Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia

The establishment of electoral systems in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan presents both a complex set of empirical puzzles and a theoretical challenge. Why did three states with similar cultural, historical, and structural legacies establish different electoral systems? How did these distinct outcomes result from strikingly similar institutional design processes? Explaining these puzzles requires understanding not only the outcome of institutional design but also the intricacies of the process that led to this outcome. Moreover, the transitional context in which these three states designed new electoral rules necessitates an approach that explicitly links process and outcome in a dynamic setting. This book provides such an approach. It depicts institutional design as a transitional bargaining game in which the dynamic interaction between the structural-historical and immediate-strategic contexts directly shapes actors’ perceptions of shifts in their relative power, and hence, their bargaining strategies. Thus, it both builds on the key insights of the dominant approaches to explaining institutional origin and change and transcends these approaches by moving beyond the structure versus agency debate.

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Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics

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POWER, PERCEPTIONS, AND PACTS

PAULINE JONES LUONG

Yale University
In Memory of
Mark Saroyan
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Note on Transliteration

I have translated Russian words according to the Library of Congress system. When words are used frequently, such as oblast and Semireche, I have left out the diacritical marks in the body of the text and in tables for the reader's comfort. The spelling of geographical names and places in Central Asia roughly corresponds to the Russified version used under Soviet rule, but has been modified to take into account newer versions that have recently become standard usage. All translations from foreign language sources into English are my own.
Acronyms

ALC American Legal Consortium
AO Autonomous Oblast
ASSR Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
CEC Central Electoral Commission
CPD Congress of People’s Deputies
DDK Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan
DEC District Electoral Commission
Erk Erkin Kyrgyzstan
FBIS Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FLAS Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship
GNP gross national product
HDI Human Development Index
HI Historical Institutionalism
IFES International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IMF International Monetary Fund
IREX International Research and Exchange Board
KPK Communist Party of Kazakhstan
KPKR Communist Party of the Kyrgyz Republic
KPSS Communist Party of the Soviet Union
KPUz Communist Party of Uzbekistan
LiCEP Laboratory in Comparative Ethic Politics
NDI National Democratic Institute
NDPU People’s Democratic Party of Uzbekistan
NGO nongovernmental organization
NKK Peoples’ Congress of Kazakhstan
NSF National Science Foundation
PR proportional representation
### Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>RCI</td>
<td>Rational Choice Institutionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFE/RL</td>
<td>Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROK</td>
<td>Republic of Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPK</td>
<td>Republican Party of Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSFSR</td>
<td>Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMD</td>
<td>single-member district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNEK</td>
<td>People’s Unity of Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Soviet Socialist Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSRC</td>
<td>Social Science Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACIS</td>
<td>Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBG</td>
<td>transitional bargaining game</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEC</td>
<td>Territorial Electoral Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
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As I have not yet raised a child, I cannot say for certain whether it takes an entire village to do so. What I can say with full confidence is that it takes an entire network of colleagues, friends, and family to write a book. In fact, in the course of writing and revising a book manuscript, these categories often become blurred. Colleagues willing to read multiple drafts of one’s manuscript become friends. Friends subjected to multiple drafts of one’s manuscript become critics. Those that remain friends afterward become family. Friends and family who forgo your company for weeks, sometimes months, in the final stages of writing and revising want to become your colleagues so that they can see you more often.

This particular book is the product of a network that extends across several campuses and several countries. At the University of California at Berkeley, where I spent my undergraduate days, I was fortunate enough to have the guidance of professors like Samuel Haber, Norman Jacobsen, Gail Lapidus, Ira Lapidus, and especially William (Sandy) Muir. Each of these individuals shared with me their knowledge and insights on politics as well as history, and, more importantly, their love for learning and teaching. I was also befriended by several graduate students, including Kevin Smith and Mark Saroyan, who encouraged me to pursue my interests in political institutions, identity, and Soviet Central Asia. At Harvard University, I am indebted, first and foremost, to my dissertation advisor, Timothy Colton, whose support for my project was unwavering in the face of not insignificant obstacles. He is one of those colleagues who quickly blurs the distinction with that of friend because he makes a personal investment in each of his students’ lives and careers. Several other Harvard professors, including Robert Bates, Joel Hellman, Mark Saroyan, and Theda Skocpol, also inspired the dissertation on which this book is based, through
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Finally, I end with the network with which I began – my family. Throughout this project, the only constant has been the love and support
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This book is dedicated to Mark Saroyan, an individual who has taught me more about scholarship, research, teaching and academic integrity in the five years I knew him than I have learned in all my years at Berkeley, Harvard, and Yale combined. It is not an exaggeration to say that this project would never have gotten started – and would have been fundamentally different – if it were not for Mark’s inspiration and dedication. Despite his physical absence in the final stages, from inception to completion, Mark has always been with this project. His acknowledgment of the importance of culture and identity in understanding political behavior, his love for language, and his emphasis on systematic and rigorous empirical research informed by theory are resonant in the pages to follow. To him, I am eternally grateful for the path I have taken and the career upon which I have embarked.