the number is as high as 90 percent.

[226] Where do candidates run? For the role of 'dominant tribe areas' in African electoral politics, see POSNER, D. N. (2005) *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

Testing of hypotheses

What about voting behavior and the weaker version of the clan politics hypothesis? The question is whether deep genealogical knowledge and a reliance on relatives implies unconditional support for fellow *uruu* members at the voting booth. In order for this to hold we would need to observe clan voting in our data. Unfortunately, we do not have the *uruu* identity or the proportion of fellow *uruu* members in district for all of the candidates that registered to run in the 2005 elections. We have to instead rely on the candidate survey and data from the seven critical clan SMDs.

In the survey over a quarter of the candidates consider *uruu* to be irrelevant when it comes to voting while a majority believe that it plays some kind of role. One candidate literally said '*Usually voters cast their ballots for their own uruu*'.[227] Voters in rural districts themselves largely agree.[228] Some of the losing candidates actually framed their failure to win in terms of *uruu* dynamics, claiming that coming from a minority *uruu* makes it difficult to win.[229] *Uruu* affiliation would at times be used by political entrepreneurs, like the candidate talking about 'playing the *Adigine* (a meta-*uruu*) card'.[230] One candidate said that *uruu* is only important for politicians (*chinovniki*) in that they use these categories in their campaigning.[231]

Candidate level results

We already know that there is no general pattern of coordination in terms of candidate selection among *uruus* in rural Kyrgyzstan. In terms of electoral performance, the survey data reveals that there is also no relationship between the proportion of ones' *uruu* as a function of total district population and performance in the first round of elections.[232] Actually, if we examine the seven critical cases in rural Kyrgyzstan it turns out that there is actually a negative and statistically significant association between *uruu* proportion and vote share, even if it does not affect the probability of eventually being elected.[233] The bigger the *uruu,* the smaller the vote share.

The candidate survey data does not contain any similar effects. Belonging to an *uruu* that is associated with the SMD in terms of being part of the 'heartland' of the *uruu* does have a small effect on vote share, an effect that

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[227] In Russian, *Obichno izbirateli predpachitayut otdavats svoi golosa za predstavitilei svoego uruu,* Candidate Survey, Jorobekov Temir, 2005 elections, Osh.
[228] The proportions (*n*=81) in percent are 41 for 'always', 34 for 'sometimes', and 25 'does not matter'.
[229] Candidate Survey, Mambetova Toktokan, 2005 elections, Batken and Nurmatov Rustam, 2005 elections, Osh.
[230] Candidate Survey, Keldibekov Akhmatbek, 2005 elections, Osh.
[231] Candidate Survey, Tashov Asamiddin, 2005 elections, Batken.
[232] For the regression results based on the candidate survey see appendix X.
[233] See Model 3 and 4 in candidate level clan models in the appendix X.

is significant at the 10 percent level.[234] Being born in the district on the other hand has no effect. Interestingly, those that were the only candidate from their *uruu* were not more likely to get elected.[235]

In the seven critical clan cases less than a fifth of the 41 candidates were the sole 'representatives' from their *uruu* in the sense of being the only ones belonging to that particular *uruu*. The rest of the candidates faced competition from fellow *uruu* members. This confirms that clans do not come up with a consensus candidate even in the most rural Kyrgyz districts. Arguably clans could still try to coordinate on voting, even if they do not do so on candidate selection and try to enforce a decision to vote for a specific candidate. For clans to dominate the electoral process, following the strong hypothesis, there would need to be an almost perfect relationship between *uruu* share of the population and vote share for someone from the same *uruu*.

These findings suggest that numerical *uruu* strength does not have any positive effect on electoral performance, as was stipulated by that hypothesis. This is truly a remarkable finding since the test is conducted using detailed data from a critical set of clan prone districts. If *uruu* size does not matter in these districts they hardly matter anywhere else either.

District dynamics

Let us now examine district wide clan dynamics using the measures of *Effective Number of Candidates* and probability of competitiveness for the SMD as a whole. Ethnic and sub-ethnic heterogeneity could potentially be reflected in electoral returns.

The inter-clan fractionalization measure I use is a fractionalization measure of *uruus* in a particular district.[236] There is no readily available data on the proportion of *uruus* per district. The most comprehensive ethnographic data on clan and tribal affiliation was complied by the Soviet ethnographer Saul Abramzon and his team in the 1950s and 60s.[237] I used these data on historical spatial distribution of *uruus* in Kyrgyzstan to calculate a fractionalization index for each district.[238] As the candidate survey already validated the Abramon *uruu* categories, such an approach seems legitimate. Unfortunately, the Abramzon map does not give us detailed information about the proportions of *uruus* of population, however, only geographical coverage.[239]

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[234] See Model 1 in candidate level clan models in the appendix X.
[235] This is the *uruu* coordination variable, see appendix X.
[236] Calculated as one minus the Herfindahl index of *uruu* group shares.
[237] 'Almost all ethnographic expeditions carried out in Kirgizstan from 1926 to the 1960s were conducted under Saul Abramzon's leadership. For more on data, see appendix IX.
[238] The calculation was done in Arc GIS after all of the *uruus* had been geo-referenced. The fractionalization score is based on the territorial *uruu* coverage in each of the SMDs and not on population. There is no detailed data on the number of people belonging to different *uruus*.
[239] For more on the details about how the Abramzon map was used in calculating the fractionalization score, see appendix IX.

Any measure using these data is therefore inadequate, but again, it is the only available national level data on *uruus*.

On average *uruu* fractionalization is .40, which tells us that there is a 40 percent chance of two randomly selected individuals in a district belonging to different *uruus*. In some districts the probability is zero indicating complete *uruu* homogeneity, while in others it is as high as .84.

Here I present the full specification for the SMD level model including the variables from both the previous chapters as well. The analysis will start with the central topic of this chapter and conclude with some reflections on the full specification of the district model.

Table 18. Full SMD Level Model, First Round, 2005

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	ENC (D)		55% dummy	60% dummy	66% dummy	Margin of vict. (log)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Ethnic/Clan fract.	0.813+	0.759	-2.520	-2.091	1.208	-0.491
	(0.47)	(0.47)	(1.66)	(1.76)	(2.13)	(0.60)
No sing. Strongman		0.771**	3.420***	3.302**	3.404**	-0.701*
		(0.25)	(0.99)	(1.17)	(1.25)	(0.31)
Alga dummy		-0.101	0.878	-0.294	-1.235	-0.291
		(0.29)	(0.98)	(1.14)	(1.53)	(0.37)
Richest 100 (single)		-0.424	-1.935+	-3.330*	-3.838*	0.242
		(0.27)	(1.03)	(1.35)	(1.61)	(0.34)
Alga * Rich		-0.696	-1.181	0.317		0.328
		(0.59)	(1.73)	(1.88)		(0.75)
Incumbent (single)		0.150	0.441	1.415	0.078	-0.108
		(0.23)	(0.78)	(0.91)	(1.05)	(0.29)
Internat. Observer (OSCE)		1.143+	-0.559	0.772	3.711	-0.785
		(0.62)	(1.76)	(1.96)	(2.74)	(0.78)
Domestic observer (NGO)		-0.533+	-1.709	-2.540+	-1.356	0.880*
		(0.28)	(1.09)	(1.34)	(1.57)	(0.36)
Urban dummy		-0.738	1.771	0.363	0.009	0.580
		(0.66)	(2.24)	(2.39)	(3.10)	(0.84)
Soc-Econ index (1999 census)		-0.013	-0.012	0.009	-0.062	0.021
		(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.02)
Constant	2.491***	2.728***	2.889	3.185	4.265	-2.486**
	(0.23)	(0.70)	(2.37)	(2.55)	(3.17)	(0.88)
N	64	75	75	75	71	75
R^2	0.047	0.279	0.311	0.349	0.393	0.218

Note: The Strongmen (count) variable is constructed as a count variable of how many incumbents, pro-presidential, muscle, and rich candidates there are per SMD. Models 1-2, and 6 are standard OLS regressions, while models 3-5 use competitiveness dummies and a logistical regression specification. In model 6 four observations of rich *Alga* candidates were dropped because that particular variable perfectly predicted success. Models 1 only contains non-Bishkek districts. Significance levels + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. McFadden's pseudo R^2 used in the logistic models.

At first, when analyzing SMDs outside the capital city, it seems as if inter-clan fractionalization has a positive effect on vote dispersion measured by

ENC (Model 1). However, introducing controls for a range of other relevant factors leads to it no longer being significant.[240] There is also no significant effect on the probability of the district reaching any of the competitiveness thresholds. Granted that the measure of clan fractionalization is rather blunt and imprecise, this suggests that clan dynamics are not central to how votes are cast. So much for the clan hypothesis on the national level. The more detailed analysis of the rural Kyrgyz dominated critical clan cases suggest that there might be a positive association between *uruu* proportion and vote dispersion, even if it is not a statistically significant one.[241] These districts need to be examined in more detail.

For instance in SMD no. 14 in the town of Batken, the winning candidate Nur Uulu Dosbol got 31 percent in the first round, despite the fact that his *uruu*, Tokmok, only constitutes 12 percent of the district. There was also another candidate from the same *uruu* indicating that Tokmok candidates did not coordinate and that they performed much better than their numerical *uruu* strength would suggest. In Ala-Buka in Jalalabad *oblast'* the largest *uruu* Mongol with 35 percent of the population had two candidates running and in total they received less than 20 percent of the votes. In SMD no. 31 further north from the town of Jalalabad, the winning candidate Rashid Tagaev came from one of the smallest *uruus* in the district, Munduz, which only had one percent of the district population. The biggest *uruu*, Basyz, was 'represented' by four candidates.[242] In At-Bashi SMD up in the mountains in Naryn, the winner was a famous businessman, Askar Salymbekov, who came from one of the smaller *uruus* Azik. He got 64 percent of the vote in the first round, even if his *uruu* only constituted less than five percent of the district population.

On the other hand, in district no. 35 in Naryn *oblast'* the *uruu* proportions seem to be well reflected in the election results. The biggest *uruu* was Sayak with over 60 percent of the population, while the smaller Mongoldor had around 18 percent. In the elections there was only one candidate from Mongoldor, Almazbek Dzhakypov, and he got exactly 18 percent of the votes. The Sayak had eight candidates running and their pooled vote share was over 80 percent. Clearly there was no coordination at the *uruu* level by the Sayak, but the vote share still reflects the proportion of *uruus* in the district.

Full model interpretation

The full specification of the district model contains several effects worth highlighting. First, the absence of a strongman in a district, which indicates an authoritarian failure of sorts, is strongly associated with competitiveness.

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[240] Barely pushing it above the 10 percent threshold with a *P*-value of .112.
[241] Here there are only seven cases, but the relationship, albeit not significant is nevertheless positive.
[242] One of the Basyz candidates indicated that other Basyz candidates were encouraged to run in order to take votes from him.

This effect is significant in all models, at the 5 or 1 percent level. In 2005 there were 29 districts in which there was only a single strongman. In the absence of a strongman candidate the district is almost 29 percent more likely to be competitive (Model 4). [243] Again, these findings are robust for all the different versions of the dependent variable.

Second, rich candidates that manage to deter other rich candidates from challenging them drive down competitiveness, even if not belonging to the pro-presidential party. A district in which there is only one rich candidate is 37 percent likely to be competitive (Model 4). This is truly extraordinary since autocrats are generally thought of as being in control over political mobilization, or at least being able to deter strong individuals from openly challenging state sanctioned candidates. The finding is a good indication of weak autocratic state capacity in the case of Kyrgyzstan.

Finally, there is no robust international election observer effect on the probability of competitiveness, suggesting that competitiveness is not a function of foreign 'democratic interventions'. None of the interviewees brought up the role of international observers, but large-scale observation missions like the one in 2005 could theoretically affect a small aid dependent country like Kyrgyzstan.[244] Interestingly, the models suggest that there is a negative effect of NGO observer presence in the district, suggesting that competitiveness is not a function of civil society engagement in the sense of 'democratic' activism.[245] More on the interpretation of the results will follow in the concluding chapter.

Going back to the main focus of the chapter at hand, the role of clans, it is apparent that a thorough study of such a challenging micro-level phenomenon would need a much more detailed and nuanced approach. A cross-district regression using Soviet era data sources, as (Abramzon) is simply not enough. What is needed is a detailed micro-level study of village patterns in a particular clan prone district.

Rural case study – Kara-Kulja

In order to test the clan politics hypotheses even further, we would need detailed data on voting at the village level. This kind of detail is only available for one of the clan districts, Kara-Kulja (pronounced K̲ara-kul-dzha).

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[243] Simulated probabilities using the *Clarify* software in Stata. All other explanatory values are here set at their mean.
[244] An observer effect on the vote share of the President has been found in Armenia, among other places, see HYDE, S. (2007) The observer effect in international politics: Evidence from a natural experiment. *World Politics,* 60**,** 37.
[245] There might be a selection bias in how domestic observers are allocated, in the sense of prioritizing districts where there is a single strongman. The effect that the model captures might therefore be evidence of a spurious relationship.

The author had the privilege of observing electoral dynamics in this mountainous mono-ethnic district first-hand on several occasions during fieldwork conducted between 2007 and 2008. This rural district in a mountainous part of southern Kyrgyzstan is useful here, because it is a most likely case for finding some effect of clan politics. *Uruu* dynamics are said to play a key factor in conflicts over resources and influence in the *rayon*. There was actually a case a couple of years ago of a village allegedly splitting due to *uruu* related disputes.[246] The previous mixed-*uruu* aiyl okmotu was said to have split into two, following *uruu* lines.[247]

Map 2. Location of Kara-Kulja *Rayon* in Southern Kyrgyzstan, Osh *Oblast'*
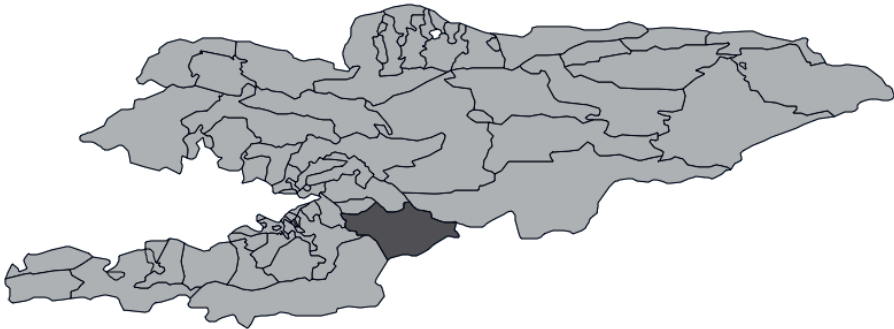
Note: Map produced by the author in Arc GIS. Kara-Kulja highlighted in dark.

Kara-Kulja *rayon* stretches from the borders of Uzgen *rayon*, close to the Uzbek border, all the way up to the Chinese border in the south. It is a mountainous region with a river flowing right through it. The population of 87,000 is concentrated around the *rayon*'s center, but there are settlements at several points along the river all the way to the Chinese border. In the *rayon* there are 12 'clusters of villages', or *aiyl okmotu* as they are called in Kyrgyzstan, which is the smallest administrative unit. The total number of villages in Kara-Kulja is 49. At the time of the elections these 49 villages were divided into 40 polling stations.

Candidates - 2007 by-election, September

In 2007 the national context was one of authoritarian consolidation under President Bakiev. When the incumbent from the district, Sooronbai Jeenbekov, became minister of agriculture, following the large-scale demonstrations in the winter of 2006/2007, the seat freed up and new elections were scheduled for September. It was clear that these elections would be a preparatory stage for the upcoming parliamentary elections that had not yet

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[246] Villages Kenesh and Intimak.
[247] Interview, Avazkan Ormonova, Kara-Kulja, April 15, 2008. The interviewee was actually involved with the villagers in a conflict resolution project funded by international donors.

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been scheduled. The turnout figures are believed to have been heavily inflated, but the vote shares were allegedly kept the same.[248]

Table 19. Election Results in Kara-Kulja, 2007 By-Election

Candidate	Votes	Vote Share	*Uruu*	Born
Abdiev Kurmantay	9,024	44.1%	Tengizbai	Biy-Myrza
Aydarov Kerim	1,375	6.7%	Bargy (Kara)	Ylay-Talaa
Osmonov Kamchybek	4,442	21.7%	Boru	Birinchimai
Chotonov Duyshonkul	5,623	27.5%	Boru	Koo-Chaty
Total	20,464			

Note: Data from the Central Election Commission. The 'against all' category has here been left out.

These were very competitive elections, like most of the post-independence elections in the district. The race was open for alternative elites to participate in and the intensity of the campaigning was not diminished by the knowledge that there might not be a second round if the president decided to call early general elections.[249]

Clan mapping in Kara-Kulja

When the villagers in Kara-Kulja talk about clan, using the Kyrgyz *uruu*, they are referring to the lineages stemming from the *Adigine* branch.[250] These kinship-based identities are very strong in Kara-Kulja and knowledge about them is next to universal. In this rural and mountainous district, everyone seem to know their clan.[251] During my fieldwork in Kara-Kulja, I never encountered anyone that did not know their clan or who hesitated to tell me their clan affiliation, nor have I encountered any hostility towards me for asking the question.[252] With the help of local experts I was able to determine the *uruu* composition in each of the 49 villages.[253]

The most populous local clan in Kara-Kulja is the Bargy (branch), with the Sary-bargy (sub-branch) being the biggest. In terms of political influ-

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[248] Interview, Kumar Bekbolotov, Bishkek, December 10, 2007.
[249] At the time however most people were convinced that the sitting parliament would serve its full term (until 2010).
[250] See Abramzon map in appendix IX.
[251] For instance two-thirds of the 20 interviewed candidates from this district say it is important (or very important) to know your forefathers (in the jeti ata sense). An impressive 76 percent claim that they knew all seven of their forefa-thers (*jeti ata*). Also, each of them gave a straight and immediate answer to the question about their *uruu* identity. Not only do they know their own *uruu,* though, but a staggering 82 percent also claim to know the uruu of all the other candi-dates as well. Furthermore, three-quarters think that the voters also know this.
[252] In posing the question, we always used the Kyrgyz *uruu* and not the Russian *klan*, even if the question was posed in Russian.
[253] The information was gathered from several different sources and through triangulation I am convinced that I have achieved a very good sense of how kinship groups are distributed in the district.

ence, though, they do not seem to be very influential. The most influential persons from Kara-Kulja come from either Tengizbai or Böru. Tengizbai is said to have dominated the district throughout the post-Soviet period.[254] According to some they used 'Mafia methods', winning elections with the help of financial resources.[255] There has been a Tengizbai MP from the district since at least mid 1980's. Moreover, Bargy candidates are said to always lose in *rayon* level elections.[256] In 19 of the 40 polling stations there was only a single *uruu*, while in nine cases there was a fractionalization score above .5 indicating a diverse *uruu* population.[257]

Clans are said to play a big role in elections in terms of clan voting, at least according to most interviewed *Aksakals,* candidates, and voters.[258] The importance of clans is said to be diminishing in the district capital though, while up in the mountains of Alaiku it is still strong.[259] An outside observer and campaigner for one of the candidates from Mirzake (village in neighboring Uzgen *rayon*) told me in an interview that campaigning is unnecessary in Kara-Kulja since the people are divided into *roda* (clans).[260]

Clan voting: candidate performance per polling station

In the 2007 by-elections, some candidates managed to monopolize electoral support in many villages with an average winner's vote share of 53 percent. The key question is what role did kinship affiliation play in such performance? Using candidates as units of analysis I hypothesize that,

($H_{3.5 - Cand.}$) Candidates from numerically strong clans get more votes

I also want to distinguish a specific *uruu* dynamic from a purely *localistic* or territorial dynamic. The localism hypothesis can be stated as,

($H_{3.6 - Cand.}$) A candidate that was born in a particular village (or AO) performs better there than elsewhere

The alternative localism hypothesis could be the lurking variable that gives the appearance of a relationship between *uruu* and electoral performance. Perhaps it is not as much about kinship as such as about territoriality.

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[254] Interview, Nabiev Nurlan, Osh, October 4, 2007.
[255] *Aksakals* in Jany Talaa a/o, Kara-Kulja *rayon*, October 10, 2007.
[256] Interview, Kumar Bekbolotov, Bishkek, April 1, 2007.
[257] For more see data appendix IX.
[258] *Aksakal*s, Kara-Kulja *rayon*, April 21, 2007.
[259] Interview, Kumar Bekbolotov, Bishkek, April 1, 2007.
[260] This was a completely unprovoked answer, since in my questions I had not even hinted at my interest in clan related issues. This just goes to show how prevalent the clan discourse' is in describing politics in Kyrgyzstan.

Table 20. Candidate Performance per Polling Station, Kara-Kulja, September 2007

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
			Vote share (%)			
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Uruu prop	0.181*					0.226
	(0.08)					(0.19)
Uruu majority		0.134*				-0.065
(village)		(0.07)				(0.15)
Uruu majority			0.037			-0.137*
(a/o)			(0.04)			(0.06)
Home village				0.394***		0.199+
				(0.10)		(0.12)
Home *ayil okmotu*					0.183***	0.273***
					(0.05)	(0.07)
Rayon capital						-0.077
						(0.05)
Constant	0.232***	0.236***	0.235***	0.234***	0.221***	0.237***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
N	160	160	160	160	160	160
R^2	0.029	0.025	0.006	0.089	0.086	0.177

Note: There were four candidates running in the SMD that contained 40 polling stations. OLS regression using vote share in its original form. Two different version of the *uruu* majority variable is presented, one calculating the proportion in the polling station, and the other the proportion of the *ayil okmotu* (a/o) as a whole. Significance levels + $p<0.10$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$. McFadden's pseudo R^2 used in the logistic models.

For individual candidates, *uruu* proportion and dominance in a village is positively associated with electoral performance, when individually tested (Model 1 and 2). However, the effect is rather small and much of the variation remains to be explained (R^2). Actually it turns out that territoriality, or the localism hypothesis, has much stronger predictive power over individual electoral performance. Being born in the village where the polling station is located bumps up the vote share by almost 40 percent and this effect is significant at the .01 level (Model 4). There is also a positive effect of territoriality on the whole *aiyl okmotu* in which the candidate was born, even if the magnitude is only half of that in the previous model. The *localism* effect is the only positive and significant effect on electoral performance in the full specification (Model 6), thus suggesting that what appears to be 'clan voting' in reality is 'localism voting'.

In terms of voting for someone from one's own *uruu* only half of the respondents in the voter's survey say that people always vote for someone from their own *uruu*.[261] One-third of Kara-Kulja respondents claimed that *uruu* identity does not play a role in determining voting behavior. The com-

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[261] The voter survey included 50 randomly selected respondents in villages across Kara-Kulja *rayon*.

parable figure from the candidate survey is 27 percent. The analysis above indicates that whether or not the candidate was born in the voter's own village is important. This kind of territorial loyalty is not unique to rural Kyrgyzstan, though, but rather a widespread global phenomenon.

Clan voting: polling stations as units

If the previous section analyzed candidates as such, in this section we now move to the equivalent of the SMD level analysis earlier in book: the polling station. There were 40 polling stations in Kara-Kulja in September 2007. The hypothesis follows the SMD-level hypothesis

($H_{3.7 - PS}$) The inter-clan fractionalization in a polling station area has a positive linear effect on vote fractionalization (ENC) and the probability of competitiveness.

Results

Even in this critical case for the clan voting' hypothesis it turns out that *uruu* fractionalization does not have an effect on the *Effective Number of Candidates* or any of the other competitiveness measures.[262] Interestingly, the only significant factor in the polling station model is whether or not the candidate was born in the village where the polling station is located. This *localism* effect, however, only works in the home village and not for the whole *aiyl okmotu* indicating a micro-local dynamic. The evidence for the localism hypothesis is imperfect, but the results do suggest that even in this rural mono-ethnic district inter-clan fractionalization on the village level is not associated with dispersed electoral outcomes.

Clan chapter conclusions

Candidates, not clans, are the central actors in elections even in the most rural districts in Kyrgyzstan. Throughout this chapter, I have covered districts that are not representative of typical districts in Kyrgyzstan. The case studies are all atypical districts that were selected as most-likely cases for testing the clan politics hypotheses. In short, I show that there is no such informal institution in Kyrgyzstan. I do find that in certain rural districts there are behavioral regularities when it comes to voting that can be easily mistaken for clan voting. However, when examined in detail it turns out that it is not so much kinship as territorial affiliation that determines voting behavior in such cases. Furthermore, other candidate attributes like financial resources and state affiliation also seem to continue to play a significant role.

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[262] Regression model presented in appendix, see table 44.

The Kyrgyz, especially in rural areas, talk about their *uruu* affiliations and at times even give an impression of them as existing as corporate groups. Indeed, in the 1990s at the height of the transition in Kyrgyzstan there was a lot of confusion about the identity of the Kyrgyz, their social organization, and what consequences this would have for politics. However, now we have reached a point in time when we can sort out some of the confusion and at the same time strip the clan concept of some of the most distorted *orientalistic* connotations in the literature. Having narrowly defined clan as a kinship-based social unit, I then go on to show that there is no such thing as a clan, as a unified organization, that actually coordinates candidate selection and manages to get members to vote along clan lines. This means that the clan hypothesis in its strong form can be put to rest.

When it comes to clan voting, my findings suggest that clan identification works as an *uncertainty reduction device*, just like ethnicity does in other polities (Hale, 2008). In information scarce environments, a decision about whom to vote for has to be made on the only cues available. The clan identity of a candidate is one such cue. Uncertainty about future performance of the MP can be reduced in the mind of the voter if they belong to the same identity group. The clan might completely lack the characteristics of an institution in the sense of decision-making capacity or sanctioning mechanisms, but the clan identity might still affect voting behavior. Most communities, be they kinship groups, associations, firms etc., rarely display unfettered solidarity (Tilly, 1973). I have here suggested an alternative micro-level hypothesis. *Localism* in the sense of voting for someone from one's own village or town is hardly a unique Kyrgyz phenomenon. This kind of electoral localism is seen all over the world. *Uruu* identities are something that most people in rural Kyrgyzstan are aware of. It is only natural that this information goes into a decision about whom to vote for.

By the time of the 2005 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, voters were much more aware and better equipped to make independent decisions. The pressure on any incumbent MP was arguably high, since the socio-economic situation continuously deteriorated in the post-Soviet period, especially in rural areas.[263] There was also a new class of entrepreneurs that emerged in the wake of the market reforms in 1990s. Many of these decided to try their luck in the great electoral game of 2005, using their material resources to lure voters into their camp. Many of these factors overlapped. You could have an entrepreneur from a big *uruu* who openly wanted to challenge an incumbent MP from another *uruu*, or any other combination of state, market, or societal affiliation that give particular districts their own flavor.

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[263] For detailed disaggregated analysis of socio-economic development, see UNDP (2010a) Kyrgyzstan: successful youth – successful country. Bishkek, UNDP.

After having presented the full specification of the district model for Kyrgyzstan in 2005 the question of generalizability arises. The next chapter explicitly addresses this by analyzing other electoral cycles in Kyrgyzstan and the fascinating case of Azerbaijan, and equally authoritarian, but yet competitive post-Soviet case.

Chapter 7: Competitiveness in Central Eurasia

How far does the argument about elite balance of power travel? Was this something unique to a single electoral race in a small peripheral country at a very particular point in time, or is there a something more general that can be learned from the case? The bulk of this study has addressed some of the specific sub-national dynamics of the fascinating electoral cycle in the spring of 2005 in Kyrgyzstan. Focusing on the micro-dynamics of elections means that comparable data for other elections and other countries is not necessarily available. The ambition of this chapter is to illustrate how the logic of balance of power helps us understand other electoral cycles in Kyrgyzstan as well as elsewhere in the region and establish more external validity for the arguments presented.

First, an overview of earlier parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan will be presented. District level data on competitiveness confirms that the high level of competitiveness in the 2005 elections was not unique. This is interesting, since most observers would not have considered Kyrgyzstan competitive in the early 1990s.[264] After this the other countries of Central Eurasia will be categorized and analyzed. Sufficiently detailed data for hypothesis testing is only available for the case of Azerbaijan in 2005, however. In this chapter, I show that competitiveness was high even in the unlikely case of Azerbaijan. However, in this case the authorities managed competitiveness better than their Kyrgyz counterparts, and as a consequence, no serious challenges to the regime followed.

Kyrgyzstan 1990-2000

As the previous chapters illustrate, parliamentary elections seem to have been a key battleground for political elites in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. The increasing role of the parliament can be noted in its many legislative initiatives.[265] The fact that the parliament became more important is not to say that

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[264] Levitsky and Way for instance do not include Kyrgyzstan in their categorization of competitive authoritarianism, instead defining Kyrgyzstan in 1995 as a case of full authoritarianism, see LEVITSKY, S. & WAY, L. A. (2010) *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War,* New York, Cambridge University Press.
[265] In 1995 only 7 percent of the laws were initiated by MPs, the following year that went up to 23 percent and in 2000 it was more than 50 percent, see ISKAKOVA, G. (2003) *Vybory i*

the country became more democratic. As a matter of fact, development to-
wards democracy seems cyclical, but has moved in a more authoritarian
direction overall since the first liberalizing reforms in early 1990.[266] Indeed,
at the turn of the millennium Kyrgyzstan received its worst ever score on the
political rights scale and was categorized as 'not free'. This does not mean,
however, that elections were becoming less competitive. Even if competi-
tiveness was slightly reduced after each election, the level still remained
exceptionally high in 2005.

Table 21. Competitiveness in Kyrgyzstan, 1990-2005

Year	Districts	Total number of Candidates	Average no of Candi-dates per SMD	Winner's vote (%)	Margin of Vic-tory	ENC (D)	Proportion compet. (60%) SMDs
1990	350	1,032	2.9	nk	nk	nk	nk
1995	105	936	8.9	37.8%	16.2%	3.84	92.4%
2000	90	420	4.7	43.6%	18.3%	3.29	82.2%
2005	75	389	5.2	47.2%	21.6%	2.98	82.7%
Total			5.4	42.9%	18.7%	3.37	85.8%

Source: Central Election Commission
Note: In 2000 there were also 15 seats allocated based on a party list in a nation-wide propor-
tional election. 11 parties contested the 15 available PR seats resulting in an ENC above five.
Several of the candidates were registered on both a SMD and on the PR party list.

Table 21 shows that competitiveness has been consistently high since the
first post-Soviet elections in 1995. On average there were three or more ef-
fective candidates per district in each of the three elections, as evidenced by
the mean ENC score above. The proportion of districts that qualify for the
competitiveness category, as seen in the last column, is also consistently
high. Interestingly though, competitiveness seems to have come down over
time, even if it remained at very high levels in the 2005 elections. Note that
the downward curve in terms of competitiveness follows the downward
trend in terms of democracy rankings. This seems to indicate that the rees-
tablishment of more authoritarian forms of government reined in competi-
tiveness at the margins. By the time of the 2005 elections competitiveness
still remained high, though.

Competitiveness was ultimately reined in further in 2007, at least at the
aggregate level of parliamentary seats, with the introduction of a propor-
tional electoral system under President Bakiev. The ENC on the aggregate
national level was still a surprisingly high 2.05 in the December 2007 elec-
tions, but the seat distribution in the parliament and the number of effective

*Demokratiya v Kyrgyzstane: Konstitutsionnyi dizain presidentsko-parlamentskikh otnoshenii
(Elections and Democracy in Kyrgyzstan: Constitutional Design of Presidential-
Parliamentary Relationships),* Bishkek, Biyitik.
[266] As indicated by the graph in chapter two.

parliamentary parties was less than 1.5 due to a peculiar secondary regional threshold.[267] The Bakiev regime did not last long and in the elections in October 2010 the outcome was intensely competitive once again, both in terms of votes and seats allocated.

In the following sections, I briefly describe each of the electoral cycles in the last 20 years in Kyrgyzstan, excluding the 2005 cycle, which is the focus of the rest of the book. Unfortunately there is no data on professional profile, party affiliation, or financial position for candidates in earlier elections, but district level election results have been published for all elections since 1995. The lack of detailed candidate information means that the main research hypotheses will not be tested for these earlier elections. However, a descriptive account of both sub-national and aggregate level dynamics should help convince the reader of the legacy of competitive elections in Kyrgyzstan since the mid-1990s.

The last Soviet era elections – 1990

The first ever multi-candidate elections in 1989 were conducted in the context of challenges to Soviet authority in parts of the Union. *Perestroika* and *glasnost'* had unleashed societal pressures for change in most parts of the communist bloc and elections to the Union-wide People's Congress were therefore an important event in the *demokratizatsiia* process. In contrast to their Baltic and Slavic counterparts, no significant democratic or nationalist movements emerged in the Central Asian republics. In Kyrgyzstan, the Soviet system was still intact in 1989 even though the First Secretary, Absamat Masaliev, was becoming increasingly unpopular (Huskey, 1995). Key political issues at the time were housing and other social issues. Ethnic tension was another key fissure, with the clashes in the southern capital of Osh being the most explicit example (Tishkov, 1995). The Slavic minority also felt increasingly uncomfortable with the emerging nationalist agenda.

In March 1989, elections were to be organized for the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, a newly established Moscow based Union-wide body with a total of 2,250 seats. Members were to be elected from three sources: Political territories, all-union social organizations like trade unions, the CPSU, and the Academy of Sciences. The Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic had 53 seats, of which 12 were from national-level public organizations. For the first time ever, the one-party rules were relaxed. Elections were held simultaneously all over the USSR. In February 1990, one year later, elections were organized at the republican (Kyrgyzstan) level Supreme Soviet. A

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[267] One of the major oppositional parties, *Ata Meken*, was apparently outmaneuvered by under-reporting their electoral support in the city of Osh and thereby disqualifying them from the second 0.5 percent *oblast'* level threshold, see OSCE (2008) Kyrgyz Republic Pre-Term Parliamentary Elections, 16 December 2007. Warsaw, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

new national Supreme Soviet was envisioned with 350 members. These were to be elected from single-member districts.[268] Elections to all levels (republican, *oblast'*, city, *rayon*, village and neighborhood) were organized, and an impressive total of 13,500 seats were to be filled. The election itself was neither free nor fair: one problem being that the right to nominate candidates was given only to labor collectives, educational establishments, and military units. Consequently, party officials, enterprise directors, collective and state farm chairmen, and officials won the majority of seats.

The Supreme Council (Soviet) that was elected in the spring of 1990 went on to vote for the Communist Party First Secretary, Absamat Masaliev, as the new chairman of the Parliament. A notable faction in the parliament, the Movement of 114, a group of reformist deputies, was later formed (Collins, 2006). In the fall of 1990 the Supreme Council was supposed to vote for a new president, but none of the three candidates, Masaliev from Batken, Amanbaev from Issyk-Kul, or Jumagulov from Chui, managed to get a majority of the votes. In the final vote in August, a political outsider and a widely recognized scientist, Askar Akaev, got a majority of the votes.[269] Later, after the Kyrgyz parliament had voted for independence from the USSR in August 1991, a presidential election was scheduled for October that same year with only one candidate, Akaev, running.[270]

At the time the only opposition came from the intelligentsia, i.e. educated professionals not working directly in the state bureaucracy (doctors, teachers, lawyers etc.).[271] For the first time, people were free to choose among several candidates, and in a few districts the ruling Communist party nominated candidates were defeated. However, the winning combination of candidate characteristics seems to have been a nomenklatura profile, with its associated understanding of how to work the system, along with being male and having local knowledge (Huskey, 1995).

The national level election outcome can be summarized as follows:

> The election results gave the party apparatus a large and obedient majority in the new republic supreme soviet. Party officials, 81 in all, formed the largest

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[268] A two-round Single-Member District system, contrary to the multi-member district proposed by the September 1989 draft, see HUSKEY, E. (1995) The Rise of Contested Politics in Central Asia: Elections in Kyrgyzstan, 1989-1990. *Europe-Asia Studies,* 47**,** 813-33.

[269] In the major English books about politics in Kyrgyzstan there seems to be a disagreement as to whether Akaev was a member of the Communist Party or not. Collins claims that he was not a member, while Anderson claims that he had indeed been a member since 1981, albeit a low profile one, see ANDERSON, J. (1999) *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's island of democracy?,* Amsterdam, Overseas Publishers Association, COLLINS, K. (2006) *Clan politics and regime transition in Central Asia,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

[270] This even though parties were allowed to contest the elections, see COLLINS, K. (2006) *Clan politics and regime transition in Central Asia,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

[271] Confer the electoral success of Omurbek Tekebaev, in Jalalabad in the same election. Tekebaev, the current chairman of Ata Meken, was back then a local school-teacher that successfully challenged a nomenklatura candidate.

single occupational group. All 40 raikom [district committee] first secretaries, both obkom [regional committee] first secretaries, and the four leading republican secretaries secured seats in the parliament. Ordinary workers and peasants again faired poorly in the more competitive elections, returning only 17% of the deputies. Leading personnel from government, industry and agriculture occupied virtually all of the remaining seats. The chairmen of collective farms and the directors of state farms alone accounted for 39 seats. Thus, the familiar pattern of parliamentary representation based on posts, and not people, was continued. The predominance of nomenklatura workers among republic supreme soviet deputies ensured that communists would assume a commanding share of the seats. Communist party members comprised 90% of the republic deputies (Huskey, 1995).

Without detailed data on either candidates or election returns, it seems as if the few instances of competitiveness in the 1990 elections in Kyrgyzstan came from democratically oriented, intelligentsia candidates.[272] Economic elites did not constitute an alternative to the state sanctioned candidates at this point. In any case, being economically successful in the Soviet Kyrgyz republic was only possible for state affiliated elites. Such candidates would have run as part of the communist party and thus not contributed to the competitiveness of the election. Rather, they would be the default favorite to win if nominated.

The situation in the 1995 elections was different. The whole state apparatus had been radically transformed and market reforms had empowered a range of non-state actors. Early democratic reforms also opened up space for civil society actors to participate more actively in politics.

First elections of post-independent Kyrgyzstan – 1995

The early years of independence were a big challenge to the newly independent state of Kyrgyzstan. The battle over the new constitution in 1992-3 eventually led to President Akaev's dissolution of the Soviet era parliament in 1994, mimicking Yeltsin's forced dissolution of the Russian Duma in September 1993.[273] The May 1993 constitution initially outlined a new 105 member strong professional, unicameral legislature. The following year was the year of referendums in Kyrgyzstan, with one in January about Akaev's policies and presidential term and another one in October about a new constitution. The New Constitution outlined a bicameral parliament with a 35 seat professional lower chamber, the Legislative Assembly (*El Okuldor Jyi-*

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[272] Anecdotal evidence includes SMD no. 258 where Omurbek Tekebaev, a village teacher and member of the Popular Front, successfully challenged the communist party nominated candidate. Another example is SMD no. 311 in *Kara-Kulja*, Osh *oblast'*, where an academic, Abyt Ibraimov, challenged a leading KGB figure, Askar Mameev in a race that went to a second round.

[273] The Soviet era parliaments in the western parts of the former Soviet Union were all dissolved earlier than the ones in Central Asia.

yny), and a 70 seat upper chamber, the People's Representative Assembly (*Myizam Chygaruu Jyiyny*). In 1995-96 people in Kyrgyzstan seemed to have high hopes for electoral democracy:

> A majority of the public (56%, up from 49% in 1995) believes the people of Kyrgyzstan can change the situation in their country by participating in elections. About a third (36%, unchanged since 1995) do not agree. Those who believe Kyrgyzstan is a democracy are more likely than those who do not to say that by participating in elections, people can change the country's situation (61% to 48%). Half of the people agree (17% agree completely) with the statement, 'Voting gives people like me a chance to influence decisions made in our country.' Slightly fewer (43%) disagree (Olds, 1997).

In terms of political issues the period was dominated by economic decline and its social consequences, along with allegations of corruption, especially regarding foreign investors in the gold extracting industry (Anderson, 1999).[274] There was also an increased urgency to managing the north-south divide given fresh memories of the regionalism that caused the civil war in the neighboring Tajikistan. On October 22, 1994, local elections were organized for *rayon* and town assemblies. They provided a good training ground for parties and political entrepreneurs for the upcoming parliamentary elections. In 1994, Kyrgyzstan had an impressive Freedom House score of four for Political Rights and three for Civil Liberties, classified as partly free, and there was indeed a lot of hope in the international community and among local democracy activists that this would be a turning point in Kyrgyz history.

Turnout in the 1995 parliamentary elections was officially reported at 73 percent (OSCE, 1995).[275] The overall assessment of the electoral process was according to one scholar 'free and fair' (Collins, 2006). The OSCE Election Report notes that candidates and parties were largely free to campaign, but also highlights reports of intimidation, ballot stuffing and multiple voting (OSCE, 1995).[276] Nowhere does the OSCE report explicitly use the words 'free and fair', however, they do state that, 'Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary election was much freer and fairer than elections or referendums in these other newly independent states of Central Asia' (OSCE, 1995).

The 1995 elections were clearly highly contested and the dispersion of the vote illustrates the fragmented nature of politics in this immediate post-independence period. Contrary to many other post-colonial settings, there

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[274] The Kumtor gold mine in Issyk-Kul *oblast'* perhaps being the most high profile case.
[275] Note that there are conflicting reports about this. Turnout for the first and second rounds of the 1995 parliamentary elections was officially 62 and 61 percent, respectively, see GRAYBOW, C. (2001) *Nations in Transit, 2001: Kyrgyz Republic*, Freedom House. Others reported a turnout of 43 percent ('Central Asian Republics,' Asia 1996 Yearbook, Far Eastern Economic Review, p. 108).
[276] For the overall assessment, see COLLINS, K. (2006) *Clan politics and regime transition in Central Asia,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

was no prior large-scale mobilization for independence, no strong organizational basis for popular movements, and no charismatic or prolific leaders in Kyrgyzstan.[277] The only established party organization, the Communist Party, was banned after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and, even though later reinstated, its organizational capacity was clearly circumscribed. In the 1995 elections, political parties were extremely marginal and contests were instead organized around local elites with a key variable being favorable positioning towards the Akaev administration. In many cases, however, local bosses were returned to the parliament after being challenged by centrally appointed candidates (Anderson, 1999). The tension between the center and the periphery was thus already on display, a feature that would characterize later parliamentary elections as well.

The socio-economic crisis was the main concern of both voters and candidates according to my candidate survey and public opinion surveys conducted at the time of the election.[278] The elections were perceived to be highly competitive, at least by the candidates interviewed in the survey.[279] Many members of the old Soviet era assembly decided not to run, but there were also several cases where they did run successfully. Interestingly enough, there were also cases of incumbents who lost, indicating that elections were perhaps becoming meaningful due to their uncertain outcomes and the ability to hold representatives accountable. Private sector entrepreneurs were already at this point heavily invested in electoral politics. As many as a third of the MPs eventually elected were said to have been involved in illegal financial dealings (Anderson, 1999). The electoral arena was clearly an important field for businessmen.

After the 1995 parliamentary elections, the democratic opposition became even more marginalized (Collins, 2006). Later in the fall of 1995, Akaev surprised many by expediently urging for presidential elections to be held in December 1995. There was speculation that the reasons he called the elections early was the fear of increasing economic dissatisfaction, which only got worse over time, and mobilizations in the southern parts of the country for the Soviet era leader, Absamat Masaliev (Namatbaeva, 1995). In the elections, Akaev got 72 percent of the votes in the first round, an exceptionally low number considering the 90 percent figures reported for presidents in the neighboring states.

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[277] Contrast this with the appearance of such leaders in some of the other post-Communist countries, such as Walesa in Poland, Havel in Czechoslovakia, Nkrumah in Ghana, or Nyerere in Tanzania.

[278] In 30 percent of the 30 respondents from the 1995 elections the economy was highlighted as the most important issue. For more on the candidate survey see appendix IV. For public opinion polls from the time, see OLDS, H. W. J. (1997) Public Opinion in Kyrgyzstan: 1996. *Voices Of The Electorate*. IFES.

[279] Almost 80 percent of the interviewed 1995 candidates rates the election as very or somewhat competitive.

The elections of 2000

The 2000 electoral cycle was a challenging time for the people of Kyrgyzstan and for their leader, President Akaev. The Freedom House electoral process scores and economic growth figures provide a good description of the trend in late 1990s and early 2000s.

Table 22. Electoral Democracy Declining and Economic Growth

Indicators	1997	1998	1999	2000	20001
Electoral Process (FH)	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.75
Civil Society (FH)	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50
GDP growth (annual %)	9.9	2.1	3.7	5.4	5.3
Inflation (%)	19.3	9.1	37.6	27.2	7.3

Note: Freedom House Nations in Transit disaggregated scores range from 1, representing the highest level, to 7, the lowest level of democratic development. GDP and inflation are from World Bank WDI indicators.

Here we can see that there was no change in the civil society score during this period, but that the electoral cycle in 2000 worsened Kyrgyzstan's electoral process ranking. The impact of the Russian financial crisis in 1998 can also be seen in falling economic growth in the years that followed. For the 2000 elections, a new bicameral parliament was adopted, based on the 1999 revision of the election code and the 1996 constitution (amended in 1998). This was the first time that a mixed electoral system was used, with 15 out of 105 seats elected from a party list. Two chambers were envisioned, a 60-seat professional Legislative Assembly, of which 45 members were to be elected from SMDs and 15 from national party lists, and a 45-seat People's Representative Assembly, of which all 45 members were to be from SMDs (Iskakova, 2003).

As a general trend it can be noted that people were becoming more and more satisfied with post-Soviet developments. The economy had grown, even if slowly, and the chaos of the early years of independence was waning. Dissatisfaction was still widespread, however, with over 60 percent reportedly very or somewhat dissatisfied with the country's general development (Pototskii and Sharma, 2002). The number of satisfied persons on the other hand had almost doubled in the 1995-2000 period, up from 20 percent in 1995 to almost 40 percent in 2001.

However, as we will see, this is not the whole story. According to some observers there were three major sets of issues that dominated the pre-election scene: corruption, economic stagnation, and regional disparities (Abazov, 2003b). In terms of corruption Kyrgyzstan was at the rock bottom of Transparency International's corruption index, ranked 87th out of a total of 99 countries. Red tape, corruption, and a weak property rights regime were especially annoying for the emerging new entrepreneurial class. The staggering economic decline of the first years of independence also contributed to

the tensions in the country. The aggregate level growth figures only give us part of the picture, since the capital of Bishkek and the surrounding Chui *oblast'* attracted 70 percent of all investments (Abazov, 2003b). The resulting regional disparities created a lot of discontent in rural areas, especially in the southern parts of the country. Turnout in the 2000 elections was just below 60 percent in the first round and only slightly higher in the second round (Graybow, 2001).

The 2000 electoral cycle was characterized by several high-level cases of intimidation, including deregistration of leading candidates. However, under the surface the competition remained fierce. Even compared with the very competitive elections of 1995, a majority of the surveyed candidates reported higher levels of competitiveness when compared to the previous election. Clearly local elites were taking elections seriously, even if their participation was not channeled through political parties. High levels of contestation also went together with high levels of reported irregularities, both pre-electoral and actual Election Day falsification. The authorities were involved in attempts to deliver a particular result, but due to the fierce local level inter-elite battles they were not able to completely stifle competition. Many MPs from the 1995 parliament managed to secure re-election, but in most cases only after being forced to a run-off. There were also interesting cases of losing incumbents. Notably, the role of money seems to have been on the rise starting with these elections.

The parliamentary elections in the spring of 2000 were followed by even more flawed presidential elections in the fall of 2000.[280] The years following the 2000 elections were increasingly difficult years for President Akaev. The discontent finally led to the Aksy tragedy in the southern *oblast'* of Jalalabad, where local protesters were brutally suppressed, and cemented the opposition's anti-Akaev attitude, especially in the southern parts of the country (Radnitz, 2005, Radnitz, 2010).

The tension between a weak central state under the leadership of Akaev and local elites that had increased their relative autonomy in the 1990s proved to be a destabilizing factor in the years prior to the 2005 elections. President Akaev tried desperately to regain control by re-establishing more authoritarian practices but, as was demonstrated in the earlier chapters, failed to coordinate elites behind a strong pro-presidential platform. The short overview of earlier electoral cycles in Kyrgyzstan illustrates how competitiveness was fierce all throughout the post-independence period and that the role of economic elites was increasing with time. For the 2007 elections under President Bakiev, who came into power as a leader of the Tulip Revo-

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[280] OSCE/Odihr reports that the elections, 'despite some positive features failed to comply with OSCE commitments for democratic elections and failed to reverse the negative trends identified during the parliamentary elections' , see OSCE (2000) Kyrgyz Republic Parliamentary Elections, 20 February & 12 March 2000. Warsaw, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

lution, a novel approach was used as a way to rein in competitiveness. For the first time a proportional party-list system was introduced. Since the December 2007 elections were conducted during my fieldwork period, the amount of data available is far better than for previous elections and variants of the research hypotheses can therefore be tested, even if there were no Single-Member Districts any more.[281]

Proportional representation elections – 2007

In the wake of the Tulip Revolution there was a lot of discussion about the institutional set-up of the regime, whether to adopt a presidential or a parliamentary system, and of the electoral system. In general, there was an agreement that the majoritarian system with its emphasis on district level dynamics was destructive for such a factional society.[282] The general trend in the former Soviet region was to move to more proportional electoral systems where the role of political parties would be enhanced. In the fall of 2007 a new electoral system was adopted in Kyrgyzstan and in December an early election was called for. As this happened during my fieldwork, I observed first hand the dynamics of the 2007 electoral cycle.

In December 2007 Kyrgyzstan went through another riveting electoral campaign. The main institutional difference in terms of electoral politics was a move to a proportional party list system in which 90 MPs were to be elected from a nation-wide party list. Similar changes to the electoral system were made in Kazakhstan in 2007, another authoritarian regime in the region. In the case of Kazakhstan, the pro-presidential party got 88 percent in the new PR system while in Kyrgyzstan, even at the height of President Bakiev's authoritarian consolidation, the pro-presidential party only got 62 percent of the votes.[283] As a matter of fact, the pro-presidential party *Ak Jol* failed to get a majority of the votes in four of the five northern *oblasts* in Kyrgyzstan.

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[281] During the 2007 and 2008 academic year the author was based at the OSCE, in Bishkek, as a Visiting Scholar.
[282] This was something that was brought up in several interviews in the fall of 2007. One local professor summed it up with the words, 'The new electoral system [proportional representation] severely limits the clan-tribal principle of progress in the legislature, which in turn will have a positive influence on the formation of executive and judicial branches of government', *Vybory 2007 goda - nachalo kontsa diktatury klanov v Kirgizii* [Election 2007 - the beginning of the end of the dictatorship of the clans in Kyrgyzstan], by A. Dzhakishev, December 29, 2007, published on www.open.kg. The governmental and the oppositional forces alike largely applauded the move to a PR party list system, see KOEHLER, K. (2009) Authoritarian Institution Building. OSCE Academy, Bishkek.
[283] Due to a peculiar regional (*oblast'*) level second threshold, authorities did manage to exclude the major oppositional party, *Ata Meken*, from getting any seats in the parliament. This meant that 79 percent of the seats in the parliament eventually went to the pro-presidential party *Ak Jol*.

The question here is what role economic elites played in making these elections as competitive as they were. Using an updated version of the list of the 100 richest persons, it is apparent that the rich continued to take part in electoral politics to a significant degree. Analyzing only the top four performing parties, *Ak Jol*, *Ata Meken*, *Social Democratic Party (SDPK)*, and the Communist party, a total of 25 rich candidates took part, only half of them on the pro-presidential *Ak Jol* list.

Table 23. Rich Candidates on the Top Four Party Lists and Party Vote Shares

Party name	Rich (count)	N	Vote share (party nationally)
Ak Jol	12	99	61.9%
Ata Meken	6	98	11.3%
SDPK	5	99	9.4%
Communist	2	93	7.0%

Source: 100 richest list published by the newspaper *De Fakto,* March 2008.

Here we can see that the number of rich candidates corresponds rather well with the vote share of the party as a whole. The fact that 13 out of 25 rich candidates ran for parties not associated with the president could be the explanation for the surprisingly high levels of competitiveness in many regions of the country. We do not have similar data for Kazakhstan, but in earlier elections rich candidates appear to have either stayed out of politics or ran exclusively for the pro-presidential party (Junisbai and Junisbai, 2005).

More detailed analysis of what role rich candidates played on the individual party lists can be done by analyzing the effect of being rich in terms of position on the party list. Here the interesting thing is not an individual vote share, since there is no such thing in a PR system, but rather how different candidates perform in the pre-electoral candidate list 'contest'. A closed party list system means that the party itself needs to decide who the winners on the list are, i.e. who is most likely to enter parliament.

Each party got to nominate 100 candidates for the 90 available seats in the December 2007 elections in Kyrgyzstan. The country as a whole was one constituency with only one candidate list per party. Analyzing the effect of individual level characteristics on the position on the party list, we find that being rich indeed has a very strong effect. A rich candidate, irrespective of gender and age, is placed 30 positions higher on the list compared to non-rich candidates.

Table 24. Individual Candidate Performance on Party Lists, Kyrgyzstan, 2007

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Rich (dummy)	-30.104***			-30.158***
	(5.37)			(5.36)
Male	-4.715	-6.561*	-6.921*	-5.427+
	(3.04)	(3.20)	(3.16)	(3.10)
Age	-0.716***	-0.786***	-0.777***	-0.708***
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Businessman		2.016		0.259
		(3.60)		(3.51)
Bureaucrat			-7.167+	-7.257+
			(3.93)	(3.84)
Constant	87.155***	89.398***	90.625***	88.296***
	(5.68)	(5.90)	(5.90)	(5.71)
N	389	389	389	389
R^2	0.180	0.114	0.121	0.188

Source: Candidate lists and professional position by CEC. Same coding as for the 2005 candidates.
Note: The dependent variable here is the position (1-100) on the party list of the respective candidates. A low value indicates that the candidate is high up on the list. Thus, a negative coefficient means that a particular attribute is associated with a 'higher' position on the list. Significance levels + $p<0.10$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

Work experience as a bureaucrat also had a positive effect on the position on the list.[284] This suggests that state elites (bureaucrats) and businessmen (rich) continued to perform well, even after a move to a PR electoral system. The fact that the main oppositional party, *Ata Meken*, did well in the regions where a local rich candidate was high on the party list is further evidence of the relationship between regionally based rich strongmen and electoral performance. For instance in Naryn and in Talas, *Ata Meken* got more than 30 percent of the votes, and in both cases there was a rich candidate from the region among the top 15 names on the list.

In the end, however, *Ata Meken* was kept out of the parliament due to apparent blatant falsification effort in the city of Osh.[285] Nevertheless, it managed to get a significant vote share in most *oblasts* of the country. Consequently, it seems as if regionally based strongmen can bring out the vote and therefore have an effect on competitiveness where they do not run for presidential parties, but in the end they might not be able to defend their votes and take their seats if the authorities push hard to keep them out.

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[284] This shows up as a negative effect on the 'position on the list' variable 1-100.
[285] For a comprehensive overview of the methods of falsification on this particular point, see the OSCE/Odihr report, OSCE (2008) Kyrgyz Republic Pre-Term Parliamentary Elections, 16 December 2007. Warsaw, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

State weakness and elite strength in Central Eurasia

Is the balance of power model of competitiveness applicable beyond Kyrgyzstan? In this section, I will show that the balance of power between ruler and alternative elites can, with a few qualifications, predict patterns of competitiveness elsewhere in Eurasia.

Borrowing from leading scholars in the field, autocratic state capacity can be understood in terms of coercive capacity, ruling party strength, and discretionary control of the economy (Levitsky and Way, 2010).[286] Simplistically, autocracies can be categorized as either weak or strong in terms of such capacities. The study of the 2005 elections in Kyrgyzstan used ruling party affiliation as a proxy for autocratic state capacity. Theoretically, though, the concept of autocratic state capacity is much more than complex than the strength of the ruling party.

The argument in this study is that the state is only one side of the coin and that the strength of societal elites also needs to be considered. Here the focus has been on two sources of power for societal elites, material resources and identity networks. The organizational capacity of alternative elites in terms of opposition parties is also an important dimension, albeit one largely absent in the Central Eurasian cases. For instance a well-organized opposition party with a lot of members, ideological cohesion, and autonomous resources is well positioned to challenge state affiliated candidates in any regime. The Muslim brotherhood in Egypt and the Islamic Revival Party in Tajikistan are two examples of such forces in autocracies. A well-organized and cohesive tribal group could also constitute a potent electoral force in an election, at least theoretically. As was illustrated by the case of Kyrgyzstan the most relevant source of power for alternative elites, however, seems to be material resources.

If societal elites are demobilized and without any autonomous resources, they will not be able to challenge the state, however weak it is. On the other hand, even a capable autocracy might not be able completely control elite behavior if elites are strong. The countries of post-Soviet Central Asia can be categorized as belonging to different combinations of autocratic state capacity and market actor empowerment. These are aggregate level best guesses of how the countries of the region could be characterized in the mid-2000s.

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[286] Levitsky and Way actually call it *Organizational Power* in their book, but in an earlier paper the term *Autocratic State Capacity* was used for coercive capacity and discretionary control of the economy, see WAY, L. A. (2007) Beyond the Democratization Paradigm: Organizational Capacity and Political Contestation in Russia 1992-2007. Department of Political Science University of Toronto.

Table 25. State and Market Actor Capacity in Post-Soviet Central Eurasia

MARKET

	Weak	Strong
STATE Weak	Tajikistan	Kyrgyzstan Moldova Ukraine Armenia Georgia
STATE Strong	Uzbekistan Turkmenistan Belarus	Kazakhstan Azerbaijan Russia

Note: State here refers to aggregate level autocratic state capacity. Market refers to the extent of market reforms, as a proxy for elite empowerment.

Strong market here does not refer to well-functioning markets where private property is protected and agreements are enforced. Private property and market transactions in a clientelistic autocracy are characterized by informal arrangements between ruling elites and businessmen. Wealth in such a context is never safe and therefore autonomy is always relative. Strong market here instead refers to the existence of a relatively resource-laden and autonomous elite. In general, a former command economy that goes through extensive privatization is here defined as a case of 'strong market'.

The effects on electoral dynamics require some further specification. The balance of power theory would lead us to believe that wherever both state and market actors are either strong or weak competitiveness would emerge. For instance in the case of Tajikistan where there seems to be a 'balance' between state and the market, competitiveness should follow. In cases with strong states and strong markets, one would also expect competeiveness. On the other hand, in cases of imbalance between state and market, competitiveness would be low. This would include both cases of strong state and weak market and vice versa. However, as noted, the implications for competitiveness require some further specification.

In autocracies, the state dominates politics by design. The institutions are set up in such a way that there is little room for non-state involvement in politics. In autocracies, elections should therefore be predictable and non-competitive. The only thing that can drive up genuine competitiveness is the existence of a materially strong and relatively autonomous elite. State weakness as such is not enough to create competitiveness. It all comes down to the relative strength of alternative elites. Competitiveness is therefore more

likely in the cases of Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan, than in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The specific nature of the race will naturally be determined by several other factors as well, especially the electoral system.

In post-Soviet cases where privatization was slow and incomplete, market actors only have limited autonomy and thus no real capacity to challenge candidates from the ruling elite. In cases where market actors are stronger and more autonomous, competitiveness emerges, but the extent of it and the consequences for the regime as a whole are different in weak states than in strong states. In strong states competitiveness can be genuine, but authorities are for most parts in complete control of the process. Let me in a few short phrases illustrate the logic with some specifics about the Central Asian cases.

For instance, in Tajikistan the machinery of President Rakhmonov in the wake of the civil war remained relatively weak (Driscoll, 2008). But the dependency relations between the elites and the president can best be described as patrimonial, with the president at the top (Hierman, 2010). In such a 'single-pyramid' structure, where clientelism is hierarchically structured with the president at the top, the autonomy of economic elites is small.[287] Tajikistan was indeed slow to reform its economy, and entrepreneurs remain heavily dependent on informal ties to the ruling elite.

In terms of patterns of competitiveness in Tajikistan, the number of effective candidates in 2005 was a meager 1.48 and the winner's vote share averaged 77 percent. The ruling party People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan managed to get 78 percent of the SMD seats in the first round. The communist party, a largely pro-governmental party, won one single SMD and candidates registered as independents won five districts. Interestingly though, there were a few slightly more competitive districts. Out of the 41 SMDs it is notable that in seven there was an ENC (D) above two. Furthermore, not a single one of these competitive districts were located in the city of Dushanbe. Such competitiveness could thus be a function of 'pockets' of strong societal elites in the sense of identity categories.

In Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan where the Soviet era coercive apparatus remained largely intact, the ability to coerce was, and continues to be, extremely high, as evidenced by the events in Andijan in 2005 or the smooth transition in Turkmenistan after the death of Saparmurat Niyazov in 2006. In both cases, the ruling party is a direct continuation of the Soviet-era communist party and thus has great organizational assets. Arguably there are some societal elites that pose a threat to the central authorities in the case of Uzbekistan, some of which are regional elites that have been out of favor with

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[287] For more on the 'pyramid' structure of clientelism, see HALE, H. E. (2011) Formal Constitutions in Informal Politics Institutions and Democratization in Post-Soviet Eurasia. *Columbia University's Comparative Politics Research Workshop.*

the current rulers, while others are ideologically (islamist) motivated.[288] But since the coercive capacity of the state is strong and room for private entrepreneurship is limited, the power of societal elites is not autonomous enough to undermine central authorities. In such cases succession is one of the few ways in which the authoritarian equilibrium can be challenged. As the case of Turkmenistan illustrates, tightly controlled autocracies can survive the sudden death of the ruler without any serious challenges to its authority.

There is no detailed data on competitiveness in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, but interestingly in the latter case, there exists a form of tightly controlled competitiveness. The authorities have imposed a four-party system and the winning party has not received more than 40 percent of the seats in any election in the 2000s. This is indeed a peculiar form of competitiveness, one in which all parties are explicitly pro-presidential and where competitiveness therefore could be considered a façade. The Uzbekistan economy is structurally dependent on the capital-intensive cotton industry and market reforms have only cautiously been implemented. In Turkmenistan, state control of the economy is even stronger, and being one of the biggest natural gas exporters in the world definitely seems to structure the incentives for the elites to openly challenge authorities.

At first, the case of Kazakhstan seems like a puzzle in that market reforms have empowered the elites, but that this has not resulted in any serious electoral challenges. As a matter of fact, economic elites have occasionally tried to organize oppositional movements, but the state has so far been successful in marginalizing them before elections (Junisbai, 2010). In more recent elections, the state has made elite challenges even more difficult by introducing a party-list PR system. Competitiveness in strong states is therefore also a function of the institutional setup in terms of the electoral system. For instance, Russia was indeed very competitive in the 2003 Duma elections, where in the SMD elections there were almost five effective candidates per district.[289] For the 2007 elections, they moved to a PR system and consequently managed to rein in competitiveness. There are therefore some indications of autocratic learning in terms of reining in competitiveness by institutional design.

The case of Azerbaijan is fascinating in that economic elites were empowered through market reforms, but remained largely dependent on central authorities for shares of patronage from the oil and gas sectors. As we will see the level of competition can still be very high in such a case, but not necessarily destabilizing for the regime. Kyrgyzstan on the other hand is strategically located along a trading route and economic reforms intended to dismantle state control of the economy were far more aggressive than else-

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[288] For Uzbekistan, see ILKHAMOV, A. (2002) Controllable Democracy in Uzbekistan. *Middle East Report*, 8-10.
[289] See table in methodology chapter. ENC (D) figures reported.

where in Central Asia, as evidenced by EBRD data. Petty trading and small-scale farming are clearly structurally different compared to the natural resource and capital-intensive centralized industries evident in other cases. Entrepreneurs in the case of Kyrgyzstan were empowered by the early reforms and the balance of power was therefore shifted in their favor over time.

There are a few points to note in terms of comparing electoral returns in the post-Soviet region. First, election returns are sometimes difficult to code due to the weakness of political parties and the high number of independent candidates (Moser, 1999b, Ishiyama, 1994, Ishiyama and Kennedy, 2001, Brancati, 2008). In the wake of the break-up of the Soviet Union, the communist party was banned in several cases and renamed in others. The electoral system of the Soviet era, single-member district plurality system, remained intact in most cases, at least in the early elections. The number of so-called independent, or self-nominated candidates remained high well into the 2000s. The problem with such candidates from a competitiveness perspective is that they are difficult to code. In some cases, like in Belarus, independents can be considered as pro-government without a doubt, while independents in Kyrgyzstan were much more independent. The main difference here is that in Belarus there was no officially sanctioned presidential party, while in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia there were.

The party system also makes an assessment of competitiveness tricky in cases like Uzbekistan, were only a handful of parties are officially registered. In the Uzbek elections in 2004, all of the parties were more or less pro-presidential in orientation. Here the two largest parties, the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the renamed communist party chaired by President Islam Karimov, and the Uzbekistan Liberal Democratic Party, which went on to nominate Karimov for the 2007 presidential elections, can both be defined as explicitly pro-government. Their joint vote share in 2004 was 57 percent, but if all parties were considered separately these elections could actually appear to be competitive. No detailed results from these elections, or any election in Uzbekistan, have ever been published, however, making further analysis impossible.

Patterns of competitiveness also differ depending on the electoral system. In pure SMD systems, the level of competitiveness is on average lower, with winners receiving 60 percent of the vote. In mixed systems the SMD component is always less competitive than the aggregate national level PR component. This seems to indicate that single-member election districts in countries with weak party systems tend to be less competitive. The fact that SMDs in some countries were very competitive thus becomes even more puzzling.

Finally, I want to address the issue of moving between the district level and the aggregate national level. In all of the reference cases for which we have data, the lack of competiveness at the district level is a symptom of

government-sanctioned candidates winning with large majorities (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan). Kyrgyzstan is the only case in which the lack of competitiveness was actually due to exceptionally strong performance by non-government candidates. In Azerbaijan, another competitive authoritarian case, by contrast, the lack of competitiveness was mostly associated with a government-sponsored candidate winning by a large margin.

The existence of district level competitiveness, by necessity, contributes to the aggregate national level competitiveness. Although the contribution to national level dynamics by a single district can be rather small, it nevertheless means that the sub-national level is essential to examine, especially in authoritarian states where national level opposition movements are marginalized.

Azerbaijan parliamentary elections 2005

For a detailed test of the hypothesis about district level balance of power let me now turn to the case of Azerbaijan in 2005. Azerbaijan is like Kyrgyzstan a Muslim majority former Soviet republic, where politics for most of the last 40 years have been dominated by the Aliyev family. The country has an abundance of oil and gas resources that have been extracted since the days of Alfred Nobel in the late 19th century. Politics in such a seemingly dynastic autocratic state would not be expected to be competitive.[290] No one has ever claimed that politics in Azerbaijan is particularly competitive, apart from a period of a few years in the early post-independence period. It turns out, however, that district level results, calculated based on official election returns from the 2005 elections, displays very high levels of average competitiveness, similar to Kyrgyzstan.[291]

Most observers would treat such competitiveness as a facade and point out that elections were seriously flawed from a procedural point of view and that the elected parliament was completely dominated by pro-presidential forces (OSCE, 2005b). Here I will show that competitiveness was genuine and reflected the qualities of candidates that ran for office. Electoral returns were manipulated, but competitiveness was not significantly reduced. Arguably the contest was far from democratic in terms of international standards, but just like in the case of Kyrgyzstan, competitiveness was indeed very real and directly reflected the quality of candidates. Interestingly though, there were no serious threats to the regime posed in the aftermath of

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[290] As a point of reference Azerbaijan gets a political rights score of six on the 1-7 Freedom House scale for the years 1993-2008. In the first couple of years of independence the country got a score of five.
[291] The average ENC in Azerbaijan in 2005 was 3.0 and in Kyrgyzstan 2.8 for the same year.

these elections. This suggests that some autocrats are better than others when it comes to coping with electoral competitiveness.

The early years of post-Soviet politics in Azerbaijan were characterized by instability and the war with neighboring Armenia over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, a province in Western Azerbaijan. The former Soviet era leader, Heydar Aliyev, came to power in the summer of 1993 in a post-conflict context where he had to rein in local despots (Cornell, 2005). The economy was in shambles, but the promises of future revenues from oil and gas raised the stakes and the need to consolidate territorial control. The coercive capacity of the state was challenged by local warlords, but by the time of the 1995 elections, Aliyev had managed to co-opt or remove some of them.[292] The security apparatus was already mobilized and at Aliyev's disposal, which made the cost of repression rather low. The parliamentary elections in 1995-96 were non-competitive on the aggregate level, with almost 90 percent of the seats going to either the presidential party or to the notoriously pro-government 'independents'. In 2000, the authorities tightly controlled the elections, and by this time economic growth had started to pick up.[293]

Economic liberalization started much later than in Kyrgyzstan and by the time of the 2005 contest, Azerbaijan's elites were less autonomous than their Kyrgyz counterparts. This was because they were still closely tied to the booming oil and gas sector in which the state plays a central role.[294] Still, by the early 2000s growth had picked up and averaged an annual rate of well above 10 percent during each of the five years preceding the 2005 elections. The populace seemed more satisfied with their financial situation, at least compared with Kyrgyzstan.[295]

Data

For the 2005 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan the Central Election Commission had an exceptionally open and generous approach to sharing electoral results. Disaggregated polling station level data was made public at the CEC website. Data from 4,934 polling stations from 114 out of the 125 districts were made public.[296] The electoral system was a single round SMD

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[292] Huseynov, Guliyev, and Javadov to name a few.

[293] Positive growth was experienced since 1996 and in 2000 it was 11 percent (World Bank Development Indicators, 2007).

[294] In terms of privatization Azerbaijan was far slower reformer than Kyrgyzstan and still lagged behind it in 2005, at least in terms of small-scale privatization (see graph in chapter two).

[295] In a survey 6 months before the elections in 2005, 42 percent of respondents said that their financial situation had improved, and another 42 percent said that it had stayed the same (Gallup, 2005).

[296] The total number of polling stations was 5,053 and the ten SMDs were re-run in the spring of 2006 due to irregularities. The OSCE claims that results were published for 115 SMDs, but in the CEC data available in 2006 there were only 114 districts posted.

system. Note that similar data was impossible to obtain from Kyrgyzstan and all the other Central Asian states, with the exception of Kazakhstan in 2007 and Kyrgyzstan in 2010.

The US based democracy promotion organization Open Society Institute (OSI), founded by the billionaire George Soros sponsored a web-based database containing information about individual candidates.[297] The OSI data contained information about the professional profile of the candidate, information that was derived from the compulsory self-reported information submitted to the CEC. The professional profile at the time of the elections was coded similarly to the data used earlier to examine the case of Kyrgyzstan.[298]

Data on financial position of candidates is even more problematic in the case of Azerbaijan, however. The only available data is a list of the 30 richest individuals provided by the business magazine *Hesabat* published by the ANS Company.[299] In addition to the above-mentioned data, local assistants conducted a separate coding of the ten least competitive and ten most competitive districts.[300]

Results

The empirical analysis of the case of Azerbaijan in 2005 will be done in three steps. First, a detailed statistical analysis of the extent of irregularities in terms of micro-level electoral returns will be conducted. This is important since it has been argued that election results are indeed falsified in autocracies and that official results therefore misrepresent how competitive the elections were.[301] As I will show, widespread falsification can indeed coincide with intense competitiveness in terms of electoral outcomes.

The second part will be a test of the balance of power argument by examining the effects of the number of strongmen on the dispersion of the vote. Finally, a short overview of some of the most interesting election districts and the individual candidates in them will be presented.

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[297] The Editor-in-Chief for the project was Justin Burke. Website accessed under several occasions during the 2007-09 period, http://www.eurasianet.org/azerbaijan/.
[298] See methodology chapter.
[299] The list is based on an expert survey after, allegedly, having failed to get the information from the tax authorities, see '*Samye bogatye lyudi Azerbaĭdzhana* – 2005',
http://forum.aztop.com/lofiversion/index.php?t10787.html, accessed April 2011.
[300] In 2008 local assistants were identified and tasked with finding out more about the top three candidates in the ten least competitive and ten most competitive districts. A total of 82 candidates were coded in terms of professional profile, party affiliation etc.
[301] Some argue that the extent of falsification is a defining feature of full authoritarianism, see LEVITSKY, S. & WAY, L. A. (2010) *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

Falsification of election results

Electoral fraud can be defined as clandestine efforts to shape election results (Lehoucq, 2003). Authorities in non-democracies use a range of tools in order to control the electoral process. Preventing certain candidates or parties from running, harassing opposition activists, limiting media access, and suppressing peaceful demonstrations are all part of the standard tool box for autocrats. Sometimes these limits to political rights these are understood as electoral fraud. The focus here is on more explicit form of electoral fraud, namely Election Day falsification. This often takes the form of ballot box stuffing or fabrication of election returns during the counting and tabulation phase. This form of fraud is especially widespread in the former Soviet space:

> …falsifications in the form of stuffed ballot boxes and artificially augmented election counts have become prevalent throughout the country (Myagkov et al., 2008)

Determining the extent of fraud is inherently difficult since authorities do their utmost to keep the phenomenon clandestine. Lately, due to the availability of micro-data, the study of electoral fraud, electoral forensics, has been radically transformed. Again, I want to emphasize that no such micro-data was made available by the authorities in Kyrgyzstan for the 2005 elections.

In order to give a sense of the falsification in the 2005 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, I will use a statistical technique based on analyzing the distribution of digits in the reported results. It turns out that humans, when prompted to produce a random list of numbers, actually favor small numbers on the 1-9 scale (Boland and Hutchinson, 2000). If there is a natural distribution of digits in vote counts and the actual election returns differ from this, it can be taken as evidence of fabrication.

There are basically two ways of doing this, focusing on either the last or the second digit. It has been shown that the last digit can be expected to be uniformly distributed if no conscious manipulation has occurred (Beber and Scacco, 2008). The argument here is that no last digit will be repeated more frequently than any other in a set of election returns, i.e. that the distribution should be uniform in the absence of falsification. Other scholars have focused on the distribution of the second digit as a proxy for fraud (Mebane Jr and Kalinin, 2010). It turns out that the second digit should follow a Benford's law distribution, where the expected relative frequency of the second digit is: 1=12.0%, 2=11.4%, 3=10.9%, 4=10.4%, 5=10.0% etc. Departures from this distribution indicate that manipulation has occurred.

The analysis of vote count digits suggests that elections in Azerbaijan were heavily manipulated in terms of the actually reported numbers.[302] Other detailed studies of elections in Azerbaijan have also found evidence of outright manipulation of the electoral returns (Herron, 2010).[303]

Balance of power and district dynamics

The main hypothesis that we want to test in the case of Azerbaijan concerns whether or not district level results reflect the balance of power in terms of strong candidates. A *strongman* count variable was constructed using information about pro-presidential party orientation, businessman credentials, and incumbency. The very same features were shown to affect electoral outcomes both at the individual and the district level in Kyrgyzstan. Again, the hypothesis is that the more such candidates that there are in a given district, the more competitive the district will be.

Three quarters of the districts that we have data for were competitive if we use the 60 percent threshold. On average there were more than three candidates belonging to YAP in each district. There were also almost two businessmen per district and there was a single incumbent in two thirds of the SMDs.

Interestingly only one of the richest 30 persons in the country registered to run, Mr. Fikret Sadigov, an incumbent MP running in district no. 41 in Sumgayit, an industrial city near Baku. In the end, however, he was dismissed from his position as the head of the country's largest chemical company, the state-owned *Azerkimya*, and arrested on charges of plotting against the government.[304] His registration for the elections was also dismissed. This illustrates a central difference with the Kyrgyzstan case, where rich and experienced candidates for the most part were allowed to run.

In any case, in terms of the explanatory model,

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[302] For detailed evidence see appendix XI.
[303] It is found that the existence of randomly allocated webcameras in a polling station have a negative effect on the vote share of the President.
[304] '… it [his dismissal] came amid a wave of dismissals connected with allegations of a coup plot against the country's leadership', *Azerbaijan's president fires state chemical company head amid wave of dismissals*, AP Worldstream, October 24, 2005.

Table 26. Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, District Model, 2005

	Azerbaijan 2005			Kyrgyzstan 2005		
	(1) ENC (D)	**(2)** Margin of vict. (log)	**(3)** (60%) dummy	**(1)** ENC (D)	**(2)** Margin of vict. (log)	**(3)** (60%) dummy
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Strongmen, count	0.171***	-0.101**	0.336**	0.362***	-0.219+	0.921**
(Gov, Busin, Incumb)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.12)	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.32)
Internat. Observer	0.550	-0.236	0.079	0.013	0.009	-0.609
(OSCE)	(0.41)	(0.33)	(1.08)	(0.54)	(0.72)	(1.54)
Urban district	0.330	-0.367	1.811	-0.386	0.585	0.157
	(0.37)	(0.29)	(1.23)	(0.49)	(0.65)	(1.47)
Constant	1.742***	-0.812***	-0.630	1.997***	-1.508***	-0.232
	(0.28)	(0.22)	(0.72)	(0.26)	(0.34)	(0.71)
N	114	114	114	75	75	75
R^2	0.248	0.174	0.169	0.209	0.069	0.144

Note: As a point of reference I also present the results for identical explanatory variables for the case of Kyrgyzstan 2005. For Azerbaijan there is complete data only for 114 out of the 125 SMDs. The Strongmen count variable presented here is constructed as a count variable of how many pro-presidential, businessmen, and incumbent candidates there were per SMD. Models 1-2 use standard OLS regressions, while model 3 is a logistical regression specification. OSCE observer coverage is a proportion of the polling stations in the SMD observed during E-day. An urban district is defined as being in the capital city of Baku. Significance levels + $p<0.10$, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$. McFadden's pseudo R^2 used in the logistic models.

The average number of strongmen per district is nearly five and the effects of this on competitiveness are straightforward, in both Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. The fractionalization of the vote in the sense of ENC is significantly associated with the number of strongmen. This effect is significant at the .01 percent level, even if we control for whether or not the SMD was in the capital city of Baku and how heavily the district was exposed to international observers.

Such a crude model naturally hides a lot of interesting micro-level dynamics. All elections contain a lot of idiosyncrasies, but the fact that 25 percent of the variation is explained by this simple model is indeed a stunning fact. The issue of idiosyncrasy can be better examined by looking at the particularities of some of the least and most competitive districts in these elections.

Ten least competitive districts[305]
Surprisingly the average number of registered candidates in the ten least competitive districts was above six, an amazingly high number for being

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[305] The extremes in terms of competitiveness were identified using the ENC (D) variable. Data for this section was provided by local assistants.

non-competitive districts in an autocracy. If we examine the officially reported election results, we note that in terms of effective number of candidates we get a meager 1.43 and an average of 72 percent for the winning candidate. An overwhelming majority, nine out of ten, of the non-competitive districts were rural districts, with the only non-competitive urban district was the one won by the president's wife.[306]

If we examine the profiles of winning candidates we see that six out of ten were experienced politicians, two were professionals, or what could also be labeled *intelligentsia*, and two were bureaucrats. Interestingly not a single businessman managed to get elected in one of these non-competitive districts. This indicates that economic autonomy of the businessmen candidates was lower than in Kyrgyzstan, where several businessmen managed to completely monopolize electoral support. In half of the cases the winner was an incumbent Member of Parliament.

The average age of the winners was 47 and the average age of the main challenger was 52. Half of the main challengers were intelligentsia type candidates, and only one of the main challengers was an experienced politician. In terms of pro-government orientation, it was very straightforward: the winners were pro-government and the main challengers were opposition.[307] Six out of the ten winners in these districts belonged to the pro-presidential *Yeni Azerbaijani Party* and all the other winners were independent in terms of party affiliation. There were also two women winners in these non-competitive districts, apart from the wife of the president. This is a surprising outcome in an otherwise patriarchal society. Remember that in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 no women managed to get elected.

The wife of the sitting President Ms. Mehriban Aliyev won the non-competitive urban district (no. 14), located on the Apsheron peninsula outside of Baku, by a landslide. It was by far the least competitive district in the whole election, as she received 92 percent of the vote.[308] Both main oppositional blocs filed candidates here, but they both fared meagerly. The main challenger was the youthful 35-year-old Mr. Hasrat Rustamov, deputy chairman of the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan and a close confidant of the exiled leader Rasul Guliyev. OSCE reported some minor counting issues in the district, but apart from that the campaign seemed to have been calm and orderly.

As for rural non-competitive districts, all in central Azerbaijan, district no. 92 was created in 2002 and therefore had no incumbent seeking re-election. The district was won by a Baku based young teacher, Ms. Jala Ali-

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[306] Interestingly, the enclave of Nakhchivan, where the Aliyev's originated from, hosts a third of all the ten least competitive districts. As a matter of fact, only one SMD in Nakhchivan was competitive.

[307] As determined by formal party affiliation.

[308] It should be noted that the President's uncle found it much more difficult to get re-elected in district no. 62. He 'only' got 47 percent of the vote.

yeva, running as an independent. She got 76 percent of the vote. The two main challengers were both registered as independent candidates, both of whom had business experience. The Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan pipeline goes through the district and there is also a car-parts factory in the districts. This makes it a very important district for the authorities to control. It seems odd that a female and inexperienced candidate from the capital could easily win a peripheral district. This example goes to illustrate the capacity of the Aliev administration and the presidential party, *Yeni Azerbaijan* (YAP), in delivering a preferred election result. Interestingly enough, two other YAP affiliated candidates withdrew right before the election.

Ten most competitive districts

In the ten most competitive districts there were on average more than 20 registered candidates. This clearly indicates that the race was of interest to local elites. In terms of serious candidates that actually managed to get votes, however, we need to look at the ENC score. An impressive average score of 6.7 indicates that the races were indeed open and competitive. Nine out of ten of the most competitive districts were urban, covering the capital city of Baku. The average vote share of the winners in these ten districts was a meager 25 percent and in one case as low as 19 percent. Half of the winners were politicians, including three incumbent MPs. Three of the main challengers were university affiliated professionals and only one of the challengers was a businessman. Although this challenger won, the result indicates that businessmen do not play as important a role as in Kyrgyzstan.

All of the winners were men and the average age was 47, while the average age of the challengers was 44. One candidate of Russian nationality was elected. When it comes to the pro-government/opposition axis we note that four of the elected MPs were opposition party representatives. In two cases, the main challenger was a pro-government candidate, while in the other cases it was either an independent or another oppositional candidate. In two cases, there were losing incumbents, including one were a losing incumbent was a losing candidate from the pro-presidential YAP.

Azerbaijan summary

The 2005 elections displayed extreme levels of competitiveness, even in the absence of strong opposition movements. This competitiveness was largely a function of strong elites actively participating in the elections. The dynamics of the race were carefully managed though, as indicated by widespread falsification and the somewhat arbitrary court process that followed the elec-

tions.[309] Several of the more resource-laden potential challengers to the authorities were also removed from the race prior to the Election Day. The pro-presidential forces were well positioned to benefit from the use of *adminresurs*, but overall pro-presidential coordination seems to have been rather weak. Most districts contained several *YAP* affiliated candidates, which suggests that authorities, in some districts, use elections as a mechanism to single out popular and well-connected pro-governmental individuals.

This implication in turn challenges the assumption that autocrats always want to reduce competitiveness and unpredictability. In the case of Azerbaijan, authorities clearly trusted in the strength of the so-called *clientelism vertical,* that is, the dependency of elites on state institutions. The Azerbaijani state is strong both in terms of economic fundamentals as well as coercive capacity. The booming oil and gas industries have grown state coffers and the West's dependency on these imports have watered down criticism of human rights violations, including rights to elect representatives in free and fair elections. The experience in the war over Nagorno-Karabakh with the neighboring Armenia has also motivated a buildup of the coercive capacity of the state. In terms of organizational capacity the relatively strong presidential party of *Yeni Azerbaijani* is also worth mentioning, even if its role in coordinating elite behavior seems secondary in the 2005 elections.

Elites on the other hand are less autonomous in the case of Azerbaijan, largely due to the slow-paced economic liberalization and dependence on the capital-intensive and centrally controlled extractive industries. As in the case of Kyrgyzstan, a district level balance of power seems to explain patterns of competitiveness rather well. As a matter of fact, the model fit is even better than in the case of Kyrgyzstan in 2005. Note, however, that the final composition of the parliament does not reflect how competitive the elections were on the district level.

Chapter conclusions

The theory developed throughout this book applies well to cases beyond the 2005 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan. The balance of power argument is not a new theory, though, even if it hitherto has been misspecified in the literature.[310] The central question should be what constitutes a source of power in an authoritarian state. The book at hand has illustrated the role that relative economic autonomy and kinship networks play in terms of district

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[309] The institutional design, specifically the first past the post system, cuts off any political mobilization right after the first round and moves the battle into the courtrooms that are completely in the hands of the ruling elite.
[310] The balance of power is not necessarily between the *ancien regime* and a political opposition as some would have it, see MCFAUL, M. (2002) The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship. *World Politics,* 54, 212-244.

level power. This specification allows us to analyze national level dynamics in the light of how such power was distributed. Kyrgyzstan with its lack of oil and gas resources in combination with early economic reforms opened up for continuous fighting between different segments of the elite.

In Tajikistan on the other hand the lack of economic reforms kept patronage centralized around the president. Therefore, even if the balance of power was uncertain in the early post-Soviet days, it should not come as a surprise that Tajikistan managed to consolidate authoritarian control over the electoral process, while Kyrgyzstan failed.

In Tajikistan businessmen in general stay out of politics and SMD level competitiveness is consequently very low. In Azerbaijan businessmen participate actively and push up competitiveness, but in the end authorities remain in full control of the process. It is notable that no businessman in Azerbaijan managed to completely monopolize electoral support. In Kyrgyzstan businessmen take part in elections and the result is high levels of competitiveness, except in a few cases were businessmen actually manage to monopolize electoral support even if they are not pro-presidential in their orientation. It is hardly surprising therefore that the regime in Kyrgyzstan was destabilized as a consequence of a competitive election, while in Azerbaijan the regime steadily weathered any post-electoral challenges.

Elections have the potential of being competitive in autocracies where market actors are strong and relatively autonomous. The effects on regime stability, however, depend on whether or not the state is strong. A strong state like Azerbaijan can cope rather well with high levels of competitiveness, as evidenced by the 2005 elections. In the weak state of Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, similar levels of competitiveness ended up in a 'revolution'.

Autocratic state capacity and market actor autonomy develop over time and the structural conditions that existed for competitiveness to emerge in the case of Kyrgyzstan since early 1990s did not threaten the regime until years later. One could argue that Soviet-era institutions of coercion were still relatively intact in the 1995 and 2000 cycles, but that by the time of 2005 Kyrgyzstan had solidly moved to the 'weak state' category. Autocratic state capacity in the case of Kyrgyzstan thus seems to have decreased over time, while in Azerbaijan it has actually increased as a function of double-digit economic growth and a military build-up. It is therefore not surprising that elections in Kyrgyzstan continue to be competitive and even threatening the regime, while in Azerbaijan authorities seem to be in control of competitiveness, and are actually even able to substantially decrease competitiveness over time.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

In this final chapter I will summarize the substantive findings of the study. I will also specifically address the effects of competitiveness on political mobilization by examining in detail how political mobilization followed the first round of elections in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. Finally, I will draw some more general conclusions with relevance for both academia and the policy community.

Main argument - summary

The argument in this book can be summarized by highlighting five contributions to the literature based on the substantive findings: 1) balance of power among elites helps to explain competitiveness; 2) capitalism opens up space for competitiveness; 3) there is no such thing as 'clan politics' in the sense used by the literature; 4) accountability is limited, but real even in some of the most authoritarian states; and finally 5) election observers, be they international or domestic, do not have any immediate effect on Election Day competitiveness.

Elite balance of power explains competitiveness

The balance of power between state and market actors goes a long way in explaining patterns of electoral contestation on both the aggregate national level and the sub-national level. On the district level, strong candidates get more votes and in most cases autocrats manage to lure such candidates to their own platform while at the same time deterring other strongmen from challenging. In all regimes, election outcomes are a question of the balance of power between relevant actors. Coordinating elite behavior and ensuring elite cohesion is therefore a central task for any autocrat. The fact that strong candidates openly challenge the ruler can therefore be seen as a form of autocratic failure.

In many authoritarian settings economic elites and incumbent MPs have no incentive to openly challenge authorities. But if the mechanisms for coordinating elite behavior are weak, as in the case of a weak ruling party, it makes perfect sense for resource-laden individuals to run for office, even if that means openly challenging the ruling elite. Many candidates run even if

they know that the authorities will try (or can be expected to try) to manipulate the outcome. As it turns out, the use of fraudulent techniques is not limited to state affiliated candidates.

The number and configuration of strong candidates, or strongmen, per district and the relationship of this with the probability of competitiveness is curvilinear. On the one hand, in the absence of a strong candidate the field is open and unpredictable and therefore votes are dispersed and the probability of competitiveness high. On the other hand if there is one single strongman running in the district there will be a consolidation of electoral support behind this candidate and thus a lower probability of competitiveness. In SMDs with two or more strongmen the districts competitiveness will be higher still. The relationship between the number of strongmen and competitiveness at the district level thus resembles a J-curve.

The sanctioning mechanisms of different candidate types can be understood as containing both *positive* and *negative* dimensions. Positive sanctioning capacity allows candidates to give someone something and a *negative* capacity allows them to deny someone something.[311] For the state the negative sanctioning mechanism is the threat of force, or violence, and the positive one is the use of *patronage* in the sense of providing public sector jobs and other forms of selective benefits. Similarly market actors can rely on intimidation as a negative sanction and c*lientelism* as a positive one. Resourceful businessmen can intimidate potential challengers and prospective voters, but also use material transfers to attract support. Finally, kinship networks can enforce loyalty among their members, at least theoretically, and it thus constitutes a negative sanction. Loyalty with one's kin could, on the other hand, also provides a sense of community among group members and therefore work as a positive sanction mechanism.

Candidates use these sanctioning mechanisms in elections and the results depend on the relative strength of sanctioning mechanisms possessed by different candidates. The default model of an autocracy would be one in which the state has a monopoly on violence and where patronage is structured around a single-pyramid with the autocrat on top.

In this book, I have examined in detail the three most important sources of candidate strength in an autocracy: state, market, and society. Naturally many of these factors can be found in the same individual. The consequences for district level competitiveness obviously depend on the number and strength of each of the participating candidates. This is what I mean by *configuration of candidates* per district. In a district with no strong competitors, one would expect an open and competitive race. In authoritarian settings pro-presidential parties often make sure that they have a strong candidate

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[311] Similar terminology also used earlier in the literature VANHANEN, T. (1977) *Political and social structures: European countries, 1850-1974*, Published for [the] Finnish Political Science Association by University Microfilms International..

representing them in the district, while at the same time discouraging potential challengers. In such an unbalanced context one would not expect competitive elections. On the other hand, in a district with two or more strong candidates we can expect the election result to reflect this balance of power.

The bottom-line is that in order to have competition there need to be competitors. The question of candidate entry is a crucial point. In authoritarian contexts, where challenging the government is associated with high costs, only economically autonomous individuals dare to run. This is the supply side of electoral contestation and we can assume that actors make rational cost-benefit analysis before they throw themselves into an electoral battle. The costs that must be weighed include persecution, confiscation, and other forms of harassment, while the potential benefits range from recognition, property rights, access to markets, and promises of future rewards.

The state in Kyrgyzstan was weak all throughout the period examined here, and getting even weaker over time. This weakness is at least partly a function of the dismantling the Soviet era state apparatus through deregulation and economic liberalization. The communist party was banned early on and no alternative governing party was set up until much later. Consequently, the coercive apparatus of the state was being challenged by local strongmen and was then further demoralized after the bloody uprising in *Aksy* in 2003.

The non-state elites in Kyrgyzstan were strong due to their involvement in petty trading, bazaars, gas stations, and other recently privatized sectors of the economy. Social networks that were established during the late Soviet period in the realm of education, sports, or even illicit trading activities proved a valuable asset in the transitional period, when informal networks played an important role. Many elites tested their strength in both local and national level elections and thus gained important know-how about campaigning. The multiple-pyramid structure of clientelism that emerged meant that intra-elite interactions were more fluid that in the neighboring states.

For the two cases for which detailed candidate level data exists, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan, the balance of power between candidates directly translated into particular election results. The more strong candidates ran for election the more fractional the returns became. Using crude individual level measures like party affiliation and professional profile naturally only captures part of what one can consider candidate strength. In any election there are also lot of idiosyncratic factors both at national, district, and individual level. The fact that such crude measures have a significant effect on particular election outcomes is therefore a stunning finding. This in turn illustrates that elections in these two cases were not completely fabricated and that the outcome in this sense was 'meaningful'.

National level competitiveness – Central Eurasia

For the aggregate national level regime, the balance of power argument is as follows. In countries where economic elites are weak and dependent on central authorities there will be no competitiveness at the national level. If the state is also weak in such a context, 'pockets' of competitiveness might exist, but they will not significantly affect the mean for the national level. If the state is strong, however, there will be no such 'pockets'. Such a state could, however, set up a system of façade competitiveness, as is illustrated by the forced four-party system in Uzbekistan. This kind of competitiveness is not genuine, though, and therefore not *meaningful* in the sense of reflecting fundamentals on the district level, like the balance of power between actors.

Table 27. Electoral Outcomes by State and Market Capacity

MARKET

		Weak	Strong
STATE	**Weak**	Non-Competitive with 'pockets' of competitiveness (Tajikistan)	Competitive and potentially destabilizing (Kyrgyzstan)
	Strong	Non-Competitive (Turkmenistan) or 'Facade Competitiveness' (Uzbekistan)	Potentially Competitive, but not destabilizing (Azerbaijan)

Note: State capacity here refers to autocratic state capacity and market refers to relative economic autonomy (see chapter seven). The main focus is on the 2000-2005 period.

So much for states where market actors are weak. In countries where economic elites are strong and relatively autonomous, there will be competitiveness on the national level, with a few exceptions. On the one hand, if the state is weak, competitiveness will be widespread and fierce. In this case competitiveness will be both genuine and meaningful. Arguably, even weak autocrats try to get their own candidates elected, but the result is nevertheless high levels of competitiveness due to autocratic failure. Interestingly, in some cases, market actors might even be able to monopolize electoral support in a particular district; however, this occurs without significantly affecting the mean competitiveness score at the national level, which remains high. In weak states where markets are strong competitiveness is a direct result of authorities not being able to coordinate elite behavior.

If, on the other hand, the state is strong, then competitiveness will not emerge by necessity but only if the ruler allows it. Strong states have the luxury of a choice in terms of allowing for genuine competitiveness or not.

Denying economic elites the opportunities associated with participating in elections comes with a cost. Therefore it might be preferable, under certain circumstances, to allow elites to openly contest elections.

Finally, competitiveness has fundamentally different effects in weak states. Under conditions of weak autocratic capacity, competitiveness is inherently destabilizing, as will be shown later in this chapter with the case of the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan. In strong states competitiveness is much better controlled and therefore not destabilizing. The focus in this book has been on explaining competitiveness and not the effects thereof. However, I will reflect on the consequences of competitiveness for the regime as a whole later in this concluding chapter.

Capitalism opens up space for raw competitiveness

Candidate strength in an autocracy is often related to state affiliation. In this study I have shown that the most important alternative source of strength is relative economic autonomy. A rich individual is uniquely positioned to challenge authorities in weak authoritarian states. Economic autonomy is a function of the structure of the economy and the room for entrepreneurs to maneuver. In a post-Soviet context many countries failed to enact substantial economic reforms, therefore keeping economic autonomy low.

> The core of this logic is that economic autonomy heightens the potential for center-local confrontation, whereas rural elites' economic dependency on the state lessens it.[312]

Kyrgyzstan was by far the most radical market reformer in Central Asia and consequently electoral politics were competitive throughout its post-Soviet period. To paraphrase Moore: *no capitalism, no competitiveness*.

By capitalism and market mechanisms I do not mean fully institutionalized robust markets where there is rule of law, however. The market in autocratic, and especially in post-Soviet, contexts instead refers to imperfect economic liberalization, whereby the role of market mechanisms is strengthened at the expense of the control of central authorities. Economic elites are essentially the only actors strong enough to challenge the autocrat. The organizational capacity of opposition movements and democracy activists, without such resources, are not sufficient to force competitiveness in such a context. The argument is not that capitalism as such leads to competitiveness, but rather that it empowers economic elites and that it has the potential to increase their relative economic autonomy.

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[312] Boone referring to Moore's 1966 classic '*Social origins of dictatorship and democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*', see BOONE, C. (2003) Decentralization as political strategy in West Africa. *Comparative Political Studies,* 36**,** 355.

Market reforms can alter the state-elite equilibrium, making politics competitive, albeit not in the robust sense of plausible governing alternatives, but rather in the sense of a *raw competitiveness*, where resource-laden individuals defend their own narrow interests without being part of a credible governing alternative. The kind of competitiveness displayed in the case of Kyrgyzstan can thus be contrasted with robust competition as it has been described in the literature (O'Dwyer, 2006), or

> … *robust competition* is characterized by an opposition that is clearly identifiable, plausible as a governing alternative, and vociferously critical, constantly monitoring and censuring government action (Grzymala-Busse, 2007).

The 'clan' is dead

A significant contribution of this study is to address the issue of 'clan politics' in an explicit and testable way. The findings show that 'clans' do exist as identity categories, but their function, if any, is more related to life-cycle celebrations and rituals, like weddings and funerals, than to voting. In Kyrgyzstan, there is no 'regularized pattern of interaction' that restrains candidates or voters, as a rigid definition of an informal institution would require (O'Donnell, 1996). Given its context, if clans in Kyrgyzstan do not structure politics, then politics are probably not structured by clans elsewhere in Central Asia either.

This study has shown that even if public perceptions, especially fuelled by the international coverage of faraway places, treat kinship-based groups as actors, they rarely are. The book at hand is based on a detailed examination of local level electoral dynamics in Kyrgyzstan, but I would not be surprised if the findings apply to a much larger set of cases, which political scientists regularly refer to as being dominated by clan and tribal politics.

Accountability and the role of the general public

Even under conditions of autocracy, elections have an empowering effect on the general public. Electoral mobilization is arguably elite-led, but the voters are also involved. [313] Voters in clientelistic systems are the target of selective transfers in times of elections and this in turn constitutes a perverse form of empowerment. At least for a day, the elites are eager to have regular people

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[313] Understanding electoral politics in the post-Soviet space as an intra-elite game is not a novel idea: 'Presidential electoral politics is best described as a coordination game among political elites', see SHVETSOVA, O. (2003) Resolving the Problem of Preelection Coordination: The 1999 Parliamentary Election as an Elite Presidential Primary. IN HESLI, V. L. & REISINGER, W. M. (Eds.) *The 1999-2000 elections in Russia: their impact and legacy.* Cambridge University Press

on their side. The dependency relation between voters and candidates is still such that no genuine freedom to choose whom to vote for really exists. Voters can nevertheless press elite representatives for concessions in the form of material rewards during an electoral cycle in exchange for their votes.

The voters constitute the demand dimension in terms of who will run for a seat. In deteriorating socio-economic environments, we can assume that people demand a change in leadership. Voters are empowered at least during the campaign cycle when all candidates vie for their support, often along clientelistic lines. Opening up a closed authoritarian system to contestation naturally brings all sorts of social pressures to bear on the political system. These pressures can originate from previously under privileged sub-national groups that at see an avenue for claiming a bigger role in politics, whether through better economic distribution or even self-determination. It might also threaten otherwise comfortable minorities with the tyranny of the majority and lead them to take precautionary measures. The demand for alternative candidates is therefore an important part in candidates' decision to run for office.

In the reduced explanatory model, where the effects of state affiliation were tested, the number of incumbent candidates had a significant effect on the competitiveness of a district.[314] This indicates that incumbency was associated with a certain cost, and it is not farfetched to seek the explanation for the relationship between the number of incumbents and competitiveness in voter dissatisfaction with incumbent performance. Many of the candidates interviewed also felt that voters often punished incumbents, due to poor performance while in office.

Accountability is thus limited but real, even in the most authoritarian contexts. The general public plays an important role as arbiters between ruling and challenging elites. A contest that at first might seems as a perfect case of raw and brutal inter-elite fighting will eventually have to involve the voters as the Election-Day approaches.

Observer effects

The study shows that the role of 'democratic interventions', in the sense of election observers, is not the main cause of competitiveness. Neither international election observation missions nor domestic observers have any robust positive effects on competitiveness. This finding goes against earlier studies of observer effects in the post-Soviet region (Hyde, 2007).

The allocation of observers is not truly random, however, which might skew the results. For instance, it is quite possible that domestic observers prioritize election districts in which there are strong indications of fraud and manipulation. Domestic observers are simply allocated to districts where the

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[314] See chapter four.

marginal utility of an observation intervention is higher. This might explain why the presence of a domestic observer is actually associated with a decrease in the competitiveness of the district.

In this context it is important to note that both domestic NGOs involved in election observation and international election observation missions do a lot of work prior to the Election Day. Such 'democratic interventions' might explain why so many candidates were allowed to run, and why campaigning was allowed around the country. The statistical models presented here are not designed to capture any such effect.

Consequences of competitiveness

Having established what makes election districts competitive under autocracy, I want to dwell on the question of the consequences of competitiveness for regime stability. The fundamental tension in the literature has already been noted: some argue that elections lead to democracy, while others hold the opposite position.

In analyzing the role of elections, we need to distinguish between non-competitive and competitive elections. Whether or not elections are good for regime survival depends on the nature of the race and the capacity of the state to contain such mobilization. A competitive election in an authoritarian state can indeed have a detrimental effect on regime stability as the Kyrgyzstan case well illustrates, but whether or not a competitive election will have a destabilizing effect depends on the autocratic state capacity of the regime.[315] On the one hand, as the cases of Azerbaijan and Russia illustrate, competitiveness in a strong autocracy has no effect on regime stability. Competitiveness in a weak state, on the other hand, has an inherently destabilizing effect in that it signals weakness in the ruling coalition and facilitates anti-governmental coordination. A strong autocratic state, like Azerbaijan, has no problems containing such mobilization, while in Kyrgyzstan it led to a regime collapse.

Here it is important to keep in mind the distinction between sub-national competitiveness and aggregate level dynamics. The reason why sub-national competitiveness has been largely ignored in the literature is probably because it is seen as a façade put up by the autocrat. Remember that districts could be intensely competitive but still be won by a pro-presidential candidate in the end. On the aggregate level such district level competitiveness is perfectly compatible with complete domination by one party of the parliament. Sub-national competitiveness in autocracies, where the presidential candidates always win in the end, has thus been seen as an irrelevant topic.

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[315] Following the logic in the previous chapter.

The case of Kyrgyzstan illustrates that competitiveness could nevertheless be immensely important.

In Kyrgyzstan in 2005 competitiveness was intense and spread out over the entire territory of the state, but in the end most of the explicitly pro-presidential candidates won a seat. However, the electoral dynamics at the district level were a very important phase in the mobilization that eventually led to the ouster of the sitting president after the elections. The theoretical implication is therefore that competitive elections in weak authoritarian states are likely to destabilize the regime. Whether or not political mobilization unleashed in a competitive election translates into serious threats for the ruler depends on the coercive capacity of the state and the institutional design. For example, an electoral system with a second round, allows for sustained mobilization.[316]

The relevance of sub-national competitiveness can best be illustrated by the case of Kyrgyzstan and the surprising events of the spring of 2005. This is not the place for a thorough analysis of the sequence of events, but rather serves to illustrate the relevance of sub-national competitiveness in autocracies.

The Tulip Revolution of March 2005

At the end of March 2005, after two rounds of intense campaigning for the highest legislative body, the *Jogorku Kenesh*, and weeks of protests around the country, president Askar Akaev left the presidential palace and fled to Russia. Much has been written about these events, but the impact of the elections as a central mechanism spurring came to be known as the Tulip Revolution has never been studied in detail.[317] The literature on electoral revolutions does also not specify particular mechanisms (Howard and Roessler, 2006, Bunce and Wolchik, 2006).

As it turns out by examining district level patterns of competitiveness, we can better understand how the protests started in the wake of the first round of elections in late February and how the momentum was sustained in these 'pockets of discontent'. If we code instances of post-election protests and identify the SMD in which they took place, we can see whether the dynamics of the first round of elections, which is the main topic of the book, have any explanatory power over ensuing electoral revolution.

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[316] In Kyrgyzstan there was a two-round system and a revolution while in Azerbaijan there was a single-round system and no revolution.

[317] Radnitz and Tucker both note the relevance of an explicit electoral dynamic without empirically testing the hypothesis, see RADNITZ, S. (2010) *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press, TUCKER, J. (2007) Enough! electoral fraud, collective action problems, and post-communist colored revolutions. *Perspectives on Politics,* 5**,** 535-551.

Using existing literature and local newspaper sources, I confirmed a total of 19 instances of significant protests in the period between the two rounds of elections.[318] These protests gathered an average of 300 participants, and candidates from the first round of elections were involved in all cases. Interestingly, the frequency of protests was highest in the northern *oblast'* of Naryn, followed by Jalalabad and Osh *oblast'*. This confirms that mobilization was geospatially different from the other cases of 'colored revolutions', where demonstrations focused on the capital city. The fact that protests went on both in the south and the north of the country at the same time also complicates the generally accepted narrative of the revolution being a southern revanchist moment (ICG, 2005b).

It turns out that protests occurred with a higher probability in districts with a competitive first round.[319] Interestingly, it also seems like clan fractionalization was an important factor, with a much higher probability of protests in divided communities. The elections in 2005 in Kyrgyzstan illustrate that the president, who was about to retire in the fall, had lost the control over the political process. Akaev and his closest confidants tried desperately to deliver a desirable result and in the end managed to get most of the pro-presidential candidates elected. However, after having gone through a very competitive first round of elections, the weakness of the Akaev regime was heavily exposed.

Some might argue that President Akaev had realized his own apparatus' weakness in delivering sound and uncontested majorities for their own candidates and therefore allowed for a free contest. This might have seemed like a reasonable compromise granted high levels of resentment among the elites, as well as the populace. However, the kind of *raw competitiveness* that ensued can be utterly destabilizing for any regime.

In this context the two-round system seems to have created incentives for local elites to sustain their protests, even in the absence of a well-organized national opposition movement. The second round of elections provided political entrepreneurs with an opportunity to sustain momentum and to coordinate with other anti-Akaev actors. As a contrasting case, it can be noted that district level competitiveness in Azerbaijan in 2005 was on roughly the same level as in Kyrgyzstan, but the protests died out immediately after the first and only round in these first-past-the-post elections.

Note that even after Akaev had been removed due to election related protests, the incoming rulers validated the allegedly fraudulent results of the

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[318] Data is here borrowed from Radnitz and his identification of 19 instances of protests in between the two rounds, see RADNITZ, S. (2010) *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press. In Radnitz's data, all protests that had more than 100 participants and were reported in the press were included. The data was confirmed by a separate coding of instances of protests by the author and local assistants in the summer of 2010.

[319] The regression table is presented in appendix XIII.

elections. The parliament that was elected in the tumultuous weeks in the spring of 2005 stayed on for two and a half years. One could argue that the reason why these newly elected 'corrupt' MPs were kept in place was simply that the new rulers had no alternative to them. The new rulers might not have gotten a much more sympathetic set of MPs if new elections had been called. Also, denying seats to newly elected MPs that had arguably invested a lot in their races would have been utterly destabilizing. As it happens the very same thing happened in Georgia in the wake of the Rose Revolution that was triggered by allegedly fraudulent elections in the fall of 2003. In that case, the MPs that won their SMD seats were also kept in place. The post-revolutionary elections in the spring of 2004 in Georgia only concerned the proportional seats. This just goes to illustrate that SMD elections in the post-Soviet space often times mean that elites invest a lot in securing seats and that central authorities are not always the ones picking the winners and the losers in elections. It also shows that whoever manages to get elected in a SMD contest is not someone that the president can crack down on without considerable cost.

General contributions

Affecting the outcome in electoral processes is important for both democratic and autocratic rulers. Democratic rulers can shape public opinion and rely on other incumbency benefits, but in the end the general public will have a say in terms of who gets elected. In autocracies, being affiliated with state elites is associated with even more powers. After all, autocracies are characterized by severe limitations on political rights and civil liberties. This does not mean, however, that all autocracies are equally well equipped to manage electoral processes. Most contemporary autocrats rely on a mix of both coercive – stick – and material – carrot – techniques to win elections.

This study has examined in great detail how elections play out in a particular weak authoritarian state. The regime in Kyrgyzstan at the time of the 2005 elections was clearly much weaker in terms of delivering desirable electoral results than its immediate neighbors. In Azerbaijan, the elections were also very competitive, but here authorities seem to have had better control over the electoral process. This is partly thanks to a single-round system, where any challenges of the results ended up in long drawn-out court processes fully controlled by authorities.

If indeed the existence of private property and market mechanisms empower alternative non-ruling elites and always lead to competition, then one would expect competitiveness to also emerge in China, Vietnam, Egypt, and Jordan. Again, capitalism has the potential to empower economic elites and thereby increase their relative economic autonomy. Such autonomy must be considered relative to the scope and capacity of the state, however. Any

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analysis of the prospects for competitive politics needs to account for all of the balancing forces that are thought to contribute to competitiveness. In other words, it is not enough to have resource-laden alternative elites if the state is far stronger and can perfectly manage challengers. The Chinese state, for example, is clearly very capable in terms of coercion and has been able to further develop such capacity even as economic elites have grown in importance.

Autocracy is in essence about successful coordination and management of resource-laden elites. If a ruler fails in ensuring that such elites are on their side, the result will be competitiveness. Whether or not such competitiveness ends up seriously challenging the regime depends on the coercive capacity of the state and the specific institutional setup, however. For an autocrat that allows for economic activity outside the realm of the state, this means that they need to continuously strengthen their autocratic capacity in order to balance the growing strength of economic elites. Such a strengthening of autocratic capacity is costly and, in the end, does not guarantee that there will be no public backlash. From the perspective of the autocrat, therefore, it might be advisable to allow for some contestation, albeit in a controlled manner.

For those, like me, who advocate democracy around the world, this study sheds light on disturbing dynamics often seen in the developing world. A naïve belief in the wonders of elections as a tool to bring about enduring democracy does not serve anyone. Opening up space for political contestation without sufficient attention to central accountability mechanisms, like political parties, might be counter-productive, at least in the short run. Electoral competitiveness without credible governing parties and supporting institutions like a free media and a professional bureaucracy can end up destabilizing a regime without producing any of the good things often associated with competitive politics. Kyrgyzstan is unfortunately a good illustration of this, so far. This is not to say that no progress is possible. In the wake of the Tulip Revolution the institutional set-up was changed first by introducing a party list proportional electoral system and later by adopting a mixed Presidential-Parliamentary mode of government. Such changes theoretically promise to institutionalize political conflict and thereby manage it in a more orderly fashion. It remains to be seen, however, whether this change will be sustainable.

To conclude let me highlight some general contributions of this study, as an addition to the substantive findings I have already summarized: 1) elections in autocracies matter; 2) electoral outcomes need to be distinguished from pre-conditions; 3) data in comparative politics should be further disaggregated; and finally 4) competitiveness under autocracy is not the same as under democracy.

Elections in autocracies matter

First of all, elections can be meaningful even if the context is authoritarian. Electoral returns, even in autocracies, are not random, but rather determined by interactions between authorities, elites, and voters. Far from free and fair, these returns still tell us something about the distribution of power resources in a society if elites seriously participate in the contests. Businessmen in countries with weak rule of law have all the incentive in the world to take part in electoral politics as a means to defend their property (Spector, 2009). By engaging in electoral politics, businessmen can signal their relative strength, and this in turn can be used to amass more influence and resources.

Data from the Kyrgyzstan case also suggests that incumbent MPs attract competition from quality candidates, which makes elections more competitive. There is also evidence of accountability in terms of voters punishing poor performance while in office.[320] Falsification occurs, but it benefits state and market candidates alike, i.e. the results are not 'completely fabricated' by the autocrat alone. This has implications for the study of regime types. For instance, using 'widespread fraud' as a defining feature of a *full authoritarian* state is problematic if both opposition and government uses 'fraudulent' techniques (Levitsky and Way, 2010).

Elections also matter because elites might actually consider elections as a more legitimate way to get access to spoils. Here elections need not be 'democratic' or free and fair, as long as elites are able to contest the elections and the outcomes depend on the candidate's own ability to buy and persuade voters (Blaydes, 2008, Lust-Okar, 2006). Finally, elections matter because they can either contribute to destabilizing the regime, or, as many studies of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East have shown, be an useful tool for authoritarian consolidation (Brownlee, 2007, Lust-Okar, 2005, Magaloni, 2006).

Conceptual distinction between pre-conditions and outcomes

In analyzing regimes and elections, we need to make some important conceptual distinctions. The first is between the pre-conditions for electoral contestation and outcomes, which help separate out an autocratic context from a democratic one. The pre-condition for contestation under autocracy is severely limited by the use of both formal and informal state institutions. The second important distinction is between electoral outcomes that are competitive and those that are not. A competitive authoritarian state is thus one in which state institutions disregard international election standards but nevertheless fail to rein in competitiveness.

In most cases, electoral competitiveness constitutes an autocratic failure, since authorities are unable to control the electoral outcome no matter how

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[320] The number of incumbents seems to have a positive effect on the probability of competitiveness.

hard they try. In some rare cases, competitiveness is sanctioned by authorities as an efficient way of sharing the spoils of office, but in most cases competitiveness in an autocracy is simply a function of the authorities being incapable or unwilling to deny candidates the right to run for office.

The importance of disaggregated data

There is also a methodological argument to be made. In studying elections in countries where regional and local divisions are pertinent, it is important that we go beyond national level aggregate measures of electoral competitiveness and democracy more broadly.

Some of the leading scholars in the field have failed to recognize competitiveness in cases like Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. Levitsky and Way, for instance, only identified one of the four cases that I label competitive authoritarian in 1990-1995 as such, namely Peru (Levitsky and Way, 2010). The other cases that fall into the competitive authoritarian category according to my conceptualization in the early 1990s, which is the period they focus on, are Morocco and Turkey. Levitsky and Way do identify Armenia, Ukraine, and Benin as being competitive authoritarian in early 1990s, just to name a few examples. However, since Ukraine at the time of the 1994 elections had a Freedom House score of three and Armenia a score of four in 1995, they can both be considered to have allowed for competition, i.e. they were essentially democracies, albeit with widely recognized deficiencies. Benin on the other hand had a political rights score of two indicating even better democratic standards. Note that all of these cases are also coded as democracies by leading authorities in the field (Przeworski, 2000). It thus seems like Levitsky and Way identify regimes as competitive authoritarian when in reality they might be democracies, albeit imperfect ones.

Since competitiveness in autocracies can be hidden behind aggregate level seat allocation in the parliament and the absence of recognizable opposition movements, the focus on the sub-national level becomes even more important. The argument here is that candidates and voters matter even if the context is authoritarian. By 'scaling down' to the appropriate sub-national level, more accurate descriptions can be achieved. This also produces more observations, which also allows for more statistical testing of hypotheses, something that thus far has been lacking in much of the study of authoritarian elections.

Competitiveness is not the same as democracy

Finally, let me stress once more that competitive elections in autocracies cannot be equated with democracy. What good could possibly come out of competitive electoral processes that local elites do their best to hijack? It is too early to say anything about the long-term effects of the kind of competitiveness that Kyrgyzstan experienced in its first 20 years of post-Soviet politics. What we do know, however, is that Kyrgyzstan for the last two decades

was one of the few countries in the world that actually had their human development decrease (UNDP, 2010b). Competitiveness can have an effect on regime stability, but the long-term effect on democracy and other developmental attributes remain to be seen.

Understanding how elections turn competitive, even if the context is authoritarian, helps us understand the limitations with this form of competition. Indeed, competitive elections are not necessarily associated with more democracy if the format of competition is *raw competitiveness*, i.e. unstructured elite-led contests where accountability mechanisms like political parties are largely absent. This sort of competitiveness is common in many weak states in the developing world and is closer to the label oligopoly than democracy. Understanding these nuances allows for democracy activists, both domestic and international, to better calibrate their efforts to improve democratic standards. Such an analysis also has the potential to reform aid modalities related to democracy and induce more patience in donors.

Appendices

I. Competitive Authoritarian Cases

Here I list all the cases identified as authoritarian in the sense of not providing the institutional setup for free and fair elections, and competitive in the sense of the largest party receiving less than 60 percent of the votes.

Table 28. Competitiveness in Competitive Authoritarian States

Country and year	Political Rights (FH)	Winner's Vote Share	ENC (T)	ENC (D)	Democracy (ACPL)
Algeria 2002	6	33.7%	4.281	3.626	0
Algeria 2007	6	35.3%	3.335	3.085	0
Angola 2008	6	53.7%	2.255	2.058	0
Armenia 2007	5	23.7%	9.451	6.839	1
Burkina Faso 1997	5	48.2%	1.835	1.955	0
Burkina Faso 2007	5	49.5%	3.379	2.700	0
Cambodia 1998	7	45.5%	.	.	0
Cambodia 2003	6	41.4%	2.441	2.428	0
Cambodia 2008	6	47.4%	2.324	2.218	0
Gambia 1997	7	52.1%	1.720	1.819	0
Indonesia 1987	5	58.4%	1.670	1.691	0
Kyrgyzstan 2005	6	27.7%	5.132	4.371	0
Malaysia 1990	5	57.3%	3.796	2.771	0
Morocco 1993	6	24.8%	5.794	4.914	0
Morocco 2002	5	13.9%	8.922	8.066	0
Morocco 2007	5	18.5%	11.144	8.279	0
Niger 1999	7	49.5%	1.926	1.972	0
Peru 1995	5	37.0%	3.094	2.898	0
Peru 2000	5	52.1%	2.963	2.441	0
Russia_2003	5	24.3%	7.036	5.576	0
Russia_2007	6	37.1%	3.527	3.112	0
Turkey 1995	5	27.0%	3.602	3.651	1
Uzbekistan 2009	7	34.2%	.	.	0
Zimbabwe 2005	7	48.6%	2.013	2.036	0
Zimbabwe 2008	7	59.6%	1.868	1.773	0
Total	5.8	40.0%	4.066	3.490	0.08

Source: Freedom House and ACPL (Przeworski) data from (Teorell et al., 2009); Election results from World Banks Database on Political Institutions (DPI) (Beck et al., 2001).
Note: The political rights score by Freedom House and the Democracy dummy are from the year prior to the election. The ENC numbers reported are based on fractionalization scores provided by DPI and do not match the ENC numbers as calculated by the author.

II. Measuring the Number of Effective Candidates

The Number of Effective Candidates (ENP) score can be understood as a measure of the number of 'real' or 'viable' candidates. In its original form the formula is,

$$ENP = \frac{1}{\sum\limits_{1}^{x} p_i^2}$$

[9]

Where p_i is the fractional share of the i-th component. In this formula, the squares of all the fractional shares are added together and this sum makes up the denominator. For instance, the fractional share of 40 percent is .40 and the weighted value that we get from the equation is .40 X .40 = .16. If the fractional share is only 1 percent, i.e. .01, then the weighted value would be .0001. This means that extremely marginal candidates are automatically discounted (Taagepera and Shugart, 1989).

In the post-Soviet cases, where political parties have been marginal actors, it is more appropriate to focus on candidates instead of parties since many candidates ran as independents without any party affiliation. Therefore I have just replaced the Parties variable (p) with a Candidate variable (c). We also need to make another adjustment to ENP, since not enough weight is given to the winning candidate/party,

$$ENC(D) = (ENC(T) + \frac{1}{v}) \times \frac{1}{2}$$

[10]

where ENC (T) is the original Taagepera version of the measure and ENC (D) is the adjusted Dunleavy version (Dunleavy and Boucek, 2003). Here v stands for the winner's share of the vote. The new measure, *The Effective Number of Candidates* – ENC (D) accounts for the effects of the winner's vote share on the overall score. The difference with the Dunleavy correction is small, but represents a more intuitive understanding of 'number of candidates'. Both measures are basically fractionalization scores.[321]

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[321] Another fractionalization measure if Rae's F, used for plotting the electoral system effects. Most fractionalization scores are based on the Herfindahl-Hischmann concentration index (HH), which is calculated by adding up the weighted values of all components (HH = $\sum p_i^2$).

Table 29. Comparing Different Fractionalization Measures (Stylized Data)

Case	Vote for individual candidates (in %)							Total	ENC (T)	ENC (D)	Margin of Victory
1	100							100	1	1	100
2	80	18	2					100	1.49	1.37	62
3	70	5	5	5	5	5	5	100	1.98	1.7	65
4	70	10	10	10				100	1.92	1.68	60
5	60	35	2	2	1			100	2.07	1.87	25
6	60	15	5	5	5	5	5	100	2.53	2.1	45
7	51	26	10	10	1	1	1	100	2.87	2.42	25
8	50	50						100	2	2	0
9	29	27	34	8.5	1.5			100	3.57	3.26	2
10	20	20	20	20	20			100	5	5	0

Source: Stylized artificial data.

Cases are here ordered in terms of competitiveness, even if cases seven to ten could be considered as equally competitive. Case four, for instance, has an ENC (T) of almost 2, even if there was apparently only one strong candidate in the district. The ENC (D) in this case adjusts down the score to 1.68, giving a more intuitive interpretation of the effective number of candidates and in this case pushing down the score below 1.7.

Again, ENC as such cannot be used as a competitiveness score since it basically measures the degree of dispersion of the vote in a linear fashion with no theoretical maximum.[322] This is obviously not the same as competitiveness in a strict sense, since only two candidates each getting 50 percent might be considered as competitive as an election in which three candidates receive 33 percent each. In the first case ENC would be around 2, while in the other case around 3.

The effective number of candidates measure is related to the other measures of competitiveness, as indicated by the correlation matrix below.

Rae has suggested that if HH is taken from 1, an index is derived that is zero when concentration is extreme and one when the system is maximally fractionalized RAE, D. (1967) *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws,* New Haven, Yale University Press.

[322] A district with 100 candidates all receiving exactly 1 percent each would yield an ENC of 100.

Table 30. Correlation Matrix Of Competitiveness Measures (Real World Data)

	Winner's Vote Share	Margin of Victory	Margin of Victory (log)	ENC (T)	ENC (D)
Winner's Vote Share	1				
Margin of Victory	0.857[***]	1			
Margin of Victory (log)	0.696[***]	0.797[***]	1		
ENC (T)	-0.837[***]	-0.483[***]	-0.414[***]	1	
ENC (D)	-0.872[***]	-0.551[***]	-0.502[***]	0.993[***]	1

Source: CLE dataset containing a total of over 10,000 constituency-level observations (Brancati, 2007). Significance levels $p < 0.10$, [**] $p < 0.05$, [***] $p < 0.01$.

III. List of Non-Survey Interviews

Fieldwork was conducted in Kyrgyzstan in March-April 2006, June-July 2006, and July 2007 to May 2008. Apart form the candidate survey a total of 161 interviews were conducted during fieldwork. Almost 43 percent of these interviews were conducted in the capital city of Bishkek.

Table 31. Fieldwork Interviews by Professional Category

Professional profile	Batken	Bishkek	Issyk-Kul	Jalala-bad	Naryn	Osh	Talas	Total
Candidates (not elected)	0	6	5	0	7	14	4	36
Informant	1	8	8	1	1	7	1	27
Journalists & Academic	0	16	0	2	0	7	0	25
Internationals	1	14	2	1	0	5	0	23
NGO	2	7	0	1	0	10	0	20
Bureaucrats	1	8	0	3	1	6	0	19
MPs	0	10	0	0	0	1	0	11
Total	5	69	15	8	9	50	5	161

Note: Professional profile coded by author.

The largest category of interviewees was candidates, thus increasing the total number of interviewed candidates to over 200, if the candidates from the survey and the elected MPs are included. Local informants like taxi drivers under a trip lasting more than two hours or family members of my assistants in the field provided valuable insights.

IV. Candidate Survey

A survey of candidates from a random selection of single-member districts (SMD) was completed during the first half of 2008. The selected SMDs and all the candidates in them constituted the sample from which interviews were sought. In the randomly selected SMDs, there were a total of 263 candidates out of which 62 were interviewed making the response rate 24 percent. In addition, I decided to backtrack and interview candidates in the randomly selected SMDs for earlier elections (2000 and 1995) as well. We also ended up using the questionnaire for candidates interviewed from non-randomly selected districts.

A total of 160 candidate interviews were conducted, a third by the author and the rest by local assistants,

Table 32. Candidate Survey Interviewers and Collectors

Collector Name	Interviews	Oblast'	Affiliation
Munozhat (coordinator)[323]	62	Osh and Batken	Siar-Bishkek
Fredrik Sjoberg	56	All regions	
Iliyas	21	Talas and Bishkek	Research Assistant
Jenishbek	9	Issyk-Kul	
Turat	8	Naryn	Siar-Bishkek
Azat	4	Issyk-Kul	Siar-Bishkek
Total	160		

Note: Three of the interviews were disqualified.

Only 62 of the candidates interviewed focusing on the 2005 elections were from randomly selected SMDs. This constitutes the sample that most of the analyses in this book is based on. Whenever I use interview results from the non-random portion of the sample I indicate this in the text. Out of the 62 candidates that constitute the random sample for 2005, three candidates did not participate in the election in the end. Among the 59 candidates, the mean vote share in the first round was 16 percent, while in the population of all candidates in the 2005 elections was 19 percent. This means that the random sample of 59 candidates is slightly biased towards worse performing candidates, even if the difference is rather small. This bias in understandable in so far as well-performing candidates sometimes are more cautious in openly talking about their electoral experiences.

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[323] Several collectors, but coordinated by Munozhat.

Table 33. Sample and Response Rate per *Oblast'*

Oblast'	Candidates (Population)	Candidate Sample	Completed Interviews	Response Rate
Batken	37	28	8	28.6%
Bishkek	61	47	2	4.3%
Chui	64	28	5	17.9%
Issyk-Kul	48	36	4	11.1%
Jalalabad	85	41	9	22.0%
Naryn	27	15	3	20.0%
Osh	65	46	16	34.8%
Osh City	24	10	9	90.0%
Talas	18	12	6	50.0%
Total	429	263	62	23.6%

Note: The population of candidates includes those that withdrew after having registered at first.

In terms of the geographical distribution of the interviews the total numbers indicate that the capital city, Bishkek, is underrepresented. An emphasis was put on making sure that candidates from peripheral districts were included and therefore the response rate in Osh, Talas, and Batken is rather high. Due to time constraints, we were not able to complete more than two interviews from the Bishkek SMDs. Note, however, that many of the interviews with candidates from non-Bishkek SMDs were actually conducted in the city of Bishkek. Furthermore, in the non-survey interviews (see next section) Bishkek interviewees are overrepresented.

Candidate Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained 41 questions of which 15 were open-ended and 26 were multiple-choice questions. The following text was read to the interviewees before the interview:

Dear Mr./Ms., my name is NN and the Single Member District (SMD) in which you ran back in X (year) has been randomly selected to be included in a research project about elections in Central Asia. This is part of a doctoral research project by a Finnish researcher, Mr. Fredrik M Sjoberg, and he is working for his PhD degree at Uppsala University in Sweden. We are not interested in the December 2007 elections here only the X Jogorku Kenesh elections

The specific questions are listed below in the order they appeared on the questionnaire.

CANDIDATE INFO
1. Here we focus on the February/March X elections, but have you ever ran in another parliamentary election? If so, what years?
2. Had you ever been elected to a local assembly or office (*oblast'*, *rayon*, village level) at the time of the X elections?
3. Has anyone in your family ever been a Member of Parliament (also going back to the Soviet time)? If yes, please give name and location

SOCIO-BIOLOGICAL AND POSITIONAL
4. Year of birth
5. Place of birth
6. What is your nationality (ethnicity)?
7. Where did you study (higher level only)? Name place and subject
8. What was your main job at the time of running?
9. Had you at the time of the X elections ever worked for the State?

GENEALOGICAL (ONLY KYRGYZ INTERVIEWEES)
10. Is it important to be able to name your forefathers (*Jeti Ata*)?[324]
11. Can you name your seven forefathers (*Jeti Ata*)?
12. What is the name of your *Uruu* (clan)?
13. What is the name of your *Uruk* (clan sub-group')?
14. Do you know the geographical heartland for your *Uruu*? Name *rayon* (and possibly a few villages)
15. Can you estimate the percentage of fellow *Uruu* members in your SMD?
16. Do you know the *Uruu* identity of the other candidates in your SMD?
17. Do all the voters in your SMD know the *Uruu* identity of all the candidates?

ELECTION (CAMPAIGN) EXPERIENCE
18. How were you selected as a candidate? Shortly describe the process (who nominated you, how was it organized).
19. What societal groups or interests did you represent in the X elections?
20. Were you a party member at the time of running?
21. If yes, were you nominated by this party in the X elections?
22. If you were a party nominated candidate, why did you choose to align with the X-party rather than any other party?
23. Were local *Aksakals* in your constituency involved in the campaigning? If yes, please specify how they were involved
24. What kind of persons in your SMD were most useful for you in your campaign? (pick maximum 2)
25. What were the two most important issues in the campaign in your SMD in the X elections? (name only two, in order of importance)
26. What was the main technique used by you to attract voters?

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[324] In Russian *Vazhno li dlya Vas znat' vashih zheti ata? Kyrgyz: Tuulgan zhyly (zhyl gana)*?

27. What was the campaign techniques used by other candidates?
28. Who was your campaign manager?
29. Was your SMD competitive? (Competitive meaning a tight race in which the outcome was difficult to predict)
30. Was your SMD more or less competitive than previous elections?
31. If your SMD was competitive, how do you explain that competition? Why was it competitive?
32. Did you take part in the second round? If no, what did you do during the second round, what did your voters do?
33. Were you surprised by the final election results?
34. Was the election results falsified in your SMD (i.e. do the final CEC numbers reflect the intention of the voters in your SMD)
35. If completely or somewhat falsified, did you file a complaint?
36. Were any incumbent Member of Parliament running in your SMD?
37. If yes, did they win or lose? Why do you think they won/lost?
38. Are people in your SMD usually voting for someone from their own *Uruu* (or 'Nationality' in the case of non-Kyrgyz respondents)?
39. Chose an ideological label that suits you best
40. What was your role in the March 2005 'Revolution'
41. What was your role in the December 2007 elections?

In addition I asked all the interviewers to record how the interviewee reacted to the questions asked, specifically, how the interviewee reacted to the clan related questions.

V. Kyrgyzstan Competitiveness 1995-2005

Competitiveness has been surprisingly high all throughout the post-independence period in Kyrgyzstan.

Table 34. Competitiveness Over Time in Kyrgyzstan

Year	N	Number of Candidates	Winner's cote (%)	Margin of Victory	ENC (D)	Prop. of 60% Compet. SMDs
1995	105	8.914	37.8%	16.2%	3.841	92.4%
2000	90	4.611	43.6%	18.3%	3.287	82.2%
2005	75	5.187	47.2%	21.6%	2.979	82.7%
Total	270	6.444	42.3%	18.4%	3.415	86.3%

VI. District (SMD) Model Explanatory Variables

For the district level regression analyses of the 2005 elections in Kyrgyzstan the following variables were used.

Table 35. District Model Variable Description, Kyrgyzstan 2005

Variable Name	Description	Scale	Data Source
Ethnic/Clan fractionalization	*Uruu* fractionalization per SMD in non-Bishkek districts; Ethnic fractionalization for Bishkek	0-1	Abramzon, 1963; Census 1999
No single Strongman candidate	A dummy for the absence of a single candidate belonging to any of the candidate strength categories in model 4, table 14: *Alga*, Incumbent, Rich, Muscle	0/1	CEC, 2005; Stamov, 2004; own coding
Alga dummy	A dummy for the presence of a single *Alga* candidate	0/1	CEC, 2005
Richest 100 dummy (single)	A dummy for the presence of a single candidate on the 100 richest list	0/1	Stamov, 2004
Incumbent dummy (single)	A dummy for the presence of a single incumbent MP	0/1	CEC, 2005
International Observer (OSCE)	The number of polling stations in a SMD that were observed by the International Election Observation Mission during Election Day[325]	0-	OSCE
Domestic observer (NGO)	The number of polling stations in a SMD that were observed by Domestic observers (NGO *Koalitsia*) during Election Day	0-	Koalitsia
Soc-Econ index (1999 census)	An index of the living standard in terms of amenities, including whether or not there is electricity, running water etc.	0-100	Census, 1999
Urban dummy (Bishkek)	A dummy for whether or not the SMD was located in the capital city of Bishkek	0/1	Own coding

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[325] As a share of the total number of polling stations per SMD. In the case a polling station was visited more than once during the day the upper boundary of this variable could be above 1.

VII. SMD List, Kyrgyzstan 2005

In the 2005 legislative elections in Kyrgyzstan there were 75 single-member districts and the key outcome and explanatory variables are presented below.

Table 36. Election Districts and Main Variables, Kyrgyzstan 2005, First Round

SMD	Candidates	Winner's Vote (%)	Margin of victory	ENC (D)	*Alga*	Rich (count)
1	4	46.3%	35.3%	2.805	1	0
2	1	85.0%	83.4%	1.297	0	1
3	7	49.8%	30.3%	2.713	0	1
4	5	51.2%	32.8%	2.600	1	1
5	4	53.3%	35.8%	2.469	1	0
6	9	38.2%	17.5%	3.560	0	1
7	4	51.0%	22.2%	2.445	1	1
8	3	47.0%	14.3%	2.674	0	0
9	4	65.4%	48.2%	1.896	1	0
10	8	56.0%	40.3%	2.361	0	1
11	5	26.4%	0.4%	4.272	1	0
12	4	44.6%	20.6%	2.903	1	1
13	5	36.9%	11.3%	3.410	1	0
14	8	22.8%	8.7%	4.132	1	1
15	9	31.9%	9.1%	4.306	0	0
16	1	96.2%	95.5%	1.072	0	1
17	6	36.8%	7.6%	3.430	1	0
18	9	15.4%	5.7%	5.956	0	0
19	4	46.7%	17.7%	2.582	0	0
20	12	55.4%	43.5%	2.426	0	0
21	4	46.3%	1.3%	2.236	1	2
22	3	68.5%	51.9%	1.746	1	1
23	6	44.9%	9.1%	2.640	0	0
24	6	20.2%	18.9%	3.392	0	0
25	3	45.3%	6.3%	2.564	0	1
26	6	48.8%	29.3%	2.730	0	0
27	3	78.0%	63.0%	1.495	1	0
28	6	32.1%	8.9%	3.922	1	1
29	4	64.9%	47.7%	1.910	0	0
30	5	54.8%	27.2%	2.215	0	1
31	5	36.5%	9.1%	3.425	0	1
32	3	64.6%	30.5%	1.749	1	2
33	7	34.9%	2.2%	3.438	0	2
34	3	63.9%	19.7%	1.863	0	1
35	9	39.2%	17.6%	3.359	0	0
36	4	52.6%	26.1%	2.322	0	1
37	12	41.2%	21.4%	3.446	1	0

SMD	Candidates	Winner's Vote (%)	Margin of victory	ENC (D)	*Alga*	Rich (non-*Alga*)
38	5	28.1%	7.0%	3.513	0	0
39	4	30.6%	9.1%	2.905	0	1
40	3	77.7%	59.7%	1.465	0	1
41	2	49.8%	1.3%	2.126	1	0
42	4	60.2%	39.4%	2.103	0	0
43	6	38.1%	2.1%	2.830	0	2
44	4	36.6%	2.3%	2.976	0	0
45	1	85.9%	83.9%	1.287	0	0
46	3	52.1%	26.4%	2.412	0	0
47	6	28.5%	6.8%	3.475	1	0
48	3	57.0%	15.5%	2.022	0	1
49	2	50.5%	1.3%	2.040	1	1
50	8	24.4%	0.6%	5.061	0	1
51	6	46.4%	23.4%	2.770	1	1
52	4	65.9%	47.3%	1.869	1	0
53	9	15.4%	6.1%	5.947	0	1
54	7	34.4%	3.1%	3.566	0	2
55	5	30.0%	4.7%	3.338	0	1
56	6	76.6%	58.5%	1.508	0	1
57	5	81.2%	74.3%	1.406	1	1
58	6	55.0%	38.1%	2.391	1	0
59	7	32.0%	1.6%	3.452	1	0
60	6	44.8%	19.6%	2.901	0	3
61	4	41.0%	17.0%	3.125	1	0
62	4	56.3%	37.7%	2.330	0	0
63	3	41.7%	6.5%	2.837	0	1
64	5	54.8%	34.5%	2.303	0	2
65	5	52.1%	12.3%	2.212	1	0
66	4	57.0%	33.6%	2.180	0	0
67	4	67.6%	48.9%	1.790	0	1
68	6	26.6%	15.8%	3.081	0	0
69	10	23.6%	1.7%	5.140	0	0
70	5	43.7%	18.3%	2.950	0	1
71	9	33.1%	16.4%	4.277	0	0
72	5	43.5%	18.5%	2.973	1	2
73	6	29.0%	8.0%	3.398	0	1
74	4	55.6%	32.5%	2.265	0	0
75	2	68.1%	24.8%	1.685	0	0

Source: See methodology chapter.

VIII. Clan terminology in Kyrgyz and Russian

The English, Kyrgyz, and Russian terminology for kinship categories used in the book are as follows,

Table 37. Kinship and Clan Terminology in English, Kyrgyz, and Russian

English	Kyrgyz	Russian	Kyrgyz example
Kinship	*Tektesh*	*Rodstvo*	*n/a*
Fraternity/Nation	*Ulut/El*	*Zemlyachestvo*	*n/a*
Wing	*Kanat*	*Kryla*	*Ong*
Tribe	*Uruu*	*Plemya*	*Bargy*
Clan	*Uruk*	*Rod*	*Kara-Bargy*

Note: In the context of the Russian language, the word *klan* is also used, but often in a pejorative sense. An *uruu* (literally *seed* in English) is simply a larger kinship unit consisting of several *uruks*. An *uruk* is a 'lineage' in the strict sense of the word (Beyer, 2006). Or in the words of Gullette: 'Some said that sometimes they refer to their *uruk* as *ichinen uruu* (Kyrgyz: 'a *plemya* within a *plemya*'). I have even heard *uruk* being described as *kichine uruu* (Kyrgyz: a 'little *plemya*')' (Gullette, 2006).

IX. Clan Chapter Data Sources

In addition to the hitherto mentioned sources of information, I have used the following sources for chapter six, the 'clan' chapter,

1. Distribution of *uruu* (clan) in Kyrgyzstan based on Soviet era ethnographic data (Abramzon, 1963)
2. Database on *uruu* (clan) proportions per village (*aiyl okmotu*) and *uruu* identities of all candidates in seven critical clan cases
3. Voter Survey (semi-random sample) in selected locations in rural mono-Kyrgyz areas
4. Observations during fieldwork on site in Kara-Kulja

In the following I shortly describe the sources of data and the data collection methods.

Abramzon national coding

There is limited available data on the tribal or clan structure of the Kyrgyz. Here we have to rely on the published work of the major Soviet era ethnographer of the Kyrgyz, Saul Abramzon and his team. Almost all of the Soviet ethnographic expeditions to the Kyrgyz Republic from mid 1920s to late 1950s took place under his leadership. A major piece of work is his contribution to the two volume encyclopedia on the *Peoples of Central Asia and*
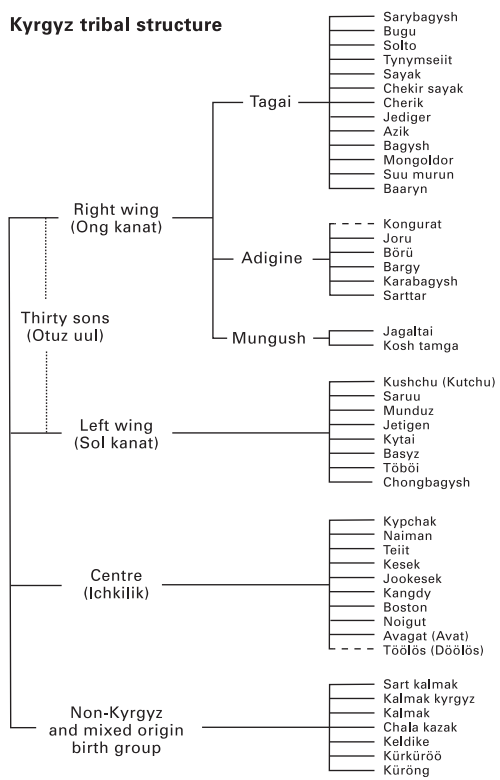
Kazakhstan, published by the Soviet Academy of Sciences (Tolstov et al., 1962-1963).

The volumes are part of the extensive *Narody Mira* (The Peoples of the World) project. All the usual critiques of Soviet scholarship can be leveled,

> They suffer from the effects of committee authorship, and from the omissions, distortions and biases common to Soviet social science. Nevertheless, in the present state of our knowledge of the areas they cover, they can only be welcomed (Dunn, 1964).

In his review of the opus, Dunn further notes that 'the ratio of 'hard' ethnography to propaganda is reduced, at least from the Western point of view'. In the second volume of *Peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan* there is a section on the Kyrgyz where a comprehensive list of 'The Clan-Tribal Structure of the Kyrgyz' (*Rodoplemennaya Struktura Kyrgyzov*) is presented.

Table 38. The Clan-Tribal Structure of the Kyrgyz (Abramzon, 1963)

Kyrgyz tribal structure

Thirty sons (Otuz uul)

- **Right wing (Ong kanat)**
  - **Tagai**
    - Sarybagysh
    - Bugu
    - Solto
    - Tynymseiit
    - Sayak
    - Chekir sayak
    - Cherik
    - Jediger
    - Azik
    - Bagysh
    - Mongoldor
    - Suu murun
    - Baaryn
  - **Adigine**
    - Kongurat
    - Joru
    - Börü
    - Bargy
    - Karabagysh
    - Sarttar
  - **Mungush**
    - Jagaltai
    - Kosh tamga
- **Left wing (Sol kanat)**
  - Kushchu (Kutchu)
  - Saruu
  - Munduz
  - Jetigen
  - Kytai
  - Basyz
  - Töböi
  - Chongbagysh
- **Centre (Ichkilik)**
  - Kypchak
  - Naiman
  - Teiit
  - Kesek
  - Jookesek
  - Kangdy
  - Boston
  - Noigut
  - Avagat (Avat)
  - Töölös (Döölös)
- **Non-Kyrgyz and mixed origin birth group**
  - Sart kalmak
  - Kalmak kyrgyz
  - Kalmak
 - Chala kazak
  - Keldike
  - Kürküröö
  - Küröng

Note: The column on the right indicate the *uruu* level. This copy was received by David Gullette.

This list was used as a baseline to compare genealogical literacy in the candidate and voter surveys. For the calculation of *uruu* fractionalization per

election district I used a map titled *Map of Pre-Revolutionary Settlement of Kyrgyz Tribal Groups* (Abramzon, 1963).[326]

Map 3. Map of SMDs in 2005 Superimposed on the Abramzon *Uruu* Map
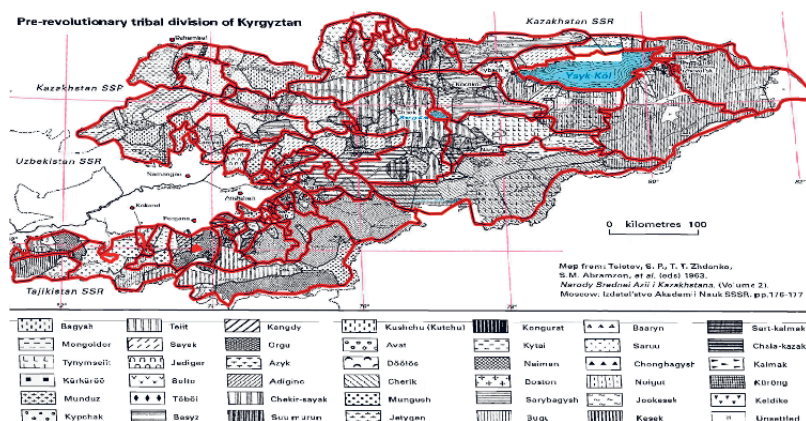
Source: The merged map was constructed in Arc GIS by first geo-referencing the Abramzon map and then superimposing the map of the 75 SMDs.
Note: The Abramzon map shows the areas that were 'dominated' by a particular *uruu*.

The map is the most detailed data available on the spatial distribution of *uruus* in Kyrgyzstan. For most parts a particular space is covered by only one *uruu*. But especially in the Ferghana valley there are some overlaps. In order to come up with a measure of the number of *uruus* per election district I first drew an electronic map of how all the *uruus* were distributed. In cases of overlaps I drew the lines in between two or more competing *uruus*. This created a map of exclusive non-overlapping *uruus*. Secondly I calculated the proportion of the election district that was covered by a particular *uruu* and came up with a database of 290 *uruu-per-SMD* observations. I thereafter calculated a fractionalization index for each SMD using the formula,

$$FRACT_j = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^{N} s_{ij}^2$$

[11]

where *s* is the share territory of group i ($i = 1 \ldots$ N) in SMD j. Technically this is a geospatial fractionalization score and not a fractionalization score used in studies of ethnicity (Alesina et al., 2003).

The map clearly illustrates that most SMDs consist of several different *uruus*. The map does not give us detailed information about the proportions

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[326] *Karta Dorevolyutsionnogo Rasseleniya Rodoplemennyh Gruppy Kirgizov.*

in terms of population, only geographical coverage. Any measure using these data is therefore inadequate, but again, it is the only available national level data on *uruu*.

This is by no means a perfect measure, but it is the best approximation of *uruu* dispersion that can be constructed with currently available data. Due to these data limitations the evidence presented had to be complemented with a more intensive study of critical cases for the clan hypotheses.

District Cases and Data

Since there is no readily available database with the clan of the candidates I had to construct one myself. Due to resource and time limitations we here only focused on a set of critical clan cases.

Table 39. Sample of Selected Rural Mono-Ethnic Clan Prone Districts

SMD	*Rayon*	South/North	Sample character	Candidates interviewed	Prop. of Kyrgyz
14	Batken	South	Critical	2	99%
18	Ala-Buka	South	Random	5	78%
31	Suzak (Northeast)	South	Random	4	80%
32	At-Bashi	North	Critical	2	98%
34	Kochkor	North	Critical	2	99%
35	Jumgal and Ak-Tala	North	Critical	1	100%
36	Kara-Kulja	South	Critical	2	100%

Source: Ethnicity data from 1999 census, see (Committee, 1999).
Note: SMDs do not perfectly overlap with the *rayon* structure in 2005. The list of *rayon* is compiled by the author examining the boundaries of each SMD.

The sample was constructed through the following steps. First, I shortlisted all SMDs with more than 90 percent Kyrgyz population. Since *uruu* is a purely Kyrgyz phenomenon and I wanted to study it without the interference of potential inter-ethnic dynamics we de-selected all SMDs where there were large shares of Uzbeks or Russians. Secondly, since the northern *oblasts* of Chui, Issyk-Kul, and Talas are all bordering Kazakhstan and they have traditionally been perceived as more russified, we de-selected all of them.[327] This left us with eight districts of which we eventually were able to cover only five due to practical limitations.[328] These are critical cases for the clan hypothesis in that if it does not exist in these districts it probably does not exist anywhere. Finally, I added two rural southern districts already sampled for the candidate survey, as part of the random sample of half of the SMDs in each *oblast'*.

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[327] However the case ot Talas *oblast'* is interesting in it being a rural, albeit northern, region with allegedly strong clan identification. For this reason we did include the district in the Voter Survey.
[328] Leaving out Aksy, Alai, and Naryn Town.

This sample is not representative of the whole of Kyrgyzstan. First of all, Kyrgyzstan is a multi-ethnic country and here I focus only on Kyrgyz dominated SMDs, of which there are only 10.[329] Secondly, there are also urban dynamics that we do not account for. But since 77 percent of the SMDs in Kyrgyzstan covered rural areas our rural bias is justified. Taken together this means that the selected sample for the clan cases' cannot be seen as representative of the whole of Kyrgyzstan, but rather of rural mono-Kyrgyz districts. But the purpose being settling the issue of clan politics such a narrow focus is clearly justifiable.

There are a total of 88 *uruus-per-district* identified for these seven districts. In terms of the *uruu* fractionalization the difference compared with the Ambramzon surprisingly low.

Table 40. Uruu Count And Mean Size per SMD

Measure	All	SMD						
		14	18	31	32	14	35	36
ENC (D)	3.26	4.13	5.96	3.42	1.75	1.86	3.36	2.32
Uruu fractionalization (New)	0.77	0.91	0.81	0.89	0.79	0.63	0.58	0.75
Uruu fractionalization (Abramzon)	0.57	0.68	0.74	0.55	0.68	0.58	0.72	0.06

*Note:*The new version of the *uruu* frationalization is based on the expert assessments of *aiyl okmotu* level *uruu* composition. The Abramzon version of the variable is based on a coding of the Abramzon map.

Note, here that for the case of Kara-Kulja we focused on sub-divisions of the Adigine *uruu*. The new fractionalization measure for this district thus measures a level that was not included in the Abramzon map.

Voter Survey

A survey of a semi-random sample of voters in four different rural settings was completed with the help of local assistants. The approach was to have the collector conduct short interviews in arbitrarily selected villages by selecting the 3rd house on either side of the street.[330] A total of 81 interviews were completed with 15 questions taken from the candidate survey, including questions about clan affiliation, clan voting, and competitiveness.

The author completed 20 percent of the interviews himself, the rest being completed by two local assistants. The geographical distribution is as follows,

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[329] Kyrgyz dominated in the sense of over 90 percent Kyrgyz in the district (13 percent of the 75 SMDs).
[330] Houses were picked on the main road going through the village.

Table 41. Voter Survey, per *Rayon*

Rayon	Freq.	Percent
Bakai-Ata	9	11.1%
Kara-Kulja	51	63.0%
Talas	11	13.6%
Talas city	10	12.4%
Total	81	100%

Note: No more than five interviews were completed in each village.

Kara-Kulja Data

For the most intensive approach to the study of clan politics Kara-Kulja *rayon* was chosen. During the fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan I visited the district (*rayon*) of Kara-Kulja on three occasions, in October 2007, December 2007, and April 2008, each time for a period of 2-4 days. Most of the interviews with the candidates were conducted in either Bishkek or Osh. Obtaining election results from each of the polling stations turned out to be very difficult, partly due to the post-revolutionary situation. In the end I managed to get disaggregated results for each polling station (PEC) for the 2002 by-elections, the September 2007 by-elections, and for the party list proportional (PR) December 2007 elections.

The following sources form the basis of the analysis in chapter six,
1. *Uruu* proportion per village (*n=49*)
    a. Coded by local experts per village
2. Database on elections (2002, 2007 SMD, 2007 PR, 2009, 2010) by polling station (*n=40-44 per election*)
    a. No detailed data fro 2005 available
3. Candidate Interviews (*n=20*)
    a. Completed by author
4. Voter interviews (*n=50*)
    a. Completed by author and local experts
5. Socio economic statistics for *aiyl okmotu* level (*n=12*)
    a. 1999 Census
6. Stakeholder interviews (local officials, seminars etc.)
    a. Completed by author

X. Clan Chapter Analysis

Here follows some additional data referred to in chapter six, the clan chapter. There is no data on clan affiliation for all candidates. As a point of reference, regression analysis was conducted on the survey data and on the candidates from the critical clan SMDs.

Table 42. Candidate Models (Different Samples)

	Candidate Survey		Clan SMDs	
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**
	Vote share divided by rest (log)	Elected dummy	Vote share divided by rest (log)	Elected dummy
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Uruu prop	-0.141	1.834	-2.978*	-2.494
	(0.19)	(1.17)	(1.29)	(3.11)
Heartland	1.084+	-3.209		
	(0.55)	(2.97)		
Born in *oblast'* of SMD	-0.497	1.930		
	(0.71)	(2.52)		
Candidates	-0.138	-0.623	-0.146	-0.038
	(0.09)	(0.60)	(0.11)	(0.20)
Uruu coordination	-2.389*		-0.395	0.798
	(0.98)		(0.67)	(1.11)
Constant	-1.841*	-2.662	-0.428	-1.082
	(0.85)	(3.59)	(0.85)	(1.68)
N	35	34	41	41
R^2		0.440		0.057

Note: Model 1 and 2 are based on data from the candidate survey, while models 3 and 4 are based on the critical clan SMDs. In the candidate survey *uruu* proportion is based on a self-assessment by the candidates themselves. Heartland is a dummy for whether or not the candidate's *uruu* heartland is in the SMD. Born in *oblast'* of SMD is a dummy for whether or not the candidate was born in the *oblast'* covering the SMD, candidates is the number of contestants per SMD, and *uruu* coordination tells us if the candidate was the only one nominated belonging to a particular *uruu*. For the critical clan SMDs we do not have data on where the candidates were born. Significance levels + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. McFadden's pseudo R^2 used in the logistic models.

The distribution of *uruu* in Kara-Kulja, according to a survey of local experts is,

Table 43. Main *Uruus* in Kara-Kulja

Uruu name	Members	Uruu Proportion In *rayon*
Sary-bargy	18,316	21%
Tasma	16,715	19%
Mongol	11129	13%
Boru	9,963	11%
Tengizbai	7,366	8%
Joru	5,512	6%
Kara-bargy	5,192	6%

Note: Based on *uruu* per Village (*n*=49), only *uruus* above five percent shown here.

In terms of the spatial distribution of these *uruus* I present a map containing all 44 polling stations and the *uruu* fractionalization per polling station. In 19 polling stations there was only one single *uruu*, while in nine cases there was a fractionalization score above .5 indicating a diverse *uruu* population.

Map 4. *Uruu* Fractionalization per Polling Station in Kara-Kulja District

Uruu Fractionalization per Polling Station
(.5,.83] (9)
(.41,.5] (13)
(0,.41] (3)
[0,0] (19)
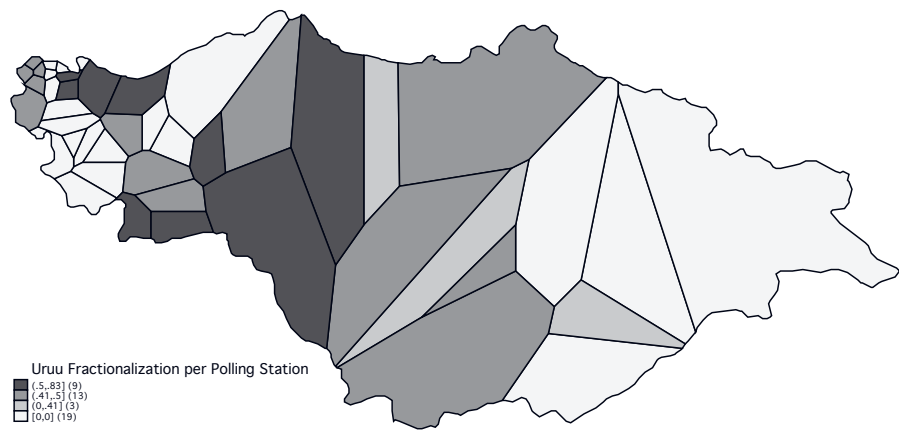
Source: Expert assessments, verified by author's own interviews.

Using candidates as the unit of analysis for the 2007 by-election to the Kara-Kulja SMD, we get the following results,

Table 44. Polling Station Model, Kara-Kulja, September 2007

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		ENC (D)			Margin of victory (log)	60% dummy
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Uruu fractionalization	-0.334			-0.445	1.005	-2.199
	(0.32)			(0.36)	(0.71)	(1.77)
Home village		-0.336		-0.399	-0.672	-3.900+
		(0.31)		(0.37)	(0.74)	(2.01)
Home a/o			-0.054	0.083	0.378	1.544
			(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.50)	(1.84)
Size of polling station				-0.000	0.000	0.001
				(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Turnout				-0.874	1.668	-2.757
				(0.62)	(1.24)	(3.05)
Distance to *Rayon* capital				-0.001	-0.001	0.020
				(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Constant	2.487***	2.413***	2.390***	3.224***	-3.409***	2.787
	(0.14)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.46)	(0.91)	(2.49)
N	40	40	40	40	40	40
R^2	0.028	0.029	0.001	0.145	0.167	0.199

Note: Significance levels + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. McFadden's pseudo R^2 used in the logistic models.

XI. Azerbaijan 2005 Electoral Fraud

The distribution of the last digit should be uniform in the case of no falsification. Each 0-9 digit has should occur with a 10 percent frequency. In terms of the deviance for all other parties the *p*-values indicate that vote counts are fabricated for all parties in Azerbaijan,

Table 45. Last Digit Goodness-of-Fit tests, Azerbaijan 2005

Variable	X^2	P-value
Candidate_1	433.727	0.000
Candidate_2	952.138	0.000
Candidate_3	822.006	0.000
Candidate_4	1148.247	0.000
Candidate_5	1304.985	0.000

Note: Here only the *P*-values for the first five candidates are presented.

In terms of the second digit the distribution that we would expect is given by Benford's Law, indicated by a red line in the graph.

Figure 4. Second Digit Distribution, Azerbaijan 2005
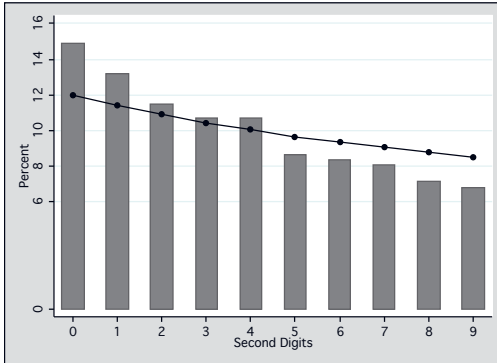
Note: The candidate number two in each Single-Member District in Azerbaijan 2005, the one with the highest X^2 value (see table above).

The blue bars are the distribution of the digits in the case of the second candidate in Azerbaijan. A quick visual indicated that the bars and the line clearly correspond to each other. However, there are a lot more zeros and a lot fewer nines than we would expect. Performing a goodness-of-fit test against a reference distribution, here Benford's, gives us a *p*-value that tells us the probability whereby we would observe such a big difference between the blue bars and the red line.[331] The goodness-of-fit is calculated for the major parties/candidates in all elections.

XII.   Tulip Revolution Protests

The protests in the time between the first and the second round in February/March 2005 were geographically distributed as follows,

Table 46. Post-Electoral Protests per *Oblast'*, Kyrgyzstan 2005

Oblast'	Sum	Mean	N	%
Batken	0	0	6	0%
Bishkek	4	0.36	11	36.4%
Chui	1	0.08	12	8.3%
Issyk-Kul	0	0	7	0%
Jalalabad	6	0.43	14	42.9%
Naryn	2	0.50	4	50.0%
Osh City	0	0	5	0%
Osh *Oblast'*	5	0.38	13	38.5%
Talas	0	0	3	0%
Total	18	0.24	75	24.0%

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[331] A large sample chi-squared tests being the default test.

XIII. Explaining The Tulip Mobilization

The regression model for explaining the pattern of political mobilization by examining SMD level competitiveness measures is presented below.

Table 47. Post-Electoral Mobilization per SMD, Kyrgyzstan 2005

	(1)	(2)	(3)
		Protest dummy	
	b/se	b/se	b/se
60% Compet.dummy	3.259*		
	(1.29)		
Margin of victory		-6.653**	
		(2.47)	
Sec.round (dummy)			1.646*
			(0.78)
Northern *oblast'*	-0.524	-1.133	-0.672
	(0.82)	(0.85)	(0.76)
Incumbent (count)	0.569	0.750+	0.672
	(0.43)	(0.45)	(0.43)
Soc-Econ index	-0.002	0.049	0.018
(census 1999)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Ethnic/Clan fract.	4.277**	3.587*	2.936*
	(1.63)	(1.60)	(1.40)
Number of candidates	-0.506*	-0.481*	-0.403*
	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Constant	-3.685*	-1.104	-2.504+
	(1.69)	(1.49)	(1.47)
N	75	75	75
R^2	0.251	0.271	0.197

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