ELECTIONS AND IDENTITY POLITICS IN KYRGYZSTAN 1989-2009 – MOVING BEYOND THE 'CLAN POLITICS' HYPOTHESIS

Fredrik M Sjoberg

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Department of Government
London School of Economics and Political Science
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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others.

Fredrik M Sjoberg

Abstract

This dissertation examines the emergence of political pluralism in the unlikely case of Kyrgyzstan. The main question is: **How can we explain 'pockets of competition in semi-authoritarian states**? The literature has focused on identity politics and more specifically on the 'clan politics' hypothesis, which states that competition is organized along the lines of kinship groups ('clans') and that competition is therefore fractionalized, especially in rural areas.

Kyrgyzstan is shown to be a critical case for the 'clan politics' literature. The unit of analysis is two-fold: Single-Member Districts (SMD) and individual candidates in parliamentary elections 1995-2005. Evidence is provided through a candidate survey (n=160), expert interviews, and local level statistics. The whole idea that there actually exists such an informal institution as 'clan politics' in Kyrgyzstan is questioned. At least 'clans' do not exist as corporate groups that actual possess agency characteristics. A 'clan' in the Kyrgyz sense of the word, *uruu/uruk*, is shown to be something that necessarily involves kinship, therefore refuting a widely used metaphorical conceptualization of the phenomenon. The reason for the politization of these genealogical categories in some rural districts can be found in the incentive structure of the electoral system (SMD), the causal story being: contests were localized and no viable national-level parties existed, therefore some political entrepreneurs turned to imagined 'clans' instead to rally support. This created the impression that there were corporate 'clan' groups that coordinated electoral behavior in rural Kyrgyzstan.

Competitiveness has been reduced over time, with the 1995 elections being the most fragmented in terms of *Effective Number of Candidates*. Until the December 2007 PR elections no new party system emerged. In 2005, the elections were especially competitive in the south, where the already mobilized campaigners later formed the backbone of the ensuing 'Tulip revolution' protests. It is shown that the introduction of election mechanisms empowered local elites to challenge the authorities. Campaign experience and financial resources were also important factors in many competitive races.

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Note on Transliteration and Names

In this dissertation I have used The United States Board on Geographic Names and by 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: ELECTORAL POLITICS IN NEWLY INDEPENDENT STATES – A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research project seeks to explain the emergence of competitive rural election districts in the unlikely case of Kyrgyzstan. The ambition is to make a contribution to the theoretical understanding of informal institutions and especially kinship based 'clans'. The fundamental question that I want to answer is whether 'clans' dominate electoral politics, and if so, by what mechanisms. The focus is on the interaction of informal and formal institutions in a newly independent and democratizing country. If 'clans' were a strong informal institution then electoral politics could be affected in two ways: 1) 'clans' coordinate among themselves and agree to nominate a consensus 'clan' candidate, thereby reducing competitiveness in the election district (Single-Member District, hereafter SMD); or 2) each 'clan' have their own candidates and voters loyally vote for someone from their own 'clan' resulting in high levels of vote dispersion (here understood as competitiveness).

Map 1: Central Eurasia

* Source: University of Texas, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, Caucasus and Central Asia (Political) 2000.

Some scholars would argue that politics in Central Asia is dominated by 'clan'-based groups that compete for power and advantage (R Abazov, Elebayeva, & Omuraliev, 2000; Collins, 2002, 2006; Schatz, 2004). The 'clan' logic allegedly explains the weakness of the party system, with grave consequences for democratic representation, contestation, and accountability. The purpose of this research project is to examine the electoral dynamics and candidate typologies in a selected set of Single-Member Districts in the 1995, 2000, and 2005 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan. I am here interested in how many candidates were nominated, and what personal profile they had, and, if possible, what 'clan' affiliation. Furthermore I am interested in the political platform and the campaigning activities of the candidates and political parties. An interesting question is how the introduction of formal institutions like elections has affected the 'clan logic', if there ever was such a thing. Has the introduction of more competitive elections restructured power relations within and between kinship groups in any way? Even though few 'clans' have allegedly formed parties, most candidates use their informal networks to mobilize support in times of elections. How about the relationship between the voter and their representatives? Have electoral mechanisms empowered the citizens to hold politicians accountable, or are they simply voting out of primordial loyalties?

Understanding politics and the driving forces behind it requires that we take informal institutions seriously. Third wave democratization scholars have long pointed out the need to move beyond an exclusive focus on 'parchment' institutions. This study finds that 'clans' are only a symbolic glued-on reality, a discourse that both political entrepreneurs and observers pay tribute to in times of elections, but that they do not exist as groups possessing agency characteristics.

State-Building, Democratization, and Elections

A great majority of the third wave democratizing states can be characterized as weak states. This is especially so for those coming from a post-colonial setting, where in most cases there was no previous experience of independent statehood. This creates special problems in terms of institutionalizing certain features of democracy, like party systems and parliaments. As a lead in to the subject of this dissertation I give a short overview of State-building, Democratization, and Elections. All relevant dimensions for the understanding of political developments in Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia, and beyond.

Building a State

Having received independent statehood without a national liberation struggle puts Kyrgyzstan and the other Central Asian states in a peculiar position in terms of global comparative politics. There are also many other features that characterize the post-Soviet experience of transition to sovereignty. As already Huntington noted in his seminal 1968 work, modernizing states are under intense pressure from different groups within a particular country and stability is often achieved only after protracted fighting among different social forces (Huntington, 1968). A state can be defined according to Weber as an organization that has the 'monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (Weber, 1965). The challenge for many newly independent states is how to build a modern state, as contrasted with Weber's 'traditional' institutions of rule (patrimonial authority), while at the same time maintain stability. A common pattern in many third wave states is the phase of state building that they are in, often characterized by weak and inefficient institutions, more often than not inherited from the former colonial powers.

For our purposes here it is important to note the centrifugal and centripetal tendencies that all new states have to deal with. As we shall see this is of particular importance in analyzing post-Soviet trajectories. The focus in this dissertation is on local dynamics, but all along I relate this to larger national level struggles for power and influence. The centripetal tendencies has been noted by many scholars:

> 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. It may generate other identifications, equally localistic. Thus the heterogeneity of interests spawed by urbanization, industrialization and socioeconomic differentiation are the product of ongoing structural tensions (Kesselman & Rosenthal, 1974, p. 6).

The centralizing state attempts to integrate smaller units into the control of the state, but are often facing resilience and resistance by 'chiefs, landlords, bosses, rich peasants, 'clan' leaders, *za'im*, *effendis*, *aghas*, *caciques*, *kulaks* (for convenience, 'strongmen'), through their various social organizations' (Joel S. Migdal, 1988, p. 33).

> Religious commitment, tribal loyalty, identification with a linguistic group or with a distinct piece of territory all attempts to maintain or expand small units or social integration – are seen as impeding citizens' ability to participate fully in the construction of the modern nation. They are, the literature would have it, barriers to societal penetration by the modern state (Kesselman & Rosenthal, 1974, p. 6).

There are also other problems in terms of state building that are especially relevant for developing countries. Since so much of the emergence of the modern state is related to the industrial revolution it can be difficult to apply the concept to non-industrialized settings. The long drawn-out process of state consolidation in Western Europe has not been afforded to the developing countries of today (Tilly, 1990). The demand for a State in the Western world was internal, while in the developing world a certain model was externally imposed on them. The legacy of colonial rule has often been to support local power brokers, since the colonial administration lacked institutionalized capacities to govern. This led to a reliance more patron-client relations (Leftwich, 2005, p. 148).[1] But the critique does not stop here; some say that we need to rethink the traditional dichotomy between state and non-state society (Sneath 2007). Previously a state has been defined by centralized sovereign political structure within a specific territory. The non-state was somewhat idealistically described as egalitarian and nomadic, while the modern state was stratified and territorialized (Sneath 2007).

Procedural Democracy

To what extent citizens can control their representatives is the crucial question and needless to say it is imperfect in all democracies. Citizens being empowered to exercise control over their representatives is especially problematic in information scarce less educated segments and/or regions of a particular country. In this dissertation I focus on the *procedural* dimension of democracy, not the *substance*, inspired by Schumpeter (Schumpeter, 1976).

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[1] Note, that I am here not claiming that the Soviet Union was a colonial empire. This topic is associated with a long-standing debate. Without entering in these debates, I do consider that post-colonial studies help to illuminate how post-Soviet states manage the legacy of their Russian colonial and Soviet communist past.

Political regimes are in essence about 'the rules of the game' and not the content. The outcome, in terms of policies, is not the interesting part here, but rather the involvement in the process of the citizenry. I focus on rule *by* the people, not *for* the people, as the saying goes. However, also in terms of a procedural definition I could opt for a comprehensive definition following Dahl 'polyarchy as responsive regimes in the imperfect real world' (Robert Alan Dahl, 1971). Or I could go for a more restricted minimal definition focusing only on the competitive element, i.e. elections. Here I have chosen the latter. For our purposes the key feature of democracy is not popular sovereignity, legitimacy or some abstract concept of human equality. The key is the elite rotation mechanism that it provides and the responsiveness to the wishes of the citizenry that comes with it.

The focus here is on 'selection of leaders'. Politicians are less than noble, just like all the rest of us, and therefore they do not necessarily have any regard for the 'will of the people'. The only way to keep them in line is by allowing for them to be challenged in free and fair elections. Electoral competition works as a straitjacket for rational self-interest maximizing politicians. This is arguably an elitist system, but nevertheless a competitive system.[2] One of the challenges in studying third wave democracies (or democratizing states) is that the conceptual apparatus has been develop for the study of well-established Western states. In non-industrial societies where cleavage structures are very different and where other basic features of Western countries are lacking it should hardly be surprising that the outcomes in terms of democracy is quite different. This is not to say that other countries will eventually converge into the Western pattern of democratization, but in the meantime I need to further elaborate the theories, methodologies, and terminologies that I utilize in studying democracy and electoral politics.

Elites in Democracies

How do elites take part in the politics of different regimes? How do elites relate to the masses, how do they control political mobilization and representation? Since the days of Mosca, Pareto, and Michels there has been a focus on elites. Elites can be defined as the most powerful segment of any institutionalized sector of society (politics, business,

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[2] For more on competitive oligarchy see Schumpeter 1976 or Dahl, 1971.

military, religion etc.). The formation of elites and their consolidation is of crucial importance to political regimes. There are basically two models here: enforced consolidation (imposed by centralized organizations, like *Ak Jol* and the presidential apparatus in Kyrgyzstan, as we shall see) and voluntary consolidation (Higley, 1995, p. 427). For a democracy to take root there is a need for voluntary elite consolidation, i.e. that the central actors agree to the 'rules of the game'. The key issue for us is related to elite recruitment and representation, undeniably crucial if we are interested in democracy. The whole idea behind democracy is that the social profiles of elites becomes more representative of the larger society (Higley, 1995, p. 429). Elites need the support of the masses and they get it through legitimizing myths and ideologies.

Democracy in the developing world

> National unity must precede all the other phases of democratization (Rustow, 1970, p. 351)

The problem in many developing countries is the inadequacies of the citizenry in terms of not being fully equipped to deliberatively participate in the democratic process. This has of course to do with general socioeconomic standards, but there is also a cultural variable at play here. The dilemma seems to be that the voters do not have the proper capacities, or incentives to elaborate on what the 'public interest' could be. The politicians (and parties) on the other hand do not have any incentives to engage in more programmatic campaigning. Furthermore, democracy is by nature conflict generating and in weakly institutionalized polities there are ongoing struggles about 'the rules of the game'. This is explained by the legacy of predatory state behavior and the fact that democracy in these contexts are zero-sum games, which in turn is both a colonial legacy issue, but also related to the absolute levels of socio-economic development. Also, in economies of shortage people cannot wait for four years (mandate period) to get a seat at the pot again. Opening up a closed authoritarian system to contestation naturally brings out all sorts of demands. These pressures can originate from previously unprivileged sub-national groups (or strata) that at last see an avenue for claiming a bigger role through either 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.

In the case of the Central Asian former Soviet republics it seems far-fetched to expect electoral accountability based on policy platforms and track records. The most we can hope for is the competitive pressures to be aimed at the ruling elite would make them more responsive to the needs of the citizens. Since electoral clientelism has been and continues to be a key feature of any political campaign in these countries, the only option for oppositional groupings is to use the same techniques in challenging the incumbents. In the wake of the Soviet collapse the central governments of these newly independent states were unable to effectively control the regions. With time this capacity has increased and might therefore explain the general decline of democratic politics in the non-Baltic former Soviet republics (Way, 2003, p. 480). In between there was a period of competitive democratic politics, like in Moldova, Belarus or Kyrgyzstan.

Elections and political parties

There are some special challenges in terms of electoral politics in states that moved from a closed hegemonic regime to open competition over night. This is especially so in the former Soviet republics that did not have any alternative organizational basis to replace the discredited and in most cases dismantled Communist Party. No alternative movements, ideologies, or programs were developed at the time of the break-up. In most cases electoral competition was unstructured and organized along lines of local strongmen and their different resource bases. The historical trajectory of establishing interest groups based on modern class structures to replace more 'parochial' social units was clearly not a possible route in these countries. In addition there are some particular challenges in the post-Communist world with the Soviet era majoritarian electoral system.

The study of political parties has long been at the center of political science inquires. Lately there has been an upsurge in studies on the workings of contemporary parties both in the old democracies and in new emerging competitive regimes around the globe (Gunther & Linz, 2002). When applied to 'Third Wave' regimes some of the old concepts and theories have been shown incomplete and especially so in studying electoral politics and party formation in former Communist countries. There is an inherent problem of ethnocentrism in party studies, since parties first emerged in the West. Parties are however seen as absolutely critical to any democratic regime (Seymour Martin Lipset, 2000). The traditional role of political parties include: recruiting candidates; mobilize electoral support;

structuring of policy agendas; formation of government. A key element has been the idea of parties functioning as vehicles for interest articulation and aggregation, but also political socialization, recruitment and communication. Nowadays and especially in the former Soviet states these functions are not always played by the existing parties.

There are mainly two theoretical and methodological traditions in the study of parties; 1) structural-functionalism; and 2) rational-choice. These are both deductive enterprises. There is also a need for a certain amount of induction in party studies, especially outside the established old liberal democracies. The classical point of reference in describing the development of party systems in the West is the Lipset-Rokkan cleavage model of party system development (S. M. Lipset, 2001; S. M. Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). It states that there are four sources of cleavage that explain the different trajectories in old democracies (Europe, North America and Australasia): *capitalists-workers*, which is the most salient one, *center-periphery*, *church-state*, *land-industry*. This model derives the party system from structural conditions that have been produced by National and Industrial revolutions (to use the Lipset-Rokkan's terminology). For parties to be stable and strong they are required to be 'linked to deep-rooted sources of cleavage' (S. M. Lipset, 2001, p. 5). The Lipset-Rokkan model is fundamentally based on the premises of modernization theory and trajectories of economic development, therefore making it difficult to apply to a non-teleological framework of today's developing countries. By emphasizing social cleavages Lipset makes it difficult to transfer the model to the late 'Third Wave' cases where neither a National nor an Industrial revolution has taken place yet. Hardly surprising then that competitive politics in these new cases, in the developing world if you like (including the Southern tier of the former Soviet Union), organize party loyalties around ethno-linguistic lines (primordial identities), not class lines. After all these are the most salient cleavages in most post-colonial settings in Africa, Middle East, and Central Asia.

Clearly a model in which class and religion are the most important features does not fit this new global context of multi-national, pre-industrial post-colonial weak states with no prior experience of statehood. In many cases parties are not even allowed to organize around religious principles (or identities). Does this mean that such countries are doomed to weak parties? The sequence in terms of party development in the 19th century was first through a strengthening of the legislature (pre-enfranchisement) and the establishment of

parliamentary fractions. This meant that when the suffrage was expanded the organizational structures of 'parties' were already in place (Duverger, 1959; Sartori, 1978). Contrary to cases like Denmark, where large expansions of the franchise preceded the emergence of legislative parties (Katz & Crotty, 2006, p. 17). When parties were forming in Europe in late19th century there was no mass suffrage, there was a period of 'early competition' (S. M. Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). This meant that the mobilization of electoral support was more orderly and manageable. Barriers (thresholds) to participation were still high and this solidified and unified organizations. The mobilization market was therefore structured to support the emergence of strong and durable organizations.[3]

Also the well-established stateness character and professional bureaucracy of the Lipset-Rokkan countries does not allow for clientelism to be accounted for as a crucial variable in party system institutionalization (Randall, 2001, p. 248). Parties in the third world were more reliant on the state and were also more successful in cementing their supremacy in politics, often leading to near one-party states. Since competition was sporadic (not persistent competitive politics) the cleavage that followed was more about pro- and anti government, not about any social cleavages. The question remains whether introducing democratic procedures, or at least allowing for contestation, lead to an empowerment of the voter, i.e. citizen. At least during the actual election it seems that the voter is empowered, receiving money if vote buying is prevalent etc.[4] On the other hand it seems that voting behavior is pretty straightforward in many settings, in that in-group loyalties prevail, even if there is no way for the patron to control the clients (citizens) (Walle, 2007).

[3] This is the 'early mover' argument also called the 'freezing mechanism' (Randall, 2001).
[4] C.f Baregas study of Africa in the excellent anthology on clientelism (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007).

Informal Institutions

> Urbanization, Westernization, and increased state intervention and control has changed the kinship system into a patron-client model (Lindholm 1986:348 referring to Gellner).
>
> Nominally modern institutions such as bureaucracies and political parties in Southeast Asia are often thoroughly penetrated by informal patron-client networks that undermined the formal structure of authority (Scott 1972:92).

In the literature on the 'third wave' democratizing states the importance of informal institutions has been stressed (O'Donnell 1996; Lauth 2000, 2004). Unfortunately there seems to be a need for some conceptual clarifications in this discourse (Helmke & Levitsky 2004: 726). There is an understanding for the need to take the informal level of particularistic ties seriously in the study of newly independent states (O'Donnell 1996). To simplify one can say that there are two different kinds of networks: those that are based on strong and self-conscious group identities and those who are based on short-term instrumental exchange (Way 2003:477). The challenge is to operationalize different forms of informal institution and organizations, like 'clans' and clientelism, along this axis. Earlier research on the Soviet and post-Soviet countries has convincingly made the case that patron-client networks played a role in leadership selection, but it has been difficult to demonstrate the importance of such connections outside of personnel policy (Way 2003:478; Willerton 1992:116-117). The ambition in this project is to take this a step further, even though the focus would still be on leadership selection (parliamentary candidate selection).

So how does one conduct research on these phenomena? Some scholars argue that informal networks are virtually immune from detailed investigation (Hughes 1997:1021). The focus in this dissertation is on institutions and individuals within these institutions, therefore we need to look both at the micro- (individual) and the macro (institution) level. First I will outline what institutions are, both formal and informal. After this is completed I take a closer look at particular kinds of informal institutions.

Institutions

In everyday language we sometimes use the concept of 'institution' to denote organizations and other corporate actors, like business firms, schools, and public administrations. By corporate I here refer to organizations that coordinate action and have an existence beyond the lives of particular members. In the social sciences the concept has a more specific

meaning in that it refers to rules and other constraints of human behavior. There are many different kinds of rules, both personal (habits and routines) and social. The latter are basically used to overcome social dilemmas. It is generally acknowledged that we can divide institutions into formal and informal. There are some definitional problems and also specific issues as to the effects of particular institutions. Part of the problem is the difference between academic disciplines in terms of methodological traditions and objects of study. The economic tradition generally views institutions as designed by humans and where individuals behave instrumentally in order to achieve ends. The sociological tradition on the other hand sees institutions as emerging from human activity, but not consciously designed.

This is of particular interest for the democratization literature. O'Donnell's defines an institution as 'a regularized pattern of interaction that is known, practiced, and accepted (if not regularly approved) by actors who expect to continue interacting under the rules sanctioned and backed by that pattern' (O'Donnell, 1996, p. 35). Formal institutions are formally codified (like constitutions and laws), while informal institutions are not. The state acts as a guarantor for formal institutions (legitimizing and sanctioning), while informal institutions are based exclusively on the fact of their existence and of their effectiveness. Different kinds of institutions have different ways of sanctioning behavior. An institution is not necessarily an organization. According to North it is useful to separate the political actors (organizations) from the rules that they form (North, 1990). As we shall see, this is especially important for the discussion about 'clan politics'. The literature has often portrayed 'clans' as organizations, corporate entities that actually possess agency.

Formal institutions rely on an external authority's monitoring and policing of individual behavior, informal institutions do not. The law can be considered the most elaborate expression of a formal institution. Formal institutions are laid down in writing. Many formal institutions are, however, embedded in informal norms. Other examples of formal institutions are: economic institutions (e.g. regulating property rights), political, cultural, religious etc. The defining feature of an informal institution is the un-codified nature of them. Legitimacy is derived from social acceptance. Examples of informal institutions are social norms for self-help among residents in rural communities or conventions (Ellickson, 1991). Informal institutions are based on auto-licensing (a kind of self-enactment and self-

assertion) and they develop indigenously over long periods of time. It is important to note that informal institutions are more than only 'regularities' of behavior, like habits or conventions. According to Lauth we need to find the existence of informal institutions in the beliefs and attitudes of individuals, otherwise they do not exist (Lauth, 2004, p. 8). With this definition we come very close to another interrelated concept, that of culture. Culture does indeed shape informal institutions, but it is a much broader concept. A distinction can be made between shared values, i.e. culture, and shared expectations, that is informal institutions (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 728).

There are many kinds of non-institutional, informal phenomena, but I am here trying to find a definition of informal institution that is precise and analytically meaningful. Such a definition could be 'socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels' (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 727). Furthermore, I need to state what informal institutions are not. Sometimes informal institutions are understood to be the same as weak institutions, i.e. the lack of effective formal institutions. This is not the case since the dysfunction could be explained by the lack of stable or binding rules – formal or informal. For instance abuses of executive power is a practice that departs from formal rules, but it does not need to be an informal institution because of that (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 727). Informal institutions should also be distinguished from other informal behavioral regularities. The key thing here is whether there exists a rule or a guideline that in the case of violation triggers some kind of external sanction. Or to use an example of Helmke & Levitsky, removing one's hat in church is an informal institution, whereas removing one's coat in a restaurant is simply a behavioral regularity. The difference is that there exists a rule, even though it is informal, that one should remove the hat upon entering church. There is no rule or no sanctions generated if one leaves the coat on in a restaurant (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 727).

Furthermore, there is an important distinction to be made between informal institutions and informal politics, like coalition agreements, corporatist meetings, or private sauna talks (Lauth 2004:8). So what then is the relationship between democracy and informal institutions, or more broadly between institutions and efficiency? Are all institutions efficient? According to O'Donnell informal institutions do collide with democratic

principles (O'Donnell, 1996). In order to specify the consequences for democracy we need to differentiate between various kinds of informal institutions. Lauth divides them into five categories: clientelism, corruption, the threat of putsch (the use of force), civil disobedience, and custom law. Some people see informal institutions as functional and problem solving, other see them as dysfunctional and problem creating.

Particularism: Patron-client relationships and Clientelism

One of the most prominent informal institutions in the literature is Patron-client relationships, or sometimes even called Clientelism, or simply Patronage. These practices belong to the general category of particularism that can be defined as non-universalistic relationships that involves preferential treatment of some sort. The institution of particularism is considered to be at odds with democracy in that it undermines the workings of formal institutions. The focus here is on the practice not on the actors (like 'clan'). There are many intertwined concepts here: clientelism, patronage, nepotism, favoritism etc. Here I try to clarify some of these conceptual issues. It is important to note that all countries exhibit different combinations of universalism and particularism. There is a grey scale at play here. It is, however, as O'Donnell has noted justified to differentiate between cases that approximates either pole, universalism or particularism (O'Donnell, 1996, p. 43).

The definition of Patron-client relations is that it involves an open-ended transaction based on differential control by individuals or groups over the access and flow of resources. Both parts benefit from the arrangement, but it is an asymmetric relationship. In modern societies the clients are supposed to have access to power and the ability to convert resources autonomously, but if the patron controls scarce resources, like land, water, employment, or schooling, then the access is circumscribed. Clientelism is an informal institution (i.e. a practice) not an identity or an organization. The literature on clientelism is not always conceptually clear on this. It is basically an economic phenomenon (transaction), not an identity bearer in itself (like ethnicity, caste, tribe, or 'clan'). Clientelism can be defined as the informal exchange of goods and services through asymmetric, dyadic ties. There is no element of ascription or affection here, rather it is solely based on need. It is with Scott's words based on a non-primordial cleavage. According to another prominent scholar on patron-client relationships, Chubb, we can define clientelism as a 'strategic response by individuals to state or market inadequacies' (Chubb, 1982). Clientelism and the Russian

phenomena *Blat* are based on 'weak ties', while kinship and 'clan' are based on 'strong ties'. *Blat* is, however, unlike clientelism an immediate or short-term practice (Collins 2006:39; Ledenevna 1998, Way 2002). Another related concept is *rapacious individualism,* which denotes politics dominated by non-ideological, unstructured, and highly individualized competition for power and rents. In this kind of situation there is a lack of 'institutionalized ties of trust – in the form of a party or strong informal network – that can structure politics and create the basis for stable coalitions' (Way, 2003, p. 475). 'Clans' and other identity organizations are more enduring because they are not based exclusively on political or economic interactions, but they contain an identity element as well.

The conclude, it was long assumed that modernizing state policies would shift 'loyalties from family, village, and tribe to nation' and 'clan networks' would disappear with the emergence of modern states and the rise of institutionalized politics (Weber 1968; Huntington 1968). This was not, however, the case in the Soviet Union, quite the contrary actually (Roy 2000; Collins 2006). Nevertheless, there seems to be an agreement that a vibrant civil society based on well-developed social networks is a prerequisite for a functioning democracy (Putnam 1993). But this holds only if the networks are composed of 'weak ties', and not of 'clan' or kinship (Gibson 2001:52). For 'clan politics' to be defined as an informal institution we need to follow up on the questions raised by Helmke & Levitsky: 1) What are the actors' shared expectations about the constraints they face; 2) What is the community to which the informal rules apply; and 3) How are the informal rules enforced (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 727). For instance, if there are no enforcement mechanisms at hand for 'clan elders', as a way to sanction certain behavior, it can be taken as a sign of the weakening of 'clan politics'.

Identity politics – 'Clan Politics'

> Although kinship is the most arcane aspect of anthropological study, it nonetheless must be understood if we are to analyze societies, like those of traditional tribal Inner Asia and the Middle East... (Lindholm, 1986, pp. 336-337).

'Identity politics' refers to a set of political activities based on group identification. In a Western context it is associated with previously marginalized groups gaining influence through raising awareness about unjust treatment or members of a particular constituency (Native American, African American, Women etc.). In this dissertation I adopt a somewhat broader definition, referring to any kind of political activity that makes appeals to group identification. Identity politics is of special importance in many newly independent states that are in the early process of state- and nation-building. Identities are based on shared experiences of group members, but political entrepreneurs often manipulate the actual articulation of the identity. On the highest, aggregated level, we have the 'imagination' of the nation, as a form of identity politics. The Kyrgyz nation-building effort is a prime example of 'modular nationalism', a process that originated in Europe in the end of the eighteenth century and was later transplanted elsewhere (Anderson, 1999, p. 4). The process was one where the state actively promoted a 'nation-people' in order to fit it with the boundaries of the state, thereby creating a nation-state. The same has also been attempted in many post-colonial settings, Central Asia included.

In this study I focus on sub-national identity categories, like 'clans' and 'tribes'. First of all it should be noted that the discourse on 'kinship' and 'clan' is a heavily contested one in the social sciences. On the one hand you have political scientists bringing in these concepts into the study of political phenomena, as in the literature on 'clan politics' in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia (Collins, 2004, 2006; Roy, 2000; Schatz, 2004):

> Clan, tribal, and regional factionalism is very much a key to the political life of the republics of Central Asia (Roy, 2000, p. 13).
>
> Clan structure does not determine outcomes [of transition], but it strongly shapes and constrains the preferences and decisions of individual actors (Collins, 2006, p. 20).

On the other hand we have anthropology of different strands which has 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. In this chapter I use the concept

of 'clan' instead of 'tribe' for the simple reason that I am referring to the literature on 'clan politics'. Arguably the concept of 'clan' is a loaded term in English, Russian (*klan* or *rod*), and its Kyrgyz forms (*uruk*). I use quotations marks throughout the chapter to indicate the contested notions surrounding this term. It is not my aim here to provide a thorough critique of the concept's use of the in social science literature. Suffice to note that the term is widely used and by using it here I indicate the literature that I am directly engaged with (Collins; Dzhunushaliev & Ploskikh; Schatz).

Here I define 'clan' narrowly in order to avoid confusion with other informal phenomena like clientelism, regionalism, corruption or organized criminal organizations (mafias). A metaphoric and loosely defined use of the concept is a predicament in the literature on 'clan politics'. I argue that the defining element of a 'clan' is that it is a network of individuals linked by kin-based bonds. The definition used here is that a 'clan' is an informal organization comprising a group of individuals linked by kin-based bonds, either real or imagined. It is an imagined community of 'genealogical relatedness' (Gullette, 2006a, p. 214). It is the affective tie of kinship that is the crucial difference between 'clans' and other informal institutions. Note that this definition states that 'clans' are indeed organizations, i.e. groups 'conceived as entities and cast as actors' (Brubaker, 2003, p. 4). A 'clan' is by nature an exclusive phenomenon; it is not a voluntary association or an interest group. A key dimension in the study of sub-national groups like 'clans' is to what extent 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. Some scholars seem to consider 'clans' in Central Asia as corporate groups, as actors, while some anthropologists have refuted this (Gullette, 2006b).[5]

In the contemporary literature there are those who claim that we need to rethink the traditional dichotomy between state and non-state society. Previously a state has been defined by centralized sovereign political structure within a specific territory, but with the

[5] For scholars that seem to advocate the view that 'clans' are corporate groups see (Collins, 2003; Dukenbaev & Hansen, 2003; Temirkulov, 2004). These authors do not use the *corporate* concept, but the sub-text in their analysis is that there exists such a thing as 'clans' and that they somehow coordinate actions, i.e. that they are actors. This is not to say that they consider 'clans' to be constant over time, Collins actually makes a good point about the changing nature of 'clans' during the Soviet and post-Soviet period. However, her definition of a 'clan' also includes close friendship ties and personalistic business ties.

onset of post-moderns theories of power this has changed (Sneath, 2007). It is necessary to understand these underpinnings if we are to use the same terminology today. Tribal societies were understood as non-state societies without a central government, as a contrast to the modern nation state of the West. Colonial administrators had a practical interest in studying and sometimes even constructing tribes in the interest of administration and dominance. This is what I earlier referred to as the Orientalistic nature of the discourse on 'clans' and tribalism in Central Asia, or as Southall puts it:

> Tribe is a self-fulfilling Orientalist prophesy in which vague notions of outsiders are essentialized (Southall 1996:1331).

Kinship

> Kinship...does not correspond to any cultural category known to man (Schneider, 2004, p. 269).

All human populations do recognize links between generations. There is however a great variation in how this is done. To be related to someone does not necessarily mean that you act or live together. Kinship was for long one of the most important topics in anthropology, especially in the early days of the discipline starting in the mid 19th century. The early pioneers focused on descent and lineage theory (Lowie, 2004[1950]; Maine, 1861; Morgan, 1877). The intellectual context of these early anthropologists was, among other things, the Darwinian idea of evolution. This stimulated an interest in the 'origins' of humanity and human social life. Primitive peoples of the non-western countries were made objects of intensive study and one of the key topics was kinship. In anthropological research a distinction is made between *emic* and *etic* categories, the former being classifications specifically defined within a cultural context and the latter classifications used by researchers to describe and understand the object of study. Many of the analytical categories of the early contributors in to the field were *etic* in nature.

Kinship was interesting because it was thought to be the basis of social organization in many societies. It explained the maintenance of order within 'simple societies'. Social organization does of course contain several different aspects and dimensions. The early discourse on kinship as a social organization can be understood as the opposite, or the 'other', to the state. The kinship logic can also be seen in opposition to other social formations that do not rely on kinship, like community, division of labor, friendship, economic relations etc. Much of the later critique of the concept of kinship derives from

this dichotomizing tendency in earlier anthropological work. So what then is kinship and how can it be defined? Many anthropologists would claim that it is impossible to arrive at a universal definition of kinship because kinship as an institution has too many local variations. It is however clear that for two persons to be kin they either both have to descend from a common ancestor, or one of them have to descend from the other. Important to note is that 'descent' here refers to the social relationship of parents and children, not to the physical (biological) relationship. In many cases there is a biological element involved, but there are many forms of descent that are non-biological, like marriage, adoption, fostering, and step-relations. Blood has frequently been used metaphorically to describe the kinship relation, but it is clearly arbitrary since other societies may choose other features to symbolize kinship, like flesh or bone instead. The problem with a narrow biological definition of kinship is that, as a phenomenon, it is universally constant, i.e. all of us have a biological father and a mother and they in turn have parents as well. There is, however, a great variation in how kinship is organized in different societies and therefore the difference must be explained by something else than biology.

Furthermore, one can ask what place and function descent plays in the formation of groups. This is a separate issue from the descent modes (patrilineal, matrilineal, and cognatic). Lineage is a form of an extended descent group in which the members are supposed to know, or at least claim to know, the genealogical connections interlinking all members of the group. These links are viewed in terms of generation and relative birth order and thereby provide a basis for calculating relations of seniority or degrees of relatedness between individuals and segments within a lineage. A lineage can stretch back for several generations and can be subdivided into segments through growth over time. Clanship relations on the other hand are categorical in character and typically non-hierarchical within the 'clan'.[6] To conclude, it seems clear that there is both a biological and a social aspect to kinship. The relative emphasis on any of the two aspects is the main dividing line in the study of kinship. Early accounts on kinship terminology tended to rely on genealogical and biological notions (Morgan, 1877). Gellner for one, stressed that biology must be involved

[6] In reference to Evans-Pritchard in (Parkin & Stone, 2004, p. 31).

in kinship (Gellner, 1957, 1960). Lévi-Strauss on the other hand considered kinship to be distinctively social, or cultural (Lévi-Strauss, 1969).

'Clan' and 'Tribe'

If kinship is the organizing logic of 'simple societies' on a micro level, then 'clans' and 'tribes' are macro level structures. These terms were first used to describe the divisions among the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Israelis. The discourse on 'clans' and 'tribes' is like the kinship discourse a highly contested one in the social sciences. The practice of naming and defining groups of people cannot be separated from the colonial context in which it was done. Colonial and imperial powers, be it Western European, Arab, or Chinese, defined and named groups of people as part of a process of dividing them into administrable units. Nothing surprising and new here. The categories and the names do not therefore, necessarily, provide an accurate picture of the social organization of the people at hand.

'Clan' as a concept is still used even though the usage varies with the geographical area of study. 'Tribe' on the other hand, as a term, is today largely defunct as a general comparative category in anthropological study (Gingrich, 2004). The concept of 'tribe' is still used as equivalent to certain local conceptions of collective sociopolitical identity. Many anthropologists abandoned the concept of 'tribe' and started using 'ethnic groups' or 'sub-nationalism' instead (Rasuly-Paleczek, 2005, p. 5). According to the conventional definition a 'tribe' is 'a culturally homogenous, non-stratified society possessing a common territory, without centralized political or legal institutions, whose members were linked by extended kinship ties, ritual obligations, and mutual responsibilities for the resolution of disputes' (Winthrop, 1991, p. 307). A 'clan' on the other hand can be defined as a group of persons who believe themselves to be related by unilineal descent but who are unable to trace genealogical connections linking all members of the group (Burnham, 2001, p. 1921). Etymologically the term comes from Gaelic *clan* and Old Irish *clann*, denoting a group claiming descent form a common ancestor (Keen, 2006, p. 516). Groups recruited by filiation and descent have historically been given several different labels: gens (plural gentes) by Morgan and sib by Lowie. The key feature of a 'clan' is the recognition of the kinship element and it always involves a genealogical narrative. Other defining attributes are exogamy and totemic taboos (Burnham, 2001, p. 1922). Birth, marriage, fostering, or

adoption generally determines membership in a 'clan', even though a great variation can be observed. In some cases you distinguish between mother 'clan' and father 'clan'.

We cannot discuss the categories of 'clan' and 'tribe' without providing some of the context in which the terms emerged in the development of social sciences from 19th century and onwards. Intellectually the period was influenced by Darwinian evolutionary thinking and politically it was a time of colonial expansion and imperialist ambitions. It is necessary to understand these underpinnings if we are to use the same terminology today. In the early anthropological studies 'tribe' and state was regarded as successive stages of sociopolitical organization. Some scholars made an ordinal distinction between bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and stratified societies. Tribal societies were understood as non-state societies without a central government, as a contrast to the modern nation state of the West. Colonial administrators had a practical interest in studying and sometimes even constructing tribes in the interest of administration and dominance. During the decolonization the term attained a largely negative and pejorative meaning. It should be noted, however, that in parts of Inner Asia and North Africa this was not the case, quite the contrary actually. This is especially so in areas influenced by Islam, in which 'tribe' and its local equivalents were associated with pride and autonomy (J Hughes, 2007).

A key dimension in the study of sub-national groups like 'clans' is to what extent they are groups that coordinate action and have an existence beyond the lives of particular members. To what extent are they corporate groups, in that they come together occasionally to carry out some collective action; have a chief or a council that represents the groups as a whole; controls collective property; exacts vengeance for the killing of a member, or demands and receives an indemnity (Radcliffe-Brown & Forde, 1950, p. 43). 'Clans' have been perceived of as groups that are tied together by 'mechanical solidarity' as contrasted with 'organic solidarity' that were organized around a division of labor (Durkheim, 1984). A 'clan' being an informal identity organization, a type of a traditional social organization (Joel Samuel Migdal, 2001). There are also other types of informal organizations, like mafias. In some contexts heavily reliant on kinship and 'clan' ties, like the Italian mafia. This is not, however, a requirement. Mafias differ from kinship based informal organizations in that they are explicitly criminal organizations and that they frequently use

violence. Examples of formal social organizations on the other hand are trade unions and parties (Collins, 2006, p. 10; Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 727).

Dissertation outline

The dissertation consists of a total of seven chapters. The first two of which are lead in chapters to the theoretical framework and the specific methodology applied. However, already in chapter two, I present a first take on electoral dynamics on a district level in Kyrgyzstan. This hopefully gets the reader interested in possible explanations for patterns of competitiveness. In chapter two it is shown that competitiveness has been reduced over time, with the 1995 elections being the most fragmented. Until the December 2007 PR elections no new party system emerged and the contests up until the 2005 elections were all localized battles over resources and influence. In 2005 elections were especially competitive in the south where the already mobilized campaigners later formed the backbone of the 'Tulip revolution' protests. Chapter two also contains a detailed discussion about the conceptual framework for this thesis, with a special focus on the discourse on 'clans'.

Chapters three to six are all based on the twin data sources of published elections results and the conducted candidate survey (n=160). I start by examining national level patterns (chapters 3-5) and end up with a detailed study of an alleged 'clan' district (chapter 6). Chapter three shows the reader the consequences of the emergence of new alternative elites as a consequence of market reforms and the role that they played in elections. Here I also present how candidates have perceived competitiveness and I outline explanations for the fact that elections on a district level remain competitive, even if the overall democratic environment deteriorates. It is shown that the introduction of electoral mechanisms empowered local elites to challenge the authorities. Chapter four examines candidate profiles in more detail and answers the questions: 1) Who are the candidates; 2) How are they selected and whom do they represent; and finally 3) How are different types of candidates performing. It is, perhaps surprisingly, shown that experienced politicians and bureaucrats fare better than businessmen. The theoretical implications of this chapter are that the role of financial resources and economic autonomy that followed in the wake of market reforms is exaggerated in the literature and that traditional elites (Soviet era *nomenklatura*) are performing well.

Chapter five focuses on the identity discourse and here I examine how political elites in Kyrgyzstan define themselves in terms of identity categories. It is shown that a 'clan' in the Kyrgyz sense of the word, *uruu/uruk*, is something that necessarily involves kinship, therefore refuting Collins metaphorical understanding of the phenomenon. The reason for the politization of these genealogical categories can be found in the incentive structure of the electoral system (SMD). Chapter six takes this discussion further by examining polling station level dynamics in a rural and infamous 'clan' prone district. Here it becomes apparent that even in this *critical case* 'clans' are not dominating the electoral process. Actually it is shown that the genealogical narrative is only a symbolical dimension of the contest and that everyday issues are more important. Therefore the 'clan politics' hypothesis is finally refuted. Alternative explanations for competitiveness are shown to be: 1) empowerment of local elites through market reforms in the sense of shifting state-society equilibriums creates autonomous actors that challenge the regime from below; 2) weak organizational capacity of the state to coerce and/or co-opt potential challengers. In the concluding chapter I suggest that we stop using the 'clan' concept in a metaphorical and lose way. Secondly, I conclude by noting that the organizational capacity of the state is crucial in understanding the emergence of pockets of competitiveness in Kyrgyzstan. I also note the role of financial resources as a consequence of privatization (marketization) reforms. However, I also highlight a fascinating pattern of electoral accountability. These local level dynamics were typical in the transitional phase when a majoritarian electoral system was employed. In most cases in the former Soviet Union this changed with the introduction of party list PR systems and as a consequence competitiveness has lately decreased significantly.

CHAPTER 2: STUDYING INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS AND ELECTORAL POLITICS

Kinship and 'clans' are interesting phenomena in the contemporary world, a world in which many institutionally weak states struggle with state building. States that recently gained their independence are trying to equip the state with functioning institutions and also to instill a sense of collective identity, often along nationalistic lines. This is obviously difficult since in many cases there is no prior experience of social organization on the allotted territory. This chapter will present some of the methodological considerations that went into this research project. I will also present a first overview of patterns of electoral competition in Kyrgyzstan 1990-2007. A key question in this dissertation is whether electoral politics in Kyrgyzstan is dominated by 'clan politics'. In order to answer this question I will use a two-fold methodology: a cross-constituency comparative study of competitiveness and candidate typologies in three post-independence elections (1995, 2000 and 2005); and a *critical* case study of a selected 'clan district'.

If 'clans' were a strong informal institution then electoral politics could be affected in two ways: 1) 'clans' coordinate among themselves and agree to nominate a consensus 'clan' candidate, thereby reducing competitiveness in the election district (SMD); or 2) each 'clan' have their own candidates and voters loyally vote for someone from their own 'clan' resulting in high levels of vote dispersion (here understood as competitiveness). Some conceptual clarification is required for a sound operationalization of a 'clan' in the Kyrgyzstan context. Here I provide a short summary of the argument and outline the consequences for my research. The key to understanding the pertinent difference between different kinds of networks is the strength of the identity factor. Another question is how to measure that strength, i.e. the strength of the ties and the identity element. I could measure it as a 'combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie' (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361).

We need to remember that relying on 'clan networks' could be considered rational in many situations. The key element here is *trust*, which in turn allows for cooperation and thereby overcoming social dilemmas. All institutions make interaction between individuals and groups easier and more predictable because they create known and accepted behavioral structures. Trust is also what makes 'clan networks' more durable. Individuals cannot change theses structures, at least not without paying a certain price, i.e. cost. So a rational actor accepts the institutions and acts accordingly, even if they do not agree with the institution themselves (Lauth, 2004, p. 6).

The ambition in this work is to test the explanatory power of the 'clan politics' theory. What I am interested in here is the relationship between 'clans' and formal institutions of the regime, parliamentary elections in this case. What about the normative dimension? First of all we have the question about competitiveness? What levels of competition is ideal for democracy? Clearly a fragmented electoral field is associated with problems of effective governance (government formation, stable coalitions etc.). Secondly, there is the question whether 'clans' necessarily are bad for democracy. Why would respect and obligations to ones family be incompatible with democracy? 'Clans' might be considered to create trust, something that is seen as a condition to solve social dilemmas. The problem with 'clan networks', however, is that they are inherently exclusive and therefore they only create trust among its members, not among citizens in general.

In daily use people often confuse 'clan' with mafia, clientelism, patronage, and corruption. A short clarification is necessary. Clientelism and corruption are informal institutions (practices), not identities or organizations. 'Clan' on the other hand contains an element of identification, as does ethnicity and caste for instance. Mafias on the other hand are organizations that sometimes rely on kinship ties, but not necessarily. Furthermore, mafias are per definition explicitly criminal organizations that use violence, or the threat of violence, as a mean to meet their ends. Another concept that is frequently used in describing corrupt, and allegedly, kinship tied practices and networks, is tribalism (or *traibalizm* in the Russian spelling). This can be defined as 'particular kinds of corrupt relations among elites' (Gullette, 2006b, p. 2). Conceptually it is very close to nepotism and favoritism. Tribalism does not, however, suggest that there is a primordial social formation at the basis of the relations, it is merely a 'collection of idioms which depict how different

factions and networks have emerged in government since independence' (Gullette, 2006b, p. 44).

Is it meaningful to create a dichotomy of 'clan networks' on the one hand and clientelist networks on the other? Perhaps I should adopt a compromise stance instead, combining the two informal institutions into a 'clan-type' clientelist networks (J. Hughes, 1997, p. 1021). Or perhaps 'patron-client networks linked to extended families' (Atkin, 1997, p. 292). I could also use 'clan network' instead of only 'clan', which would be a bit less rigorous (like Collins does). The problem is that 'clan' is an actor and clientelism is a practice, a way of doing things. An additional and substantial problem in the study of these things in contemporary Central Asia is that 'clans' do not necessarily act as corporate groups, which basically discredits them from being identified as actors.

The danger in keeping with the concept of 'clan' is that it leaves us with an evolutionist agenda, once again emphasizing colonial categories on the local population. It should, nevertheless, be noted that the discourse on 'clans' in Kyrgyzstan is officially and culturally sanctioned and it might therefore prove an easier case than in many other settings. Or perhaps, in the light of the anthropological critique of the concept, we should stop using it altogether? If we instead start talking about categories of genealogical relatedness, does that help us in explaining and understanding kinship based networks any better?

Here follow an assumption and some hypothesis that the research project is addressing.

Assumptions

- If 'clans' dominate politics in Central Asia, as many argue, it should be noticeable in times of parliamentary elections, even though the parliament plays a marginal role in Kyrgyz politics.

Hypothesis

- 'Clans', if they exist in any politically meaningful way, should be able to do an informal pre-selection of candidates and therefore reduce electoral competitiveness. This obviously depends on how many different 'clans' reside in each constituency. In constituencies with several 'clans' we can expect some kind of pre-electoral inter-'clan' coordination.
- Alternatively, each 'clan' could have their own candidates and voters loyally vote for someone from their own 'clan' resulting in high levels of vote dispersion (here understood as competitiveness).

- If 'clans' dominated electoral politics it would imply certain reciprocity between the members of the network. People vote for a particular candidate because of kinship ties, either real or imagined. If this were the case then 'clans' would not need to buy votes.
- Voters in rural constituencies, that are said to be dominated by 'clan politics', are more loyal with their candidates and electoral (democratic) accountability is therefore non-existent.
- Voters in urban constituencies are more critical towards candidates and political platforms play a bigger role in winning the election. Electoral accountability is also substantially higher in urban constituencies.
- Ethnic voting works in the same way as 'clan' voting, in that the loyalty supersedes accountability.
- The 'localism' hypothesis states that voters will vote for the candidate they personally know best, i.e. someone from their own immediate surrounding, irrespective of their 'clan identity'.

In the next few chapters I will deal specifically with all of these 'hypotheses'. More specifically I am addressing the following questions:

Specific Research Questions

- What explains the pattern of electoral competitiveness in a semi-authoritarian, hybrid regimes?
- What is the explanatory power of the 'clan hypothesis' when it comes to competitiveness (chapters 6 & 7)?
- Is there really such a thing as a 'clan' today in the sense of kinship-based groups that are relevant for politics (chapters 6 & 7)?
- Do elections lead to political pluralism (chapters 4 & 5)?

Methodology Summary

The methodology will be two-folded. The first part is a comparative quantitative and extensive study on competitiveness, candidate typology, political parties, turnover, and campaigning in parliamentary elections Kyrgyzstan 1995-2007.

The variables will be constructed out of the following kind of data:

- Competitiveness measured by the Effective Number of Candidates

$$N = \left(\frac{1}{\sum_{1}^{x} c_i^2} + \frac{1}{v}\right) \times \tfrac{1}{2}$$

- Candidate typology – a typology of all candidates (in a random selection of Single-Member Districts): experienced politicians (pro-government or oppositional), businessmen, bureaucrats (state administrators), and cultural-professional (intelligentsia)
- Accountability – re-election rate and turnover (total turnover of incumbents irrespective if they take part in the election or not).
- Party Strength by examining (following V.O.Key): Party in Electorate (polling data of most 'well known parties' and detailed election results), Party as Organization (no. of members, no. of candidates, no. of election commission members, and no. of election observers).
- Voter survey data (IRI, IFES, and own interviews): what determines the vote, policy issues/personality features, vote buying etc.

Data gathered through candidate survey (n=160), officially published election statistics (CEC), and expert interviews. The final part of the study examines one particular SMD in detail and examines what role 'clan' plays, if any. This is a unique intensive study in a 'clan' prone district (contrasted with the extensive overview of the other SMDs selected for the candidate survey). This district is considered a critical case for the 'clan politics' hypothesis. I will be looking at:

- Reconstruction of candidate selection procedures: who pre-selected, who nominated, problems with registering etc.
- Examination of the relevance of 'clans' in voting behavior, including vote buying, by in-depth interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

Data sources are the same as in the extensive study, i.e. the very same candidate survey (n=160), officially published election statistics (CEC), and expert interviews. In addition the author visited the selected district several times and also witnessed a by-election in the district first hand.

Informal institutions in former Soviet republics

In the former centrally planned economies of the Soviet Union informal institutions have played a key role in the economic and political transition. Corruption, patronage, and bribery were widespread in the final years of the Union as different kinds of networks were struggling for resources and influence (Ledenevna, 1998; Varese, 2005). Some of these networks were based on traditional kinship ties, real or imagined, and others were of more clientelistic nature. In terms of structuring the political landscape the networks can be divided into three categories: Soviet-era political ties, workplace relationships, and national groups (McMann, 2006, p. 38). Here follows a short overview that introduces some of the concepts relevant in the literature on elites and networks in the former Soviet republics.

A central concepts in the study of informal institutions in the Soviet and post-Soviet literature is *Blat*. It can be defined as 'the use of personal networks and informal contacts to obtain goods and services in short supply and to find a way around formal procedures' (Ledenevna, 1998, p. 1). The practice became especially prominent in the 1970s as a consequence of the economic stagnation in the Soviet Union. Blat differs from bribery in that it relies on trust or continuity of relations. Bribery on the other hand is purely a transaction that does not require any previous personal connection or friendship. Formally bribery was considered illegal according to the Soviet Criminal Code, while blat was not even mentioned. There is also a difference between corruption and blat, in that the former is a practice that necessarily involves public officials and does not need to be based on personal relations. Blat and clientelism more generally is based on 'weak ties' while kinship and marriage are 'strong ties' (Collins, 2006, p. 26). During the Soviet times there were widespread informal practices that were described with the term 'second economy', a complementary and parallel to the Soviet central planning system (Ledenevna, 1998, p. 47).

'Clan' on the other hand differs from blat in that it is based on strong and self-conscious group identity. It is a key informal organization in the literature on parts of the post-Soviet space, especially Central Asia. 'Clans' traditionally included both a few wealthy persons, called *bai* in Kyrgyz, and some more dependent members (Edgar, 2004; Massell, 1974). In order to maintain their social status the elites need the support of their network. The non-elites, on the other hand, need 'clan' elders and patrons to help them with 'finding jobs, dealing at the bazaar, gaining access to education, getting loans, obtaining goods in an

economy of shortages, and obtaining social or political advancement' (Collins, 2006, p. 29). It is important to note, however, that kinship entails a shared identity that organizes the ties across time and space. This is what brings stability into 'clan's and kinship based networks, as opposed to ordinary patron-client relations. Individuals make rational choices in 'clan'-based societies, their preferences, choices, and actions are shaped by the normative social structure in which they are embedded (Collins, 2006, p. 33). In the Moldovan case it seems that weak personal connections were very important and played a critical role the institutionalization of competitive electoral politics (Collins, 2003). The networks were not of a strong tie character, like in the Central Asian republics.

Kinship, 'clan' and *tribalism* in Central Asia

> *Rod* and *Plemya* are not corporate groups which can support its members, they are categories of relatedness (Gullette, 2006a, p. 95).

In the study of the Central Asian countries the notions of kinship, 'clans' and 'tribes' have a prominent position. The region is dominated by the steppe landscape, mountains and the more arable areas along the rivers. There are many prejudices about the general models of Eurasian pastoral nomadic societies. Often these societies are perceived of as segmented societies where groups act as corporate units. But already 1986 Lindholm stated that 'the Central Asian 'clan' structure was long since functionally disintegrated by the hierarchical tendencies it held within itself' (Lindholm, 1986, p. 350). Historically the dichotomy with the Middle Eastern kinship system has been emphasized. It is worth remembering that Inner Asian kingships ruled large parts of the Middle East for centuries, the Ottomans, Qajar, Selcukid, and others (Lindholm, 1986, p. 351). The social organization of the Central Asians enabled them to build empires in the Middle East, largely because of their social organization, that was based on a hierarchical kinship system.

Soviet ethnography was highly influenced by the Morganian thinking and thereby evolutionist in character. Early Soviet-era scholars tended to describe tsarist and pre-tsarist Kazakh and Kyrgyz society in terms of feudalism, something that was later refuted by Tolybekov and Markov (Markov, 1976; Tolybekov, 1971). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been an upsurge in the study of Inner Asia (Collins, 2002, 2006; Schatz, 2004). Of the previous attempts to study kinship and 'clan' politics I can mention Charles Lindholm and Elizabeth Bacon, of which the latter spent a few weeks in Central Asia in the

1930s and 1960s, but fieldwork was during the Soviet time done in the context of officially controlled visits. Khazanov is a prominent example of a Soviet anthropologist whose work was also translated into English (Khazanov, 1984).

It is hard to determine to what extent plemya and rod has any elements of corporate group characteristics in contemporary Central Asia. It is clear, however, that these identities have to some extent disappeared and/or been transformed during 70 years of Soviet rule. Previous attempts to conduct political science research on 'clan politics' in Central Asia has not taken into consideration the anthropological critique of the concept. Some of the research has relied solely on biographical data on the elites and/or historical (and Russian imperial) documentation. So what are 'clans' in the Central Asian context? Tribal names and traditions are said to remain stronger in the more recently nomadic tribes, the Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, and Turkmen, than in the sedentary cultures of the Tajiks and the Uzbeks (Collins, 2006, pp. 72-73). As in many other nomadic cultures the Kyrgyz were once organized according to tribal rules and traditions. According to the 19th century German/Russian historian V.V.Radlov we basically have three levels of analysis here: Confederations of tribes, tribes, and 'clans' (Collins, 2006, p. 72).

'Clan' terminology in Kyrgyzstan

In the case of Kyrgyzstan a 'clan' is something specific, especially for the titular nationality in rural areas. A 'clan' in Kyrgyz denotes a nameable patrilineage, which comes with an elaborated set of stories and founding myths.[7] This cannot be equated with the purely residential category like *mahalla* in the case of Uzbekistan, like Collins does. The Kyrgyz word for 'clan' is *uruk* or *uruu*, depending on what level we are referring to.[8] 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 current President Kurmanbek Bakiev. In this chapter I will use the English word 'clan' to denote any relevant level, be it *uruu* or

[7] A lineage is a descent group that is able to demonstrate a common descent from a known ancestor.
[8] In the anthropological and ethnographic literature on Kyrgyzstan, *uruu* is often equated with the English *tribe* and Russian *plemya*, while *uruk* has the equivalent or *clan* in English and *rod* in Russian. In the context of the Russian language, the word *klan* is also used, but often in a pejorative sense. An *uruu* is simply a larger kinship unit consisting of several *uruks*. An *uruk* is a 'lineage' in the strict sense of the word (Beyer, 2006, p. 160).

uruk.[9] Strictly speaking, the focus in this chapter is on '*uruu* (or *uruk)* politics', but this is an utterly incomprehensible term for both the Kyrgyz themselves and for the larger scholarly community. The most commonly used equivalent concept in English language literature on the region is that of 'clan'. As already noted, in the political science literature the concept of a 'clan' in Kyrgyzstan has been used in an overly metaphorical way (R. Abazov, 2003b; Collins, 2006). This way of using the concept can be both confusing and frankly orientalistic.[10] In some writings on regionalism and localism in Kyrgyzstan the concept of 'clans' has been equated with larger territorial concepts like north and south:

> ...by regional rivalry and 'clan' loyalties. This divide will probably dominate political life in the Republic in the future. (Abasov 2000:552)
>
> 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, Jalal-Abad, and Osh oblast (R. Abazov, 2003a).

Here the concept of a 'clan' is used to denote a vast geographical territory that would never be associated with an *uruu* or an *uruk* in the Kyrgyz sense. Also, there was never a genealogical narrative of relatedness that covered the 'south' of Kyrgyzstan.[11] Collins at one point refers to the '*Issyk-Kul* clan' and the '*Chui* clan', which is clearly misleading since these are purely administrative units (Collins, 2006, p. 126). These two examples illustrate how the concept of a 'clan' has been used in a loose and metaphorical way that completely misses the point of *uruus* and *uruks* and their emic meaning in contemporary rural Kyrgyzstan. I argue that applying foreign categories, like 'clan', a concept that has a unique emic meaning to the Kyrgyz, in such a loosely defined way qualifies as orientalism. An *uruu* identity necessarily involves kinship; it cannot be a geographically determined administrative category, like an *oblast'* (region). But even if there exists a genealogical narrative about these kinship-based groups it does not mean that these groups dictate

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[9] This is problematic from the viewpoint of established anthropological distinctions (see previous footnote). However in ordinary use in the villages the distinction between *uruu* and *uruk* is fluid. The most widely used term for a 'clan' is *uruu*. For more on the 'tribal structure' of the Kyrgyz see Abramzon (Abramzon, 1963, p. 175).

[10] Only by using the 'clan' and 'tribe' terminology one projects a view of an unruly and uncivilized people that were not even been able to set up a centralized state structure in the period prior to the Russian conquest.

[11] It is popular to point out the north/south cleavage in analysis of Kyrgyz history and contemporary political divisions. Here they usually refer to the areas on separate sides of the Tian Shan mountain range. However, as anyone who ever studied the map can see, the more proper geographical division would have to be north-east/south-west.

politics locally, that they are groups that actually do things in an organized way. Yes, people do talk about their *uruu* belonging and possibly even give an impression of them existing as corporate groups. And yes, in mid 1990s at the height of the transition (political and economic reform process) 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 connotations in the literature. Again, I want to reiterate that when I use the 'clan' concept I do not intend to imply that there actually are 'clans' in contemporary Kyrgyzstan that are organized as corporate groups. I narrowly define 'clan' as kinship-based social units and then I go on to show that there is no such thing as a 'clan', as an organization, that actually deals with political matters in contemporary Kyrgyzstan.

Terminologically there are some difficulties in that both Russian and the local languages have been used. The Russian term *rod* is usually translated into the English term 'clan', but it can easily be misinterpreted. The same Russian term is as a matter of fact also used for family, sort and gender. The Russian term for tribe, *plemya*, corresponds with the Kyrgyz term *uruu*, while the Kyrgyz term for 'clan' is *uruk*. An *uruu* consists of a few *uruk* (seed in Kyrgyz) and have related (familial) ties going as many as seven generations back (Gullette 2006:61). There are diverging opinions as to whether these can be seen as corporate groups or not (Collins 2006; Gullette 2006). These categories are nevertheless determined through narratives of genealogy. Some would argue that the Soviet documentation of Kyrgyz 'tribal' society in itself created an authoritative description of social life (Gullette 2006:58).

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', Kyrgyz meaning branch, wing) and Ong kanat (the 'right') (Dukenbaev & Hansen, 2003, p. 25). The basic dividing line here is geographical, the first based in the South/West and the latter in the North/East. This division into left and right reflects 'the quasi-military formation of post-Chingisid ethnoi, but there was no practical significance to the system since the Kyrgyz had never in memory engaged in universal military action' (Prior, 2002, p. 49). In addition to this we have the Ichkilik, which consists of many 'clans' of different national origins, but they still claim Kyrgyz identity. On the next level we have the tribes or tribal unions.

Historically the Kyrgyz social structure was constructed out of around 40 tribal unions (or groups, *Uruu* in Kyrgyz). There is disagreement as to whether these groups were necessarily based on real kinship ties or only imaginary kinship (Temirkulov, 2004, p. 2). Tribes in this context are essentially groups of 'clans'. Lastly we have 'clans' (*Uruk* in Kyrgyz), which are patrilinear units whose members descend from a common known ancestor. 'clans' can, however, also include individuals connected via marriage, family alliances, neighborhood or a village. The 'clan' is based geographically in a village or the like, but members of the 'clan' do not necessarily have to live in the location to be a part of the 'clan'.

In the context of the Russian language it should be noted that 'clan' has very negative connotations. During the Yeltsin years and thereafter, it was synonymous with 'faction'. So why do we not use the concept of 'tribe' instead? The term is seen as derogatory, in that it labels the developing countries as primitive. However, it should be noted that the concepts of 'clan' and 'tribe' have long been used by Central Asians themselves. In Africa these terms have been viewed in a more negative manner, but not so in Central Asia.

Operationalization and measuring 'clan' and clientelism

So how do we go about measuring to what extent 'clans' dominate electoral politics in Kyrgyzstan? I have decided to define 'clan' in a narrow sense in this research project. This means that there is a requirement of having direct kinship bonds with the respective people in the election district and that both the candidate and the people identify the candidate as belonging to a particular 'clan'. So there is both an objective 'biological element', if you will, and an ascriptive social element in the definition used here. The rationale for a narrow definition is to allow for distinguishing between candidates relying on a 'clan' identity and a 'clan network' and candidates relying on pure patron-client networks.

Here I approach the question about 'clan' identity in a straightforward way. I simply ask the candidates to identify their 'clan' (*uruu/uruk*) and ask them to estimate the importance of 'clan' loyalty for voting behavior to find out whether there are any elite/mass differences in terms of 'clan' identity I also ask voters similar questions in our SMD case study. Furthermore, I ask several other questions related to the genealogical narrative, i.e. the local discourse on 'clans'. This allows us to garner the 'clan' discourse fluency of particular candidates. Possessing a lot of genealogical information is here considered a pre-condition to the existence of 'clan politics' in the Collin's sense of the word.

Positional analysis will complement the 'clan' identification analysis mentioned above. This combined with an occupational variable and social background variables allows for a categorization of each candidate. The question here is what can be formalized and measured and what needs a more intensive ethnographical case study approach? According to Lauth we need to find the existence of informal institutions in the beliefs and attitudes of individuals, otherwise they do not exist (Lauth 2004:8). This means that we need to measure self-identification. The requirement here is that the candidates identify themselves as being a member of a particular nameable 'clan' and that they are able to place that 'clan' in the broader narrative about the 'clan' structure of their country.

The narrow definition used in this context is challenging the more unspecified and metaphorical use that is so common among journalists and political scientists. The assumption in this dissertation is that a candidate that is not from the region in which he or she is running and does not have relatives there, apart from the most immediate family, but that still uses a 'clan' discourse to describe themselves is not a 'clan' candidate. The reason

for them using the 'clan' discourse to describe their candidacy might be to legitimize their role as a representative of the community. However, if there are no direct kinship bonds with the voters in the constituency I would regard this as a non-'clan' candidate. Of course the candidate could have an attachment to the constituency without having kinship bonds in there, but this per definition disqualifies him or her for being considered a 'clan' candidate. Territoriality therefore becomes one of the key features in the definition used here.

In table 1 I have ranked 'levels of attachment' with strong ties at the top:

Table 1: Levels of *Attachment*

Direct kinship (blood ties, in 1st and 2nd order)[12]	Strong ties (affective)
Indirect kinship (marriage, other order, including imaginary)	
Direct territoriality (born and lived)	Weak ties
Indirect territoriality (moved in)	
Economic relation (mafia, clientelism)	

* There is a hierarchy at work here. Following my definition of 'clan', if a candidate is categorized as belonging to one of the lower three levels of this table he/she is not a 'clan' candidate.

In order to qualify as a 'clan' candidate in the narrow sense of the word, you need to run in a constituency in which your own 'kinsmen' live. For instance, the infamous case of Bayaman Erkinbayev in the southern constituency of Kadamjai, cannot be considered a 'clan' candidate since neither he nor his wife was from that constituency.

The challenge is to go beyond the metaphorical use of the 'clan' concept and to see whether the candidate actually is a candidate representing a corporate group with a distinct identity. Following the levels of attachments table I ask candidates questions about the place of birth, the place where they grew up, studied, and lived, and whether there were any kinsmen in these territories. The question I ask the interviewees is 'What clan are you', but specifically using the Kyrgyz word *uruu* for 'clan'. If the candidate is not able to identify their own 'clan' by name, then I immediately disqualify them as a 'clan' candidate.

From previous anthropological research into kinship, 'clan', and tribalism in Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan it seems that these concepts are very fluid and plastic (Gullette, 2006a).

[12] Following Radcliffe-Brown, the first order of relation is constituted by three types of social relationship 'that between parent and child, that between siblings, and that between husband and wife.' Beyond this first order is a second order of social relationships, which connect different elementary units through a common member (uncles, aunts, cousins, etc.).

Based on the recent anthropological critique of the 'clan' discourse one could redirect the research into how candidates and the local population perceives of relatedness in times of elections and how it is being used in the campaign. This will be done in the constituency level case studies.

In an ideal case scenario in order for a candidate to be considered a 100 percent 'clan' candidate, all of the following condition would need to be filled:

A. There needs to be at least one nameable 'clan' (*uruu)* occupying the territory of the constituency.

B. The candidate understands himself to be a representative of that 'clan'. Operationalized and measured as self-ascription: use of 'clan' discourse, both publicly and privately (subjectively expressed in interviews); demonstrable kinship ties to the constituency (objectively).

C. The electorate sees the candidate as a representative of the 'clan', understood as a corporate group, being able to name the 'clan' (*uruu*) of the candidate.

Tougher conditions include:

D. The candidate is neither a businessman nor an experienced politician, i.e. could not have used extensive vote buying or administrative resources.

E. The candidate secures a seat in the parliament with a number of votes that roughly corresponds with estimates about the number of fellow 'clan' members in the constituency.

This is not to say that there was such a candidate in the last elections in Kyrgyzstan. But in order to identify critical cases for the 'clan politics' theory these set of 'ideal' conditions are helpful as a benchmark.

Operationalization of competitiveness, accountability, and party strength

What I am interested in this dissertation is the developments in terms of electoral politics post-independent Kyrgyzstan. The focus is on the parliamentary elections. The 1990 election was the first multi-candidate election and since then the elections have all been fairly competitive if we look on an aggregated national level. If we examine some of the constituencies separately a different picture emerges. Was there a 'clan' involvement in anyway in the selection of candidates? Do voters in Kyrgyzstan keep their politicians accountable in times of elections or do incumbents always win when they decide to run again? Are urban districts more competitive and do parties fare better there than in rural less developed constituencies? These are some of the questions.

Competitiveness

One way to measure the competitiveness of an election is to look at the *Effective number of candidates* (ENC), which basically measures the number of 'real' or 'viable' candidates. This is an adaptation of Laakso & Taageperas widely used Effective number of Parties, ENP.

- Quantitative analysis of competitiveness (or format of competition) on Single-Member District (SMD) level. Competitiveness operationalization: *Effective Number of Candidates*, which is an index that measures the number of candidates that stood a chance.[13]

$$N = \left(\frac{1}{\sum_{1}^{x} c_i^2} + \frac{1}{v}\right) \times \tfrac{1}{2}$$

[13] Where c_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% is .40 and the weighted value that we got from the equation is .40 X .40 = .16. If the fractional share is only 1%, i.e. .01, then the weighted value would be .0001. In reality this means that extremely marginal candidates are automatically discounted (Taagepera & Shugart, 1989). The second party of the formula corresponds to Dunleavy and Boucek's critique of Taagepera and Shugart (Dunleavy & Boucek, 2003). Here v stands for the winner's share of the vote and by adding this last part to the formula we account for the largest party predominance.

As already noted this is basically a modified version of Effective Number of Parties (ENP). However, in the Kyrgyzstan case there is no use in measuring the number of parties since a majority of the candidates are running as independents. Therefore I have just replaced the Parties variable (p) with a candidate variable (c). The rationale for using this measure here is to show competitiveness in the different constituencies in Kyrgyzstan for the 1995, 2000 and the 2005 elections. What the ENC does is that it discounts the really marginal candidates, the ones that did not stand a chance.

One problem with labeling *ENC* as competitiveness is that it basically measures the degree of dispersion of the vote, i.e. to how many candidates the votes are pooled. This is obviously not the same as competitiveness in a strict sense, since only two candidates that get about 50 percent each is clearly a competitive election. What I am interested in here, however, is more the dispersion element, i.e. as a proxy for how fractional the constituencies are (following the 'clan' hypothesis).[14] The problem with *ENC* can be exemplified by district no. 36 and 44 in the 2005 election in Kyrgyzstan. In 44 there were three incumbent MPs running and they got 26, 34, 36 percent of the votes respectively. Clearly a very competitive election. In selecting the extreme cases of 'competitive' constituencies, however, these got an *ENC* value of well under 4, which was the threshold selected for singling out the most 'competitive' constituencies. This example illustrates the terminological problems with using the concept 'competitiveness' when I am in reality measuring vote dispersion in the first round of elections. In terms of competitiveness it is clear that an *ENC* score under 1.75 is not a very competitive.

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[14] Cf. Fractionalization: A variable to be used whilst plotting the electoral system effects is fractionalization index F by Douglas Rae (1967). This index is based on another well-known index called the Herfindahl-Hischmann concentration index (HH) that is calculated by adding up the weighted values of all the parties and can be calculated from both votes and seats.

$$HH = \sum p_i^2$$

Rae 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 1967, 54).

Table 2: ***Effective Number of Parties/Candidates*** **examples**

Case	Division of Vote Among Candidates (in %)							TOTAL	Taagepera ENP	Dunleavy ENC (N)
1	100							100	1.00	1.00
2	80	18	2					100	1.49	1.37
3	70	5	5	5	5	5	5	100	1.98	1.70
4	70	10	10	10				100	1.92	1.68
5	60	35	2	2	1			100	2.07	1.87
6	60	15	5	5	5	5	5	100	2.53	2.10
7	51	26	10	10	1	1	1	100	2.87	2.42
8	50	50						100	2.00	2.00
9	27	29	34	8.5	1.5			100	3.57	3.26
10	20	20	20	20	20			100	5.00	5.00

On the other hand all *ENC* scores above 2.00 are clearly describing high levels of competition. Above this arbitrary level it is basically only fractionalization that increases. An *ENC* of 5.00 is therefore both competitive, but also highly fragmented.

Accountability

Apart from competitiveness, one of the key issues in this research project is that of electoral accountability. In a semi-authoritarian context like Kyrgyzstan we are interested in voting behavior and local loyalties. Possible incumbency effects are of particular interest here. The ultimate test of accountability is whether incumbents really do lose elections. In cases where this is theoretically possible, but has never happened there is reason to doubt the democratic nature of the contest.[15]

- Incumbency re-election rate – The percentage of incumbents seeking re-election who win another term (well over 90 % in the US)
- Pre-Election Turnover (retirements) – Number of incumbents not seeking another term or not being able to register for a second run
- Election-Day Turnover (defeats) – Number of incumbents that decide to run, but who loose on Election Day[16]
- The peculiar 'Against all' vote in many post-Soviet States can also be considered as an accountability measure

[15] This corresponds to Przeworksi et.al's definition of democracy (Przeworski, 2000).
[16] The latter two figures can be combined into a biennial turnover rate.

Turnover is measured by the number of persons that were a member of the previous legislature but that either chose to not run again or that lost the re-run. This is generally defined as the aggregate level of exit, from one general election to the next, of elected candidates in the popularly elected lower house of the legislature in a bicameral system or the sole chamber in a unicameral one. This is usually measured as a percentage of all seats. The typical average in western European countries is around 20 %. It is important to note that in some legislatures there are term limits that naturally affect the turnover rate. A distinction is made between pre-election turnover and election-day turnover. Also, within pre-election turnover I make a distinction between incumbents that have no intention of running or incumbents that were unable to secure a nomination are counted as pre-election turnover.

I will examine how candidates themselves explain the phenomena of incumbency in Kyrgyzstan. In cases where there was a winning incumbent, we asked the reasons for them winning, and in cases of losing incumbents we asked about the reasons for them losing. In the Kyrgyzstan case I also need to account for changes in the total number of MPs elected in each election if I want to compare the developments over time. The number of seats has been steadily decreased from 350 in 1990 to 105 in 1995 and 2000, and to 90 in the 2005 elections. The incumbency re-election is therefore expected to be substantially lower since the number of seats has been steadily decreased, i.e. for each seat there has in theory been more than one incumbent. Therefore there is a natural turnover in the Kyrgyzstan system that in itself is quite high, at least between the 1990 election and the 1995 election (going from 350 to 105 seats). To summarize, electoral accountability cannot be compared over time in Kyrgyzstan. This does not, however, rule out comparing turnover rates between regions and on the urban/rural axis.

Low turnover, or non-existing turnover, is operationalized as incumbency in the 2000 and 2005 elections, i.e. a MP that secured elections in all three majoritarian elections in Kyrgyzstan. What this measures is basically patterns of entrenched support for a particular candidate in one and the same area, if not exactly the same district (due to re-drawings). High turnover (I) will be operationalized as: rule 1) SMDs in which an incumbent lost and no other incumbent won. In addition to that I will also define as High Turnover (I): rule 2) SMDs in which an incumbent runs and gets an 'against all' vote of more than 50 percent

(only once district); rule 3) SMDs in which several incumbent runs, but one of them gets less than l0 percent. High turnover (II), is a more restricted version and it is utilizing only the latter two decision rules. A SMD in which an incumbent runs and does not get elected, and no other incumbent gets elected either, is clearly a sign of the voters 'punishing' the candidates, or alternatively the authorities 'punishing' the incumbent (rule 1). Furthermore a vote 'against all' of above 50 percent in a district where an incumbent runs is also clearly a sign of the voters 'punishing' an incumbent in the lack of other 'good' candidates to vote for (rule 2). Lastly, a SMD where several (maximum two) incumbents run, but one of them gets less than 10 percent is also clearly a sign of the voters 'punishing' that particular candidate. If they had been happy with their representative they would probably have given him/her at least more than 10 percent of the vote. 10 percent is obviously a arbitrary threshold, but it is a good way of restricting the sample for the High turnover cases.

Case Selection: Why FSU and Kyrgyzstan?

There are several reasons why we should be interested in electoral politics in the former Soviet Union republics. First of all it seems like these countries somehow contradict some of the major political science findings from other regions, like Duverger's law (Likhtenchtein & Yargomskaya, 2005). The former Soviet republics are also good cases of the effect of different kinds of informal institutions on elections. This is interesting both academically, in terms of explaining diverging outcomes that electoral institutions have, but also policy wise, since it is a stated intention of many International Organizations, Governments, and NGO's to promote democracy through electoral assistance. Central Asia is especially interesting since informal institutions are said to be even more prevalent than elsewhere in the post-Communist space (Collins, 2006). Furthermore Central Asia is interesting because traditional theories of democratization would consider them lacking the prerequisites of democratization, like a strong middle class, developed economy, market mechanisms etc (S. Lipset, 1959; Moore, 1966).

Kyrgyzstan is especially interesting since it has arranged elections with a fairly high level of adherence to international commitments and with surprisingly competitive outcomes. Parties and candidates have been allowed to register and the elections themselves have been monitored by both local and international observers. This is not to say that the elections have been free and fair, but they have nevertheless been freer and fairer than elections in other Central Asian countries (R. Abazov, 2003a).

Why a single-country case study on Kyrgyzstan?

In general it is thought that single country case studies is a good complement to large-*N* studies and a central avenue for research if we are interested in theory-construction. When it comes to informal institutions, and especially kinship based ones, it seems obvious that we are in need of some better theories. Case studies are also good if we want to go beyond correlations of different phenomena to an actual explanation of causal mechanisms. Not to mention a possible understanding of the phenomena. Furthermore, identity politics and genealogical relatedness are issues that necessarily involve perceptual variables, symbols, and discourses. Quantifying these is not an easy task, and it can only tell us so much about the underlying logics at play. Therefore we need to combine an extensive large-*N* approach with an intensive case study approach. The large-*N* in this case is the overview of both

competitiveness (election statistics) and candidates (survey) in the last four elections in Kyrgyzstan. From a theoretical point of view, the cases can be considered as critical in that they challenge some of the assumptions in the literature (Collins, 2006).

The reason for choosing Kyrgyzstan as our country case is that, first of all, they have had three relatively competitive elections since independence (1995, 2000, and 2005). This is not to say that they were free and fair, but they were nevertheless generally more competitive than other Central Asian parliamentary elections. Secondly, if we are to say anything about the concept of 'clan politics', and potentially to determine whether it exists or not, Kyrgyzstan should be a good case because it is considered one of the most 'clan' prone societies in the former Soviet Union. If we want to falsify the pre-conception of 'clans' in much of the literature, then Kyrgyzstan is a critical case.

District (SMD) level case selection

> ...there is probably no substitute for intensive fieldwork in informal institutional analysis. Indeed most studies of informal institutions take the form of either abstract theory (N=0) or inductive case studies (N>0) (Helmke & Levitsky & Levitsky 2004:733).

Focusing on the national is clearly not enough for the purposes of this dissertation. What is warranted is a micro analytical approach, or to paraphrase Snyder, to 'scale down' (Snyder, 2001). The phenomena of 'clans' are per definition sub-national in nature and therefore we need to bring down our study to the level where possible 'clan' interaction can actually be observed. Since the interest here is on elections I have decided to study in depth several Single-Member Districts (SMD). In choosing the constituency cases, i.e. the critical cases for the 'clan' theory, we need to keep in mind that the size and the number of constituencies in Kyrgyzstan has changed several times over the last 17 years. The electoral system has been changed from a pure majoritarian system in the 1990 with 350 constituencies to a mixed system in the 1995 and 2000 elections with 105 MPs, back to a majoritarian system in 2005 with 75 MPs. On an aggregated regional (*oblast'*) level it does not make any difference, since the constituencies were always organized into sub-*oblast'* level units. Therefore we can use *oblast'* level aggregated data to analyze the developments in terms of electoral politics. However, the changing size of the constituencies means that we cannot use exactly the same units of analysis (SMDs) in comparing developments over time. We therefore need to examine the re-drawings of the constituencies and try to determine

whether there was a 'clan' components involved in the deliberations or not. Since the number of 'clans' (or 'tribal unions') is somewhere between 40 and 80 and since there are currently 75 seats in the parliament there is in theory a possibility that each 'clan' has their own representative in the parliament. The selection of a particular 'clan' case constituency needs to be one that has not been severely altered by these re-drawings.

There are also two other relevant divisions in Kyrgyzstan that we use to group constituencies together: north and south, and urban and rural. The north/south divide is said to be very important in Kyrgyz politics. Roots of the division can be traced back to the fight for the territory that is today Kyrgyzstan. The southern tribes in Kyrgyzstan were closely linked to and under direct supervision of the 18th and 19th century Kokand Khanate in the Ferghana Valley. The Northerners on the other hand inhabited the frontiers where Russian Imperial power was more present.

> When the Russian Empire expanded to Turkistan (what is today's Central Asia) at the end of the 19th century the Northern tribes accepted its rule voluntarily while the Southerners were more reluctant to join and offered heavy resistance (Chargynov, 2005).

The southern tribes were incorporated into the Russian Empire among the last territories of Turkistan The divisions persisted and grew stronger during the Soviet period when the north was favored both in economics and politics. During the independence period it also continued until the end of the Akaev era in the spring of 2005, when a southerner, Kurmanbek Bakiev came to power. Since then the balance between north and south has shifted to the advantage of the latter. South is generally regarded as more rural, poorer and traditional (conservative) and is therefore of importance if we are trying to identify a 'clan constituency'. There is partly a geographical explanation to the differences between north and south since a large part of the country is divided by the Tian Shan mountain range. Of the seven oblast of Kyrgyzstan three of them are in the south: Batken, Jalalabad, and Osh, and Chui, Issyk-Kul, Talas are in the north. Naryn can be partly considered as a northern region, even though some would regard it as a southern in terms of customs and traditions. The north would be perceived as more industrialized and russified (Chargynov, 2005).

The urban/rural division is also used in this dissertation in order to distinguish between allegedly traditional Kyrgyz agro-nomadic regions and more urban settings where the level of education and patterns of mobility is different. One can assume that if we want to find a 'clan logic' in Kyrgyz politics we would need to examine the politics in one of the rural

constituencies. Since Kyrgyzstan is a predominantly rural country this will not be difficult. Urban population as a percentage of total population is 36 percent in Kyrgyzstan, compared to 64 percent for other post-Communist countries, and 31 percent for other low-income countries (World Bank Institute, Kyrgyz Republic At a Glance). There are two city *oblasts'* in Kyrgyzstan and they most obviously qualify as urban regions, even though they might contain constituencies on the fringes of the city. In the other seven *oblasts'* I single out the urban constituencies from the rural ones. This is not a problem in Naryn, Talas, Chui, Batken, since there are no urban centers to speak of. In Jalalabad, however, there are clearly some urban constituencies in the city center. In the urban rural quantitative comparisons the urban constituencies of Jalalabad will be separated from the rural ones.

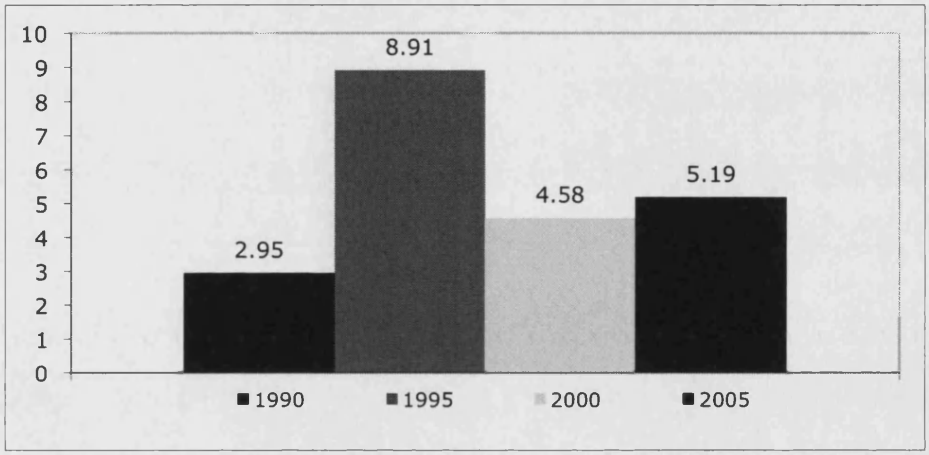
The 'clan politics' case was identified using a snowball method, i.e. gathering as much data as possible about an alleged 'clan dynamic'.[17] In the first phases of the fieldwork (March-April 2006, June-July 2006, and July-September 2007) I identified 'clan' constituencies by asking local experts and by conducting interviews with candidates and the electorate in these constituencies. During fieldwork there were several by-elections organized which provided additional information that fed into the case selection decision. Following my hypothesis about 'clan' coordination, I have examined some of the least and most competitive rural constituencies. I was able to identify 4-5 constituencies that many observers find dominated by 'clan politics'.

[17] Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects.

First take on Elections in Kyrgyzstan

I here want to give a first glimpse of electoral politics in Kyrgyzstan. This is done by examining patterns of electoral competition over time. Let us start by examining the average number of absolute candidates, i.e. the numbers of physical candidates running in each constituency (SMD).

Table 3:Average number of absolute (physical) Candidates 1990-2005



* Source: Central Election Commission, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 1996, 2001, 2006). In December 2007, in the first ever PR elections there were on average 13.19 candidates per seat (12 registered parties with a maximum of 100 candidates each competing for a total of 90 seats).

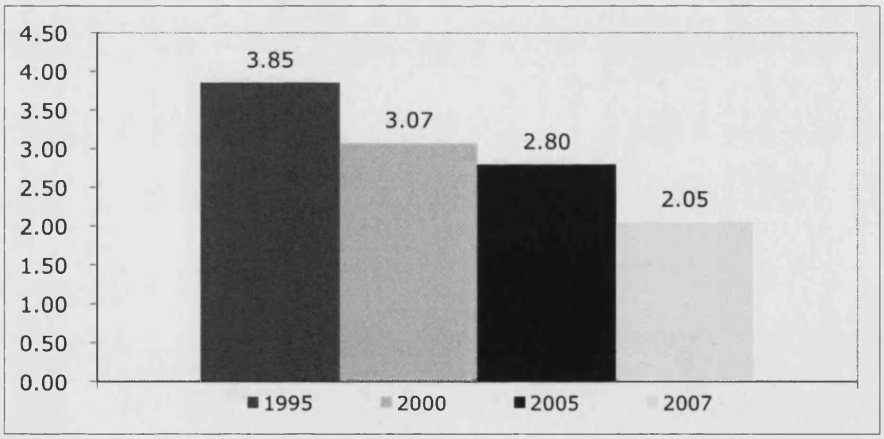
Here we clearly see that there are more candidates immediately after independence, in the first ever completely open electoral process in Kyrgyzstan in 1995. In these first post-independence parliamentary elections there were on average almost nine candidates for each available seat.[18] The 2000 elections clearly point in the direction of less fragmentation, which in itself is an expected pattern considering the increasing authoritarian tendencies of

[18] Here it is important to remember that in the last Supreme Soviet (Parliament) there were 350 seats while in the 1995 there were only 105 seats available. In 1990 there were 1032 candidates and in 1995 the number was 936, i.e. the absolute number of candidates actually went down. The important figure in terms of competitiveness, however, is how many candidates there were per seat each election year.

the Akaev administration, as recorded by Freedom House.[19] If we only focus on the absolute number of candidates, as in Table 3, it seems as if the 2005 elections were more competitive than the 2000 election. This is actually not so, which clearly demonstrates the problem with using 'absolute' numbers of candidates. These figures obviously do not tell us anything about how many of those 'absolute' candidates were marginal in terms of the election outcome, i.e. candidates receiving only minuscule vote shares.

To really understand how competitive elections have been over time in Kyrgyzstan we need to look at the '*Effective Number of Candidates*' (ENC), which basically measures the number of 'real' or 'viable' candidates, i.e. candidates that really stood a chance in the elections (see previous discussion about ENC). This index discounts marginal candidates and therefore gives us a more accurate picture of how competitive, or more precisely, how fractional the competition was in each constituency was. There are no numbers for the 1990 elections because disaggregated district level results were never published. However, if we look at all of the post-independence elections we can discern a clear pattern. It seems like competitiveness has steadily been going down if you look at the country as a whole.

Table 4:Average Number of 'Effective Candidates'



* Note: the 2007 elections were conducted under a PR system with a two-fold threshold. The reported number here is that of the election itself. However, the *Effective Number of Parties* score for the current parliament is a meager 1.46 indicating that the parliament itself is not composed of competitive blocs.

[19] Kyrgyzstan's Political Rights (PR) score was four in 1994-95 and it went up to five in 1998 and eventually up to six in 2000. The 2005 elections brought the score down to five again (FreedomHouse, 2007). Note that a high score on the PR scale means high levels of authoritarianism.

There is clearly a downward trend in terms of electoral contestation using the first post-independence elections in 1995 as our point of reference. Arguably, ENC levels around three indicates a fierce competition and as we will see in the disaggregated results many districts in the 1995-2005 elections did go to a second round due to the competitive nature of the first round elections. Table 4 tells us that the 2005 elections were actually less competitive than the previous ones, even though there were on average more candidates per seat, as was shown in Table 3. Perhaps indicating a stabilization of support patterns.

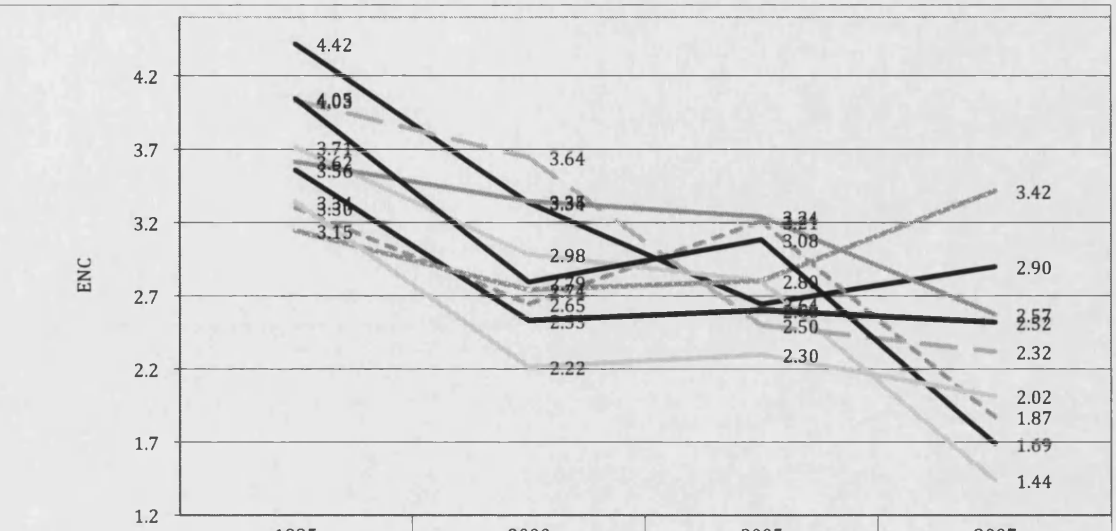
Map 2: Map of regions (*oblast'*) in Kyrgyzstan

* Note: this map is from pre-1999 when Osh *oblast'* was divided into Batken and Osh *oblast'*. Source: UN Cartographic Section Aug-98.

Regional (oblast') patterns

Another pattern emerges if we break the numbers down to a regional (*oblast'*) level. In the next table we can see the trends in terms of *competitiveness* for each *oblast'* over the whole post-independence period. In 1995 the capital Bishkek is the most competitive oblast with an ENC of 4.42 while the rural districts of Talas and Batken only have a value of 3.15 and 3.30 respectively. In the 2000 elections all *oblast's* have lower numbers of ENC, but the relative proportions are still pretty much the same, with Bishkek and the surrounding Chui *oblast'* significantly higher than both Batken and Talas, both peripheral rural districts.

Table 5: Competitiveness per *Oblast'* 1995-2007



	1995	2000	2005	2007
Bishkek	4.42	3.34	2.64	2.90
Batken	3.30	2.65	3.21	1.87
Jalalabad	3.71	2.98	2.80	1.44
Naryn	3.56	2.53	2.60	2.52
Talas	3.15	2.74	2.80	3.42
Chui	4.03	3.64	2.50	2.32
Issyk-Kul	3.62	3.35	3.24	2.57
Osh Oblast	4.05	2.79	3.08	1.69
Osh City	3.34	2.22	2.30	2.02

* Batken was previously a part of Osh *oblast'*, but was in 1999 granted *oblast'* status. Here I have reconstructed Batken *oblast'* results going back in time by taking out the Batken SMDs from Osh *oblast'*.

The finding that the capital region of Bishkek is more competitive (fragmented) than other regions over time is hardly surprising. The literature largely assumes that democratic pressures and contestation emerges in urban areas (see chapter 1). The mean score for Bishkek for all these three elections is an impressive 3.32 ENC.[20] Furthermore if we examine the extreme cases of competitiveness the capital region emerges as one of the most frequently highly competitive regions. Another interesting pattern can be found in the northern regions of Talas and Issyk-Kul, both with low levels of variation from one election

[20] But the standard deviation is also high .78, significantly higher than Talas (.31) or Issyk-Kul (.44) indicating volatile levels of ENC from one election to the other.

to the other.[21] Both of these rural districts had persistently high levels of competitiveness, with averages above three in each case.

In the other end of the spectrum we have the southern multi-ethnic city of Osh that reveals an interesting pattern of persistently lower levels of competitiveness.[22] The second least competitive district is Batken with a mean ENC of 2.76. There are also occasional low performers like Jalalabad in the December 2007 elections with a meager score of 1.44 indicating severely circumscribed competition. As a matter of fact Jalalabad has also figured frequently in the least competitive SMD category in the last three elections, with two out of ten least competitive SMDs being in Jalalabad in 2000 and 2005.

Urban/Rural patterns

As already noted, traditional democratic theory would have us expect urban constituencies to be more competitive than rural. The underlying assumption here is that urban voters are better educated, better informed, more mobile, economically autonomous from the state and therefore better positioned to make an informed choice not relying on local formal or informal authority as voters in rural communities often do.[23] Low levels of contestation in rural districts could have, hypothetically, been explained by the presence of strong informal institutions that coordinate electoral contests. But, as already outlined previously in this chapter, high levels of rural competition could also be explained by district level social fragmentation, the so called 'clan politics' hypothesis. Let us first examine urban/rural patterns in more detail.

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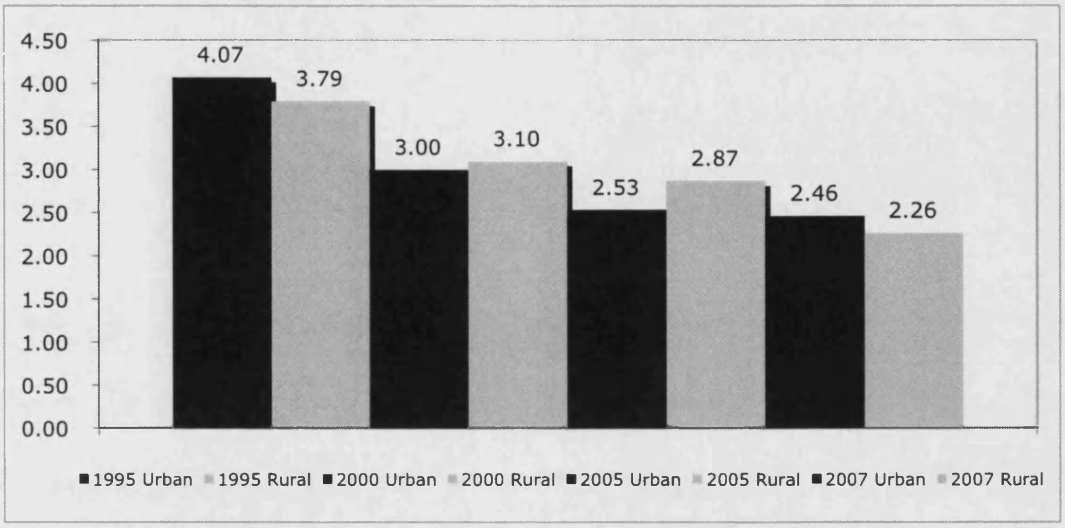
[21] Variability measured as Standard Deviation (σ). Low: Talas .31 σ, Issyk-Kul .44 σ, Naryn .51 σ. High: Osh *oblast'* .97 σ, Jalalabad .95 σ.
[22] Osh city has an average of 2.47 ENC (1995-2007) and a standard deviation of .59.
[23] For more on this see chapter 1.

Table 6: Competitiveness per Urban/Rural SMDs 1995-2007



* The definition of urban I use in this analysis is a SMD that covers the two major cities in Kyrgyzstan Bishkek and Osh. All other districts were defined as rural by default. Another option would have been to also include the third city, Jalalabad, as a urban SMD. The difference in terms of the results would have been that the urban average in 2000 would have been 3.00 as compared to rural 3.10, putting rural ahead of urban in terms of ENC. The reasons being low levels of ENC for the SMD covering Jalalabad city in 2000 (ENC 1.96 and 1.73). However, both these districts also cover parts of the surrounding countryside.
** There are no disaggregated data available from the 2007 elections yet (and probably never will be).

If we group together urban and rural constituencies and compare over time we see that the 2005 elections produced higher levels of competitive districts in rural constituencies than in urban constituencies. The difference is substantial and it spurs us to hypothesize that the 'democratic theory' assumptions about urban areas being more pluralistic in terms of contestation are not correct in the Kyrgyz case.[24] How do we explain this interesting pattern? What do numbers of 'Effective Candidates' tell us about what is going on in rural Kyrgyzstan in times of elections? How is this competition organized; why is it that the local rural elite is unable to 'control' the electoral process and therefore reduce uncertainty and competition? This opens up interesting questions as to how the introduction of formal institutions, elections in this case, interacts with existing informal institutions. These are all central questions in the chapters that will follow.

[24] In other cases of Central Eurasia urban districts are predictably more competitive, and significantly so (author's upcoming PhD dissertation).

Data collection and challenges

Obtaining information from primary sources is easier in Kyrgyzstan than in many other countries in which politically salient sub-ethnic identities are said to play a role, like Somalia, Chechnya, or Afghanistan. So if we want to conduct research into 'clan politics' and elections Kyrgyzstan is a good case to test some hypothesis and to further develop the theories involved. However, obtaining disaggregated election results from polling station level turned out to be very difficult.

Data was gathered from both written historical and contemporary documents. Limited archival research was done, mainly targeting *rayon* level newspapers. Election statistics were compiled using both Central Election Commission, local election commission, and results reported in local media. Even though the context was non-democratic, if not authoritarian, we have good reasons to believe that the election results largely corresponds to the actual ballots cast or at least represent the will of the local strongmen in a particular polling station. This problem was, at least partly, solved by crosschecking the data provided by official sources with local election observation documentation and their protocols from the polling stations.

I was conducting many interviews myself, but at times I was accompanied by a local interpreter/assistant. For the survey we interviewed a total of 160 candidates, of which I myself conducted a third (see Appendix I). In addition to the survey I interviewed another 160 plus people for the purposes of this dissertation.

Table 7: Interviews by the author (candidate survey interviews not counted)

Name of Region (*oblast'*)	Total interviews	Share of total (%)
Bishkek	64	39%
Batken	5	3%
Jalalabad	8	5%
Naryn	9	6%
Osh City	26	16%
Osh	30	18%
Talas	5	3%
Chui	0	0%
Issyk-Kul	16	10%
Kyrgyzstan Total	163	100%

As this table shows there is a Bishkek (capital city) bias in the non-survey interviews. This is a very common pattern in research on Central Asia and elsewhere in the developing world. Foreign researchers coming into the capital cities and interviewing urbanized upper-middle class locals. This is the reason for the rural (non-Bishkek) bias in the actual candidate survey conducted (see Appendix 1). Also, for the case study chapter on a 'clan prone' district (Kara-Kulja) we conducted face-to-face interviews with over 50 voters.[25] Whenever in the field, i.e. outside of the capital of Bishkek, I stayed with families that in addition to shelter often also provided me with valuable local information. At the beginning of my interviews I told my informants that I could protect their identity, by using aliases. However, in most cases the informants opted out of this offer.

Survey[26]

The main unit of analysis in this research project is individual candidates. The selection of our sample was done through a selection of Single-Member Districts (SMD) in the February 2005 Parliamentary Elections in Kyrgyzstan. The selection was done in two phases: 1) random selection and 2) purposeful addition of SMDs of particular interest. The selected SMDs and all the candidates in them is the baseline for the sample. The population is all candidates that officially registered to run in parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan. In

[25] For more on this see chapter six.
[26] For more information about the survey see Appendix 1.

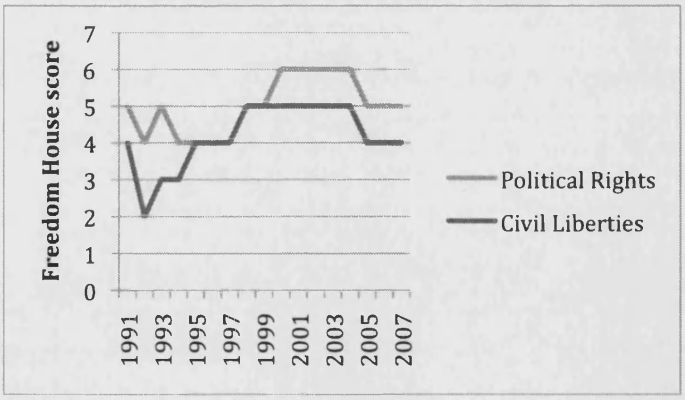
addition we decided to backtrack and interview candidates in the same SMDs for earlier elections as well, in 2000 and 1995. A total of 160 candidate interviews were conducted, of which a third by myself, and the rest by local assistants. All the interviews were conducted in the spring/summer of 2008. 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)

A structured questionnaire was constructed partly based on previous experience of similar surveys conducted by Professor James Hughes (J. Hughes, 1997). The questionnaire contained 41 questions of which 15 were open-ended and 26 were multiple choice type questions. Getting the candidates to agree to an interview was not always easy. This is partly due to the intensifying political intimidation in 2007/08. Furthermore some of the questions asked were of a sensitive nature, e.g. questions about 'clan politics', that fore some people have connotations of political corruption, tribalism and the like. No other study has spent so much effort in trying to garner insight into how the Kyrgyz define themselves. This study has an obvious elite bias in that the sample is made up of parliamentary candidates. In the text when I refer to a specific interviewee from the candidate survey I only use the respondent number, e.g. #96 for respondent number 96 on my list of 160 interviewees.

CHAPTER 3: CONTESTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN KYRGYZSTAN 1995-2005

This chapter will give the reader an overview of all the parliamentary elections in post-independence Kyrgyzstan starting with the first ever multi-party elections in 1995 up until the 2005 elections that triggered the so called 'Tulip Revolution'. Parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan have been competitive, but the nature of the competition is poorly understood in the literature.[27] Why only focus on parliamentary elections? Especially since the institutional context is characterized by superpresidentialism and therefore a very weak legislative branch. As this chapter will demonstrate, parliamentary elections did become a key battleground for political elites in Kyrgyzstan after independence. The increasing role of the parliament can also be noted in its many legislative initiatives.[28] The fact that the parliament became more important is not to say that the country became more democratic. As a matter of fact, the development since the first liberalizing reforms in early 1990 has been up and down, but overall in a more authoritarian direction.

Table 8: Democracy Diagnosis Kyrgyzstan 1991-2007



* Freedom in the World Comparative and Historical Data, 2009. Both political rights and civil liberties reported. The measures are a one-to-seven scale, with one representing the highest degree of Freedom and seven the lowest. I have only included the years when a change in the score has been reported.

[27] See introductory chapter.
[28] In 1995 only 7% of the laws were initiated by MPs, the following year that went up to 23% and in 2000 it was already more than 50% (Iskakova, 2003, p. 319).

Here we can see that in the early 1990s the most frequent rating is that of 4, which is equal to the Partly Free category.[29] This is the level Kyrgyzstan remains on in terms of political rights all through the 1995 electoral cycle up until the 2000 Parliamentary elections and the re-election of Akaev as president later that same year. At the turn of the millennium Kyrgyzstan received its worst ever score and is therefore put in the 'Not Free' category. This does not mean, however, that elections were becoming less competitive. In this chapter I will show that indeed under the surface contestation at the voting booth remained surprisingly high all throughout the period studied here.

This chapter gives an overview of the electoral dynamics of each multi-candidate election 1995-2005. The methodology used here is both quantitative and qualitative. I start by outlining the political context for each of the parliamentary elections, starting with a short summary of the last Soviet era elections in 1989/1990. The main issues and elite dynamics at hand for each of the election years, 1989/1990, 1995, 2000, and 2005, are presented. For each of the election years I will give an overview with the following sub-sections: competitiveness; accountability, political parties; candidate typology (including gender) and candidate selection. In chapters four I will further develop the candidate typology and test the explanatory power of a candidates profile for electoral success.

[29] Those whose ratings average 1.0 to 2.5 are considered Free, 3.0 to 5.0 Partly Free, and 5.5 to 7.0 Not Free.

1989/1990 Soviet Elections

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 Assembly (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 getting increasingly unpopular (Huskey, 1995, p. 817). A key political issue at the time was 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; and 'all-union social organizations' like trade unions, the CPSU, and the Academy of Sciences.[30] 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 to the republican (Kyrgyzstan) level Supreme Soviet. A new national Supreme Soviet was envisioned with 350 members. These were to be elected from Single-Member Districts.[31] Elections to all levels (republican, *oblast'*, city, *rayon*, village and neighborhood) were organized, an impressive total of 13 500 seats were to be filled. The election itself was neither free nor fair; one problem being the right to nominate candidates was given only to labor collectives, educational establishments and military units. Party

[30] Info from www.britannica .com accessed 19-Feb-2009.
[31] Two-round Single-Member District system, contrary to the multi-member district proposed by the September 1989 draft (Huskey, 1995)

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 fraction in the parliament, 'Movement of 114', a group of reformist deputies, was later formed (Collins, 2006, pp. 127, 180). 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 (Osh), Amanbaev from Issyk-Kul, nor Jumagulov from Chui, managed to get a majority of the votes. In the final vote in August a political outsider, a widely recognized scientist, Askar Akaev, got a majority of the votes.[32] 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.[33]

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[32] 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 indeed was a member since 1981, but a low profile one (Anderson, 1999, p. 23; Collins, 2006, p. 127).

[33] This even if parties were allowed to contest the elections (Collins, 2006, p. 232).

February 1995 elections

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.[34] The May 1993 constitution initially outlined a new 105 member strong professional unicameral legislature. 1994 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 outlining a bicameral parliament with a 35 seat professional lower chamber Legislative Assembly (*El Okuldor Jyiyny*), and a 70 seat upper chamber, 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, and allegations of corruption, especially regarding foreign investors in the gold extracting industry (Anderson, 1999, p. 27).[35] There was also an increased urgency to manage the north/south divide, with the regionalism that caused the civil war in Tajikistan fresh in memory. On 22 October 1994 local elections were organized (*rayon* & city assembly) and 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

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[34] The Soviet era parliaments in the western parts of the former Soviet Union were all dissolved earlier than the ones in Central Asia.

[35] The Kumtor gold mine in Issyk-Kul *oblast'* perhaps being the most high profile case.

1995 parliamentary elections was officially reported at 72.8% (OSCE, 1995).[36] The overall assessment of the electoral process was according to Collins 'free and fair'; the OSCE Election Report uses phrases like 'candidates and parties were largely free to campaign', but also note 'many reports of pressure and intimidation... ballot stuffing and multiple-voting' (OSCE, 1995).[37] Nowhere does the OSCE report say that the elections were '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, p. 10).

What were the main electoral issues as determined by the candidates themselves? The following table provides an overview of the responses from the candidate survey conducted by the author.[38]

Table 9: Economy and Rule of Law high on the agenda

Sector	Sector focus (primary)	Sector focus (secondary)
Infrastructure=1	13%	7%
Agriculture=2	17%	13%
Social sector=3	10%	13%
Economy=4	30%	33%
Education=5	0%	13%
Rule of Law=6	27%	0%
Corruption=7	3%	20%
n	*30*	*15*

* Two options in order of priority. Here we report only the 1995 responses to Q26.

Here we can see that the most common area of concerns was the economy and rule of law. Considering the rural bias in the sample it is perhaps not surprising that agriculture is also rated a very important issue. The platforms ranged from general positions, being against President Akaev (#36), to specific proposals, like creating a unified economic zone among CIS countries with common taxes and border procedures (#13). Some candidates were explicit about their disapproval of the privatization policies of previous years (#87, 102). In

[36] 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 (Graybow, 2001, p. 222). Others reported a turnout of 43 percent ('Central Asian Republics,' Asia 1996 Yearbook, Far Eastern Economic Review, p. 108).

[37] For the overall assessment see Collins, 2006, p.232, footnote 88.

[38] See Appendix I (*n=160).*

the survey we also asked about the groups that the candidates were focusing on in their campaign efforts. This was asked in an open-ended fashion and later coded by the author.

Table 10: Candidates represent 'locals'

Group Focus	Distribution
women=1	0%
youth=2	25%
old=3	13%
locals=4	63%
other=5	0%
	8

* Q25. This question was scrapped in the later interviews due to the un-reflected nature of the responses (platitudes).

An overwhelming majority of the respondents answered 'locals', as in people in their own constituencies. This reveals that the majoritarian electoral system indeed produced localized contests, where the candidates perceived their role as representing geographically determined categories, not broader socio-economic strata or interest groups.

Competitiveness

A post-election survey showed that there was a lot of dissatisfaction with the conditions in the country at the time and that the disappointment with the government was high. This might be part of the explanation for the high numbers of candidates challenging the authorities, in that the lack of socio-economic development would be detrimental to the incumbent MP. The average number of absolute candidates was almost nine and in terms for the *Effective Number of Candidates* score we get an impressive 3.85.[39] Clearly electoral support was fragmented and in many cases there was no winner in the first round of elections. Only 16 of the 105 seats were filled in the first round of elections 5 February clearly indicating a high level of contestation. Even in early March only 85 of a total of 105 seats had been filled. Collins notes some urban/rural patterns, where the capital of Bishkek was more competitive than rural surrounding areas (Collins, 2006, p. 238). This is indeed corroborated by SMD level data (chapter two).

[39] For more on the *Effective Number of Candidates* score see Methodology chapter. There are also some conflicting reports about the number of candidates. According to some there were 1,400 candidates for the 105-seats ('Central Asian Republics,' Asia 1996 Yearbook, Far Eastern Economic Review, p. 108).

What do the candidates themselves have to say about competitiveness? Here I examine district level competitiveness and how the candidates themselves reason about this phenomenon. We wanted to ask the candidates what they thought about the level of contestation in their own SMD.

Table 11: High levels of competition

Was your SMD competitive?[40]		
Answer Options	**1995**	
Very	39%	13
Somewhat	39%	13
Don't know	0%	0
A bit	9%	3
Not at all	12%	4
answered		*33*
skipped		*2*
skipped %		*5.7%*

* District (SMD) competitiveness (1995 only, Q30).

Almost eighty percent of the candidates considered the elections to have been somewhat or very competitive. As I have already shown this is confirmed by the reported election results; the level of competitiveness in these elections was indeed very high. We also asked candidates to compare their district's competitiveness with the previous election in that same district.[41]

Table 12: More competitive than the 1990 Supreme Soviet elections

Was your SMD more or less competitive than previous elections?		
Answer Options	**1995**	
More competitive	74%	23
Less competitive	3%	1
Equally competitive	23%	7
answered		*31*
skipped		*4*
skipped %		*11.4%*

* Note that the district magnitude was changed in between elections. This is therefore a somewhat misleading question. We left it up to the respondents to interpret the question. (Q31).

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[40] We specified 'competitive' as 'meaning a tight race in which the outcome was difficult to predict. In Russian: Был ли ваш одномандатный округ конкурентоспособным (имеется в виду напряженные гонки, в которых было трудно сделать прогноз)?

[41] Note that the SMDs were re-delineated in each election and this judgment can therefore only been seen as provisional.

This table illustrates that these first ever post-independence elections were significantly more competitive than the last Soviet era elections. This is a tautology, since this was the first time that the process was truly open. But as I will later show the perception of the elections being competitive is not necessarily always reflected in the real numbers of *Effective Candidates*. In any case, the interesting part is how the candidates themselves explain high levels of competition. We asked this question in an open-ended fashion and later coded to responses into several thematic categories.

Table 13: Strong candidates explains high levels of competitiveness

Thematic category	Distribution (%)
Strong opponents=1	70%
Incumbency=2	0%
KG Mentality=3	0%
'Clan'=4	4%
Facade=5	0%
Other=6	26%
n	*23*

* We coded a total of 88% of the responses (total responses n=111). Here 1995 only (Q32).

Here we can see that the strength of the opponents is by far the most common explanation for the competitiveness of a particular SMD in the 1995 elections.

> There were many candidates per district and among them there were former MPs who had experience from electoral campaigns (#96).

The 'strong opponents' category includes things like experienced MPs, rhetorically skilled campaigners, well-respected local authority figures etc. The 'other' category mainly includes issues like financial resources. As a matter of fact in all 'other' responses (n=6) the issue of money is brought up. Not a single respondent considered high levels of competition to be a façade. In only one case was there an explicit reference to kinship ('clan') dynamics.[42]

Next, we asked what the candidates thought about levels of falsification.

[42] Referring to 'Strong support from their uruu-voters' (Q32, #118).

Table 14: Election results somewhat falsified

Were the election results falsified in your SMD[43]		
Answer Options	**1995**	
Completely falsified	12%	4
Somewhat falsified	48%	16
Don't know	6%	2
Not much falsified	15%	5
Not at all falsified	18%	6
answered		*33*
skipped		*2*

* (Q35).

A majority thought that the results were either completely or only 'somewhat' falsified. The question about 'falsification', *falsifikatsia* in Russian, was always a sensitive one. My impression is that there was and continues to be some confusion about international election standards. In many cases falsification of the election results would be confused with harassment of candidates and their campaigners or campaign sabotage, like tearing down posters. When talking about falsification I here refer to what is going on in the polling station on Election Day, everything from ballot stuffing to the counting and tabulation procedures. So what if the results were falsified, what did the candidates do about it? Only three out of 35 candidates in the 1995 sample made a formal complaint. This in itself can be taken to indicate a lack of trust in the rule of law in Kyrgyzstan, or perhaps even more intriguingly that there was not serious widespread falsification.

Accountability

Apart from competitiveness, one of the key issues in this research project is that of electoral accountability. In a semi-authoritarian context like Kyrgyzstan we are interested in voting behavior and local loyalties. One of the main questions in the literature is whether elections actually empower the citizenry or whether it is just another way of local elites battling it out among themselves (R. A. Dahl, 2005). Another question is the role of incumbency. The ultimate test of accountability is whether incumbents really do lose elections. In cases where this is theoretically possible, but has never happened there is reason to doubt the

[43] Specified as to what extent the final CEC numbers reflect the intention of the voters in your SMD.

democratic nature of the contest.[44] In the 1995 elections 20 former Supreme Council representatives were re-elected, but there were also some interesting cases of losing MPs:

> Among the losers was former parliament Speaker Medetkan Sherimkulov, Akaev's bete noir, who charged that officials in his election district had connived to ensure his defeat. On February 27, Akaev established an independent public commission to investigate these allegations (OSCE, 1995, p. 9).

There were also other high-profile cases of losing incumbents.

Table 15: No incumbents in a majority of the SMDs

Were any incumbent Member of Parliament running in your SMD?		
Answer Options	**1995**	
No	61%	19
Yes (please name)	16%	5
answered		*31*
skipped		*4*

* (Q37).

Here it is important to note that there were far fewer seats available in the 1995 elections, only 105 as compared to the 350 in the Soviet era assembly. As already noted, in some cases strong incumbents prevailed, perhaps partly due to falsification, but in most cases the competition was still stiff. Let us examine how candidates themselves explain the phenomena of incumbency in Kyrgyzstan. In cases where there was a winning incumbent, we asked the reasons for them winning, and in cases of losing incumbents we asked about the reasons for them losing.

Table 16: Government support and good reputation are essential

Winning incumbent	
Reason	%
Govt support	29%
'Good guy'	14%
Money	14%
Other	43%
n	*14*

Losing incumbent	
Reason	%
No Govt support	22%
'Bad guy'	33%
No Money	11%
Other	33%
	9

* Note: I have here coded the responses into the major thematical areas. (Q38).

In these elections governmental supports seems to have been very important, especially in explaining winning incumbents. Financial resources, while already important in early

[44] This corresponds to Przeworksi et.al.'s definition of democracy (Przeworski, 2000).

1990s, is not considered as important as in the following two elections. Some candidates were said to have performed well due to their oppositional platform (Ibraimov), while others performed badly due to being 'too oppositional' (Turgunaliev).[45] Government support would translate as '*adminresurs*' in Russian – i.e. a different type of electoral manipulation, not outright falsification as in ballot-stuffing or incorrect tabulation of results. The 'other' category includes issues like campaign experience and financial resources.

Political parties

Already by the beginning of 1993 the Justice Ministry had registered 12 political movements or parties.[46] The Communist party had been deregistered after the failed coup in Moscow 1991, but regained its official status as a party in early 1992.[47] Akaev expressed at a very early stage his desire to see the emergence of a coherent and strong party system. Ethnic and religious parties were explicitly banned. Not surprisingly the reinstated Communist Party emerged as the strongest party organization. The Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (DMK), created in May 1990, provided a platform for other parties to emerge. As a spin-off from DMK Erkin Kyrgyzstan (ErK) was created by Turgunaliev and Tekebaev in early 1991. Tekebaev later went on to form the Ata Meken (Fatherland) party in late 1992. At the far end of the nationalist spectrum there was the nationalist Asaba party lead by Bazarbaev which propagated for an ethnically 'pure' society, using the slogan 'Kirgizia for Kirgizians' (Hvoslef, 1995). Prior to the election in September 1994 a poll put the Communist Party up as the most popular party with 10% nation-wide support, closely followed by 9% for Ata-Meken, 5% for ErK, 4% for DMK, 2% for Asaba, and only 1% for the newly established Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK). There are also some interesting regional patterns, where the capital of Bishkek and the surrounding region, Chui, report very high numbers for people that will not take part in the elections, almost a third. Also, the Communists and Ata Meken are doing far better in peripheral *oblasts* (Anderson, 1999, p. 38).

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[45] Ibraimov in Alai (#96, #97) and Turgunaliev in Ala-Buka/Aksy (#71).
[46] According to OSCE and Collins the number of registered parties prior to the 1995 election cycle was 12 (Collins, 2006, p. 185; OSCE, 1995).
[47] Late 1993 according to Collins.

Less than a fifth of the total number of candidates were nominated by political parties and of those that got elected only 14% (18% according to CEC) were party candidates.[48] One-quarter of all the party nominated candidates (n=161) were from the Communist Party. Nine parties managed to get a member elected: SDPK three seats; United Kyrgyzstan, Erkin Kyrgyzstan, Ata-meken and Kyrgyz Communists all took two seats; and one seat each for Agrarian, Agrarian-Workers, Kyrgyzstan's Democratic Movement, and the Republican Party.[49] But the biggest groups were clearly the 'independents', who won 86 % of the seats in the 1995 election.[50] After the election there was a re-configuration of the positions with several of the independent candidates reportedly aligning themselves with the Social Democrats after the election (Collins, 2006, p. 233).[51]

Just as a point of reference I here present a post-election survey conducted by IFES in late 1996. When asked to name a party that represents the views of the respondent the Communist Party comes out on top with 12%, followed by DMK 6%, Asaba 5%, Erkin Kyrgyzstan 5%, and Ata-Meken 4% (Olds, 1997).[52] The survey also asked about the ideal number of parties, as a way to gauge the support for a multi-party system. One-quarter said that one party would be the ideal number, 14% said that two would be ideal, and 43 said that several (>2) would be ideal.

Candidate typology and candidate selection

Many of the elected MPs were former *kolkhoz* directors or officials, but the businessman category was also well represented. The 1995 elections were also the first ones where new business elites, some of them suspected of financial impropriety, emerged as an important elite category. The persons elected were not disposed to view Akaev favorably, as with the many cases of local bosses being returned to the parliament after being challenged by a candidates appointed by the center (Anderson, 1999, p. 52). After the elections Akaev is

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[48] The number of party candidates is taken from the OSCE Election Report (OSCE, 1995). The number for elected party MPs that Collins gives is 21.9% (23 MPs) (Collins, 2006, p. 232).
[49] Asaba (Banner) also took one seat in the upper house (not according to the CEC though).
[50] 'Out of 35 members of the Legislative Assembly, 23 are independent; out of 105 members of the Assembly of People's Representatives, 69 are independent' (Namatbaeva, 1995, p. 3).
[51] According to President Akaev himself, only 84 of the 105 MPs elected in 1995 had a party affiliation (Brauer, 1995).
[52] I here report the numbers from the second cohort, December 1996, n=1494. The respondents were shown card with party names on them.

said to have claimed that 'the existing election law allowed members of the old elite and representatives of criminal groups to be successful' (Anderson, 1999, p. 52). In the IFES survey they also asked whether the respondents knew the name of the MP from their district. A majority said that they did not know.[53] Let us now examine how the successful candidates can be characterized in terms of professional categories. Here is a list of all MPs elected in 1995 and how their professional profile is distributed in the population.

Table 17: *Nomenklatura* candidates doing well

Elite segments	SMD (percent)
State apparatus (*power* in Russian)	29%
Industry, construction, transportation, agriculture	29%
Local government	14%
Entrepreneurs (Businessmen)	7%

* Source: CEC (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 1996).

There is also an indication that some criminal elements were involved in the campaigning, with one of the candidates being assassinated in Bishkek 16 February.[54] As for gender balance I note that only four women were elected out of 105, three in Legislative Assembly and one in People's Assembly, totalling less than four percent.[55] Half of the female MPs were elected in the capital of Bishkek and none of them were incumbents.[56] A more detailed typology of candidates, based on interview data (candidate survey) will be presented in the next chapter.

Summary

The 1995 elections were clearly highly contested and the dispersion of the vote well illustrates the fragmented nature of politics in this immediate post-independence period. Contrary to many other post-colonial settings there was no prior large-scale mobilization for independence, no strong organizational basis for popular movements, no charismatic or

[53] The number from the July 1995 cohort is 45% 'no, do not know the MPs name', while the number of 'no' is up to 55% in December 1996.
[54] Central Asia Monitor, news summary, no. 2, 1995.
[55] It should be noted that the fall in the representation of women was typical across the former Soviet bloc (Matland & Montgomery, 2003).
[56] We do not know the third Legislative Assembly MP though.

prolific leaders in Kyrgyzstan.[57] The only established party organization, the Communist Party was banned after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and even if it was later reinstated its organizational capacity was clearly circumscribed. In the 1995 elections political parties were extremely marginal and the contest was instead organized around local elites with positioning towards the Akaev administration as a key variable. In many cases local bosses were returned to the parliament after being challenged by centrally (pro-Akaev) appointed candidates (Anderson, 1999, p. 52).The socio-economic crisis was the main concern of both voters and candidates according to our candidate survey and other surveys conducted at the time of the election. The elections were perceived to be highly competitive, at least by the candidates themselves. Many members of the old Soviet era assembly decided not to run, but there were also several cases where they did run, and in most cases successfully so. But there were also cases of losing incumbents, indicating that elections were perhaps becoming meaningful in the sense of uncertainty of outcome and holding representatives accountable. Private sector entrepreneurs, aka businessmen, were still a fairly small category of candidates and the role of financial resources was still not as important as it will later become (see next chapter).

After the 1995 parliamentary elections the democratic opposition became even more marginalized (Collins, 2006, p. 228). Later in the fall of 1995 Akaev surprised many by expediently urging for Presidential elections for December 1995. There was speculation that the reasons he called the elections early was the fear of increasing economic dissatisfaction, that would get worse all the time, and mobilization in the southern parts of the country for the Soviet era republican leader, Absamat Masaliev (Namatbaeva, 1995, p. 2). In the elections Akaev got 72% of the votes in the first round.

[57] Like in some of the other post-Communist countries, like Walesa in Poland or Havel in Czechoslovakia, or Nkrumah in Ghana or Nyerere in Tanzania.

February/March 2000 elections

This was a challenging time for the people of Kyrgyzstan and for their elected 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 18: Electoral democracy declining and economy growing

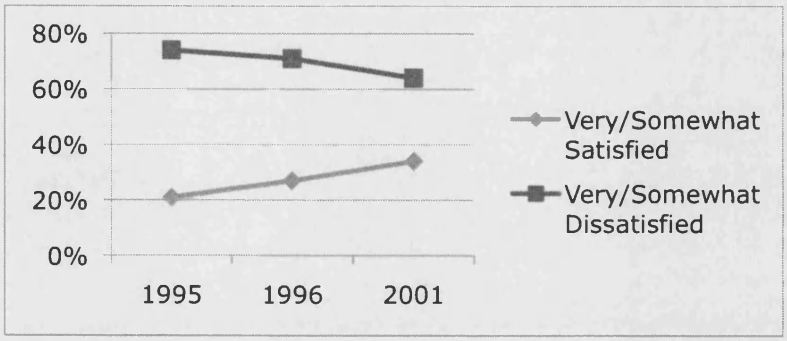
Indicators	1997	1998	1999	2001	2003
Electoral Process (FH)	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.75	6.00
Civil Society (FH)	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50
GDP growth (annual %)	10	2	4	5	-0

* Freedom House Nations in Transit scores range from 1 representing the highest level and 7 the lowest level of democratic development. GDP figures are from World Bank WDI indicators.

Here we can see that there was no significant change in the civil society score during this period, but that the electoral cycle in 2000 worsened the ranking in terms of the democratic nature of the electoral process itself. The impact of the Russian financial crisis in 1998 can also be seen in the fall in economic growth. 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 (14%). Two chambers were envisioned, a 60-seat professional Legislative Assembly, of which 45 members elected from SMDs and 15 from national party list, and a 45-seat People's Representative Assembly with 45 members from SMDs (Iskakova, 2003, p. 386).

As a general trend it can be noted that people were getting more and more satisfied with the post-Soviet developments. The economy grew and the chaos of the early years of independence was waning.

Figure 1: Increasing levels of dissatisfaction



* Source: IFES poll (Pototskii & Sharma, 2002).

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 (R. Abazov, 2003b, p. 546). 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% of all investments (R. Abazov, 2003b, p. 547).Regional disparities created a lot of discontent in rural areas, and especially so in the southern parts of the country. Turnout in the 2000 elections was just below 60% in the first round and 65% in the second round (Graybow, 2001, p. 222).

What were the issues if we ask the candidates themselves? The following table provides an overview of the responses from the candidate survey conducted by the author.

Table 19: Economy and the social sector in focus

Sector	Sector focus (primary)	Sector focus (secondary)
Infrastructure=1	10%	25%
Agriculture=2	14%	0%
Social sector=3	24%	8%
Economy=4	34%	17%
Education=5	7%	8%
Rule of Law=6	10%	17%
Corruption=7	0%	25%
n	*29*	*12*

* 2000 only (Q26).

Here we can see that in terms of area focus the most common first priority issue is still the economy. This largely follows the priorities of the populace as reported in polling conducted by IFES (Olds, 1997; Pototskii & Sharma, 2002).[58] The social sector is also emerging as an ever more important sector. In the 1990s the Soviet era social safety nets were dismantled and this left many groups vulnerable. This might explain the fact that there was a renewed focus on the social sector among the candidates in the 2000 elections. Issues of infrastructure and corruption also come up as important second priorities, but among the voters only 2% claim to be dissatisfied due to high levels or corruption, and for democracy that same number is 1% (Pototskii & Sharma, 2002). Several candidates specifically mentioned democracy as an important focus area.[59] The campaign platforms of the candidates ranged from general positions, like being against privatization, to specific proposals, like granting a particular mountainous district a 'high altitude' status and therefore increasing the subsidies (#65: Q26). The transitional years of the 1990s were heavily present in the minds of the candidates. One candidate uttered: 'People do not believe in the reforms of the early 1990s, the western experiments' (#67).

Competitiveness

In the first round of elections in February there was on average 4.7 absolute candidates in each SMD. However, the average *Effective Number of Candidates* (ENC) score was 3.1,

[58] Where the reasons for people being dissatisfied were (in order or importance): Unemployment 24%, Low living standards 20%, Inflation 10%, Economic recession 10%, Lack of social protection 9%.
[59] However due to the small number in the total sample we decided to not code this as a separate category.

understandably lower than the absolute number, but still a very high number. A total of 420 candidates were registered to stand in the SMD for both chambers. Eleven parties contested the 15 available proportional seats. The Legislative Assembly had 230 candidates challenging the 45 seats, an average of 5.1 candidates and ENC 3.1. The People's Assembly had 186 candidates running for the 45 seats, 4.1 on average and an ENC of 3.05, almost exactly the same as for the Legislative Assembly. Competition was clearly very high if on average there were three *effective candidates*, meaning three equally strong candidates receiving roughly the same share of the votes each in each SMD.[60]

What do the candidates themselves have to say about competitiveness? Here I examine district level competitiveness and how the candidates themselves reason about this phenomenon. We wanted to ask the candidates what they thought about the level of contestation in their own SMD.

Table 20: Very high levels of competition

Was your SMD competitive?		
Answer Options	**2000**	
Very	63%	19
Somewhat	30%	9
Don't know	0%	0
A bit	3%	1
Not at all	3%	1
answered		*30*
skipped		*3*
skipped %		*9.1%*

* (Q30).

Over ninety percent of the candidates considered the elections to have been somewhat or very competitive. It is interesting that the candidates consider the election to have been very competitive since this is the time the international community considers a low point in Kyrgyzstan's 'democratic development' (see Table 18). This just goes to show that the international community is obsessed with high-profile national level politicians, like Felix

[60] Some of the competition might be attributed to the re-drawing of the districts for the 2000 election (see later chapters).

Kulov or Danyar Usenov in the 2000 elections, but that they failed to recognize local level dynamics outside of these heavily exposed SMDs.[61]

We also asked candidates to compare their district's competitiveness with the previous election in the same district.[62]

Table 21: A majority considers elections more competitive than in 1995

Was your SMD more or less competitive than previous elections?		
Answer Options	**2000**	
More competitive	54%	15
Less competitive	18%	5
Equally competitive	29%	8
answered		*28*
skipped		*5*
skipped %		*15.2%*

* Note that the district magnitude was changed in between elections. This is therefore a somewhat misleading question. We left it up to the respondents to interpret the question (Q31).

This table illustrates that elections were becoming more and more competitive over time. This might seem strange considering that the first post-independence elections in 1995 had been established a very high baseline category for comparison. There might be some idiosyncrasies due to the sampling frame (see methodology appendix). Or it might be due to the subjective nature of the question. In any case, the interesting part is how the candidates themselves explain high levels of competition. We asked this question in an open-ended fashion and later coded to responses into several thematic categories.

Table 22: 'Strong candidates' explain high levels of competition

Thematic category	Distribution (%)
Strong opponents=1	55%
Incumbency=2	0%
KG Mentality=3	10%
'Clan'=4	0%
Facade=5	5%
Other=6	30%
n	*20*

* We coded a total of 88% of the responses (total responses n=111, Q32).

[61] For more on these high-profile cases see previous chapter on history of elections in Kyrgyzstan.
[62] Note that the SMDs were re-delineated in each election and this judgment can therefore only been seen as provisional.

Here we can see that the strength of the opponents is by far the most common explanation for the competitiveness of a particular SMD. The other category mainly concerns financial resources, but previous campaign experience is also mentioned in a few cases. Only 5% considered high levels of competition to be a façade. The great majority of these responses show that even though the electoral process did not reach international standards in terms of free and fair elections, they nevertheless were competitive and the competition was real. Some responses to this question also mentioned that the position of MP is indeed a very attractive position, and that many therefore wanted to win.[63] Next, we asked what the candidates thought about levels of falsification.

Table 23: Elections somewhat falsified

Were the election results falsified in your SMD[64]		
Answer Options	**2000**	
Completely falsified	23%	7
Somewhat falsified	35%	11
Don't know	10%	3
Not much falsified	16%	5
Not at all falsified	16%	5
answered		*31*
skipped		*2*

* (Q35).

A majority considers the 2000 elections to have been somewhat or completely falsified in terms of the officially reported results. On the other hand one third considers the elections to have been not falsified.

Accountability

In these elections 38 of the incumbent parliamentarians were re-elected, a significantly higher number, as a total of the new composition, than in the 1995 elected parliament. This goes to show that there was clearly a break in terms of representation with the breakup of the Soviet Union in Kyrgyzstan and that by 2000 there was a new political elite emerging. But most of the incumbents did not manage to get re-elected in the first round. There are also some interesting cases of Election Day turnover, for instance Abyt Ibraimov in Kara-

[63] #30 and #61.
[64] Specified as to what extent the final CEC numbers reflect the intention of the voters in your SMD.

Kulja, a case that we will examine in more detail in a separate chapter. Examining how the candidates themselves explain the phenomena of losing incumbents, or alternatively how they explain the power of incumbency we get the following patterns:

Table 24: Why did the incumbent win/lose?

Winning incumbent	
Reason	%
Govt support	7%
'Good guy'	36%
Money	29%
Other	29%
n	*14*

Losing incumbent	
Reason	%
No Govt support	0%
'Bad guy'	50%
No Money	50%
Other	0%
	4

* (Q38).

Here we can see that being a 'good' representative and having money are seen as the most important features in securing re-election in 2000. In this sample we only have four comments about losing incumbents and in all of the cases fellow candidates blame that on them being 'bad guys', i.e. not properly serving their own constituencies. The other category also includes one explicit allegation of the use of bandit gangs, something that will become more important in the 2005 election (#113). Also, in one of the winning cases it was mentioned that ethnicity played a large role in the sense of all the Uzbeks voting for the Uzbek candidate. Since the district had an Uzbek majority the incumbent Uzbek patron therefore easily secured re-election (#139).[65] Financial resources is also clearly becoming much more important, at least as an explanation for securing re-election.

Political parties

By the time of the February 2000 elections 42 parties were officially registered. A total of 11 parties nominated candidates for the 15-seat party list proportional element. The competitiveness score for the party list was a very high 5.7 (ENC), with the Communists coming out on top receiving 28 % of the vote. The bloc 'Union of Democratic Forces got 19% and the Democratic Party of Women of Kyrgyzstan did relatively well with 13%. The seat distribution in the final parliament is as follows:

[65] District no. 34, the city of Osh, in the 2000 elections.

Table 25: Election Results and fractions

Category	Orientation	Party Name	Party List Seats	SMD Seats	Total Seats
Presidential Orientation	Pro-Presidential	Union of Den. Forces	4	8	12
		Dem. Party of Women	2	0	2
		Party of Afghan W. Vet.	2	0	2
	Pro-Government/Centrist	Maya Strana	1	3	4
		Agrarian Labor Party	0	1	1
Independent Candidates				73	73
Oppositional Orientation	Opposition	People's Party	0	2	2
		DMK/Ar-Namys	0	0	0
	Leftist Opposition	Party of Communists	5	1	6
	Opposition/Centrist	Erkin Kyrgyzstan	0	1	1
		Ata-Meken	1	1	2

* This table is taken from the OSCE Election Observation Report (OSCE, 2000, p. 20).

Some parties had some pre-election procedural problems, like People's Party and Ar-Namys that were both denied registration. Others like DMK was at first registered, but later de-registered (OSCE, 2000). Erkin Kyrgyzstan did not win any seats in the PR election, but one of their members won a SMD seat (Tursunbai Bakir-Uulu). The parties positioned themselves in relation to the Akaev regime, with the Communist Party aggressively coming out against the neoliberal marketization reforms. Asaba (national resurrection in Kyrgyz) on the other hand attacked the President for 'unnecessary concessions' to ethnic minorities and not being nationalist enough (R. Abazov, 2003b, p. 548).

Candidate typology and candidate selection

So what kinds of candidates were running in 2000, and more importantly what kinds of candidates were successful? In terms of the successful ones this is how Freedom House

reported the results: 'A mix of government officials, intellectuals, and clan leaders captured 82 of the 105 seats in that vote' (Graybow, 2001, p. 222).[66] As was already shown in the table above, the biggest category of successful candidates were independents. These were candidates that represented local and regional bosses (R. Abazov, 2003b, p. 549). According to the Central Election Commission the professional distribution is as follows:

Table 26: Engineer is the most common professional background of MPs

Category	%
Engineers	33%
Economists	17%
Historians	10%
Lawyers	8%
Doctors	6%
Agronomists	4%
Military	3%

* Others: Philologists 2, Physicists 2, Journalists 2, Architects 1, and Teacher 1. CEC data, both LA and PA (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 2001).

Here we can see that a third of all the new MPs had an engineering background, a profession that during the Soviet era often meant influence in the collective farms and other industries. The intellectuals are also a fairly big category, if we include historians, lawyers, doctors, journalists, and teachers, totalling almost one third of the candidates. In terms of gender balance I note a small increase from the previous parliament, with seven women out of the total of 105 MPs, six in the Legislative Assembly, of whom three from the party lists, and one in the People's Assembly, totalling 7%. Three out of four of the female MPs were from SMDs in the capital of Bishkek, indicating a weak female rural representation. It seems as if a plurality system does not favor women, since only four women made it to the parliament from SMDs and half of them were Russian. This will be further explored in later chapters.

Summary

The 2000 electoral cycle was characterized by several high-level cases of intimidation, including de-registration of leading candidates. However, under the surface the competition remained fierce. Even compared with the very competitive elections of 1995, a majority of

[66] Note the use of the 'clan' concept. Here the author gives an impression of 'clans' existing as corporate groups whos 'leaders' somehow get elected to the parliament.

the surveyed candidates reported higher levels of competitiveness for the 2000 elections compared to the previous one. Clearly local elites were taking elections serious even if their participation was not channeled through political parties. High levels of contestation also go together with high levels of reported irregularities, both in the pre-election form 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 the competition. Many MPs from the 1995 elected parliament managed to secure another mandate period, but in most cases only after being forced to a run-off. There are also interesting cases of losing incumbents. The role of money seems to be on the rise starting with these elections. Financial resources are mentioned as a key explanation for both easy re-election, in cases of a lot of resources to spend, and failure to secure re-election in cases where the incumbent had insufficient funds.

The parliamentary elections in the spring of 2000 were followed by even more flawed presidential elections in the fall of 2000.[67] The years following the 2000 elections were increasingly difficult years for President Akaev. The discontent finally led to the Aksy tragedy and cemented the opposition's attitude, especially in the southern parts of the country.[68]

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[67] 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' (OSCE, 2000).

[68] On 17 March 2002 in the southern Aksy district, police opened fire on a demonstration in support of a jailed local politician. Five demonstrators were killed and several others injured. The event sparked month long nationwide protests (Radnitz, 2005).

February/March 2005 elections

In the spring of 2005 the national context was one of preparation for the upcoming presidential elections where Akaev had announced his intention of stepping down. The international context was one of 'colored revolutions', with regime changes in both Georgia and Ukraine. The discontent with Akaev was especially strong in the southern parts of the country, following events in Aksy in 2002 and the border settlement with China.[69] There was a disappointment with the development achievements of Akaev's economic transformation (marketization) and political liberalization (democracy). The first round of elections in February 2005 led to small-scale local protest around the country, a mobilization that after the second round coalesced into a sustained national protest movement. On March 24 a crowd of demonstrators ousted Akaev, in what was later termed the 'Tulip Revolution'.

These were the first elections since the adoption of a new constitution in 2003, which created a unicameral 75-member parliament to be elected from SMDs. Even though the election procedures in the previous election cycle had been rated low by international standards, the voters still believed in their ability to affect the outcome.[70] However, in a poll conducted in April 2005, right after the elections, 76% of the respondents said that the 2005 parliamentary elections had indeed been unfair (IRI, 2005). In the regional distribution of trust in the electoral process there are some interesting details. One could have expected relatively high numbers of dissatisfaction with the electoral process in the southern parts of the country and especially in the Jalalabad region, where the 'revolution' later started. The region in which the largest proportion thought that the elections were unfair, however, was the northern *oblast'* of Naryn (87%), while in the southern district of Jalalabad, where the post-election demonstrations started, the number who thought the elections were unfair was the lowest (64%). In any case a very high number, but if the main issue of the post-election mobilization was discontent with the electoral procedures one could have expected

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[69] For more on the tragedy in Aksy see (Radnitz, 2005). For more on the border dispute and its settlements see (Gullette, 2006a).

[70] 69% in a USAID survey (n=1500) responded positively to the question 'Does your participation in elections at any level influence the results of such elections? (Q10) (USAID, 2004).

demonstrations to start in Naryn or Bishkek instead. My interpretation is that disgruntled local elites in the form of losing incumbents used the 'falsification' narrative to keep their supporters mobilized. These local pockets of dissatisfaction later coalesced into a nation-wide movement that key opposition leaders picked up.

In any case, this was always going to be in an interesting election since Akaev's term was coming to an end and there had been discussions about extending his term. Some people claim that pro-Akaev candidates were supported by the presidential administration with this clear aim in mind. What were the issues if we ask the candidates themselves? The following table provides an overview of the responses from the candidate survey conducted by the author.

Table 27: Economy and the Social sector most important (still)

Sector	Sector focus (primary)	Sector focus (secondary)
Infrastructure=1	16%	0%
Agriculture=2	13%	0%
Social sector=3	19%	40%
Economy=4	25%	33%
Education=5	6%	0%
Rule of Law=6	16%	27%
Corruption=7	6%	0%
n	*64*	*15*

* 2005 only (Q26).

Here we can see that in terms of area focus the most common issue concerns the economy, followed by, social sector, and rule of law (human rights) issues. This largely corresponds with the attitudes among the voters, as reported in polling conducted by IFES, IRI, and others (IFES, 2005; USAID, 2004). The platforms ranged from general positions, like being against President Akaev, to specific proposals, like organizing elections for local police commissioners. Three candidates were explicit about their disapproval of the privatization policies of the previous years. Another exclaimed: 'Socialism was fair. Today we are lost. Where are we going?' (#51). Several also brought up the issue of migration.[71] And others were candid about their mission: 'Distributing budgetary means to Alai *rayon* [candidate's home region]' (#89).

[71] # 24, 50, and 151.

Competitiveness

In the 2005 elections there were an average of 5.2 (physical) candidates in the 75 single member election districts. This seems to imply that there was at least a certain degree of contestation for the available seats. If we look at particular constituencies a different story emerges. In three districts there was only one candidate. If we look at the measure *Effective number of Candidates* (ENC) we see that on average there were 2.8 'viable' candidates in each district. In any case, this figure clearly shows that there was a real choice in most constituencies. Furthermore, rural districts were slightly more competitive than urban districts.

What do the candidates themselves have to say about competitiveness? Here I examine district level competitiveness and how the candidates themselves reason about this phenomenon. As already noted, there are some interesting patterns of competitive SMDs in Kyrgyzstan, one of them being the fact that competitiveness is spread out all over the country, even in rural peripheral areas. We wanted to ask the candidates what they thought about the level of contestation in their own SMD.

Table 28: Very high levels of competition

Was your SMD competitive?		
Answer Options	**2005**	
Very	62%	47
Somewhat	17%	13
Don't know	0%	0
A bit	8%	6
Not at all	13%	10
answered		*76*
skipped		*2*
skipped %		*2.6%*

* 2005 only (Q30).

Around eighty percent of the candidates considered the elections to have been somewhat or very competitive. This is roughly the same as in the two previous elections, even though the real ENC numbers differ between the elections. The number of districts that are perceived as not at all competitive increased significantly compared to the 2000 elections, up from 3% to 13%. I will later examine in more detail the cases of complete lack of competition, as in the district of Kadamjai in Batken *oblast'* where there was only one candidate. We also

asked candidates to compare their district's competitiveness with the previous election in the same district.[72]

Table 29: More competitive than the 2000 elections

Was your SMD more or less competitive than previous elections?		
Answer Options	**2000**	
More competitive	54%	15
Less competitive	18%	5
Equally competitive	29%	8
answered		*28*
skipped		*5*
skipped %		*15.2%*

* Note that the district magnitude was changed in between elections. This is therefore a somewhat misleading question. We left it up to the respondents to interpret the question (Q31).

This table illustrates that elections were becoming more and more competitive over time. At least that is the perception of the candidates. The Freedom House scores also confirm this trend, with Kyrgyzstan being labelled 'Not Free' (PR 6, CL 5) in 2000 and 'Partly Free' (PR 5, CL 4) in 2005 In any case, the interesting part is how the candidates themselves explain high levels of competition. We asked this question in an open-ended fashion and later coded responses into several thematic categories.

Table 30: 'Strong candidates' explain high levels of competition (again)

Thematic category	Distribution (%)
Strong opponents=1	43%
Incumbency=2	15%
KG Mentality=3	4%
'Clan'=4	4%
Facade=5	2%
Other=6	30%
n	*46*

* We coded a total of 88% of the responses (total responses n=111, Q32).

Here we can see that the strength of the opponents is by far the most common explanation for the competitiveness of a particular SMD. The other category includes issues like

[72] Note that the SMDs were re-delineated in each election and this judgment can therefore only been seen as provisional.

ethnicity, criminal networks, and financial resources. Only 2% considered high levels of competition to be a façade.

> There were 12 candidates in my district. Four of them put up as candidates with the purpose of taking votes away from me. Before, my village belonged to Kara-Kulja district, but these elections it was attached to Myrza-Ake district in order to split the vote. Everything was done on purpose and against me. The powers did it all (#159).

But these kinds of anecdotes are rarely found in our responses. The great majority of these responses show that even though the electoral process did not reach international standards in terms of free and fair elections, they nevertheless were competitive and the competition was real. Some responses to this question also mentioned that the position as a MP is indeed a very attractive position, and that many therefore wanted to win.[73] It is especially interesting in a context of superpresidentialism, that local elites would consider the parliament as being an attractive and influential body (#83). Several interviewees brought up the issue of candidates having gathered experienced since the first post-Soviet elections and that voters as well better understood what elections was all about.[74] Or as one put it 'There were many candidates for one district, some of whom were former MPs and experienced in election campaigns' (#96). Again, this illustrates the thesis about elections in themselves generating competitiveness over time.[75]

Other pointed out the deep distrust of authorities and the heightened political battles in this transition period. One candidate said 'Maybe [the elections were competitive] because presidential elections were soon to take place. Therefore, the then President Akaev wanted to push his own MPs in to the parliament to ensure support in the future' (#18). The main dividing line seems to have been the position towards the authorities. A lot of pressure was put on many political activists and potential candidates, but this also created counter-reactions: 'Authorities started losing power and started pressuring people. People did not like this' (#53). In some cases candidates were asked to join the pro-presidential party Alga: 'The Governor [Shaidiev] personally invited me to see him and demanded that I withdraw my candidacy and work for Alga party' (#143). In only a few cases were explicit

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[73] #30, 61, 63, 86.
[74] #28, 54, 60, 65, 96, 101, 105, 121, 138, 148, 150. Some mentioned specific skill sets that candidates had developed, like rhetorical (oratory) sills (#97, 106, 154).
[75] What I have termed the Lindberg thesis (Lindberg, 2006).

kinship ('clan') dynamics mentioned as an explanation to high levels of competition, and in these cases always in conjunction with localism, nepotism, and traibalizm (#59?, 128).[76] Next, we asked what the candidates thought about levels of falsification.

Table 31: Some falsification on Election Day

Were the election results falsified in your SMD		
Answer Options	**2005**	
Completely falsified	25%	19
Somewhat falsified	22%	17
Don't know	10%	8
Not much falsified	23%	18
Not at all falsified	19%	15
answered		*77*
skipped		*1*

* (Q35).

Note that those that consider the officially reported election results as completely or somewhat falsified have decreased somewhat over time. Still almost half of the respondents rate the election results are having been falsified. So what if the results were falsified, what did the candidates do about it? It has been shown by others that disgruntled candidates can be a very potent force (Radnitz, 2006b). A third of the candidates filed a formal complaint (Q36). This is a very high number and it shows an upward trend, which in itself indicated a certain measure of trust in the system.

Accountability

In 2005 there were 27 incumbent parliamentarians that managed to get re-elected. By far the most successful incumbents, at least proportionally, where the ones in Talas *oblast'*, while Issyk-Kul *oblast'* incumbents where all unsuccessful. In the city of Osh there is also a strong rate of re-election, while in the *oblast'* it is the other way around. Once again it is worth remembering that the post-election protests started in Osh and Jalalabad, both with relatively low re-election rates. Disappointed incumbents were key actors in the ensuing post-election mobilization. Several of the winning incumbents were also on the 100 richest persons in Kyrgyzstan list. In two of these cases there were only one candidate running in

[76] One claimed that due to the vast size of the districts there were many 'local' (elites) that wanted to take their chances (#128).

their district, Baibolov in Bishkek and Sabirov in Osh. The 'against all' votes were exceptionally high in both cases, perhaps demonstrating dissatisfaction with the candidate registration process. At least this voting system gave the voters an opportunity to show their dissatisfaction.[77]

Several of the incumbents only got around a third of the vote in the first round. We do not have any data on pre-election turnover, i.e. retirements. But we do have data on incumbents who lost in 2005. We start by looking at incumbents who served two terms before they were humiliated at the voting both. By all accounts these candidates had to be well prepared for securing re-election. After serving two terms one would assume that they would have perfected their personal and organizational skills. It is therefore surprising that seven two-term incumbents lost, and even more surprising that the support levels for three of them was below 10 percent. This clearly demonstrates that some accountability mechanisms were at play. This is not to say that the voters decided, it might well have been a decision by pro-presidential state structures as well.

Table 32: Two-term incumbent MPs losing in February 2005

Name	SMD	% in 1995	% in 2000	% in 2005
Usubaliev Turdakun	1995:22PA 2000:22LA 2005:33	78	99	24
Ibraimov Abyt	1995:25LA 2000:33LA	27	3	n/a
Artykov Anvar	1995:26LA 2000:26LA 2005:42	35	29	19
Pronenko Alevtina Pavlovna	1995: 4LA 2000:43LA 2005:6	19	43	9
Sadybakasova Sharipa	1995:21PA 2000:4PA 2005:6	52	29	38
Zhuraev Borubai	1995:22LA 2000:31LA 2005:42	42	36	9
Kanimetov Zhangoroz	1995:17PA 2000:18LA 2005:71	33	54	7

* First round vote-shares. LA = Legislative Assembly, PA = People's Assembly. In 2005 there was a unicameral parliament.

[77] The 'against all' vote was also practiced during the Soviet time.

Two of the losing two-term incumbents were female MPs, both of them elected from the party list component in 2000. This goes to show the gender effects of the majoritarian electoral system. Women were indeed doing well when they were running on a nation-wide party list for a specific Women's party. For the 2005 elections the party list component was scrapped and the women that had been elected from the party list did not manage to beat their male counterparts at the booth. Of the losing two-term incumbents it is notable that three of them got less than ten percent in the first round in 2005.

What if we ask the candidates themselves to explain the phenomena of losing incumbents?

Table 33: Money explains why incumbents win

Winning incumbent	
Reason	%
Govt support	14%
'Good guy'	14%
Money	64%
Other	7%
n	*14*

Losing incumbent	
Reason	%
No Govt support	3%
'Bad guy'	39%
No Money	8%
Other	50%
	36

* (Q38).

Here we can see that those incumbents that get re-elected largely succeed because of financial resources, at least if you ask the losing candidates themselves. In 14% of the cases they win due to outright governmental support and in 14% they win because they simply are 'good guys', i.e. they deserve to win. Incumbents that lose generally do so for some other reason, but in forty percent of the cases allegedly due to them being 'bad' representative for the local communities in their district. In some cases it was pointed out that incumbents simply promised too much and failed to deliver.[78] As you can see the 'other' category is very large when it comes to explaining losing incumbents. This category includes things like: the candidate gave up (did not campaign actively); minority nationality (uzbek); wrong gender (female); not known locally etc. In several of the districts where incumbents lost there were two or even more incumbents in one and the same district. Since the districts had been redrawn and the number of MPs was reduced, all of the incumbents could not have won a seat in any case. Some of these districts illustrate the complete lack of

[78] 'депутат не выполнил обещания, хотя был избран трижды. появлялся только перед выборами' (#148). Or #49, 54, 148.

pre-election coordination among the local elites, or how else could one explain the high numbers of candidates and also the high levels of vote dispersion (competitiveness). A possible explanation could be the lack of an established balance of power between different local forces, a sort of uncertainty if you will. In such a context, and especially with constantly changing district boundaries, you cannot really blame local elites for filing their own preferred candidates instead of uniting behind a joint consensus candidate.

Political parties

17 % of the nominees were party nominated, a majority of them from the pro-presidential *Alga Kyrgyzstan* (Forward Kyrgyzstan). A third of the 75 elected MPs were party members, of which only two were non *Alga Kyrgyzstan* members. There were 12 parties actively involved in the election campaign in February/March 2005. The main pro-presidential parties in the 2005 parliamentary elections were: *Alga Kyrgyzstan* and Adilet. Bermet Akaeva, the daughter of the President played a leading role in the former while the latter was run by the Head of the presidential Administration. There were also four opposition groups, People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan (NDK), the Civic Union for Fair Elections, Jani Bagit (New Direction), and Atajurt (Fatherland). All these coalitions were formed back in 2004. In addition to these you also had two communist parties and Felix Kulov's Ar-Namys (Honour) party. Before the elections all these seven oppositional groups formed Forum of Political Forces with the idea of cooperation during the electoral campaign.

It is a challenge to measure the relative strength of these parties when only a few candidates used the party label in the campaign. One way to measure a party's organizational strength is to look at the ability to nominate regional and local election commission members and local election-day observers. If we look at the data we can see that Adilet and Alga Kyrgyzstan had substantially higher numbers of SMD level election commission members than any other parties. In total 25 parties had their members represented in SMD level election commissions, all in all 289 members which is approximately 26 per cent of all SMD election commission members. Note that one third of the members of the polling station commissions had to be party members according to the law. One interviewee said that these are only a façade, that they come up with fictive protocols, fictive organization

membership.[79] If we look at the numbers of election observers over the whole country we see that in total there were almost two thousand party representatives observing the voting procedures on both 27 February and 13 March. There were over nine thousand domestic election observers out on the Election Day and also almost seven hundred international observers mainly from the OSCE and CIS. Eight parties had managed or decided to take part as election observers. It can be noted that Alga Kyrgyzstan did not observe the election at all. The strongest parties in terms of mobilizing election observers were Adilet and Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan. Parties were most successful in getting their candidates registered in Batken, Bishkek and Chui oblasts, where parties nominated around 20 percent of the registered candidates. In Jalalabad on the other hand only 9 percent of the candidates were party nominated.

Candidate typology and candidate selection

389 candidates participated in the election (425 were originally registered). 13 of the candidates had been members of the legislative assembly and 13 had been members of the People's assembly. Over half of the elected MPs were pro-Akaev and approximately one third had close ties with informal business (Radnitz, 2006b). Like in previous elections, parties, worker collectives, or the candidates themselves were allowed to nominate. In some cases the initiative came from voters in the hometown (village) of the candidate or perhaps their workplace. However, most candidates decided to register as self-nominated, largely due to easier registration requirements. There were also some high-level cases of candidate de-registrations. Concerning gender balance, I note with disgrace that not a single female MP was elected.[80] There were five constituencies where women got over 10 percent.[81] Three of these five districts were in Bishkek. It seems as if women are facing real difficulties in rural districts. Also, several high-level court cases demonstrate that even formal complaint mechanisms might prove difficult for women.

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[79] Interview, Maatov, Uzgen, 22-Jun-2006.
[80] Bermet Akaeva, the daughter or president Akaev, was actually elected at first, but was later deprived of her seat after the 'Tulip revolution'.
[81] SMD no. 6 with Sharipa Sadybakasova, who got more than Eshimkanov, but a court case later gave the seat to him. Interview, Sadybakasova assistant, 10-Mar-2008.

Summary

These elections were by far the most dramatic ones in the history of Kyrgyzstan. The elections provided a crucial organizational logic for the revolution that followed. Already established campaign organizations and fully mobilized voters were utilized in the post-election protests. There were yet no strong political parties, but out of disparate local contests grew a protest movement that in the end managed to topple the sitting President Akaev. There are several interesting factors to note about the 2005 election as compared to previous electoral cycles. First of all, competition remained at very high level both in terms of *Effective Number of Candidates*, but also in terms of perceptions of competitiveness (Table 28). And what is even more important there is a perception among the candidates themselves that competition was becoming ever more fierce. Also, the role of financial resources significantly increased in the 2005 election. But the level of perceived falsification decreased for the first time since independence in 1991. This might seem a bit paradoxical considering that the perception of a flawed electoral process triggered the 'Tulip Revolution'.

The spring events of 2005 in Kyrgyzstan severely altered the power balance in the country. Two former Prime Ministers played a key role in the post-revolution developments. Kurmanbek Bakiev quickly took over the presidency, while the formerly imprisoned oppositional politician Felix Kulov was put in charge of the security apparatus. Later in the spring these two agreed to a so called tandem agreement, whereby Kulov would not run in the presidential elections scheduled for July 2005 and would instead be appointed Prime Minister after the elections.

Chapter 3 Conclusions

Since the first multi-candidate elections introduced during the Soviet era there has been, on average, a fairly high number of candidates challenging each seat in Kyrgyzstan. Exceptionally high as a matter of fact, considering that we are talking about a regime that can at best be classified as Partly Free. An examination of particular constituencies illustrates this well.[82] In some constituencies there has been only one candidate, while in

[82] Which is the topic of the constituency level chapter (6).

others there has been over twenty. This figure clearly shows that there has been a real choice in most constituencies in all post-independence elections. Another clear pattern is that women fare much better in urban constituencies. It can also be noted that there was a complete break in terms of women incumbency in 2005.

The perception of competitiveness on a district level has been persistently high with on average 83% rating the election as either 'very' or 'somewhat' competitive. It is interesting to note that perceptions of competitiveness do not correlate with international ratings of the electoral process. Freedom House lowered the Electoral Process score for Kyrgyzstan in the wake of the 2000 election, but the perceived level of high competition was 93% for that year. This just goes to show that the international community is obsessed with high-profile national level politicians, like Felix Kulov or Danyar Usenov in the 2000 elections, and failed to recognize local level dynamics outside of these heavily exposed SMDs.[83] Furthermore, when asked to compare levels of competition with the previous election in the same district there is also a fairly stable majority that rates the elections as becoming more and more competitive for each time. When asked to explain high levels of competition candidates simply say that there are many strong candidates with the campaign experience, networks, and the resources needed to get votes. However, as already noted high levels of competition does not mean that it was a fair battle. As a matter of fact the level of falsification on Election Day has been persistently high. In terms of trends over time there are nevertheless some interesting patterns. The perception of falsification is going down over time, with the 2005 elections being the first time ever a majority does not rate the elections as having been 'completely' or 'somewhat' falsified. Also, encouragingly the number of candidates that make formal complaints about falsification is dramatically going up over time, perhaps indicating increasing levels of trust in the rule of law.

[83] For more on these high-profile cases see previous chapter on history of elections in Kyrgyzstan.

CHAPTER 4: BUSINESSMEN AND BUREAUCRATS COMPETING FOR VOTES – CANDIDATE PROFILES AND CAMPAIGNING EXPERIENCES IN KYRGYZSTAN

> Why do they compete? Evidently because they seek allies from the outside, as their strength comes from the numbers that follow them. And how do they compete? Clearly, by promising benefits and advantages to their followers. The consequence is that the unorganized majority of the politically inactive becomes the arbiter in the contest among the organized minorities of the politically active. So, no matter how oligarchic the organization of each minority is when examined from within, nonetheless the result of the competition between them is democracy (Sartori, 1978, p. 71?).

The issues in this chapter can be formulated in several different ways, but the underlying puzzle is what happens on an elite level when political liberalization occurs. Does the elite continue to be homogenous and monolithic, therefore implying continuity or what some authors refer to as adaptation.[84] Or is there a pattern of a differentiated and polyarchic elite emerging, i.e. is there a brake with the Soviet era patters that can be labeled elite competition?

We have established that Kyrgyzstan is an interesting and perhaps unlikely case of political pluralism. Parliamentary elections in this newly independent state were surprisingly competitive in the post-independence period, with election results demonstrating extreme levels of vote dispersion. There were actually single-member districts (SMD) where ten candidates competed for one seat and where the votes were spread out fairly equally.[85] In this chapter I address three key areas of interest in terms of electoral politics in Kyrgyzstan: 1) who are the candidates; 2) how are they selected, whom do they represent and how do they compete; and finally 3) how do different candidate types perform. In the first part of the chapter I dwell on the type of persons that were running in each of the elections and the campaign experiences as reported by the candidates themselves. What I am interested in

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[84] See the special issue on elites in *Governance*, Volume 6 Issue 3 , Pages 303 - 460 (July 1993).

[85] For instance in Chatkal-Alabuka SMD, Jalalabad *oblast'*, in 2005, there were nine candidates and the top five all got around 15%, and the rest got around 5% each. This district got an *Effective Number of Candidates* score of 5,96, indicating that there were almost six candidates that were competitive.

here is to develop a typology of candidates so that I can later measure their respective success electoral performance over time. In the second part I present the campaign experiences of the candidates focusing on candidate selection and the role of political parties, but also on actual campaign techniques. The final part of this chapter consists of a first attempt to test the predictive power of candidate categories over election results.

In this chapter it is demonstrated that bureaucrats and incumbents continue to perform well, even though a post-Soviet economic elite is challenging them. The big losers are intelligentsia type of candidates and marginal societal groups, like farmers, pensioners, or unemployed people.

Who are they? Outlining a Candidate Typology

I begin by examining the kind of persons that were running in parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan 1995-2005, and based on this I develop a candidate typology. The idea here is to shed light on elite composition and study patterns of change and continuity in this volatile post-Soviet period. First I give an overview of the socio-biological and positional profiles of the sampled candidates. Thereafter I review the political experience of the candidates. This lays the ground for the latter part of the chapter where the hypothesis to be tested is that the role of business elites over time has increased and that the 2005 elections demonstrate the high point in this development.[86]

Socio-Biological and Positional

Where are the candidates from, how old are they, where did they get their education, and what was their main profession at the time of the election? There are many dimensions of a candidates' life that could explain electoral performance. Let us start by examining the birthplace of the candidates. In most cases the birthplace of the candidate is in the district (SMD) where they eventually decide to run. This is a good illustration of the power of 'primordial ties', i.e. that loyalty to their native locality is high among political entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan.[87] It is possible that the candidates estimated their chances in the capital of Bishkek, or perhaps in the southern cities of Osh or Jalalabad, to be minimal due to a lack of horizontal networks (Radnitz, 2006a). The candidates might also have considered elections easier to manipulate in their home villages, both in terms of actual election day manipulation, but perhaps mostly in terms of voters being more susceptible to the lures of material gifts in impoverished rural communities.

The average age of a candidate at the time of the election was forty-seven years, with the youngest being twenty-three and the oldest seventy-one. And in terms of gender balance, as I showed in the previous chapter, the trend over time in Kyrgyzstan has been consistently

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[86] Tekebaev, among others described this trend to me in great detail, see also (Radnitz, 2009).
[87] A local observer also noted that being native to a particular SMD actually triumphs 'clan' (kinship) ties, in reference to the district of At-Bashy in Naryn *oblast'* (Baktibek Isakov, 28-Apr-2009, Harvard University).

downward in terms of women's representation, with the 2005 elected parliament eventually ending up as a male-only assembly.

If we now turn to educational background I note that a majority of the sampled candidates had graduated from a higher educational institution.

Table 34: Candidates are highly educated

Name of Institution	Number of Students (n=160)
Kyrgyz National University (Balasagyna)	54
Kyrgyz State Technical University	24
Kyrgyz Agrarian University	16
Osh Humanitarian-Pedagogical Institute	10
Kyrgyz State Medical Academy	6
Tashkent Polytechnic Institute	4
Kyrgyz State Academy for Sports	3
Tashkent Higher Party School	3
Moscow Automobile-Road Institute	3
Osh Technological University	3

* Here we list all the educational institutions that had more than two of the interviewed sample attending them. Other institutions: Kyrgyz State Jurisprudence Academy 2, Academy of the Interior Ministry (MVD) 2, Moscow Commercial University 2, Frunze Economic Academy 2, Samarkand Cooperative Institute 2, Andijan Agriculture Institute 2, Frunze Polytechnic Institute 2 (Q8).

Here we can see that candidates in Kyrgyzstan in general are quite a well-educated group of people. Furthermore, a third of them attended the major Kyrgyz National University. Educational background does not tell us very much about the candidates. Positional information is far more revealing. In the literature on post-Soviet transitions there are two ideal types of elite transformation that allegedly took place. One school of thought claims that the new elites were simply a reproduction of old Communist Party networks, a privatization of the nomenklatura of sorts (Kryshtanovskaya & White, 1996). Another point of view emphasizes elite competition and fragmentation, dividing post-Soviet elites into 'old' and 'new' formations (Lane & Ross, 1999). However, as Hughes has pointed out age, or the generational dynamic, was also a significant factor in determining elite patterns (J. Hughes, 2001, p. 685).

In this chapter *nomenklatura* is defined as 'a monolithic group of Party-Komsomol functionaries and technocrats ' (Lane & Ross, 1999, p. 160).

> ... the Soviet elite was monolithic in nature, extending across all spheres of party, state and social life. Its monolithic character was assured by the fact that all its members were communists, and by the manner in which all leading appointments had to be made or at least approved by higher-level party bodies (Kryshtanovskaya & White, 1996, p. 713).

Another concept is that of an *apparatchik,* 'an agent of the governmental or party apparatus'. In this project I only consider representative political elites, i.e. elites that engage in the politics of representation (elections, party work etc.). As a first take, and arguably a rough one, I present the following distribution in the case of Kyrgyzstan:

Table 35: Businessmen the largest group of Candidates

Coding	Total		2005		2000		1995		By-elect.	
	Response Percent (%)	Response Count								
Businessman	35%	51	33%	22	30%	9	36%	12	53%	8
Bureaucrat	33%	48	34%	23	40%	12	33%	11	13%	2
Intelligentsia	19%	27	12%	8	20%	6	27%	9	27%	4
Experienced politicians	13%	19	21%	14	10.00%	3	3%	1	7%	1
answered		*145*		*67*		*30*		*33*		*15*
skipped		*15*								

* Open-ended question 'What was your main job at the time of running?' Responses were recoded into these four categories. For instance a lawyer, NGO professional, Academic was coded as Cultural. This division follows the main categorization of post-Soviet elites (J. Hughes, John, & Sasse, 2002) (Q9).

Perhaps surprisingly only thirteen percent were experienced politicians, while thirty-five percent were businessmen. Obviously a candidate could fall into more than one category. However, based on a straightforward coding of the reported responses this is the distribution we get. Over time there are some interesting patterns, with the proportion of businessmen and bureaucrats remaining largely stable, while intelligentsia candidates being significantly reduced from 27% in 1995 to less than half of that in 2005 (12%). Experienced politicians on the other hand are increasing over time going from a meager three percent in 1995 to over a fifth of all candidates in 2005. In the final section of this chapter I will go deeper into the different types of candidates, going beyond this simplified way of categorizing candidates.

In terms of work related experience it can be noted that over two-thirds of the candidates had previously worked for the state. This might not come as a surprise since the state was indeed ever present in one form or the other during the Soviet era.

Table 36: Two-thirds had worked for the State

Had you at the time of the elections (year X) ever worked for the State?										
Answer Options	**Total**		**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
	Response Percent	Response Count								
Yes	68%	106	70%	53	70%	23	73%	24	43%	6
No	32%	50	30%	23	30%	10	27%	9	57%	8
answered		*156*		*76*		*33*		*33*		*14*

* The question in Russian was: Работали ли Вы когда-либо в госструктуре до выборов X г. (Q10).

The table shows that the number of candidates that had previously worked for the state is fairly constant over time in our sample. As has been noted in the literature the Soviet *nomenklatura* largely remained in power in Kyrgyzstan, even if President Akaev was a bit of an outsider (Nogoybaeva, 2007). Nothing surprising here in other words. Let us now continue by examining the experience variable in more detail.

Political experience

We are here interested in the personal profile and prior political experience of candidates. Of special interest is election related experience. If we start by examining the number of elections that our sample has participated in we see that the sampled candidates (n=160) have participated in an average of 1.76 elections.

Table 37: Many Candidates run repeatedly

Here we focus on the X elections, but have you ever ran in another parliamentary election? If so, what years?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1990	9%	14
1995	42%	67
2000	41%	65
2005	55%	88
2007 (PR)	16%	25
Other years (by-elections)	14%	23
answered		*160*
Total		*282*
Average		*1.76*

* Note that these are the aggregated numbers for the whole sample as of spring 2008. This does not say anything about the number of elections that candidates had participated in prior to the year X (the year of focus in each particular interview, Q2).

For each of the interviews we focused exclusively on a particular election year (year X), but clearly many of the candidates had participated in elections prior to year X, and in many

cases they did take part in elections after year X. We will get back to this fact later, but suffice to say that in all likelihood previous election related experience prepares the candidates for successful campaigning in the future. One of the secondary hypotheses in this project is indeed that the fairly open contest in the 1995 and 2000 elections gave a lot of people a first time direct experience with running their own campaigns and therefore as a consequence the 2005 elections were surprisingly competitive, even with the frequent efforts to suppress competitiveness from the side of the authorities.[88]

This argument can be taken further by not only examining national level elections, but also local elections. The assumption being that any election related experience gives political entrepreneurs an opportunity to hone their skills and therefore be better prepared for the next election, regardless of what level. Furthermore, if successfully elected to either local of national office, that position obviously provides a good platform for further contests.[89] In terms of previous experience with local level elected office over forty percent say they have that experience. This is possibly of relevance in that it shows the professionalization of politics, where the local level elections provide a breeding ground for future politicians.

Table 38: Many have experience of local elected office

Had you ever been elected to a local assembly or office (oblast, rayon, village level) at the time of the X elections?										
Answer Options	**Total**		**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
	Response Percent	Response Count								
Yes (specify)	42%	65	49%	38	34%	11	35%	12	31%	4
No	58%	91	51%	39	66%	21	65%	22	69%	9
answered		*156*		*77*		*32*		*34*		*13*
skipped		*4*		*1*		*1*		*1*		

* (Q3).

[88] This largely follow the argument put forward by Lindberg, i.e. that elections themselves over time lead to more competitive and democratic regimes (Lindberg, 2006). This has been challenged by others (Levitsky & Way, 2008), pointing out the stability of non-democratic regimes. For more detail see introductory chapter.

[89] Note for instance that in the case of Georgia, Mikhail Saakashvili got elected to the city council in Tblisi in 2002 and this gave him a platform to organize the 'Rose Revolution' in the fall of 2003. The case of Madagascar in March 2009 can be seen as even more contemporary evidence of this phenomena, where Andy Rajoelina, a former local politician (mayor in the capital) managed to oust the incumbent president. Clearly we need to recognize local elected office as a potential platform for national level contests.

Here we can see that the number of candidates with prior local level elected-official experience is substantially higher in 2005. This makes sense since the number of opportunities to get elected increase over time, as Kyrgyzstan have introduced new forms of local elections as part of a decentralization drive.[90] Next I address to issue of dynastic patterns, i.e. whether close family members had previously been elected to the Parliament and what affect this has on family members running. The following table illustrates that in an overwhelming majority of the sampled candidates, 90%, an immediate family member had not been a MP.

Table 39: Family members of MPs rarely participates

Has anyone in your family ever been a Member of Parliament (also going back to the Soviet time)?										
Answer Options	**Total**		**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
	Response Percent	Response Count								
No	89%	138	89%	68	78%	25	97%	33	92%	12
Yes (name&location)	11%	17	11%	8	22%	7	3%	1	8%	1
answered		*155*		*76*		*32*		*34*		*13*
skipped		*5*		*2*		*1*		*1*		

* (Q4).

This suggests that we are not dealing with family cliques of 'clans' in the sense of lineages. In the following section I wanted to examine more closely the political profile of the sampled candidates. What are the defining features of the candidates' political profile? What role do specific political issues play and what is the role of ideology, if any? Clearly a certain ideological vacuum characterized politics in Kyrgyzstan in the post-independence period. This is understandable after years of official Marxist-Leninist ideological indoctrination. Most politics after the breakup of the Soviet Union was structured around a binary pro-government/oppositional line. In analyzing politics in Kyrgyzstan the one-dimensional left-right axis was something that both foreign and local analysts tried to apply, but without much success (OSCE, 2000). To start off this analysis we wanted candidates to place themselves on a left-center-right scale.

[90] In 2004 local elections were organized where several thousand candidates were filed (OSI report on decentralization).

Table 40: All candidates are 'centrists' now

Chose an ideological label that suits you best[91]										
Answer Options	**Total** Response Percent	Response Count	**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
Left	11%	16	11%	8	11%	3	16%	5	0%	0
Center	75%	109	75%	55	86%	24	63%	20	83%	10
Right	14%	20	14%	10	4%	1	22%	7	17%	2
answered		*145*		*73*		*28*		*32*		*12*
skipped		*15*		*5*		*5*		*3*		

* (Q40).

Evidently the extremes on this one-dimensional scale are uncomfortable categories for the respondents, with 75% placing themselves in the comfortable 'center' category. Those that placed themselves in any of the other categories are also of interest. For instance a Member of Parliament from the oppositional Social-Democratic Party defined himself as on the 'right', even though one would assume, by western standards, that they would be on the left or at least center-left.[92] By far more important than left-right is the position towards the rulers at the time of the elections. We have a lot of evidence of the oppositional mindset of the Kyrgyz (Beshimov, 2009). Since the 2005 elections were such an important event and the attitude towards the former President, Askar Akaev, such a hot topic we decided to ask directly about this.

[91] This question was one of the last questions in the survey and it needs to be noted that 'left' and 'right' are also categories that the Kyrgyz use as names of 'tribal confederations', like the *Ong* and *Sol kanat* (ref?).
[92] Murat Dzhuraev from Batken *oblast'*.

Table 41: Many were anti-Akaev during the 'Tulip Revolution', March 2005

What was your role in the March 2005 'Revolution'										
Answer Options	**Total**		**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
	Response Percent	Response Count								
Active anti-Akaev	42%	63	45%	34	30%	9	50%	16	31%	4
Active pro-Akaev	5%	8	7%	5	3%	1	6%	2	0%	0
Passive	47%	71	45%	34	50%	15	44%	14	62%	8
Other (specify)	5%	8	3%	2	17%	5	0%	0	8%	1
answered		*150*		*75*		*30*		*32*		*13*
skipped		*10*		*3*		*3*		*3*		

* (Q41).

Not surprisingly only a few admitted being actively pro-Akaev during this particular point in time. In terms of performance at the voting booth, it can be noted that the admitted relationship with the 'Tulip Revolution' mobilization or ones' position on a left-right ideological scale does not correlate with vote share in the first round. Finally, since the interviews were conducted in the immediate aftermath of the December 2007 elections we also decided to ask about the role that the sampled candidates played in this first ever party list (PR) election.

Table 42: A majority participated in the early elections, December 2007

What was your role in the December 2007 elections?										
Answer Options	**Total**		**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
	Response Percent	Response Count								
Candidate	21%	31	27%	20	23%	7	0%	0	31%	4
Campaigner	28%	43	24%	18	26%	8	44%	14	23%	3
Passive	44%	66	44%	33	32%	10	56%	18	38%	5
Other (specify)	7%	11	5%	4	19%	6	0%	0	8%	1
answered		151		75		31		32		*13*
skipped		9		3		2		3		

* (Q42).

Here we can see that a majority of the sample actively took part in the elections, either as candidates or as active campaigners. Those that ran in the 1995 elections, however, a majority of them were passive in these elections.

Section Summary

To summarize this section on candidate experiences from professional life, electoral politics, and socio-biographical characteristics I note that candidates in Kyrgyzstan are middle-aged males, largely following patterns in established democracies. Many candidates have experience from running in earlier elections, either on local or national level. Again, this might be a plausible explanation for persistently high levels of competitiveness all over Kyrgyzstan. There are simply a lot of candidates that are campaign-experienced. In terms of generational dynamics and ideology, I note that parliamentary election candidates in Kyrgyzstan are highly educated and 'centrists' in ideological orientation. Ideologically this transition period caused a lot of confusion, with the traditional left-right scale rendered meaningless. One of the few organizing principles in electoral battles during this time, in terms of positioning, is whether the candidates view the incumbent President and his administration favorably or not. Finally in terms of elite composition and our four-fold typology I want to stress that businessmen actively take part in the electoral process, more often than not as candidates. However, as we shall see, their success rate is not as good as is often assumed in the literature.

Concerning the typology of candidates, one could envision either a parsimonious categorization and try by force to fit a diverse group of candidates into only a few categories, like above. Or, one could create a broader categorization. I will further elaborate on this in the final section of this chapter, but suffice to say that the question about the role of new economic elites is indeed very interesting. As the case of Russia demonstrates, the often uneasy balance of power in the 1990s later reach a new equilibrium with Putin, when state elites regained control and economic elites had to stay out of politics (Frye, 2003). However, this was not the case in Kyrgyzstan, where the new emerging economic elites openly challenged central authorities, among other things, as candidates in parliamentary elections. For instance almost half of all the 100 richest persons in Kyrgyzstan where also running in the 2005 parliamentary elections:[93]

[93] 100 Samykh Bogatykh Lyudei Kyrgyzstana 2004 Goda [Fergana: The 100 Richest People in Kyrgyzstan], www.akipress.kg, accessed Jul-06.

> Money lends itself to power in Kyrgyzstan: forty-eight of the wealthiest 100 Kyrgyz ran for parliament. Twenty-eight of them won their seats, sixteen in the first round and twelve in the second. Of the twenty losers, six defeats were to other candidates from the list. Only eight of the forty-eight lost to somebody who was neither an Alga candidate nor another member on the 'wealthiest' list. The most formidable candidates were those on both lists—all eight candidates who were on the '100 wealthiest' list and representing Alga won seats (Radnitz, 2006a, p. 153).

This quote nicely illustrates the power of both money and pro-presidential orientation. Even though the number of wealthy candidates might seem high and therefore all pervasive, the events after the election, the co called 'Tulip Revolution', clearly indicates the weakness of the ties between moneyed elites and the Akaev regime.

How are they selected and whom do they represent?

In this section the focus is on the immediate campaign experience of the candidates, starting with covering the crucial candidate selection phase and the role that political parties played. This is followed by an overview of reported campaign techniques. Again, the average number of elections per interviewed candidate was 1.76, with 34 candidates having participated in three or more elections. Clearly a quite experienced groups of candidates. Here I also want to reiterate that over 40% of the sampled candidates had been elected to local office prior to running in parliamentary elections, indicating political experience that in turn could explain the competitiveness of the elections.[94]

Candidate selection

One of the most secretive and least studied dimensions of the electoral cycle is the candidate selection procedure.[95] This is especially so in the post-Soviet context where parties were marginal in the candidate selection process. The question asked in the survey was 'How were you selected as a candidate?' and the answers were left open-ended. We asked the candidates to shortly describe the process: who nominated; how was it organized etc.

Table 43: A majority were self-nominated

Nominated by	Distribution %
Self	61%
Collective	24%
Party	8.6%
n/a	7%
n	*151*

* Non-response rate only 2% (Q19).

We can see that most candidates were self-nominated. The reasons for this is both the weak party system at the time, but also the fact that nominating oneself was much easier, even if one did belong to a party. One candidate said 'Alga [the main pro-presidential party in

[94] Q3 in the survey.
[95] Sometimes referred to as the 'secret garden' of politics (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988).

2005] nominated me at their congress because some American organization did a survey and found out that I was really popular' (#36). Another said that he was nominated by a labor cooperative, but that he registered as self-nominated due the simpler procedures (#39). One candidate even turned down an offer to stand for the pro-presidential party Alga, claiming that he preferred independence and only wanted to serve his own district (#58). Another said 'I on purpose did not go for Alga, because their authority had already weakened' (#83). A candidate's strategic decisions in the selection phase obviously involve many factors, of which party affiliation is only one. Being closely attached to a party, even if it is a weak one, obviously compromises ones' room for maneuver. There were also particular challenges for party nominated candidates in Kyrgyzstan in the elections covered here, like requirements on how the party congress had to be organized etc.

Many candidates also had to consider in what district to run. For instance, what if other prominent candidates announce their candidacy in the same district where you intend to run?

> As I was akim [local mayor] of Kyzyl Kiya town it was Kyzyl-Kiyans who wanted to nominate me but as Masaliev [Communist Party chairman] proposed his candidacy there, I did not want to compete with him and he also asked me not to put forward my candidacy. I had to run in my [native] *rayon* as residents asked me to (#103).

This quote shows the calculated nature of picking a district, perhaps not that different from the behavior of prospective candidates in established democracies. Again, remember that a very high number of incumbents were running in the 2005 elections, partly due to the fact that there were fewer seats available.[96] In general people run in districts where they have a family connection.[97] But even after a decision has been made on district and party, there is still room for articulating other affiliations and perhaps indicate whom one intends to 'represent'. When asked a straightforward question about this we get the following responses.

---

[96] The 2003 election reform stipulated 75 seats in stead of the 105 that were elected in the mixed system elections in 2000.

[97] For more on family connections and the alleged importance of kinship see 'Clan politics' case study chapter.

Table 44: Business and 'Locals' well represented on the ballot

Target group	Primary choice (%)	Secondary choice (%)
Locals	28%	24%
Businessmen	27%	3%
Youth	21%	48%
Intelligentsia	11%	7%
Women	10%	3%
Elderly	3%	14%
n	*71*	*29*

* The respondents were asked to give two choices. Here we only have answers from half of the interviewees. Early on in the process we realized that this was not a good question. The responses that we were given were mere platitudes and we therefore decided to cut out the question in later interviews (Q20).

This table shows that when asked to pick a group that they focused on in their campaigning most people, not surprisingly, said 'locals'. Interestingly many said that they represented the business community. Another seemingly important category, and perhaps a requirement in terms of political correctness, was youth. More importantly, we wanted to now what role political parties play in the pre-election phase. Remember the survey question about ideological position (Table 40), where three quarters placed themselves in the 'center' category. So what was the relationship between candidates and political parties?

Table 45: Only one-quarter were Party members on E-day

Were you a party member at the time of running?										
Answer Options	**Total**		**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
	Response Percent	Response Count								
No	72%	111	68%	52	74%	23	74%	25	79%	11
Yes (name party)	28%	44	32%	24	26%	8	26%	9	21%	3
answered		*155*		*76*		*31*		*34*		*14*
skipped		*5*		*2*		*2*		*1*		

* (Q21).

This shows that an overwhelming majority of the candidates were not a member of any party at the time of the election. This pattern is fairly stable over time. Based on this diagnosis of an extremely weak party system many later argued that Kyrgyzstan needed to move to a proportional party list system (Juraev, 2008). This was often heard in the run up to the constitutional referendum in the fall of 2007, a referendum that also contained a

proposed electoral law reform. As a follow-up to those that were a member of a party we asked whether that same party formally nominated them.

Table 46: Half of the party members chose self-nomination

If yes, were you nominated by this party in the X elections?										
Answer Options	**Total** Response Percent	Response Count	**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
Yes	47%	18	45%	10	50%	3	50%	4	50%	1
No, why not?	53%	20	55%	12	50%	3	50%	4	50%	1
answered		*38*		*22*		*6*		*8*		*2*
Skipped		*6*								

* Note that only those that responded positively to Q21 were included in this question (Q22).

In specifying why their party did not nominate them, some said that the party had nominated another candidate in their particular district. Others seemed to have thought more strategically about their party's low levels of popularity and therefore decided to go it alone. A couple of them emphasized that the procedures for being nominated through parties was much more complex, requiring more paper work, than simply registering as an independent (self-nominated). Several were surprised at the question, saying that the system back then was not a party system, but a SMD system, as if those two would exclude each other. We also followed-up by asking why they had chosen this or that particular party. Some seemed to have chosen party based on the leadership, others based on the ideas and the platform of the party. A couple of the Communist Party candidates put it bluntly, noting that they had been members for several decades by now and that their membership was rather automatic. Here it is important to note that later chapters will deal with issues of local level informal institutions, like aksakals (local elders), and their alleged role in the candidate selection procedure.

Campaign issues and techniques

Next I examine the kind of issues that candidates reportedly focused on in their campaigns. The ambition is here to get a better sense of how the electoral process works in Kyrgyzstan, with a special focus on what interests candidates represent. We asked the candidates to name two of the most important issues in their campaign platforms. The following table shows both the coding and the percentage distributions:

Table 47: It's the Economy stupid!

Sector	Sector focus (primary)	Sector focus (secondary)
Economy=4	27%	27%
Social sector=3	19%	16%
Rule of Law=6	16%	11%
Infrastructure=1	14%	18%
Agriculture=2	14%	6%
Education=5	6%	10%
Corruption=7	4%	11%
n	*134*	*62*

* Two options in order of priority. Nine persons skipped this question (was not asked? Q26).

Here we can see that in terms of area focus the most common issue concerns the economy, followed by, social sector, and rule of law (human rights related) issues. This largely corresponds with the attitudes among the voters, as reported in polling conducted by IFES, IRI, and others (IFES, 2005; Olds, 1997; Pototskii & Sharma, 2002; USAID, 2004). The platforms ranged from general positions, like being against President Akaev, to specific proposals, like organizing elections for local police commissioners (referring to American style sheriff elections). Three candidates were explicit about their disapproval of the privatization policies of previous years. Another exclaimed: 'Socialism was fair. Today we are lost. Where are we going?' (#51). Several also brought up the issue of migration (ref). And others were candid about their mission: 'Distributing budgetary means to Alai *rayon* [candidate's home region]' (#89).

Next we wanted to know what methods campaigners use to attract votes in Kyrgyzstan. Again, this says something about who the candidates were. The questions about campaigning techniques were purposely kept open-ended with the intention of allowing for maximum freedom for the interviewees to frame the response. Asking around about this sensitive issue, especially right after a very contentious election (December 2007) was naturally a high-risk strategy. In analyzing the responses we need to be cautious and account for the context, and especially the position of the respondent at the time of the interview. For instance a candidate that played an active role in the 'Tulip Revolution' mobilization and then went on to serve as proponent of the new regime (pro-Bakiev) would naturally be predisposed to emphasize the corrupt nature of campaigning during the Akaev-era, while they would be more positive when commenting on the most recent election (December 2007). In any case I coded the responses with an eye to the 'vote buying

discourse', which clearly is one of the key elements in any discussion about campaigning in Kyrgyzstan.

Table 48: 'Other' candidates use votebuying, but not me!

	Votebuying
Me	2%
Others	88%
Both	10%
n	*88*

	Admininstrative support
Me	0%
Others	100%
n	*19*

	'Others campaigned like me'
Yes	21%
No	79%
n	*104*

* Here I decided to code the responses focusing on whether the interviewee alleged others to have used dirty techniques (*graznye tekhnologii* in Russian, Q27&28).

Here we can see that only 2% admitted themselves to using vote buying as a technique, while 88% claimed that other candidates in their districts used this technique. Hardly a surprising finding, but it nevertheless clearly illustrates the 'vote buying discourse' in Kyrgyzstan. Everyone talks about it and everyone is supposedly engaged in it, but no one admits it when it comes to themselves. This even if the President at the time, Akaev, publicly stated that it voters should take money if offered, but vote for whomever they like. Vote buying obviously comes in many different forms, but the most common goods distributed are lamb meat, flower, gifts, computers, electricity generators (Q28:#60). As a matter of fact, many things that in the West would not be considered vote buying is considered vote buying in Kyrgyzstan, like offering tea to potential voters (*chaipite* in Kyrgyz).[98] A common way of characterizing other people's campaigns is by the Russian word грязные технологии, meaning dirty tricks.[99] In analyzing this further one could hypothesize that those who do not blame others for vote buying are more pro-governmental in orientation and therefore receive larger shares of the vote. That is, do high achievers (in terms of vote share) mention vote buying at all? Statistical analysis confirms that there is no significant association between these two variables.

How about administrative resources, that is the use of public office for electoral gains? This campaigning technique comes in many forms, but the support from local authorities, both in terms of personnel and logistical support seems to be crucial, especially in rural districts.

[98] Кыргызки чаепитие ('chaipite', i.e. offering sheep meet and tea) (#5, 71). This is pretty much like offering hot dogs at political rallies in Western countries.
[99] #28, 100, 143.

One losing candidate said that administrative resources, like using the village council (aiyl okmotu) or schools staff, favored the leading candidate in their district.[100] Again, no one admitted to using administrative resources for themselves (see previous table). Other techniques that the candidates mentioned include: help with local infrastructure (road improvements, #127); construction of Mosques (actually mentioned by several respondents).[101]

In this last part of this section I want to say something about the discourse on falsification of election results. As a lead-in question, I asked the candidates whether they were surprised by the reported election results (Q34). A majority said they were indeed surprised about the officially reported results. This indicates either a certain level of hubris, in that they actually thought they would get more votes, or outright falsification of the results. Next, we asked what the candidates thought about levels of falsification.

Table 49: Falsification slightly going down over time

Were the election results falsified in your SMD[102]										
	Total		**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count								
Completely falsified	20%	31	25%	19	23%	7	12%	4	7%	1
Somewhat falsified	30%	46	22%	17	35%	11	48%	16	13%	2
Don't know	12%	19	10%	8	10%	3	6%	2	40%	6
Not much falsified	20%	31	23%	18	16%	5	15%	5	20%	3
Not at all falsified	18%	27	19%	15	16%	5	18%	6	20%	3
answered		*154*		*77*		*31*		*33*		*15*
skipped		*6*		*1*		*2*		*2*		

* (Q35).

Note that those that consider the officially reported election results as completely or somewhat falsified have decreased somewhat over time. So what if the results were

[100] Referring to Alymbekov in one of the Issyk-Kul districts, but quickly added that 'he is a good guy' (#142).
[101] #46,53,94,96,103,104. Half of these cases (n=3) are cases were the candidates themselves openly admitted to constructing mosques as a campaign technique.
[102] Specified as to what extent the final CEC numbers reflect the intention of the voters in your SMD.

falsified, what did the candidates do about it? It has been shown by others that disgruntled candidates can be a very potent force (Radnitz, 2006b).

Table 50: Not many formal complaints filed

If completely or somewhat falsified, did you file a complaint?										
Answer Options	**Total**		**2005**		**2000**		**1995**		**By-elections**	
	Response Percent	Response Count								
Yes	22%	27	33%	18	21%	6	10%	3	0%	0
No (why not?)	78%	97	67%	36	79%	23	90%	28	100%	10
answered		*124*		*54*		*29*		*31*		*10*
skipped		*36*		*24*		*4*		*4*		

* (Q36).

As we can see not many filed formal complaints and this in itself can be taken to indicate a lack of trust in the rule of law in Kyrgyzstan. Interestingly, however, the number of candidates that did file a complaint is dramatically increasing over time.

Section summary

In this section I have shown that parliamentary candidates in Kyrgyzstan were predominantly self-nominated in the period covered here, 1995-2005. Many candidates perceived of their constituency as 'locals' or business interests. Political parties were exceptionally marginal in the whole electoral process, with even active party members deciding to go it alone, i.e. without the party's formal endorsement. In terms of salience issues economy comes out on top. The electoral process itself is characterized by irregularities, like vote buying, intimidation, and outright falsification at the polling stations. That is if we ask the candidates themselves. Quite predictably those candidates that consider the election result as falsified are also those with lower reported vote shares.

Table 51: Perception of falsification and Vote share (crosstab)

Falsified?	Mean Vote share %	N	Std. Deviation
completely	10.37	31	7.99
somewhat	11.53	45	11.45
don't know	6.85	18	5.86
not much	17.64	28	13.28
not at all	24.55	24	20.20

* P < .01 (Anova table)

Winning candidates do not consider the results falsified, while losers do. Nothing new or surprising here.

Revised Candidate Typology and analysis of Performance[103]

As already stated, the candidate typology that I presented in the first section was highly insufficient. Furthermore, apart from only analyzing the candidates themselves, we also want to say something about how they perform at the voting booth. In this final section I will examine how different elite categories are performing in terms of vote share in the first round of elections. As already stated it is often alleged that financial resources are becoming more and more important. If this was the case we should observe higher proportions of votes over time for this category as compared to other candidate types. However, the classification of a particular candidate is never unproblematic due to the multiple identities and the multitude of experiences that most aspiring politicians have. As a solution to this problem I have decided to use three different ways of coding the Professional Category variable. In order to do this I had to re-organize data from the candidate survey, complement it with written sources and interviews with local observers. The first candidate typology variable (professional category, profcat1) is the baseline for the analysis and the data is here taken directly from the candidate survey (Q9):

Table 52: Simple Candidate Typology (profcat1)

Coding	Category	Examples (Decision rule)
1	Experienced politicians (pro-Govt/Opp.)	MPs, Party workers
2	Bureaucrat (State administrators)	Experience from State institutions
3	Businessmen	Private sector entrepreneur
4	Cultural (intelligentsia)	Lawyers, NGO professionals, teachers

The problem with question nine (Q9) in the survey is that the candidates themselves decide how to present their professional profile. This is not necessarily a correct characterization since they might be motivated to play down certain experiences, like working for the state or being involved in business deals. It is also problematic that incumbency is included in this typology, since candidates that at the time of the election were sitting parliamentarians often answered *Deputat* (MP) as their 'job at the time of the elections'. The incumbency

[103] Cut-down version for MPhil...(no ProfCat2, no Experience (no.Elect)

effect naturally boosts the Experienced Politicians category and blurs the effect of non-MPs that were nevertheless experiences politicians. The solution to this is to recode the professional experience (position) of an MP into another category that fit them, in many cases unsurprisingly political leaders.[104] The new candidate typology is labeled profcat2b:

Table 53: Simplified Detailed Candidate Typology (profcat2b)

Coding	Category	Decision rule
1	Political leaders	All levels CP secretaries, also -ispolkom chairmen
2	Administrative officials	(Senior) all levels -kom & -ispolkom officials
3	Interest group officials	Trade union officials, Political Party functionaries, and NGO professionals
4	Economic leaders	Directors of state and private enterprises, directors of *sovkhozy* and chairmen of *kolkhozy*
5	Professional	Directors of schools, higher education institutes, universities, research institutes, and chief doctors in hospitals
6	Other	Pensioners, unemployed and students

Even though this is a more precise coding of the professional category profcat1, it still does not allow us to properly analyze the entrepreneurial class, or what is sometimes referred to as simply *businesmen.* In order to do this we need to distinguish between very rich businessmen and all other candidates that might be considered businessmen, but of the more petty type. This is inherently problematic in a country like Kyrgyzstan where so much wealth is not registered and not much data published. Before the 2005 elections, however, there was a list published with the 100 richest individuals in Kyrgyzstan on it.[105] This was a list compiled by local journalists and its reliability can in general be deemed quite high (Radnitz, 2006a; Stamov, 2004). I label this variable profcat3. The distinction here is between successful businessmen that conceivably have both financial resources available for campaigning, but also possess a certain political clout in their districts.

So much for the coding of the professional category variables. In what follows I will systematically examine the whole cohort and the first round election results for each different coding of professional experience: profcat1, profcat2b, and profcat3. Furthermore, I also look at the performance in terms of being elected or not. Finally I examine how

[104] This largely follows the elite typology provided by James Hughes (J. Hughes, 1997).
[105] 100 Samykh Bogatykh Lyudei Kyrgyzstana 2004 Goda [Fergana: The 100 Richest People in Kyrgyzstan], www.akipress.kg, accessed Jul-06.

different categories are doing over time. In this section we are only considering sampled candidates that ran in the ordinary elections, 1995, 2000, or 2005, not those that participated in by-elections.

Simple Candidate Typology

The sections are divided into examining the relationship between candidate typology and vote share, candidate typology and eventual electoral success, and analysis of developments over time for different candidate categories.

First Round Vote Shares

So how are the different professional categories performing?

Table 54: Experienced politicians are getting higher vote shares

PROFCAT1	Mean Vote share (%)	N	Std. Deviation
Experienced politicians	19.92	17	14.49
Bureaucrat	15.61	44	13.80
Businessman	14.16	48	14.79
Intelligentsia	6.66	26	6.60
Total	13.91	135	13.67

* P < .01 (Anova table). Note: Here sorted in descending order for the mean vote share (column 2).

Here we can see that intelligentsia and businessmen candidates seems to have a hard time getting votes compared to experienced politicians and bureaucrats. This might come as a surprise since the common wisdom is that *businesmeni* are indeed performing very well in parliamentary elections (Stamov, 2004). Examining the last column tells us that there is a lot of variation in the businessman category.[106] In other words it seems as if some businessmen are doing very well, while others not.

Actually winning

What about the relationship between candidate typology and eventual success in getting elected to parliament? The following cross-tabulation gives us a an idea:

[106] Businessmen has the highest Standard Deviation score on all four categories.

Table 55: Cross-tabulation of Elected yes/no and Profcat1

			PROFCAT1				
			Experienced politicians	Bureaucrat	Businessman	Intelligentsia	Total
Elected	no	Count	12	38	41	26	117
		% within	70.6%	88.4%	85.4%	100.0%	87.3%
	yes	Count	5	5	7	0	17
		% within	29.4%	11.6%	14.6%	.0%	12.7%
	Total	Count	17	43	48	26	134
		% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

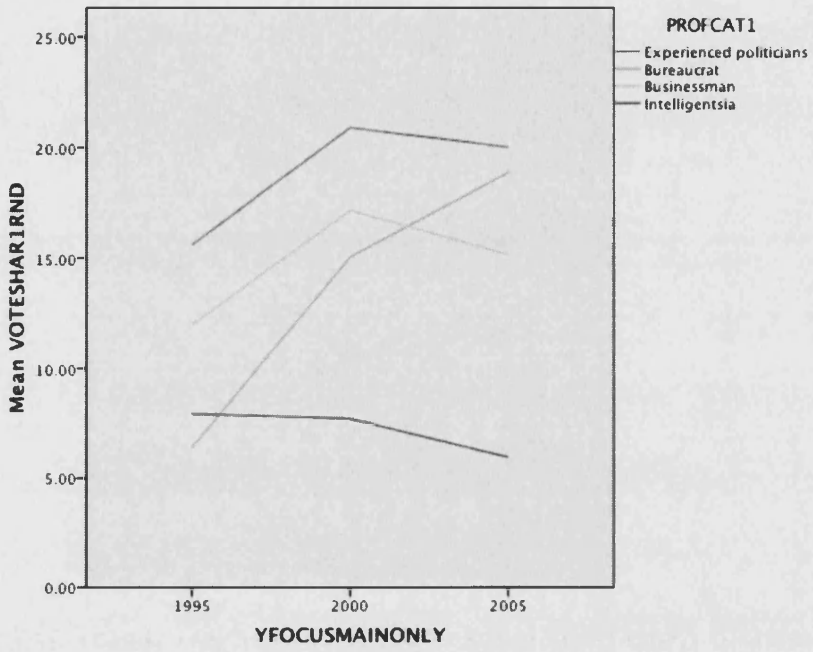
* $\chi 2 = 8.27$, df = 3, P < .05. Lambda not applicable (the within-category mode (Elected=no) is the same as the overall mode. Cramer's V .248, which can be considered strong relationship. Note that $\chi 2$ based scores (like Cramer's V) are problematic if cells contain less than 5 counts, as is the case for instance in the intelligentsia/yes cell.

Here we can see that experienced politicians (here including incumbents) are doing well when it comes to eventually being elected.

Vote share over time

So it seems as if Experienced politicians and Bureaucrats are doing fine in terms of vote shares, and that the success of businessmen has been exaggerated. However, as we can see in the table above, businessmen are proportionally more likely to get elected as compared with bureaucrats. There might also be some interesting patterns over time that we need to account for.

Figure 2: Bureaucrats on the rise



* Only general elections, not by-elections (n=142).

It is here clearly visible that the businessmen category is actually going down in the 2005 elections and that the bureaucrat-type of candidates are doing well. This indicates a pattern of re-consolidation of the state and the marginalization of candidates with no experience working for the state. We might get a better picture if we disaggregate the professional category.

Detailed Candidate Typology

Here we do not include the incumbency dimension in that we recode the professional experience (position) of an MP into what other category that might fit them, in many cases unsurprisingly political leaders. This new categorization borrows from James Hughes work on Russian elites (J. Hughes, 1997).

First Round Vote Shares

If we examine the mean vote-shares for each candidate using the modified profcat2b we get some interesting results.

Table 56:Detailed Candidate typology (profcat2b)

PROFCAT2B	Mean Vote share (%)	N	Std. Deviation
Political leaders	20.76	8	11.56
Economic leaders	18.07	38	17.01
Administrative officials	14.20	32	13.73
Other	11.94	21	9.67
Interest group officials	7.33	11	8.66
Professional	6.63	21	6.16
Total	13.57	131	13.46

* Significant at the .01 level. Note: Here sorted in descending order for the mean vote share (column 2).

This table shows that political leaders are doing well and that there is quite a small variation around the mean vote-share.[107] Political leaders therefore seem to be a fairly homogenous group. As a contrast we have the Economic leaders category with an average vote-share of 18%, but with a much higher variation. An interpretation for this could be that economic leaders are heterogeneous and that we might need to find a sensible sub-division that would allow us to analyze economic leaders with lower levels of variation. One solution here could be picking out the really rich candidates from this group (which incidentally we will do in the next section).

Actually winning

If we examine the simplified profcat2b we get the following results in a cross-tabulation:

[107] Standard Deviation of 11.56, significantly lower than for economic leaders and administrative officials.

Table 57: Cross-tabulation ProfCat2b and Elected yes/no

			PROFCAT2B						
			Political leaders	Administrative officials	Interest group officials	Economic leaders	Professional	Other	Total
Elected	no	Count	6	28	11	29	21	20	115
		% within	75.0%	90.3%	100.0%	76.3%	100.0%	95.2%	88.5%
	yes	Count	2	3	0	9	0	1	15
		% within	25.0%	9.7%	.0%	23.7%	.0%	4.8%	11.5%
	Total	Count	8	31	11	38	21	21	130
		% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

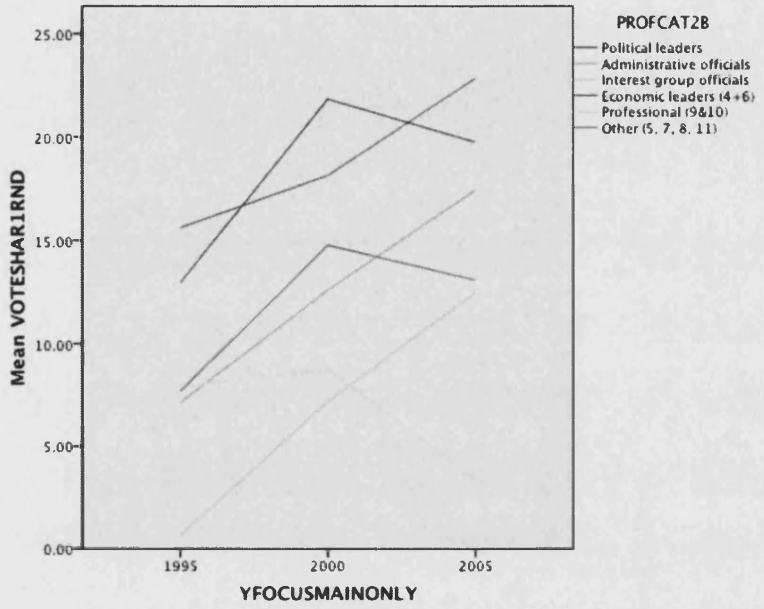
* $\chi 2 = 12.1$, df = 5, $P < .05$. Lambda not applicable (the within-category mode (Elected=no) is the same as the overall mode. Cramer's V .306 at the .01 level, which can be considered strong relationship.

From this table we can see that where a candidate is situated in terms of profcat2b does go together with eventual election success. Political and Economic leaders are performing well in terms of securing a seat.

Vote share over time

We have seen that the detailed candidate typology, profcat2b, partly predicts how well a candidate fares in terms of mean vote-shares and election success if we analyze all candidates at once, irrespective of election year. What happens if we examine developments over time? Are there any interesting temporal patterns?

Figure 3: Politicians and Bureaucrats perform better (profcat2b)



The graph above makes the trends very obvious, three categories are performing better over time, Politicians, Bureaucrats, and Interest Groups officials, while Businessmen and Professionals are finding it hard to keep up. But economic leaders (businessmen) are still doing quite well in 2005, hovering around 20%.

A detailed candidate typology (profcat2b) can in part predict both vote-share and electoral success. In comparing mean vote-shares for different categories there is a significant difference between different groups, with political leaders coming out on top, closely followed by economic leaders. Over time economic leaders and professionals are receiving less and less votes. The same goes for the 'marginals' category, a group that was well represented in the rubber-stamp representative bodies during the Soviet era.

Rich Candidates or Petty Businessmen (2005 only)

It has been established that we need to distinguish between very rich businessmen and all other candidates that might be considered businessmen, but of a more petty type. For a convenient operationalization of this we use the widely cited 100 richest list.[108]

First Round Vote Shares

Let us start by examining what features correlate. Does whether or not you are on the 100 richest list have any relationship with the vote share in the first round of elections or number of elections participated in?

Table 58: 100 richest list (survey sample) and vote-share in 2005

PROFCAT3B	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Not on the 100 richest list	14.28	59	13.93
On the 100 richest list	32.90	8	12.64
Total	16.50	67	14.98

* $P < .01$.

So far we have only focused on the sampled candidates. The table above illustrates that there is a huge gap between rich and poor candidates in terms of vote share.

As a next step I analyzed all the 100 persons on the richest list, not only those that were included in my sample. Of those 100 persons on the list 41 of them were running in the 2005 elections. This is a very good indication of the overlapping of business and politics in Kyrgyzstan. There is also some really interesting variation in the 100 richest group, with some rich candidates receiving over 95% while others only 1%. Clearly just having financial resources is not enough to secure a high vote share. Mr. Khon Valerii, a Bishkek based businessman only got 1% of the votes.

[108] 100 Samykh Bogatykh Lyudei Kyrgyzstana 2004 Goda [Fergana: The 100 Richest People in Kyrgyzstan], www.akipress.kg, accessed Jul-06.

Table 59: 100 richest list (all Candidates running in 2005) and vote-share in 2005

Statistics	Vote share (%)
Rich guy mean vote share	39.68
Mean vote share if rich guy 'lost to other rich guy'	18.01
Min (lowest score for rich guy)	1.18
Max (highest score for rich guy)	95.45

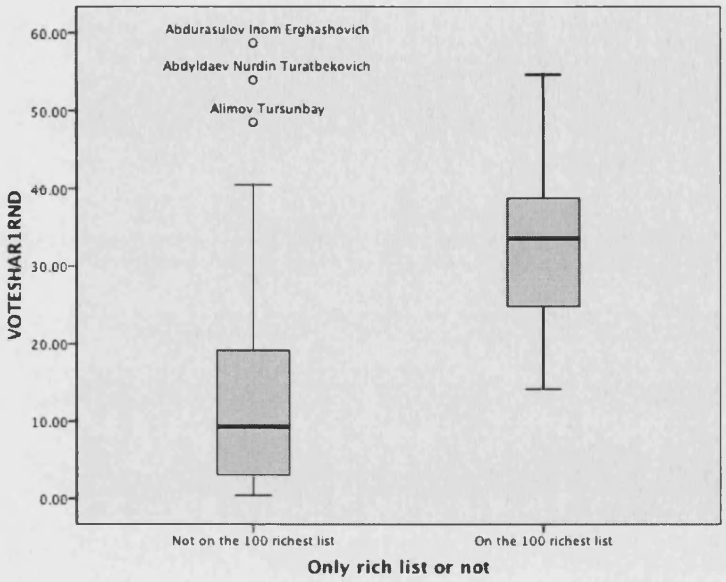
* n=41, out of which 15 actually won a seat. In six cases there were two rich candidates in the same SMD. St. dev. of mean 20.99.

This table shows compared to the population mean of 15.84 (2005 elections) that rich candidates do indeed fare much better in the total population of rich candidates. Also, in the population of candidates rich candidates do fare much better than in the sample.

To summarize, rich candidates, who are predominantly male, actively take part in parliamentary elections, and surprisingly often they end up losing to other candidates on the richest list (in six cases). There is also a notably high variation among rich candidates and some interesting extremes in the range that need to be explored further. Going back to our candidate survey sample I can visualize the extremes by showing statistical outliers for 2005.[109]

[109] Those candidates that are more than 1.5 times above (or below) the Inter-Quartile Range (IQR, i.e. the box).

Figure 4: Several outliers in both categories



This table shows that there are three outliers among the 'not rich' candidates that perform well in the first round. Let us shortly analyze these three candidates. Abdyldaev had been running in two elections before the 2005 election and was therefore well prepared for the 2005 campaign. All three candidates had been working for the state before, Abdurasulov as the former as the head of Kashgar-Kyshtak village council and Alimov as village (*ayil okmotu*). In all cases a close family member had been previously been a Member of Parliament. Two of these 'not rich' high performers are ethnic Uzbeks, Abdurasulov and Alimov. One of them was a member of the pro-presidential 'Alga Kyrgyzstan', while another was a Communist Party member. Two of them claim that the results were not at all falsified, while the third says that the results were completely falsified. In terms of pro-Government/Opposition orientation, it can be noted that these outliers each place themselves in different categories, one as an anti-Akaev, another as pro-Akaev, and the third as passive.

Actually winning

What happens if we also examine the second round of elections and the final results from the sampled districts?

Table 60: Cross-tabulation ProfCat3b and Elected yes/no

ELECTED * PROFCAT3B Crosstabulation					
			PROFCAT3B		
			Not rich	Rich	Total
ELECTED	no	Count	52	4	56
		% within	92.9%	7.1%	100.0%
	yes	Count	7	4	11
		% within	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%
	Total	Count	59	8	67
		% within	88.1%	11.9%	100.0%

* $\chi 2 = 7.47$, df = 1, P < .01. Lambda not applicable (the within-category mode (Elected=no) is the same as the overall mode. Cramer's V .334 at the .01 level, which can be considered strong relationship.

Yes, quite predictably, rich candidates not only get a large vote share in the first round, but they also end up winning a seat.

Summary of the Performance Analysis Section

Experienced politicians are faring better than other candidate types, both in terms of vote-shares and in terms of actually securing a seat. However, over time the biggest gains have been by the bureaucrat category. Furthermore, yes, money seems to play a role, especially for those with a lot of it. Candidates that are on the 100 richest list are outperforming all other categories, but the generic businessman category, i.e. both successful and petty businessmen, are actually lowering its vote-share over time in our sample. This suggests that the role of financial resources has been exaggerated in the literature. Businessmen do not necessarily get elected.

To conclude this section on performance analysis I present some hitherto not analyzed features of a candidate and how they go together with vote share in the first round of parliamentary elections. When examining the association between age and vote share in the first round there is nothing significant whatsoever. Age is therefore not a factor that seems to affect the election performance.[110] How about the gender dimension? Yes, there is a significant and positive association between being a male and performing well in the first round. Male gender is also positively correlated with having been elected to local office. When examined whether educational background is associated with good performance in

[110] The mean age at the time of the election: 1995 45 years (n=36, st.d 7.4), 2000 46 years (n=33, st.d 5.6), 2005 48 years (n=73, st.d 7.8).

parliamentary elections it does not generate any statistically significant results. Furthermore, none of the political profile questions (ideology or role in 'tulip revolution') were associated with good performance in the first round. Finally, candidates whose family members have previously been MPs fared significantly better than their counterparts.

Chapter 4 Conclusions

In this chapter I have shown that post-Soviet elites in Kyrgyzstan were far from monolithic. Yes, some elements of the old communist *nomenklatura* were able to transfer their pre-independence influence into post-independence power, but there was an abundance of challengers. For local elites, running for a seat in the parliament became something of a great game where a plethora of players bet a lot of resources on the prospects of winning a seat. I can only speculate about the motivational factors of these political entrepreneurs, but it is well known that the rewards, if a seat was secured, were good in terms of both protecting existing resources, by gaining immunity, but also by opening up new avenues for amassing more wealth and influence. This might come across as a cynical interpretation of the motivation of aspiring politicians in Kyrgyzstan, but anecdotal evidence supports these claims.

Much of the competition was organized, in terms of positioning, around views of the incumbent President and his administration. The weak capacity of the central authorities, both in terms of coercive capacity (stick), but also financial incentives (carrot), seems to be a condition for this dynamic to work. Also, the question about the role of new economic elites seems to be of central importance. The transition process in Kyrgyzstan produced an open elite structure. I tested the hypothesis that the role of business elites over time has increased and found that some rich businessmen are indeed outperforming other candidate categories. But there were also many petty businessmen that participated in the elections and more often than not with meager results.

Election campaigns since the last Soviet era elections contained a lot of dirty tricks including vote buying and the use of administrative resources. However, since almost everyone was using these techniques the field strangely leveled. Furthermore there seems to be a resigned acceptance among candidates of the fact that elections in Kyrgyzstan contain irregularities. Also, the party system was extremely weak and the explanation is partly

found in the institutional incentives with tough requirements on party nominations, while almost none on self-nominated candidates. Even though this might seem like a un-intended systematic glitch there is evidence that the authorities tried to undermine the creation of a new strong party system (Jones Luong, 2002).

CHAPTER 5: POLITICAL ENTREPRENEURS AND THE IMAGINATION OF 'CLANS' IN KYRGYZSTAN

> Мой адрес не дом и не улица, мой адрес - Советский Союз! (Тухманов, Давид Фёдорович, 1966)

> 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, 1963, p. 120).

The failure to create a *homo sovieticus* is well illustrated by the narrow and 'primordial' identity discourse in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. Once citizens of a multiethnic federation, Soviet Union, now the citizens were free to define themselves in other categories. But the Kyrgyz identity itself was not fully developed due to suppression during the Soviet era. Also, the territory that constituted the newly independent Kyrgyzstan was in itself a multiethnic mosaic, with large populations of Slavic, Uzbek, and other minorities. Nowhere was this quest for identity more visible than in the highly politicized and surprisingly open electoral campaigns. Where loyalty before, at least formally, was to the Soviet Union (see the quoted song), now it became an issue for exclusive groupings, often with direct references to kinship groups. This is the context were kinship categories, like 'clans' became politicized and nostalgia for the old inclusive Soviet identity was first felt.[111]

The Kyrgyz nation-building effort is a prime example of 'modular nationalism', a process that originated in Europe in the end of the eighteenth century and was later transplanted elsewhere (Anderson, 1999, p. 4). The process was one where the state actively promoted a 'nation-people' in order to fit it with the boundaries of the state, thereby creating a nation-state. This was the track that the Kyrgyz state took in the 1990s. The state machinery promoted a standardized vernacular, reformed public education, and built monuments of

[111] In one of the candidate interviews the reaction to the question about 'clans' was to quote very famous song that illustrates the loyalty to the transnational Soviet era identity project (*homo sovieticus)*: 'My address is neither a house nor a street – My address is the Soviet Union' (#67).

commemoration, all in line with similar experiences of nation-building elsewhere. A good illustration of this was the 2003 celebrations termed the 'Year of Kyrgyz Statehood', when the supposedly 2,200-year-old Kyrgyz state was to be celebrated. Tracing the roots of the 'nation' (ethnogenesis) has often been a core element in the making of nations. However, political identity projects never operate in a vacuum. Political institutions clearly have an affect on the outcome of different identity projects. The Kyrgyz identity project ended up encouraging divisive elements when it revived sub-national kinship-based identities ('clans') as part of the revitalization of national heritage. The politization of 'clans' is a good illustration of this logic. The incentive structure of single-member plurality systems produces localized battle lines. Political entrepreneurs organized their electoral campaigns exclusively focusing on a particular district and this produced high-pitched allegations of 'clan politics' and *tribalism* among both local and international observers.

In this chapter I will show that local identities emerged as key features of politics on a constituency level. In order to get a better picture of how politicians, both successful and aspiring ones, define themselves politically and in terms of identity categories we conducted a survey of 160 candidates. In this chapter I present some of the findings from this unique survey. I am especially interested in the identity discourse and the role of informal institutions, kinship-based social units ('clans'), and lineages. Three basic questions are being addressed in this chapter: 1) How do candidates identify themselves in terms of genealogical categories; 2) How can we explain the emergence of politicized kinship; and 3) Is a strong 'clan' identity a prerequisite for a successful candidacy. I find that a 'clan' in the Kyrgyz sense of the word necessarily involves kinship, therefore refuting metaphorical conceptualizations of 'clans'. Furthermore, under conditions of a single-member plurality formula local identities become a potent force, even if only discursively.

The chapter is concerned with the genealogical narrative, i.e. the 'clan' dimension. The first part is a section on 'clans' in the Kyrgyz sense of *uruu/uruk*. The second part is a discussion on how the respondents reacted to us asking 'clan' related questions.

'Clans' in Kyrgyzstan

In the case of Kyrgyzstan a 'clan' is something specific, especially for the titular nationality in rural areas. A 'clan' in Kyrgyz denotes a nameable patrilineage, which comes with an

elaborated set of stories and founding myths.[112] This cannot be equated with the purely residential category like *mahalla* in the case of Uzbekistan. The Kyrgyz word for 'clan' is *uruk* or *uruu*, depending on what level we are referring to.[113] 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 current President Kurmanbek Bakiev. In this chapter I will use the English word 'clan' to denote any relevant level, be it *uruu* or *uruk*.[114] Strictly speaking, the focus in this chapter is on '*uruu* (or *uruk*) politics', but this is an utterly incomprehensible term for both the Kyrgyz themselves and for the larger scholarly community. The most commonly used equivalent concept in English language literature on the region is that of 'clan'. In the political science literature the concept of a 'clan' in Kyrgyzstan has been used in an overly metaphorical way (R. Abazov, 2003b; Collins, 2006). This way of using the concept can be both confusing and frankly orientalistic.[115] In some writings on regionalism and localism in Kyrgyzstan the concept of 'clans' has been equated with larger territorial concepts like north and south:

> 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, Jalal-Abad, and Osh oblast (R. Abazov, 2003a).

Here the concept of a 'clan' is used to denote a vast geographical territory that would never be associated with an *uruu* or an *uruk* in the Kyrgyz sense. Also, there was never a genealogical narrative of relatedness that covered the 'south' of Kyrgyzstan.[116] Collins at

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[112] A lineage is a descent group that is able to demonstrate a common descent from a known ancestor.
[113] In the anthropological and ethnographic literature on Kyrgyzstan, *uruu* is often equated with the English *tribe* and Russian *plemya*, while *uruk* has the equivalent or *clan* in English and *rod* in Russian. In the context of the Russian language, the word *klan* is also used, but often in a pejorative sense. An *uruu* is simply a larger kinship unit consisting of several *uruks*. An *uruk* is a 'lineage' in the strict sense of the word (Beyer, 2006, p. 160).
[114] This is problematic from the viewpoint of established anthropological distinctions (see previous footnote). However in ordinary use in the villages examined here (Kara-Kulja) the distinction between *uruu* and *uruk* is fluid. In this region the most widely used term for a 'clan' is *uruu*. Furthermore, in this chapter I focus on sub-tribal dynamics, a level below the Adigine tribe. For more on the 'tribal structure' of the Kyrgyz see Abramzon (Abramzon, 1963, p. 175).
[115] Only by using the 'clan' and 'tribe' terminology one projects a view of an unruly and uncivilized people that were not even been able to set up a centralized state structure in the period prior to the Russian conquest.
[116] It is popular to point out the north/south cleavage in analysis of Kyrgyz history and contemporary political divisions. Here they usually refer to the areas on both sides of the Tian Shan mountain range. However, as anyone who ever studied the map can see, the more proper geographical division would have to be north-east/south-west.

one point refers to the 'Issyk-Kul clan' and the 'Chui clan', which is clearly misleading since these are purely administrative and geographic units (Collins, 2006, p. 126). These two examples illustrate how the concept of a 'clan' has been used in a loose and metaphorical way that misses the point of *uruus* and *uruks* and their emic meaning in contemporary rural Kyrgyzstan. I argue that applying foreign categories, like 'clan', a concept that has a unique emic meaning to the Kyrgyz, in such a loosely defined way qualifies as orientalism. An *uruu* identity necessarily involves kinship; it cannot be a geographically determined administrative category, like an oblast' (region). But even if there exists a genealogical narrative about these kinship-based groups it does not mean that these groups dictate politics locally, that they are groups that actually do things in an organized way. Yes, people do talk about their *uruu* belonging and possibly even give an impression of them existing as corporate groups. And yes, in mid 1990s at the height of the political and economic 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 connotations in the literature. Again, I want to reiterate that when I use the 'clan' concept I do not intend to imply that there actually are 'clans' in contemporary Kyrgyzstan that are organized as corporate groups. I narrowly define 'clan' as kinship-based social units.

Genealogical narrative

How do parliamentary candidates identify themselves in terms of kinship categories? A lot of these categories are contested both in the anthropological and ethnographic literature, but there is also some confusion among the Kyrgyzs themselves. This is understandable since these identities were not dwelled upon during the Soviet era. With the collapse of the Soviet Union however there was a significant renewed interest in historically important identity categories for the Kyrgyzs. In the rural districts that we focused on for this survey we do not see much of that confusion. Respondents had quick and clear-cut answers to most of the genealogical questions, indicating that these are indeed issues that people have active knowledge on. 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.

The discourse on relatedness in Kyrgyzstan is surprisingly well structured and was very much in vogue during the period covered here (1990-2007). *Sanjyra* is the Kyrgyz word that refers to genealogical information combined with accounts of the past. This is especially relevant in the studies of particular 'clans' and 'tribes'. Key actors in the discourse on relatedness are the *sanjyrachi*, local specialists on genealogical descent and the history of particular 'clans' and 'tribes'. In this research project the questions related to genealogy were exclusively aimed for the titular nationality, the Kyrgyz (n=146). Since the focus of this project is on the Kyrgyz discourse on relatedness it does make sense to exclude respondents of minority nationalities. In Kyrgyzstan as a whole the Kyrgyz make up two-thirds of the population (1999 census). The total number of sampled candidates therefore over-represents the titular nationality as a proportion of the true values in the population (see Methodology appendix). In this chapter we do not need to consider this, since only the Kyrgyz respondents will be analyzed in this chapter.

'Clan' identities in Kyrgyzstan

I am here engaged in a diagnosis of the 'clan discourse' in Kyrgyzstan. On an ontological level it is debatable whether there really exists such kinship-based entities like 'clans' in contemporary Kyrgyzstan. The question being, are there really coherent emic entities that we reasonably can label 'clans' and if so, what are the implications for electoral politics? It is clear that an element of 'imagination' is involved, but do they actually exist as coherent entities, are they really groups? Here I borrow from the conceptual apparatus of Brubaker et.al and instead talk about categories and groups (Brubaker, 2006):

> If by 'group' we mean a mutually interacting, mutually recognizing collectivity with a sense of solidarity, corporate identity, and capacity to concerted action, or even if we adopt a less exigent understanding of group, it should be clear that a category is not a group; it is at best a potential basis for group-formation or 'groupness' (Brubaker, 2006, p. 11).

Following Brubaker I am here examining the political processes through which categories get invested with varying degrees of groupness. The reason for adopting this cumbersome language is simple. I want to avoid substantialist language that presupposes groups as agents. As I will show, this is especially relevant in an analysis of 'clans' in Central Asia. Taking categories as our starting point, instead of groups, allows us to focus on the processes and relations rather than the substance.[117] Taking a cue from Brubaker, the aim here becomes to outline 'the organizational and discursive careers of categories', in this case 'clans'.

A key act in the recognition of a group is naming, i.e. coming up with a collective name of the group.[118] The Kyrgyz word for 'clan' is *uruk* or *uruu*, depending on what level we are referring to.[119] The most cited level is that of *uruu*, like for instance the *Sarybagysh*, the *uruu* of the former President Askar Akaev and the *Teiit*, the *uruu* of the current President Kurmanbek Bakiev. In this chapter I will use the Irish/English word 'clan' to denote any relevant level, be it *uruu* or *uruk*.[120] I want to reiterate that when I use the 'clan' concept I do not intend to imply that there actually are 'clans' in contemporary Kyrgyzstan that are organized as corporate groups. I narrowly define 'clan' as a kinship-based social unit based on an identifiable linage that comes with an elaborate set of genealogical information.

The designation of a particular person as a member of this or that 'clan' is here purely aggregative, a generalization if you will. President Akaev identifying himself as being *Sarybagysh* (*uruu*) does not imply anything about the salience of this self-identification in

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[117] For more on Brubaker's critique of 'groupism' see the article *Ethnicity without groups* (Brubaker, 2003).
[118] This goes for all kinds of ethnic groups (both national and sub-national levels). On the importance of naming see (Smith, 1986, p. 24).
[119] In the anthropological and ethnographic literature on Kyrgyzstan, *uruu* is often equated with the English *tribe* and Russian *plemya*, while *uruk* has the equivalent or *clan* in English and *rod* in Russian. In the context of the Russian language, the word *klan* is also used, but often in a pejorative sense. An *uruu* is simply a larger kinship unit consisting of several *uruks*. An *uruk* is a 'lineage' in the strict sense of the word (Beyer, 2006, p. 160). 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, 2006a, p. 60).
[120] This is problematic from the viewpoint of established anthropological distinctions (see previous footnote).

relation to the myriad of other self- and other-ascribed identification. A 'clan' is here not understood as a solidary or bounded group, but rather as a set of category members. Let us be clear about this point. Being a member of a certain 'clan' does not imply that the aggregated 'group' of members is anything more than just that, a set of category members. Again, the language adopted here might come across as cumbersome, but as I will show, the usage of the 'clan' terminology in describing politics in Central Asia has hitherto been insufficiently precise.

In this research project I consciously chose not to use the Russian word *klan*, but instead the Kyrgyz word for 'clan' *uruu*. This even if the interview was conducted in Russian. The question about the 'clan' belonging was put to the interviewee rather straightforwardly, I simply asked the interviewees to identify their *uruu*.[121] The results are presented in the table below:

Table 61: Naming one's 'clan' and 'sub-clan'

What is the name of your *uruu* ('clan')?		What is the name of your *uruk* ('clan' sub-group)?	
Answer Options	Response Count	Answer Options	Response Count
answered	142	answered	131
skipped	4	skipped	15
answered %	*97.3%*	*answered %*	*89.7%*
skipped %	*2.7%*	*skipped %*	*10.3%*

* (Q13&14).

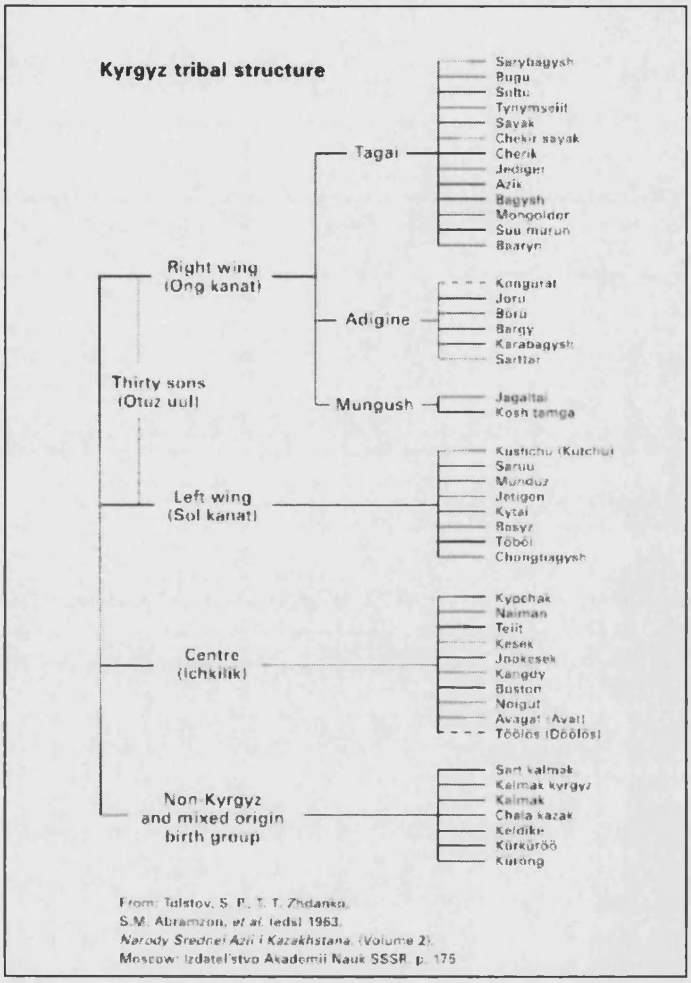
Here I can see that an overwhelming majority, 97 percent, did not have any problems in responding to the question about their *uruu*.[122] Even the question about the sub-group, the next level in the kinship group hierarchy, the *uruk* was not an issue for almost 90 percent of the candidates. This clearly indicates a certain 'clan' discourse fluency among the political elites sampled here. However, if I closely examine the answers themselves I note that there seems to be a degree of fluidity in these identity categories. The classical 'tribal structure' in Kyrgyzstan can be represented by the Abramzon taxonomy. The list of *uruus* can be seen

[121] In Russian the question was: '*Nazovite imya vashego uruu*' and in Kyrgyz '*Sizdin uruunuzdun aty emne*'. As noted by Dr. Madeleine Reeves the latter is a rather literal translation (ref. e-mail correspondence 25Feb08).

[122] For more details about how the candidates reacted to the question about 'clan' identities see the section 'Clans' and electoral politics later in this chapter.

in the column to the right in the following figure (starting with Sarybagysh, the *uruu* of the former President, Askar Akaev).

Figure 5: Abramzon (1963) 'Pre-Revolutionary Tribal Structure' Taxonomy



From: Tolstov, S. P., T. T. Zhdanko, S.M. Abramzon, *et al.* (eds) 1963. *Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana*. (Volume 2). Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR. p. 175

According to this figure there were historically a total of 46 *uruu* level kinship groups in Kyrgyzstan. In the survey I basically wanted the candidates to place themselves in one of these categories. However, after testing out several different ways of posing the question, with and without showing interviewees the Abramzon taxonomy, I decided to simply ask the *uruu* identification question in an open-ended fashion without any guidelines as to what exact level I wanted the interviewees to place themselves in. The idea here being to verify

whether the often cited Abramzon pre-1917 taxonomy has any relevance today.[123] Three quarters of the 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.

Table 62: *Uruu* identification

What is the name of your *uruu* ('clan')?		
Answer Options	Percentage	Response Count
Uruu name (Abramzon right-hand column)	74%	105
Uruu name (non-Abramzon *uruu* level)	25%	35
Do not know	1%	2
answered	*97%*	*142*
skipped	*3%*	*4*

* (Q13).

It is here notable that well over 90% of the Kyrgyz respondents had a straightforward reply to this question.[124] Replying in itself does not tell us much, however, the nature of the reply does. What we are interested in here is to what extent the reported *uruu* identity corresponds to the traditionally considered key *uruu*s in Kyrgyzstan (i.e. the Abramzon categories). In the table above we can see that 74% gave an *uruu* name that correspond to one in the right-hand column in Figure 1. The ones that placed themselves in any of the Abramzon *uruu* categories (n=105) placed themselves in 26 of the available 46 u*ruu*s. The rest that did respond to the question about their *uruu* responded with a non-Abramzon *uruu* category. The 35 candidates that did reply to the question about their *uruu* (Q13) with a non-Abramzon *uruu* category are distributed in the following way: 10 with a higher level group (first or second column in Figure 1), Adigine or Ichkilik; 10 with a sub-group, often with the Kyrgyz prefix *kara-* or *saru-* ('black' and 'water' respectively); and 15 responded with a non-identified (non-Abramzon) category. How about those Kyrgyz respondents that did not give an answer or that responded 'do not know' (n=6)? Do we have any reasons for their refusal to provide an answer? Perhaps they felt intimidated by the fact that a foreigner

[123] 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).
[124] If we combine the 'do not know' answers with the 'skipped question' responses we still get an impressive 96% that replied to this question.

wanted to know such a private thing. There might also be interesting developments over time that we need to account for.

In two cases of non-response (missing value), the candidates were nevertheless able to name their *uruk* ('clan' sub-group), indicating a certain knowledge about these issues. Actually, the problem with non-response might lie in the Abramzon taxonomy itself. This can be illustrated by the response given by Abdiev (#27) from the southern mountain district of Kara-Kulja. His 'clan' is *Tengizbai*, which is an anomaly in that it does not fit the Abramzon taxonomy. The alleged reason is that *Tengiz* (without the *bai* – boy suffix) according to the legend was an orphan. When asked about *uruu* Abdiev does not answer, but when asked about *uruk* he answers with *Tengizbai*. In two other cases the question was not asked at all, since we already knew the *uruu* identity of the candidate (Tagaev and Ibraimov).[125] The two remaining cases on non-response were both candidates in the 1995 elections, and only one of them seems to really not know his *uruu* (Primov #135).

Let us now turn to the question about the sub-group, or what we here are referring to as *uruk*. Again, we have a very high response rate, 90%. One fifth or the respondents answered this question with an *uruu* level category (the right-hand column in Figure 1). However, in most of the cases (40%) the answer is a recognizable sub-group, sometimes in the form of a Kyrgyz prefix (see above).

Table 63: *Uruk* identification

What is the name of your *uruk* ('clan' sub-group)?		
Answer Options	Percentage	Response Count
Uruu name (Abramzon)	19%	27
Uruk name (non-Abramzon)	40%	56
Ancestor's name	26%	37
Geographical area	1%	2
Do not know (d/k)	4%	5
answered	*90%*	*127*
skipped	*10%*	*14*

* (Q13).

[125] Also, both of the candidates were quite intimidated by the overall interview and we therefore sought to bypass some of the sensitive questions.

To my knowledge, there is no Abramzon *uruk* taxonomy. In terms of the responses on *uruks*, in one quarter of all the cases the answer is with a recognizable Kyrgyz name (Ancestor's name). On a closer examination this should not surprise anyone, since names are indeed used to denote patrilinear groups (lineages). Perhaps one of the most important findings here is that only 1% of the respondents related their *uruk* name to a geographical term and in one of these cases only as a suffix to an already existing Abramzon *uruu* category.[126] This clearly shows that Collins is wrong in using the 'clan' concept in a metaphorical way that incorporates geographical terms as well.[127] For the Kyrgyz an *uruu* is an emic category that does not follow administrative or geographical boundaries.

So we have established that the Kyrgyz political elites, if that is how we want to understand candidates, possess a lot of genealogical information about themselves. But what about ordinary citizens? Is the genealogical discourse only restricted to the elites? In my case study on a single election district I showed that there is also a high level of 'clan' fluency among locals, at least in rural areas (Sjoberg, 2008). However, in the context of the candidate survey we continued by asking candidates if they knew the *uruu* identity of their fellow candidates.

Table 64: Knowing the *uruu* of other candidates

Do you know the *uruu* identity of the other candidates in your SMD?								
Answer Options	Percentage	Response Count	**2005**		**2000**		**1995**	
Yes	68%	92	65%	41	74%	20	69%	22
No	32%	43	35%	22	26%	7	31%	10
answered		*135*		*63*		*27*		*32*
skipped		*12*		*6*		*4*		*1*
skipped %	*8.2%*		*8.7%*		*12.9%*		*3.0%*	

* (Q17).

Over two-thirds of the elites claim that they indeed knew the *uruu* identity of all the other candidates in their election district. So how about the voters, do the candidates think that the voters also knows the *uruu* identity of all the candidates?

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[126] The response was 'Avat-Tokmok', where Avat is an *uruu* group and Tokmok is a city in Chui *oblast'*.
[127] Collins at one point refers to the 'Issyk-Kul clan' and the 'Chui clan', which is clearly misleading since these are purely administrative geographical units (Collins, 2006, p. 126).

Table 65: Voters knowledge of candidate's *uruu*

Do all the voters in your SMD know the *uruu* identity of all the candidates?								
Answer Options	Percentage	Response Count	2005		2000		1995	
Always	51%	69	45%	28	67%	18	53%	17
Sometimes	18%	24	16%	10	7%	2	28%	9
Don't know	16%	21	16%	10	22%	6	3%	1
Rarely	11%	15	19%	12	4%	1	6%	2
Never	4%	5	3%	2	0%	0	9%	3
answered		*134*		*62*		*27*		*32*
skipped		*13*		*7*		*4*		*1*
skipped %	*8.8%*		*10.1%*		*12.9%*		*3.0%*	

* (Q18).

As we can see candidates believe that a majority of the voters always knows the *uruu* identity of all the candidates in the district.[128] I also wanted to find out more about the 'clan' narrative and the sizes of these groups. First we asked about the 'geographical heartland' of the *uruu*:

Table 66: Knowing the heartland of one's *uruu*

Do you know the geographical heartland for your *uruu*? Name *rayon* (and possibly a few villages)		
Answer Options	Percentage	Response Count
Yes	96%	109
No	4%	5
answered		*114*
skipped		*32*
skipped %	*22%*	

* (Q15).

Clearly most candidates had an idea about the geographical heartland of their kinship-based group. And as noted by Smith, the ability to associate an ethnic (or sub-ethnic in this case) with a particular locus or territory is of utmost importance (Smith, 1986, p. 28). Knowing the heartland of one's *uruu* is another good indicator of 'clan' fluency. We followed up this question by asking them to estimate the proportion of fellow *uruu* members in their own election district. Again, most of the respondents did not have a problem with answering this

[128] In my case study voter survey (n=50) I showed that voters do not necessarily always know the *uruu* identity of all the candidates (Sjoberg, 2008).

question, even though the answers themselves might be biased, either exaggerating of playing down to numerical strength of one's 'clan'.

Table 67: Estimate proportion of one's own *uruu*

Can you estimate the percentage of fellow *uruu* members in your SMD?		
Answer Options	Percentage	Response Count
Less than 10%	39%	49
10-29%	26%	33
30-49%	23%	29
50-69%	5%	6
More than 70%	7%	9
answered		*126*
skipped		*21*
skipped %	*14.3%*	

* (Q16).

This table tells us that most of the candidates belong to numerically insignificant *uruus*, with only 12% openly admitting that their *uruu* is in a majority position in the constituency. Due to the sensitivity of *uruu* mathematics it is conceivable that these numbers are low estimates, but it nevertheless provides us with another source of information about the genealogical fluency of the candidates.

So far we have exclusively focused on the genealogical narrative dimension. Let us now turn to the more intriguing question about the effect that all of this has on electoral dynamics. Let us start by looking at campaigning. 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 commission, 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 persons involved in their campaign.

Table 68: Important persons in the SMD

What kind of persons in your SMD were most useful for you in your campaign? (pick maximum 2)								
Answer Options	Percentage	Response Count	2005		2000		1995	
Relatives	77%	112	76%	54	70%	21	85%	28
Colleagues	49%	71	39%	28	60%	18	61%	20
School friends	39%	56	45%	32	40%	12	33%	11
Local state admin	12%	17	11%	8	10%	3	9%	3
Fellow party memb	9%	13	13%	9	7%	2	6%	2
Business friends	8%	11	6%	4	10%	3	3%	1
answered		*145*		*71*		*30*		*33*
skipped		*15*		*7*		*3*		*2*
answered %	*91%*		*91%*		*91%*		*94%*	

* Note that two answers were possible. The response alternatives were presented in this exact order, i.e. not randomized (Q25).[129]

The role of relatives sticks out as the most important category of useful persons in a campaign. It is 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 by law prohibited to participate 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 cannot surprise anyone that less than ten percent picked fellow party members as the most valuable category of people. It is also notable that the importance of 'fellow party members' is increasing over time. What this table does show is the essential role that relatives play in the organization of the campaign. Also, predictably the percentage relying on relatives is much higher in rural election districts

What about voting behavior? Does deep genealogical knowledge and a reliance on relatives imply unconditional support for fellow *uruu* members at the voting booth? In many cases yes, but this does not seem to be a straightforward mechanism. In order to fully determine this we would need to conduct a thorough ethnographic overview of all the election districts and then see if the results in the first round of the elections correspond to the *uruu*

[129] At first we also intended to ask more specific questions about particular individuals, like campaign managers and other leading activists. Due to the sensitivity of the matter we decided, after conducting several pilot interviews, to avoid exploring this issue further in the format of the formal interview.

proportions in each district. Due to the difficulty of the task, we have decided to approach this through a detailed case study of a particular election district instead.[130] However, in the context of the voter survey we wanted to ask the candidates what they themselves think about voting behavior and the role of *uruu* identity.

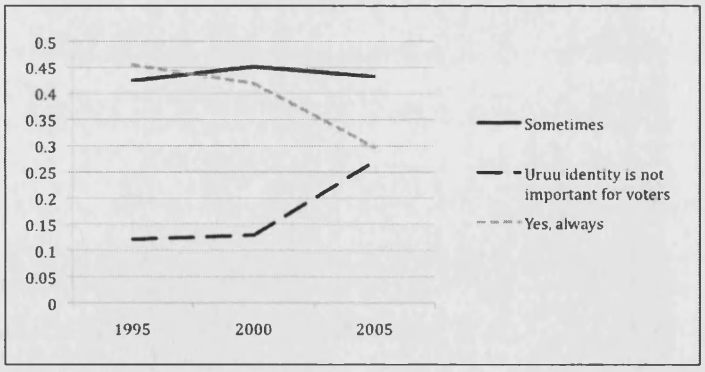
Table 69: Voting for one's *uruu*

Are people in your SMD usually voting for someone from their own *Uruu* (or 'Nationality' in the case of non-Kyrgyz respondents)?								
Answer Options	Percentage	Response Count	2005		2000		1995	
Yes, always	36%	54	30%	22	42%	13	45%	15
Sometimes	45%	69	43%	32	45%	14	42%	14
Uruu not important	19%	29	27%	20	13%	4	12%	4
answered		*152*		*74*		*31*		*33*
skipped		*8*		*4*		*2*		*2*
skipped %	*5.0%*		*5.1%*		*6.1%*		*5.7%*	

* Note that this question is not only directed at Kyrgyz respondents only, but to the whole sample (Q39).

Here we can see that less than a fifth of the candidates think that *uruu* is irrelevant when it comes to voting. Clearly most candidates consider *uruu* (or ethnicity) to play some kind of role in voting behavior, but the proportion that considers people always voting for someone from their own group is steadily going down over time.

Diagram 1: Trends of 'voting for one's *uruu*'



Interestingly enough in the sample we note a significant increase in the candidates deeming it not important in the 2005 elections compared to the two previous electoral cycles. *Uruu* is said to be especially relevant in the first round of the parliamentary elections (#35). One

[130] See case study chapter (6) on Kara-Kulja.

candidate identified invoking *uruu* identities as an explicit campaign technique (Q28).[131] At times candidates would be introduced with their *uruu* identity at local rallies and an *uruu* loyalty would be invoked in appealing for the vote, like when at a rally in Talas *oblast'* the audience was told 'Let us vote for *kushchu* [an *uruu*]' or in Kara-Kulja *rayon* where voters were asked to cast their vote for fellow *uruu* members (#36, #29: Q28).[132] Or when Sherniyazov, a leading candidate in one of the Talas *oblast'* districts, said about a fellow candidate, the incumbent Borubaev: '[he] played the *uruu* card' (#38:Q28). Another former MP, Chekiev, in Jalalabad, also claimed that other candidates appealed to *uruu* loyalties (#53:Q28).

Let us examine some emerging patterns when it comes to candidate's views how people vote. For instance one could assume that respondents that think voters always knows the *uruu* of the candidates also would think this played a role in terms of deciding whom to vote for.

Table 70: Voters knowing the *uruu* of Candidates and Voting for fellow *uruu* members (crosstab)

			VOTERURUUKNOW					
			always	sometimes	do not know	rarely	never	Total
URUUVOTING	always	Count	34	2	5	5	0	46
		%	50.7%	8.3%	25.0%	33.3%	.0%	35.1%
	sometimes	Count	27	16	8	5	2	58
		%	40.3%	66.7%	40.0%	33.3%	40.0%	44.3%
	does not matter	Count	6	6	7	5	3	27
		%	9.0%	25.0%	35.0%	33.3%	60.0%	20.6%
	Total	Count	67	24	20	15	5	131
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* $\chi 2 = 26.97$, df = 8, $P < 0.001$, $\gamma = 0.466$

This table shows that there is indeed an association between candidates thinking that voters know the *uruu* of the candidates and them thinking that voters vote for someone from their own *uruu*. Examining those who think that voters always know the *uruu* of the candidates, i.e. the upper left corner, and comparing that with those in the lower right corner clearly reveals the pattern. Of those 67 respondents that say that voters always know the *uruu* of all

[131] 'Oni pri vstrechakh c izbiratelyami delili kandidatov na uruu' (#105, Q28:#121).
[132] 'Davai galasuem Kuschu' (#36).

the candidates a majority (34 candidates) think that voters always vote for someone from their own *uruu*. On the other hand, a majority of those respondents (n=5) who consider voter never knowing the *uruu* all the candidates 60% say that *uruu* never plays any role in voter's decision at the booth. Next we will examine regional differences when it comes to the strength of the 'clan' identity discourse.

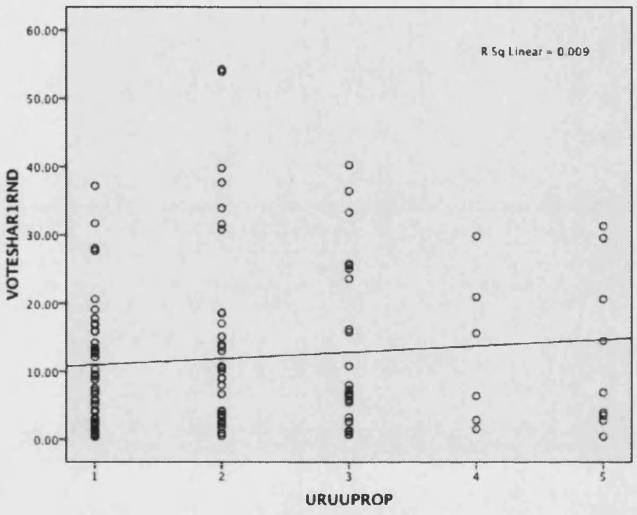
Table 71: *Oblast' and* Voters knowing the *uruu* of Candidates (crosstab)

			OBLAST									
			Batken	Bishkek	Chui	Issyk-Kul	Jalalaba	Naryn	Osh *oblast'*	Osh City	Talas	Total
VOTERURUUKNOW	always	*n*	11	0	1	7	7	5	28	1	9	69
		%	55%	0%	20%	33%	64%	39%	62%	20%	82%	52%
	somtimes	*n*	5	0	1	5	3	2	6	1	1	24
		%	25%	0%	20%	24%	27%	15%	13%	20%	9%	18%
	don't know	*n*	2	1	2	4	0	4	5	3	0	21
		%	10%	33%	40%	19%	0%	31%	11%	60%	0%	16%
	rarely	*n*	2	0	1	3	1	2	6	0	0	15
		%	10%	0%	20%	14%	9%	15%	13%	0%	0%	11%
	never	*n*	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	5
		%	0%	67%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	4%
	Total	*n*	20	3	5	21	11	13	45	5	11	134
		%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* $\chi 2 = 68.34$, df = 32, $P < 0.05$, $\gamma = -0.180$

Here we see that the urban *oblast's* of Bishkek, Chui, and the city of Osh behave predictably, with lower levels of voter's knowing the *uruu* of all the other candidates (according to the candidates that is). If I do the same regional cross-tabulation, but with uruuvoting instead of uruuknowing, I also get the same pattern and yet again a result that is statistically significant ($P < 0.01$). I can therefore conclude that there is clearly a regional pattern when it comes to the strength of the genealogical discourse on 'clans'. So how does being a member of a large *uruu* affect the results in the first round? Fitting a simple scatter plot produces the following pattern:

Diagram 2: Candidate's *uruu* group proportion (%) and vote share in the first round (scatter plot)



As we can see there is only a tiny positive association between being a member of a large group (*uruu* proportion) and the vote share, a fitted line produces a R^2 of 0.009. Furthermore if I do a cross-tab with being a member of a majority *uruu* and vote share in the first round I do not get any statistically significant results. The same happens if I crosstabulate the proportion of *uruu* with the dichotomous variable elected/not elected.

'Clans' and electoral politics

Asking a Kyrgyz about their 'clan' affiliation is not something that other survey type research has done before. The phenomenon of *uruu/uruk*, and the overall genealogical narrative is often confused by foreigners with explicit political phenomena, like political corruption or regionalism. In this project I wanted to ask the questions about the genealogical narrative in a mostly open-ended and straightforward fashion. Of particular interest therefore is the reaction of the respondent to the posed questions. In the guidelines for the collectors (interviewers) I specifically asked them to write down the reactions of the respondent (candidates) to the questions about 'clans'. This allows us to make further inferences about the phenomena, granted, through the subjective eyes of the data collector.[133] All in all I have 128 comments by the interviewers on the respondent's reaction to the *uruu* related questions.[134] As a first step I decided to code the answers in the following way:[135]

Table 72: Coding of the comments to 'clan' questions

Attitude to Question	Attitude to the *Uruu* phenomenon	Relevance of *Uruus* in politics?	*Uruu* bad for politics
1=calm, interested, 2=indifferent, 3=hostile, nervous	1=important, 2=indifferent, 3=nonsense	1=high, 2=medium, 3=none	1=Yes, 0=No

* (Q43).

In addition to this I here provide some anecdotal evidence on the issue of 'clans' and electoral politics. I present the findings separately for each election year, starting with the most recent. At the end of this section I will summarize the findings for each year and look for notable trends.

[133] For more information about the survey see Methodology appendix.
[134] Total number of Kyrgyz 146, i.e. we have additional comments for 88% of the Kyrgyz candidates.
[135] This was done manually by the PhD Candidate himself.

Table 73: 2005 sample 'clan' question comments

	Attitude to Question (1=calm, interested, 2=indifferent, 3=hostile, nervous)	Attitude to the *Uruu* phenomenon (1=important, 2=indifferent, 3=nonsense)	Relevance of *Uruus* in politics? (1=high, 2=medium, 3=none)	*Uruu* bad for politics (1=Yes, 0=No)
1	967%	72%	45%	93%
2	0%	8%	39%	
3	3%	21%	16%	
0				7%
N	*60*	*39*	*31*	*15*

* (Q43).

For the 2005 candidates we have a total of 64 comments. On the 'attitude towards the *uruu* question' (Q13&14) we see that most respondents were calm and curious, but we also got tense and hostile reactions from a few candidates. When the PhD Candidate did the interviews the respondents often felt a need to explain the *uruu* phenomenon and if the collector was a native Kyrgyz they would at times ask for the *uruu* of the collector. At only a few instances was the reaction to the *uruu* question uncomfortable (#147). In terms of the attitude towards the phenomenon (*uruu*) itself, I note that on several occasions the interviewees responded that knowing your *uruu* is indeed important for the Kyrgyz (72% of all that brought this up saw it as important). Many pointed out that the discourse on *uruu/uruk* is of great historical relevance to the Kyrgyz, an important 'part of the past' as one respondent put it (#127). Several pointed out that the genealogical narrative is only relevant for the history, but irrelevant in peoples everyday lives in contemporary Kyrgyzstan (#148). Here I can add that none of the comments were about the other possible non-political spheres of life where *uruu/uruk* still plays an important role, life-cycle rituals and the like.

So what kind of open-ended comments do we get on the *uruu* questions related to politics? Several candidates expressed frustration about the role that *uruu* plays in rural constituencies (#51, 52). Or in the words of one of the candidates:

> The belonging existed during the feudal system, but now the biggest role is played by localism [*zemlyachestvo*] as the practice demonstrates. *Uruu* belonging exists and existed only during the creation of the history of Kyrgyz, it is their origin (#85).

However, in some areas it still plays a significant role. 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 (*uruu*). Every clan needs its own meeting (#14: Q27).

Some said that an *uruu* loyalty meant that there was a lot of free (cheap) labor for the candidates in their constituencies, i.e. that fellow *uruu* members were used for campaigning without remuneration. Concerning voting behavior and the role of *uruu* loyalty, one admitted that usually voters vote for someone from their own *uruu*.[136] At times the *uruu* belonging would be used by political entrepreneurs, like the candidates talking about 'playing the Adygine [see Figure 1] card' (#83). One candidate even told us that *uruu* is only important for politicians (*chinovniki*), in that they use these categories in their campaigning (#144). Some of the losing candidates blamed their failure on the fact that they came from a minority *uruu* (#94, 151). In a few interviews the *uruu* question came up even before the interviewer reached the *uruu* related questions on the questionnaire (#56). A quarter of the comments were explicitly about the negative effects of the *uruu*s on politics. The role of *uruu* in Kyrgyz society is by some considered to be disruptive, or bringing the country to an explosion, *'jaryluuga alyp kelet'* in Kyrgyz (#63). Or as another candidate pointed out: '*uruu* is the engine (sail) of political corruption.[137]

Next I turn to the comments from the 2000 sample.

Table 74: 2000 sample 'clan' question comments

	Attitude to Question (1=calm, interested, 2=indifferent, 3=hostile, nervous)	Attitude to the *Uruu* phenomenon (1=important, 2=indifferent, 3=nonsense)	Relevance of *Uruu*s in politics? (1=high, 2=medium, 3=none)	*Uruu* bad for politics (1=Yes, 0=No)
1	95%	94%	50%	100%
2	0%	6%	36%	
3	5%	0%	14%	
0				0%
N	*22*	*16*	*14*	*10*

* (Q43).

For the 2000 candidates I have a total of 24 comments recorded by the interviewees. The striking thing about the comments here is that the attitude towards the phenomenon seems

[136] 'Obichno izbirateli predpachitayut otdavats svoi golosa za predstavitilei svoego uruu' (#156).
[137] 'Prinadlezhnost' k uruu – eto parus korrumpirovannogo parlamenta. Eto vsegda ispolzovannye metody nechistoplotnikh lyudei' (#132).

to be very positive in that 94% consider it important. Also, not a single one of the comments contain anything about *uruus* not being destructive or bad for politics. Most respondents would be very interested in these issues, but a bit surprised that a foreigner asks around (#114).

> Knowledge about *uruu* is a personal question. It is a private matter for of each of us, and no one other has the right to know about it. Also it should not concern elections. In Kyrgyz history the Khans used to elect. But we are now living in a democratic society. Clans and *uruus* are necessary for our children so that they do not forget the past. (#3).

Many pointed out that for the Kyrgyz themselves it is essential to know one's *uruu* (#5, 117). One of the respondents got really interested and asked for copy of the Abramzon taxonomy that the PhD candidate had brought with him for the interview (#1).[138] Another respondent provided an ex tempore division of the Kyrgyz into: 1) national 2) *uruu* 3) *uruk* 4) *jeti-ata* (Kyrgyz respected elders) levels, all delivered in a friendly and pedagogical spirit (#45). In the comments for the 2000 elections we also have a good illustration of how *uruu* identities are being used in elections, as with the candidate who said 'Four candidates from my own *uruu* was put against me (all of them *Baziz*). He went on to say that this is what is meant by *'Politeknologi pa Kyrgyz'*, i.e. a peculiar Kyrgyz technique of organizing elections. One respondent emphasized that in certain parts of the country 'tribe-clan' (*Roda-Plemennye*) relationships are very important, here referring to Jalalabad as 'down there' (#46). Others pointed out the relative novelty of this phenomenon:

> It is exactly these years [1995] that *uruu* divisions began. Before it did not play any role as there was a different system in USSR. After the independenc of Kyrgyzstan we began returning to history and started studying who came from where, who his parents were. Now it became fashionable. But for the democratic society and for managing politics *uruu* should not play any role. Politics is about politics, but history should remain without being trampled down (#99).

This quote illustrates the ideological vacuum and the nation-building challenges that Kyrgyzstan faced in the early independence period. As the Soviet Union was dismantled a new identity project was begun.[139] Another respondent also brought up the same theme: '*uruu* became important only after the fall of the USSR, as the ideology of USSR

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[138] This respondent confused his uruu belonging, first saying that he was a Tengizbai, and then after looking at the Abramzon document, he said that he was a Joru. Joru and Tengizbai are not related.
[139] For more on this see D.Gullette's PhD dissertation.

disappeared and people turned to the *Manas* epic' (#114).[140] There are also some interesting comments regarding gender dynamics. One of the female candidates expressed frustration about the role of women in this 'tribe-clan' system:

> An *uruu* never supports its daughters, but it is handy for male politicians. It is quite old method of governing. *Uruu* belonging should play a role only during writing an autobiography of a man, during the study of one's kind and history of one's land (#108).

The 2000 sample did not have any problems with 'clan' related questions as such and they confirmed that it is an interesting phenomenon that has significant influence over the elections. The ones that included a value statement in their comments were all skeptical about the influence of 'clans' on elections.

Finally I have the 1995 candidate comments. Here I have a total of 29 comments. A strikingly high number felt uncomfortable when this question was asked, with over 11% of the collectors reporting hostility or nervousness on the part of the candidates. Also notable is the high number of respondents that consider *uruu* to be explicitly bad for politics.

Table 75: 1995 sample 'clan' question comments

	Attitude to Question (1=calm, interested, 2=indifferent, 3=hostile, nervous)	Attitude to the *Uruu* phenomenon (1=important, 2=indifferent, 3=nonsense)	Relevance of *Uruus* in politics? (1=high, 2=medium, 3=none)	*Uruu* bad for politics (1=Yes, 0=No)
1	83%	92%	70%	57%
2	6%	8%	20%	
3	11%	0%	10%	
0				43%
N	*18*	*13*	*10*	*7*

* (Q43).

Here follows some notable comments from the 1995 sample. Many pointed out that knowing your *uruu* is essential for the Kyrgyz, like the candidates that said:

> The Kyrgyzs need to live and respect their *uruu*. This is a part of their life. In history there are occasions when were punished if they did not know their *uruu* (#98).

Or as the candidate that with pride in his eyes said:

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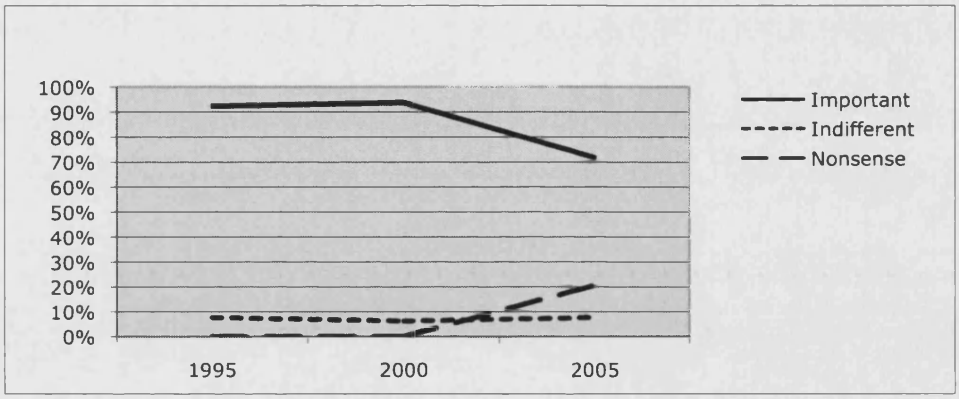
[140] 'Uruu stala vazhno tolko prosle razvala SSSR, t.k. ideologiya SSSR ischezla I lyudi obratilis' k eposu Manas idr' (#114).

> Knowledge about *uruu* is very important to the Kyrgyzs. There are very few peoples in the world with such a history (#112).

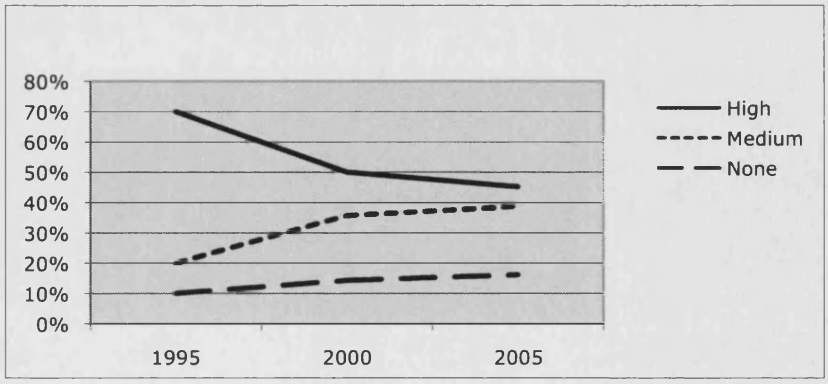
A high percentage (70%) claim that *uruus* are indeed very relevant in politics, but there are also diverging opinions, as with the candidate claiming that the 1995 elections had been above *uruu* divisions, but that it became more prevalent in the next couple of electoral cycles (#21). In conclusion, the comments for all three elections (1995-2005) highlight that for an overwhelming majority of the candidates the *uruu* discourse is not sensitive and that the phenomenon itself for many is a source of pride and great interest. But it is clear that the trend is downward in terms of the importance of *uruus*.

Diagram 3: Attitude to the *uruu* phenomon (coded by author)



About half of the comments reveal that the political relevance of *uruu* is high, even though the trend is towards less and less relevance. Also, the number of people that consider the phenomenon completely nonsensical is increasing. So much for the attitudinal dimension, but what about the relevance of all of this for politics?

Diagram 4: Relevance of *uruus* for Politics (coded by author)



Here we can see that the number of candidates considering *uruus* to be highly relevant for politics is steadily going down over time. Finally I note that an overwhelming majority of the candidates consider *uruus* to be bad for politics and something that should be kept away from politics.[141]

Chapter 5 Conclusions

The un-weighted results of the candidate survey illustrate several key things about politics and identity in post-independence Kyrgyzstan.[142] For one, 'clan' identities are strong and this is by some candidates believed to have straightforward implications for voting behavior. However, a majority of the respondents say that 'clans' should not play any role in politics, that it is a purely historical identity phenomena with no place in a modern democratic Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, candidates in rural districts are acutely aware of the number of fellow *uruu* members, the size of the 'clan' so to speak, with more than 85% responding to the question about the *uruu* proportions in their district. But the implications of strong 'clan' identification for voting behavior remain a puzzle. 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. So the question really becomes: what exactly does the 'clan' component determine in an election and what is the role of locality? In the case of Kyrgyzstan it is clear that there is no such thing as a 'clan' that actually does things, i.e. coordinated action among locals. At most, it is a symbolic reality, an imagined community if you will. Political entrepreneurs gladly utilize the 'clan' language in describing their candidacy, but this does not mean that there actually are sanction mechanisms at hand for 'clan elders' to enforce decisions on candidate selection or voting. This is not to say that 'clans' do not exist as culturally important categories and that life-cycle rituals are at times organized around these kinship units.

It has here been illustrated that 'clans' are indeed discursively present in times of heightened political battles (elections). The question in the Kyrgyz case is: under what condition does an emic category like *uruu* become a 'klan', as in a politicized kinship

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[141] Even though on this particular issue we have some interesting finding in the 1995 sample, where over 40% did not consider *uruus* to be bad for politics.
[142] For more information see Table 87 in the Methodology appendix.

group? Relying on 'clans' as a key component in the new identity project in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan was an intentional strategy deployed by the Akaev administration. In an ironic twist, 'clans' replaced the communist party, as something that you had to pay lip service to. A 'new conformism' developed, partly as a result of the ideological confusion in this transitional period.[143] This new conformist narrative was especially strong in rural areas. But the fractionalizing nature of the single-member district (SMD) system also contributed to the persistent focus on 'clans'. There were no incentives for political entrepreneurs to reach beyond their district in their campaigning. The majoritarian SMD system in Kyrgyzstan allowed for localized identity formations to be exploited in election campaigns. The switch to a nation-wide party list system in late 2007 ended all of this, turning the contest more into a question about trust in authorities and oppositional mentalities, not kinship categories.

[143] The concept of 'New Conformism' was suggested by my supervisor, Prof. James Hughes at LSE.

CHAPTER 6: TESTING THE 'CLAN POLITICS' HYPOTHESIS IN A RURAL DISTRICT IN KYRGYZSTAN

I have selected a rural and mountainous district in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan to illustrate local level dynamics in times of elections. This is not a representative district in Kyrgyzstan, but rather a critical case for the 'clan politics' hypothesis. The selected district might be peripheral in geographic terms, but it is nevertheless a politicized district that has fed the national arena with both leading pro-government and oppositional politicians. The election results show that the contest for a seat was surprisingly open in this semi-authoritarian setting. This is not to say that the electoral process was free and fair, quite the contrary actually. I nevertheless claim that due to the process of political liberalization in the early 1990s, the regime in Kyrgyzstan was opened up to local level dynamics. This was something of a Pandora's box, but something that the first post-Soviet president, Askar Akaev, had to accept in a great bargain for the institutional framework for this newly independent state.[144]

Here I will show that 'clans' were at least discursively present in post-independence politics in Kyrgyzstan. Instead of corporate groups ('clans') engaging in the electoral processes as actors (organizations) we have something of a poetic toolbox with genealogical narratives that political entrepreneurs use in times of elections. The loyalties that these narratives invoke are perhaps similar to those employed in war-like situations that the segmentary lineage theory refers to (e.g. the *Nuer*). [145] However, this does not mean that 'clans' are the main organizing principle on the constituency level in Kyrgyzstan. The selected election district can be considered a critical case for the 'clan politics' hypothesis (Collins, 2006; Khamidov, 2002; Temirkulov, 2004).[146] In this chapter I will show that

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[144] The bargain basically granted regional elites institutional benefits, in terms of how the seats were determined and the structure of the parliament. 'Thus, in its final form the electoral law primarily reflected the regional leaders' preferences…' (Jones Luong, 2002, p. 185).

[145] For more on segmentary lineage theory see (Kuper, 1982).

[146] The most elaborate 'clan politics' statement about electoral politics can be found on p.238 in Collins book 'Where several names appeared on one ballot in a rural district, competition among several notables, usually

'clans' do not determine the outcome of parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan. Yes, elections are conflict generating and without any programmatic or ideological content the contest becomes one of personalities, mythologies, and financial resources. This is the context where kinship became politicized in Kyrgyzstan in the immediate post-Soviet period. More important, however, is the political liberalization that allowed for alternative political and economic elites to take advantage of the situation. A situation that opened up space for protest voting and perhaps even the first signs of democratic accountability.

The chapter is structured as follows. I begin with an introduction to the district (*rayon*) of Kara-Kulja (Кара-кулжа) in southern Kyrgyzstan. Each of the parliamentary elections in this district is shortly examined with a focus on an alleged 'clan dynamic'. I wrap up by addressing four key questions in explaining electoral competitiveness.

Case Study: Kara-Kulja Rayon, Osh Oblast

Through my research, I have selected Kara-Kulja district to illustrate local electoral dynamics in rural Kyrgyzstan. In the literature on Kyrgyz politics it is often said that 'clans' are influential in rural areas and especially in the southern parts of the country. Kara-Kulja is a peripheral mountainous district in the southern province (*oblast'*) of Osh. The district can be considered a critical case for the 'clan politics' thesis, which states that politics in Central Asia is heavily influenced by 'informal social networks rooted in kin and fictive kin ties [clan networks]' (Collins, 2006, p. 19). Based on discussions with both locals and international experts I short-listed a dozen Kyrgyz-only rural districts that had exhibited both competitiveness and non-competitiveness in the last four electoral cycles.[147] Also, during my fieldwork, by-elections were organized in Kara-Kulja, which provided me with a good opportunity to study an election campaign in the making.

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from different clans living within that district, took place. Ballots were typically cast along clan lines...' (Collins, 2006, p. 238).

[147] By competitiveness we here refer to a modified version of Taagepera and Shugart's classic *Effective Number of Parties,* as introduced by (Dunleavy & Boucek, 2003). This is basically a fractionalization score, weighted with the winner's share of the vote. The higher the number the more competitive (dispersed/fractional) the election results.

I looked for a mono-ethnic district in order to avoid having to consider possible inter-ethnic dynamics, as is the case in so many parts of Kyrgyzstan. I also wanted to select a district where there is a history of incumbents losing elections, indicating a certain level of 'meaningful competition'.[148] Finally, Kara-Kulja is fascinating in that local elites from this arguably peripheral district have played such an influential role in the Kyrgyz society since the days of Kurmanjan-*datka*. As an indication of this, the mobilization that started in the south prior to the overthrow of President Akaev (the so called 'Tulip Revolution') was fuelled by electoral grievances from Kara-Kulja candidates and their supporters (Radnitz, 2006a). In the following introductory sections I present a short note of the history, geography, and local elites of Kara-Kulja.

Note on History

Prior to the Russian conquest of the areas around Ferghana valley the Kokand Khanate controlled the area with its base in the city of Kokand, located in modern day Uzbekistan. The mountainous areas that today belong to Kyrgyzstan were distant corners of this state formation. There are stories about local *biis* (chieftains) rebelling against the appointment of bureaucratic personnel from Kokand during the khanate era (19th century). This pattern of local resistance prevailed well into the Soviet era. For instance the Basmachi revolt in the early 20th century was especially strong in the mountain areas surrounding the Ferghana valley. There are several occasions during the most repressive years of Soviet rule when this region resisted the new practices (collectivization etc.). And then of course we have the only female Central Asian ruler, Kurmanjan-*datka*, who managed to rally mountain 'tribes' behind her in late 19th century. This district was politically active even during the Soviet times, as indicated by letters that were sent to Moscow to complain about local conditions.[149]

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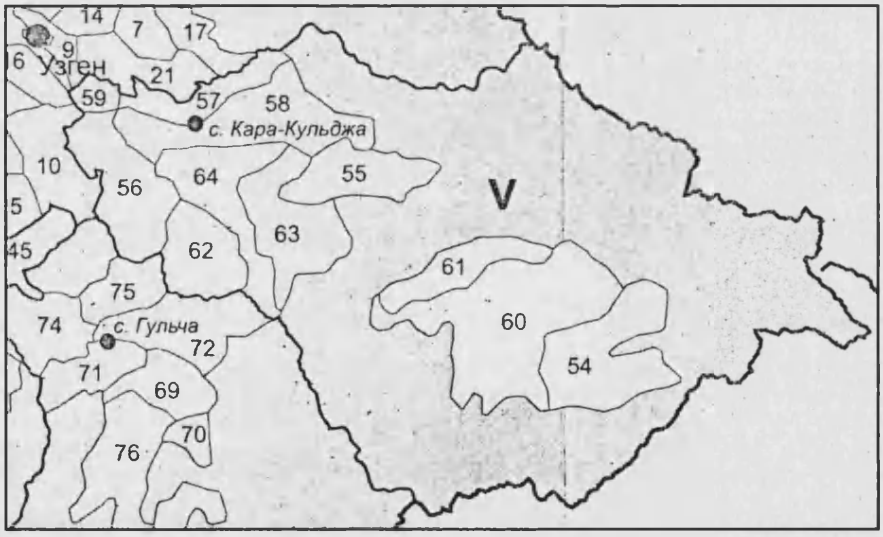
[148] 'Meaningful competition' taken from Levitsky&Way 2009 (unpublished book manuscript) 'Put another way, whereas officials in closed regimes can rest easy on the eve of elections, as neither they nor opposition leaders expect anything but an incumbent victory, incumbents in competitive authoritarian regimes can not. Government officials fear a possible opposition victory (and must work hard to thwart it), and opposition leaders believe they have at least some chance of victory. In competitive authoritarian regimes, incumbents are often forced to sweat.'

[149] Interview, Bekbolotov, Kumar, Bishkek, 1-Apr-08. Note that this was not necessarily an uncommon practise in other parts of the USSR also.

Geography

Today's 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 in and around the *rayon* center, but there are settlements at several points along the river all the way to the Chinese border. In the *oblast'* there are 12 'clusters of villages', or *aiyl okmotu* (a/o), which is the smallest administrative unit. These are spread out with three of them close to the Chinese border. These three are often referred to as Alaiku. There were no proper roads up to Alaiku until 1982, and even in the spring of 2008 the road required a four-wheel drive vehicle. The rest of the villages are concentrated in and around the rayon center further down the river.

Map III: Kara-Kulja district *(rayon)* including *aiyl okmotus*



* This map is from the 1999 Census publication from the National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyzstan.

District (*rayon*) Elites

What strikes an outside observer is that this arguably peripheral district has produced so many influential political profiles. Part of the answer lies in history and contemporary policies of preferential treatment of ethnic Kyrgyz (*Korenizatsiya* during the Soviet era). The southern capital of Kyrgyzstan, Osh, was historically an Uzbek city because the

Kyrgyz being nomadic herders did not settle down until late 19th century (Geiss, 2003; Khazanov, 1984).[150] Other hypotheses are that children from this sparsely populated area were sent to boarding schools in the southern capital of Osh, and therefore received a better education than even some urban children. Many Kyrgyz also simply believe that people that grow up in though circumstances become stronger. Two influential families in the center of the *rayon* are worth mentioning: the Jeenbekov's and the Osmonov's. Both of the family heads were very influential during Soviet times, in the district itself and beyond. In contemporary Kyrgyzstan their off springs have held posts such as chairman of Supreme Court, Minister of Agriculture, Member of Parliament, *oblast'* Governor, Speaker of the Parliament, Ambassador etc.

The Jeenbekovs are said to be one of the most influential families in the whole of Kara-Kulja *rayon.*[151] The grandfather, Jeenbek, the one who's name they carry, is said to have been a simple man.[152] The family home was in Bimyrza close to what is today the *rayon* center. Jeenbek had three sons. Sharip Jeenbekov, the youngest of them, was the chairman of RaiPo (a state owned wholesaler) during the Soviet time in Uzgen, Jalalabad, and Kara-Kulja. Sharip studied in Tashkent, in the neighboring Soviet republic of Uzbekistan, which back then was considered the capital of Central Asia. At one point he was the chairman of the enlarged Uzgen *Ray' Soviet.*[153] Everyone you talk to in Kara-Kulja recognizes that he was a strong local authority figure. When the RaiPo was dismantled in 1990s he retired and when he died in 1998 there was a big funeral. An interesting connection between Sharip Jeenbekov and the former Soviet time MP and *Kara-Kulja Sovkhoz* director, Saip Kokoev, is that their wife's were sisters. The national importance of Sharip is illustrated by the fact that President Akaev is said to have sought his support in the presidential elections of 1995 when Akaev was re-elected.[154] All of his sons went on to have successful careers, more often than not in politics. One brother is currently the ambassador to Iran. Another is a MP from the Social Democratic Party (SDPK), and the third, Sooronbai, has been a MP for three times and also a minister, but is currently keeping a low profile.

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[150] Still in the 1989 census the Osh city population was 41 percent Uzbek.
[151] Several sources, both in Kara-Kulja, Osh, and Bishkek.
[152] Interview, Murat's 'sister', Bishkek, 29-Mar-08.
[153] Like a municipal representative body.
[154] Interview, Baisalov, Edil, Stockholm, Sweden, 6-Mar-08.

The other really influential family in Kara-Kulja is the Osmonov's from a village on the east side of the *rayon* center, 'The First of May' (*Birinchi Mai*). Nothing is known (to me) of the grandfather to the contemporary generation of influential Osmonov's, but their father, Ergesh Osmonov was at his time a local strongman. Ergesh was educated in Moscow, which at the time was very impressive for a village boy from rural Kyrgyzstan. It should be noted that this kind of rapid upward social mobility was not unusual for the Stalin through to Brezhnev generations in the 1930s-1960s. He later became the director of the *Sovkhoz* in the *rayon* center. He also served in the Second World War, and later served as the Nookat 2nd Secretary of the Communist Party.[155] He died the year after Sharip Jeebekov, in 1989. After his death, the local school, the former Lenin School, in the *rayon* center was renamed after him. His sons both actively participated in politics, one of them served as deputy Prime Minister, and later the chairman of the Supreme Court.

As a point of summary, I conclude by outlining an elite typology. We basically have three archetypes here: pre-Soviet 'traditional' elites, Soviet era elites, and post-Soviet elites. The interesting part is both continuity and change in the elite formation patterns. Elections seem to have triggered an unprecedented positioning of locals or quasi-locals.

Table 76: Candidate typology at the time of the election (winners only)

Elite segments	Candidate Names
Experienced politicians (pro-Government)	Jeenbekov Sooronbai (95, 00, 05)
Experienced politicians (Oppositional)	Chotonov Duishonkul (00), Sydykov Usen (02)
Bureaucrats (State administrators)	Osmonov Kurmanbek (00), Abdiev Kurmantai (07)
Businessmen	Parmankulov Zamirbek (02)
Cultural (intelligentsia)	Ibraimov Abyt (90, 95)

* For detailed election results see Appendix: Election Results.

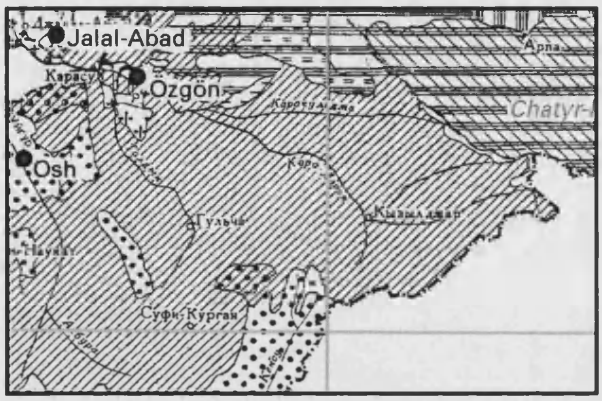
This table shows that the range of people that have done well in Kara-Kulja is broad. We have older experienced politicians winning, as well as younger businessmen, younger oppositional politicians securing a seat as well as old Soviet era nomenklatura.

[155] Interview, Murat's 'sister', Bishkek, 29-Mar-08. Nookat is another *rayon* in Osh *oblast'*.

'Clan' mapping

The dominant 'meta-clan', or 'tribe' if you will, in Kara-Kulja is the Adigine. If we examine the now famous 'Pre-Revolutionary 'clan' map' by the Soviet anthropologistswe can see that in Kara-Kulja there is only one group and that is Adigine (Abramzon, 1963, p. 175).

Map IV: Abamzon Pre-Revolutionary tribal division (zoomed in on Kara-Kulja)



* I got a electronic version of the 'Abramzon' map from

However, when the villagers in Kara-Kulja talk about 'clan', using the Kyrgyz *uruu*, they are referring to the next level, i.e. the lineages stemming from Adigine. In the current research project I have not done a thorough ethnographic study, but I was nevertheless able to identify villages in the district that are dominated by one 'clan' or the other. These are rough estimates of the proportion of 'clans' in Kara-Kulja. These kinship-based identities are very strong in Kara-Kulja. In this rural and mountainous district everyone seem to know their 'clan'. During my fieldwork in Kara-Kulja, I never encountered anyone that did not know or anyone that hesitated to tell their 'clan' belonging, nor have I encountered any hostility towards me for asking the question.[156]

[156] In posing the question, we always used the Kyrgyz *uruu*, even if the question was posed in Russian.

Table 77: 'Clan' map of Kara-Kulja

Uruu	% (expert estimate)	Location (dominating in a/o)
Bargy	30-50%	Chalma, Kapchygai, Oi-Tal, Kyzyl-Jar, Ylai-Talaa, Alaiku
Böru	15-20%	1-mai v. in K-K a/o, Oi-Tal, Alaiku
Tengizbai	15-25%	Bimyrza in K-K a/o
Joru	5-10%	Alaiku
Mongoldor	5%	Mirzake
Kytai		
Sarybulak		Karakochkor
Tasma	5%	Jany-Talaa

The most populous local 'clan' in Kara-Kulja is the Bargy branch, with the Sarybargy (sub-branch) being the biggest. In terms of political influence though they do not seem to be very influential. The most powerful people from Kara-Kulja come from either the Tengizbai or the Böru 'clan'. The villages in South-Eastern Uzgen rayon, that at times have been included in the Kara-Kulja electoral district, are mostly populated by Böru. Tengizbai is said to have dominated the district in the whole post-Soviet period.[157] According to some they used 'Mafia methods', winning elections with the help of financial resources.[158] There has been a Tengizbai MP from the district since at least 1985. Alaiku (and their Bargy) are said to always lose in rayon level elections.[159] 'Clans' are said to play a big role in elections in the sense that one always votes for a fellow 'clan' member, at least according to some local *aksakals*.[160] The importance of 'clans' is said to be diminishing in the district capital, while up in the mountains of Alaiku it is still strong.[161] An outside observer and agitator 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').[162] Later in this chapter I will show that the role of 'clans' in terms of electoral behavior is overstated.

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[157] Interview, Nurlan, Osh, 4-Oct-07.
[158] Interview, *Aksakals*, Kara-Kulja *rayon*, 21-Apr-08.
[159] Interview, Anonymous, 1-Apr-07.
[160] Interview, *Aksakals*, Kara-Kulja rayon, 21-Apr-08.
[161] Interview, Bekbolotov, Kumar, Bishkek, 1-Apr-08.
[162] 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.

Candidate Survey

So what do the candidates themselves say about identity issues and their campaign experience? Two-thirds of the interviewed candidates say it is important (or very important) to know your forefathers (in the *jeti ata* sense).[163] An impressive 76% claim that they know all seven of their forefathers (*jeti ata*). Also, each of them gave a straight and immediate answer to the question about their *uruu* identity.[164] But not only do they know their own *uruu*, a staggering 82% also claim to know the *uruu* of all the other candidates as well. Furthermore, three-quarters think that the voters also know this and less than 20% say that voters only 'sometimes' know this. All this confirms that candidates are quite comfortable in the 'clan discourse' and that they also think that voters are. These numbers are within a 10-15 percent margin of the national averages for the same questions.

If we now move to voting behavior and ask candidates in Kara-Kulja if *uruu* plays any role in determining the vote, we get the following results: around 40% say that voters always vote for someone from their own *uruu*; another 40% claim that they do it only sometimes, and only 6% say that *uruu* identity does not play any role when people vote.[165] If we contrast the candidates from Kara-Kulja with the national average we note that it largely corresponds, apart from the number of candidates that think *uruu* does not play any role whatsoever. While this number was 8% in the Kara-Kulja sample, the national average is almost 20%. This confirms that Kara-Kulja is indeed a very good case for testing the 'clan politics' hypothesis.

What more can we say about the candidates and the campaign itself? Quite predictably, the role of political parties was marginal since the demise of the Communist Party following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Two-thirds of the candidates were not a member of any political party at the time of the elections. Another peculiar Kyrgyz phenomenon is that of local elders, or *aksakals*. The exact translation in English is 'white beard' and this word is reserved for respected local elders. It is often alleged by local observers that elders do play

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[163] *Jeti ata* is a Kyrgyz term that means ones seven forefathers. It is culturally considered to be important to the Kyrgyz to know their *jeti ata* (ref?).
[164] In Russian 'Nazovite imya vashego uruu'.
[165] The rest of the respondents did not provide any answer to this question.

a particular role in elections, and especially so in terms of candidate selection, coordinating gift distribution (vote buying) etc. When asked about the influence of *aksakals*, 30% of the interviewed candidates say that they do not take part in the elections. The rest gave examples of them being involved as organizers and in some cases actively involved in candidate selection and distribution of gifts. We also specifically asked about the kind of persons that were more useful in the campaigning and got the following results:

Table 78: 'Useful campaigners' – Candidate Survey, Kara-Kulja only

What kind of persons in your single-member district (SMD) were most useful for you in your campaign?	
Relatives	78.4%
Colleagues	50.3%
School Friends	36.6%
Local Authority representatives	11.1%
Political Party members	9.2%
Business friends	7.2%

* Allowing for two choices. The results are here presented in the order of importance, not in the order of the alternatives given (Q25).

Perhaps not surprisingly, an overwhelming majority relied on relatives in their campaigning. Again, this largely corresponds to the national averages. Finally, concerning the actual election results, a majority say that they were to a large extent falsified, but only 6% claimed that they were completely falsified. Only one of the candidates made a formal complaint about falsification, demonstrating an almost complete lack of trust in the legal system. In terms of ideology, not a single one of the candidates identify themselves as left, given the left-center-right choices.

Voter Survey[166]

Here I examine what voters themselves say about some of the same identity issues and the campaigns. When asked about the importance of *jeti ata* an overwhelming majority of the respondents say that knowing your seven forefathers is either really important (35%) or

[166] This is not a proper survey of voters in Kara-Kulja. The focus in the research was on political elites and I therefore choose to focus on candidates, not voters as such. But just to get a sense of how voters would answer similar questions we conducted mini-surveys in three villages in Kara-Kulja, with a questionnaire of 15 questions. In Kara-Kulja we conducted over 50 face-to-face interviews. responses to these questionnaires. In terms of sampling, we chose every fourth or fifth household on the right-hand side when we entered the village. I had a local assistant with me who translated for me.

only 'important' (57%). Interestingly, however, 40% say they do not know their *jeti ata*. In other words, it is considered by the interviewed residents to be something culturally important, but on an individual level not everyone is 'up to the standards'. On the 'clan' question each of the respondents gave a name of their *uruu* and *uruk* without hesitating. When asked whether all voters know the *uruu* of all the candidates two-thirds said that, yes, that is always the case. But in terms of voting for someone from one's own *uruu* only 48% say that people always vote for someone from their own *uruu*. One-third claim that *uruu* identity does not play any role in terms of voting behavior. This last figure is significantly higher than what the candidates thought would be the case. This indicates that there is an elite bias in the 'clan discourse', in the sense of candidates emphasizing these genealogical categories, while the voters themselves might be more interested in other issues. Or then voters are simply ashamed of admitting that they would always vote for someone from their own *uruu*.

When asked about the December 2007 party list elections, 40% say that there was no vote buying this time around, but the number of respondents that 'do not know' is a very high 40%. This indicates that vote buying is a sensitive subject to discuss, especially with outsiders. Only two percent say that there was a lot of vote buying in December 2007, while four percent say that there was 'a bit of' vote buying. However, when asked about the February 2005 elections that triggered the 'Tulip Revolution' only 30% 'do not know' and one-third clams that there was a lot of vote buying. Either these people have been indoctrinated with the President Bakiev's line about the benefits of a party list system, or then the 2005 elections were really dirtier in the sense of vote buying.[167] It also seems as if all of the candidates in 2005 were using vote buying as a technique, at least according to 83% of the respondents. But there does not seem to be any sanction mechanism punishing voters that do not vote for their patrons (the candidates giving them money), since 90% say that one does not need to vote for the person that one receives the money from (c.f. the Akaev campaign about vote buying). Finally, two-thirds think that a party list proportional system is better than the previously exercised SMD system.

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[167] A PR party-list system, was by President Bakiev said to heal the Kyrgyz politics from localism and tribalism. This was a position long held by the political opposition as well.

To conclude, from both the candidate and the voter survey it is apparent that there is a significant fluency in terms of genealogical categories, be it *aksakals, jeti ata*, or *uruu/uruk*. This much is clear, but it still does not reveal much of the consequences for local politics. Kinship categories are thought to be one out of many considerations in determining the vote, but in the campaign itself the candidates often rely on relatives. Let us now turn to each of the legislative elections and go through them one by one, starting with the last Soviet era elections in the spring of 1990.[168]

1990 Elections

These were the first ever multi-candidate elections in Kyrgyzstan. 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.). For the first time the people were free to choose among many candidates and in a few districts the ruling Communist party nominated candidates were defeated. However, the winning combination seems to have been a nomenklatura profile, with the entailing understanding of how the work the system, but also male gender, and local knowledge.[169] 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 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: 825).

As for Kara-Kulja, four representatives were to be elected in single-member districts in this *rayon*. One of only a few competitive districts in these elections was also one of the most

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[168] Detailed election results are presented in the Appendix: Election Results 1995-2007.
[169] C.f 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.

peripheral districts up on the Chinese border in Kara-Kulja. One candidate described this as a revanchist moment for the local elites whose forefathers had fought against the Soviets in the early 20th century (c.f. the Basmachis). This district, no. 311, in Kara-Kulja proved to be one of the most interesting in this whole election. Abyt Ibraimov, an academic from the remote Alaiku areas bordering China, won the election against a high-level KGB official from the *oblast'* capital of Osh. Ibraimov was, in his own words, demanding democratic rights, including, freedom of movement (repealing the *propiska* system). The repressive nature of the Soviet state was also a target in the case of Ibraimov's campaigning, perhaps not surprising since the authorities sent a KGB official from Osh to campaign against Ibraimov in this strategically located border area. Ibraimov won with 70 % of the votes in the second round with strong support from local *aksakals* according both to the candidate himself and the local elders in Alaiku.

1995 Elections

In 1995 the *rayon* of Kara-Kulja was covered by two single-member districts, one for each of the chambers in the new 105 seat parliament.

Table 79: 1995 Parliamentary Election Results in *Kara-Kulja*

Legislative Assembly SMD no. 25 Gulcha				
Ibraimov Abyt	14,099	26.89%	29,173	56.61%
Amatov Begish	15,095	28.79%	22,363	43.39%
Abdykaparov Asanbek	6,352	12.11%		
Bazarkulov Askarbek	498	0.95%		
Bekeshov Tynybek	3,134	5.98%		
Kalybekov Bekbolot	825	1.57%		
Kasymbekov Toktosun	1,370	2.61%		
Keneshbaev Abdipatan	404	0.77%		
Omurzakov Mamatemin	5,632	10.74%		
Osmonov Kurmanbek Ergeshovich	1,764	3.36%		
Taychabarov Marip	1,288	2.46%		
Cholponbaev Tokush	652	1.24%		
Emilbaeva Meylikan	1,324	2.52%		
Total	52,437	100.00%	51,536	100.00%

People's Assembly SMD no. 40 Kara-Kulja

Jeenbekov Sooronbai Sharipovich	5,551	21.53%	13,415	51.83%
Zhamshitov Zhanybay	6,338	24.58%	12,466	48.17%
Abduraimov Zharasul	5,162	20.02%		
Abdykadyrov Turgunbay	163	0.63%		
Aytbaev Taalaybek	209	0.81%		
Aytkulov Abdykadyr	24	0.09%		
Ashimbaeva Salamat	136	0.53%		
Israilov Abdilashim	2,218	8.60%		
Maylubashov Kochkonbay	1,872	7.26%		
Toktobaev Erkindik	95	0.37%		
Toktosatarov Akun	2,943	11.41%		
Turdubaev Osmon	1,076	4.17%		
Total	25,787	100.00%	25,881	100.00%

* Two-chambered parliament, one professional full-time body (Legislative Assembly) and one that only met occassionally (People's Assembly).

The first round of elections in Kara-Kulja (and Alai *rayon*) show that the process was quite open and that no clear alliances and affiliations had been established.[170] As so much else in Kyrgyzstan at this point in history everything seems to have been in a flux. The institutional arrangement for the elections made this instability (and the resulting volatility) apparent to all observers. A new bi-cameral assembly was to be elected, with a professional full-time upper chamber. It really seems to have been an open race where positioning, negotiation and coordination were tried out, but in the end the local elites decided to play it out among themselves at the booth.

Both the voters and the candidates already had some experience with elections and voters' expectations on both the campaign and the capacities of the future MPs were highly inflated. This district shows that the new emerging economic elites were not yet in a position to challenge the established local elites, like Sooronbai Jeenbekov in Kara-Kulja in the lower chamber or the incumbent Abyt Ibraimov in the upper chamber. This is how the OSCE mission summarizes the composition of the new parliament:

[170] In the 1995 legislative assembly district both Kara-Kulja *rayon* and Alai *rayon* were part of SMD no. 25.

> ...the new parliament includes only six of the former deputies; the rest are a mix of government officials (central, regional, local), businessmen, representatives of the intelligentsia, and clan leaders. The single largest group (25) is engineers, followed by seven economists, five surgeons and five lawyers (OSCE, 1995, p. 10).

Note the use of the 'clan' concept, a perfect illustration of the orientalistic discourse, implying that 'clans' exist as organizations and that they have leaders that get elected to parliament.

2000 Elections

For the 2000 elections there were some slight changes with the introduction of a small proportional component of 15 seats. The SMD seats between the two chambers were divided up equally, largely corresponding to the *rayon* delineation.

Table 80: 2000 Parliamentary Election Results in *Kara-Kulja*

Legislative Assembly SMD no. 33 Kara-Kulja

Osmonov Kurmanbek Ergeshev	10,776	23.63%	24,462	53.35%
Turganbaev Nadyrbek	14,412	31.61%	21,313	46.48%
Parmankulov Zamirbek	8,496	18.63%		
Israilov Abdilashim	7,620	16.71%		
Boronbaeva Toktokan	2,918	6.40%		
Ibraimov Abyt	1,330	2.92%		
'against all'	47	0.10%	78	0.17%
Total	45,599	100.00%	45,853	100.00%

People's Assembly SMD no. 33 Kara-Kulja

Jeenbekov Sooronbai Sharipovich	30,468	65.90%		
Osmonov Jolbors	15,703	33.96%		
'against all'	66	0.14%		
Total	46,237	100.00%		

* The parliament was still structured as two-chambered, but this this with new district delineation.

These elections illustrate the emergence of a new younger generation of business elites that vie for support and influence. There were incumbents and young businessmen in both SMDs. In the People's Assembly election, the lower chamber, where the incumbent Jeenbekov ran, the incumbency effect was clearly discernable, reducing the competitiveness to a meager 1.67 *Effective Number of Candidates*. However, we can clearly see that the second candidate, Jolbors Osmonov, managed to attract a considerable number of votes. Actually according to Jolbors, Jeenbekov had promised him in 1995 that

he could have the seat in 2000; a strong indication that informal deals do not necessarily hold.

In the Legislative Assembly race the competition was fierce and partly (perhaps) organized along 'clan' lines. In the end Kurmanbek Osmonov, who came in second in the first round, managed to win the seat. The most interesting thing is that an incumbent MP, Ibraimov, lost his seat after getting less than three percent of the vote. This is a remarkable result for an influential person from the biggest *uruu* in the district. This is here also taken as an indication of the oppositional mentality in theses peripheral mountainous regions of Kyrgyzstan. These elections also set the stage for future mobilizations, especially relevant considering the tragic Aksy events that were to follow in 2002. In these elections there was also a national party-list component (15 seats only). One of these seats went to the young oppositional politician from Kara-Kulja, Duyshonkul Chotonov.

2002 By-elections, October

Table 81: 2002 Parliamentary by-election Results in *Kara-Kulja*

People's Assembly SMD no. 33 Kara-Kulja		
Sydykov Usen	18,421	48.80%
Parmankulov Zamirbek	7,450	19.74%
Osmonov Jolbors	5,383	14.26%
Dyikanbaev	3,808	10.09%
Satybaldiev	1,390	3.68%
Amanbaev	1,298	3.44%
'against all'		
Total	37,750	

* Note only the People's Assembly seat was up for by-election.

This is one of the most interesting by-elections ever in Kyrgyzstan. By-elections were called for because the incumbent MP, Kurmanbek Osmonov was appointed deputy Prime Minister, in a reshuffle after Bakiev left his position as the Prime Minister in the aftermath of the Aksy tragedy.[171] This can be considered a turning point in the Akaev presidency. The elections came six months after the Aksy events and together these two events constituted rallying causes for southern oppositional forces. Clearly the authority of president Akaev had been circumscribed and especially so in the south. The favorite in this election was a

[171] See footnote 69.

former communist party official and MP, Usen Sydykov, one of the most influential southerners in the country. The crowds actually seized the district (*rayon*) state administration building at one point and took the *rayon akim* (head) hostage protesting falsified elections and the loss of Mr. Sydykov. In an unprecedented development they actually made the *akim* walk with tied hands all the way from Kara-Kulja to the neighboring *rayon* capital of Uzgen in front of the protest march.[172] This pattern of demonstration was later to be repeated across the country during the 'Tulip Revolution' in the spring of 2005. However, there was no clear coordination between anti-Akaev fractions. This provided an opening for a young Bishkek-based businessman who was born in Kara-Kulja, Mr. Parmankulov to emerge as the winner, but only after a protracted legal process and a second round that was postponed by more than half a year. This election illustrates the emergence of a new class of younger generation businessmen, a category that would go on to play a key role in the 2005 elections.

2005 Elections

Table 82: 2005 Parliamentary Election Results in *Kara-Kulja*

SMD no. 36 Kara-Kulja

Jeenbekov Sooronbai	11,962	52.61%
Chotonov Duyshonkul	5,942	26.13%
Parmankulov Zamirbek	4,239	18.64%
Bozhonov Zamirbek	531	2.34%
'against all'	62	0.27%
Total	22,736	

* A unicameral parliament with 75 SMD seats.

A very interesting election that also played into the larger post-electoral 'revolutionary' dynamic that eventually led to the overthrow of president Akaev. The incumbent MP, Jeenbekov secured re-election already in the first round. However, due to discontent and allegations of fraud the other candidates mobilized their (horizontal) networks to demonstrations in the Oblast capital of Osh. Two of the losing candidates were incumbents, Chotonov and Parmankulov. The discontent they felt after losing is understandable, as is their interest in challenging the results.

[172] Interview, Baisalov, Lysekil, Oct-08.

> The organization of protesters in Kara-Kulja is a case study in community networks that become politicized by external events. After Chotonov lost in the first round with 20% of the vote to pro-government candidate Sooronbai Jeenbekov (no relation to Jalalabad's Jeenbekov), Chotonov and two of his campaign organizers, who later became members of the coordinating committee—and then deputy governors of Osh—began plotting in Kara-Kulja. They utilized Chotonov's mobile group (mobil'naya gruppa) of 20-30 campaign activists, which had done most of the legwork during the campaign. Chotonov and his aides coordinated from the center of the district while the mobile group worked in villages, some separated by up to 100 kilometers. On February 28, the mobile group went door-to-door and made phone calls to mobilize people for a protest at Kara-kulja's courthouse on March 2. In all, 217 were recruited to protest on behalf of Chotonov, more than half of them from the district's center Alaiku, and most of those from Koch-ati village, where Chotonov was born and his family lives—a small but committed portion of the total population. After protesters had gathered, the remainder of the election committee returned and reconstituted as the leadership of the movement. After losing their case, they decided to appeal to higher authorities—and began marching toward Osh (Radnitz, 2006a, p. 168).

The February 2005 elections clearly prove a lack of 'clan' coordination in Kara-Kulja. 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 Böru had been able to coordinate their behavior they might have stood a chance, but now since there were two candidates they conveniently split the votes between each other. Also, the Tengizbai challenger, the young journalist, did not seem to be intimidated by the presence of a MP from his own 'clan'. This goes to show that 'clan dynamic' cannot explain politics on a district level. There simply are not any effective sanction mechanisms for 'clans' to use.

2007 By-elections, September

Table 83: 2007 Parliamentary by-election Results in *Kara-Kulja*

SMD no. 36 Kara-Kulja		
Abdiev Kurmantay	9,024	44.10%
Aydarov Kerim	1,375	6.72%
Osmonov Kamchybek	4,442	21.71%
Chotonov Duyshonkul	5,623	27.48%
'against all'		
Total	20,464	

When the incumbent, Jeenbekov, became minister in the Atambaev cabinet in April 2007, following the large-scale demonstrations in the winter of 2006/07, the seat freed up and new elections were scheduled for September 2007. It was clear that these elections would be a preparatory stage for the upcoming parliamentary elections (that had not yet been scheduled). The vote shares for each candidate pretty much correspond to the 'clan'

proportions in the district. The turnout figures are believed to be heavily inflated, but the proportion of votes were kept the same![173]

These were very competitive elections, like most of the post-independence elections in this district. The race was open for alternative elites to participate and the intensity of the campaigning was not even diminished by the knowledge that there might not be a second round if the president decides to call early general elections.[174] It does not make sense to put so much effort into a campaign without a clear agenda or idea about the purpose. The winner of the first round, Kurmantai Abdiev, perhaps thought that by getting elected in the first round he would be in a good position to secure a nomination on a party ticket later in the fall, if early party-list elections were to be called. In this he did not succeed, but his son-in-law later managed to get nominated as number 15 on Bakiev's Ak Zhol party list in the December 2007 PR elections. Chotonov's ambition on the other hand was clear in that he, as the vice-chair of Ata-Meken, was preparing for the upcoming electoral cycle, just like they did in another by-elections in Balykchy, the same fall. The same might be said about Kamchibek Osmonov who was supposed to run on the Asaba party in these by-elections, but later got cold feet, most likely due to government pressure. And finally we got, Kerimbek Aidarov, the young journalist that managed to get almost seven percent of the votes in his first ever attempt in his home region. In sum, it seems as if the SMD by-election in September 2007 was both a platform for future electoral struggles, but also a final last glimpse of the workings of a majoritarian system in Kyrgyzstan.

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[173] Interview, Azamat and Bekbolotov, Bishkek, 10-Dec-07.
[174] At the time however most people were convinced that the sitting parliament would serve its full term (until 2010).

2007 Party-list Elections, December

Table 84: 2007 Parliamentary Election (PR system) Results in *Kara-Kulja rayon*

Kara-Kulja *rayon*		
Ak Zhol	34,024	87.06%
Ata Meken	1,873	4.79%
Communist Party	1,309	3.35%
Others	1,873	4.79%
Total	39,079	

* Note: Only the *rayon* level results for Ak Zhol and CP have been obtained. We have estimated the results for Ata Meken and all other parties, by dividing up the rest of the votes equally between these two categories.

The consolidation of president Bakiev's power over the regions, and especially in the south is well illustrated by the case of Kara-Kulja in December 2007. These elections were the first ones to be organized using a party-list proportional system, a major institutional change from the previous single-member district majoritarian system. At the end of the day, the pro-presidential party, Ak Zhol, did not have any problems delivering Kara-Kulja, even though there were no high profile candidates from this particular region on their party list. There were only a few pockets of resistance left in this district, mainly in the home region of the vice-chair of the main oppositional party Ata Meken.

Another interesting development was the election of Asylbek Jeenbekov, from the quasi-oppositional Social Democratic Party (SDPK). He chose SDPK out of loyalty to his brother and the then sitting PM Atambaev (also a fellow businessman). The Jeenbekov family has treaded a fine line throughout the history of independent Kyrgyzstan. As a matter of fact, an immediate family member has been a MP since 1985 (if we include Saip Kokoev).[175] Their power seems to have been cemented in the district, in that no matter what regime there is in Bishkek they always get elected. Is it because Bishkek does not control the district or is it because the Jeenbekov's are appeasing the center? There was also another candidate from Kara-Kulja worth mentioning, Kerim Aidarov, who also ran in the September 2007 by-elections. He tried to register his candidacy for the Taza-Koom party, but the CEC denied the party their registration.

[175] Saip Kokoev first marriage was to Sharip Jeenbekov's wife's sister.

Discussion of Competitiveness

From the short overview of each parliamentary election it seems obvious that there are much more at play than simply politically mobilized kinship groups. Here I outline the implications of my study by addressing four pertinent questions about local level electoral dynamics in Kyrgyzstan.

1. Why were so many rural districts competitive?

Constituencies were competitive, first of all, because the central authorities did not exercise complete control over all districts in Kyrgyzstan in the first place.[176] This was partly the outcome of a conscious decision to decentralize a lot of authority in the 1990s. Secondly, because any possible coordination and control mechanisms that could have hampered competition had broken down, if there ever were any such mechanisms. It seems as if neither the President nor the 'clan elders' were in complete control over the processes in this transitional period when democratic institutions were first introduced.[177] Since none of the local elites could consolidate power and secure representation by informal pre-electoral coordination mechanisms they allowed for elections to play that role. Elections were not competitive in order to please the international community, but rather to please different segments of the local elites. Elections provided an opportunity for the elites (both local and national) to advance their interests in an otherwise economically and socially deteriorating environment. There were a lot of procedural problems with the electoral process, but in SMDs where there were candidates strong enough to defend their votes, in the sense of forcing polling station officials to count their votes, it contributed to the competitiveness.[178]

City districts were less competitive because administrative resources were more readily available there, in the form of large public sector and state affiliated institutions, like

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[176] This largely corresponds to the argument put forward in a forthcoming book by Levitsky and Way 'Competitive Authoritarianism' (forthcoming), chapter two: '...regime outcomes also hinge on incumbents' capacity to resist opposition challenges. Autocratic governments vary considerably in their ability to control civil society, co-opt or divide oppositions, repress protest, and steal elections'.

[177] Here I am not suggesting that there is such a thing as elders representing a particular 'clan', I am only addressing the assumptions in the 'clan politics' literature (see section on 'Clans' in Kyrgyzstan).

[178] More on the procedural problems with elections in Kyrgyzstan see OSCE/Odihr, National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Republican Institute (IRI), International Federation for Electoral Systemt (IFES), and *Koalitsia* (local NGO) election observation reports.

schools and universities. There were also a few urban cases of very rich businessmen that just by their sheer popularity, wealth, and active discouragement deterred people from challenging them. In competitive rural districts, there is furthermore an element of impatience on the behalf of the voters, in the sense that disappointment in the socioeconomic development was directed towards the incumbent MPs. Both voters and candidates express a frustration with the performance of parliamentarians and this can be considered an emerging pattern of democratic accountability. People simply have too high expectations on the capacity of the government, and its institutions, to deliver benefits. This dynamic might be more prevalent in rural areas since the withdrawal of the all-encompassing Soviet state apparatus was more directly felt here than in urban areas. This constant resentment translates into a demand for alternative candidates.

2. Why do not 'clans' coordinate among themselves in order to secure representation?

This is one of the most challenging puzzles when it comes to local level electoral dynamics in Kyrgyzstan. In the literature 'clans' are considered to be the most salient cleavage and the organizing principle of political battles (Collins, 2006). However, examined on a local level another picture emerges. 'Clans', in the sense of Kyrgyz *uruu* do not exist as corporate groups anymore, if they ever did. An *uruu* identity with its ensuing genealogical narrative does not mean that it exists as an organization with a hierarchical structure and enforceable capacities. The fact that the biggest 'clan' in Kara-Kulja, the Bargy, was not able to get anyone elected in the 2000, 2002, 2005 or 2007 elections show that other forces than 'clans' are at play. A group with around 30-50 % of the rayon population can be assumed to leverage a certain influence, but somehow the smaller Tengizbai 'clan' came to dominate politics in the rayon.

Yet, there might have been attempts to 'coordinate' between different 'clan elders', but since their influence was mostly of ceremonial nature they were unable to monopolize the candidate selection procedure. This is clearly shown by the fact that in 2005 there were two candidates from each of the strong 'clans' in the district. If these kinship groups had been able to enforce a decision of uniting behind a fellow 'clan' member, or forcing the lesser of the two to step down, it might have altered the election outcome. So it seems clear that 'clans', even in times of heightened political battles, are anything but united actors with a clearly defined agenda. Talk about 'clans' and forefathers is a crucial part of the self-

perception of most Kyrgyz and this narrative is especially strong in some of the rural districts, but 'clan' affiliation is only one of many factors that influence electoral outcomes and in most electoral districts, except for a few mono-ethnic rural districts, it probably does not have any effect at all.

3. Why do incumbent MPs lose in an otherwise semi-authoritarian setting?

One hypothesis is that incumbents lost due to falling out of favor with the central authorities, a replacement sanctioned from the top in other words. This might be the case in many other semi-authoritarian settings, but this argument implies that the state is capable of delivering a certain election result. The most likely scenario in the case of Kyrgyzstan seems to be weak performance of incumbents and consecutive punishment by the voters and local elites. Both voters and fellow candidates confirm this in the case of Kara-Kulja. The relative open political climate allowed for local elites to exploit the weakness of the incumbents. The empowered citizenry was 'shopping around' in times of elections, receiving gifts and financial support, from several different candidates. The economic reforms (privatization etc.) in 1990's created a new class of entrepreneurs that vied for the support of the voters. If the incumbent was seen as aloof and too closely associated with an unpopular president they were up for a tough fight at the polls.[179]

4. Why did so many candidates run even though they knew they would lose?

This is an interesting phenomenon contributing to the competitiveness of elections in Kyrgyzstan. The reason is probably a combination of conscious strategy on the part of different groupings to divert attention from other candidates and hubris on the part of candidates themselves. Either these candidates were façade candidates or then they simply imagined that they could make it to a second round and that the stacks would be re-organized in the second round allowing for them to win. The façade candidates can either be someone running in order to secure benefits from other more prominent candidates. For instance a local school might want to nominate their head teacher in order to secure benefits from a winning candidate.[180] Or, a leading candidate could put them on the ballot in order

[179] Here we are referring to Abyt Ibraimov, the incumbent in the 2000 elections that got only 2.3 percent of the votes in the first round and who's brother was President Akaev's state secretary.
[180][180] Note that until the December 2007 elections worker's collectives had a right to nominate candidates.

to take votes of opponents. There are also those who ran out of a sense of loyalty to their most immediate constituencies, in several cases being asked by *aksakals* from their own village to run.[181]

Chapter 6 Conclusions

This chapter shows that there is no such informal institution as 'clan politics' in Kyrgyzstan. 'Clans' in the sense of *uruu* and *uruk* do exist as categories, but their function, if any, is more related to life-cycle celebrations and rituals, like weddings and funerals. 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, p. 35). The district covered in this chapter, Kara-Kulja, is not representative of a typical district in Kyrgyzstan, on the contrary it is an atypical district that was selected as a critical case for falsifying the 'clan politics' hypothesis. If politics is not dominated by 'clans' in Kara-Kulja it probably is not dominated by 'clans' anywhere else in Kyrgyzstan either. That is, if I narrowly define a 'clan' as a kinship-based social unit that possesses agency characteristics. I therefore suggest that we stop using the concept of 'clan' when describing politics in Kyrgyzstan and the rest of Central Asia. Since the corresponding Kyrgyz concepts *uruu/uruk* do indeed have a very unique emic meaning it seems somewhat misleading to stretch the concept to cover all sorts of informal and often

[181] Interview. Date?

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this dissertation I have illustrated how electoral campaigns are fought in a country where allegedly 'clans' are playing a central role. The research questions, as outlined in chapter two concerned explanations of electoral competition and more specifically the explanatory power of the 'clan hypothesis' for district level patterns of competition. Through an analysis of local (district) level dynamics and with a special focus on local level 'kinship' identities I have attempted to shed some light on the dynamics of formal and informal institutions in an impoverished former Soviet Republic. I have no illusions about the limits of my understanding of this very complex phenomenon. As a matter of fact many locals also admit to being confused about the nature of 'clan'. In this concluding section I will summarize my findings and speculate about possible future avenues for research.

Elections and Identity politics in Kyrgyzstan

As was shown in the two preceding chapters several of the conditions for 'clan politics' to be present were indeed present in the time period covered.[182] The first conditions were all about the 'existence' of 'clans' in reality, i.e. whether both candidates and voters were fluent in the genealogical discourse about 'clans'. The tougher conditions included vote shares of a candidate from a particular 'clan' having to be on par with the proportion of voting age fellow 'clan' members. Again, the conditions that I outlined prior to conducting fieldwork were not intended to imply that there actually was such a candidate in the last few elections in Kyrgyzstan. This was only used as a benchmark for identifying critical cases to test the 'clan politics' hypothesis.

The un-weighted results of the candidate survey illustrate several key things about politics and identity in post-independence Kyrgyzstan.[183] For one, 'clan' identities are strong and this is by some candidates believed to have straightforward implications for voting behavior. However, a majority of the respondents say that 'clans' should not play any role

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[182] Conditions outlined in chapter two, section 'Studying 'clans' and clientelism'.
[183] Remember the rural bias in the candidate survey. For more information see table Table 87 in the Methodology appendix.

in politics, that it is a purely historical identity phenomena with no place in a modern democratic Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, candidates in rural districts are acutely aware of the number of fellow *uruu* members, the size of the 'clan' so to speak, with more than 85% responding to the question about the *uruu* proportions in their district. But the implications of strong 'clan' identification for voting behavior remain a puzzle. 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. So the question really becomes: what exactly does the 'clan' component determine in an election and what is the role of locality? In the case of Kyrgyzstan it is clear that there is no such thing as a 'clan' that actually does things, i.e. coordinated action among 'clan' members. At most, it is a symbolic reality, an imagined community if you will. Political entrepreneurs gladly utilize the 'clan' language in describing their candidacy, but this does not mean that there actually are sanction mechanisms at hand for 'clan elders' to enforce decisions on candidate selection or voting. This is not to say that 'clans' do not exist as culturally important categories and that life-cycle rituals are at times organized around these kinship units.

I here cast in doubt whether 'clans' even are informal institutions. Based on my findings it seems as if 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, p. 35). Note that if politics is not dominated by 'clans' in Kara-Kulja, my selected critical case, it probably is not dominated by 'clans' anywhere else in Kyrgyzstan either, or Central Asia for that matter. That is, if I narrowly define a 'clan' as a kinship-based social unit that possesses agency characteristics. I therefore suggest that we stop using the concept of 'clan' when describing politics in Kyrgyzstan and the rest of Central Asia. Since the corresponding Kyrgyz concepts *uruu/uruk* do indeed have a very unique emic meaning it seems somewhat misleading to stretch the concept to cover all sorts of informal and often criminal behavior, like corruption.

It has here been illustrated that 'clans' are indeed discursively present in times of heightened political battles (elections). The question in the Kyrgyz case is: under what condition does an emic category like *uruu* become a 'klan', as in a politicized kinship

group?[184] Relying on 'clans' as a key component in the new identity project in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan was an intentional strategy deployed by the Akaev administration (Gullette, 2006a). In an ironic twist, 'clans' replaced the communist party, as something that you had to pay lip service to. A 'new conformism' developed, partly as a result of the ideological confusion in this transitional period.[185] This new conformist narrative was especially strong in rural areas. But the fractionalizing nature of the single-member district (SMD) system also contributed to the persistent focus on 'clans'. There were no incentives for political entrepreneurs to reach beyond their district in their campaigning. The majoritarian SMD system in Kyrgyzstan allowed for localized identity formations to be exploited in election campaigns. The switch to a nation-wide party list system in late 2007 ended all of this, turning the contest more into a question about trust in authorities and oppositional mentalities, not kinship categories.

Competitiveness in Kyrgyzstan

Since the first multi-candidate elections introduced during Soviet era, in 1990, there has been, on average, a fairly high number of candidates challenging each available seat in Kyrgyzstan. Exceptionally high as a matter of fact, considering that I am talking about a regime that can at best be classified as Partly Free. The perception of competitiveness on a district level has been persistently high with on average 83% rating the election as either 'very' or 'somewhat' competitive. It is interesting to note that perceptions of competitiveness do not correlate with international ratings of the electoral process. Freedom House lowered the Electoral Process score for Kyrgyzstan in the wake of the 2000 election, but the perceived level of high competition was 93% for that year. This just goes to show that the international community is obsessed with high-profile national level politicians, like Felix Kulov or Danyar Usenov in the 2000 elections, and failed to recognize local level dynamics outside of these heavily exposed SMDs. Furthermore, when asked to compare levels of competition with the previous election in the same district there is also a fairly stable majority that rates the elections as becoming more and more competitive for each time. When asked to explain high levels of competition candidates simply say that there are many strong candidates with the campaign experience, networks, and the resources needed

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[184] Note the Russian spelling of 'clan' with the letter k.
[185] The concept of 'New Conformism' was suggested by my supervisor, Prof. James Hughes at LSE.

to put up a fight. However, as already noted high levels of competition does not mean that it was a fair battle. As a matter of fact the level of falsification on Election Day has been persistently high. In terms of trends over time there are nevertheless some interesting patterns. The perception of falsification is going down over time, with the 2005 elections being the first time ever a majority does not rate the elections as having been 'completely' or 'somewhat' falsified. This all probably has changed since then, due to the parliamentary elections in December 2007 that were considered as sub-standard (OSCE, 2008).

Parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan were competitive because central authorities were not capable of fully controlling all electoral districts. Part of the story is that central authorities simply neglected some rural districts, i.e. they decided not to control these districts. However, the 'Tulip Revolution' in 2005 clearly illustrated the danger with this strategy, since a lot of the revolutionary mobilization started in these peripheral districts. This tells us something about the evolving state-society relationship in this newly independent country. The state's capacity was limited and different social actors were empowered through both economic (privatization) and political (democratization) reforms introduced in the 1990s. The state was weak and societal actors grew stronger, at least in the sense of increasing the room for maneuver outside the realm of the state. This was quickly picked up by political entrepreneurs. Politics in Kyrgyzstan since independence in 1991 has been characterized by negotiations about institutions, shifting loyalties and balances of power, and a general sense of loss of direction. New actors entered the scene and old ones were marginalized, or found new roles. This is the context where elections in Kyrgyzstan became surprisingly competitive, a trend that was reversed in the December 2007 elections. Only time will tell if the era of competitive elections is over in what was formerly known as the 'Island of Democracy'.

Political elites in Kyrgyzstan

Some elements of the old communist *nomenklatura* were able to transfer their pre-independence influence into post-independence power, but there was an abundance of challengers. For local elites, running for a seat in the parliament became something of an obligatory 'game' where a plethora of players bet a lot of resources on the prospects of winning a seat. I can only speculate about the motivational factors of these political entrepreneurs, but it is well known that the rewards, if a seat was secured, were good in

terms of both protecting existing resources, by gaining immunity, but also by opening up new avenues for amassing more wealth and influence. Much of the competition was organized, in terms of positioning, around views of the incumbent President and his administration. The weak capacity of the central authorities, both in terms of coercive capacity (stick), but also financial incentives (carrot), seems to be a condition for this dynamic to work. Also, the question about the role of new economic elites seems to be of central importance. The transition process in Kyrgyzstan produced an open elite structure. I tested the hypothesis that the role of business elites over time has increased and found that some rich businessmen are indeed outperforming other candidate categories. But there were also many petty businessmen that participated in the elections and more often than not with meager results.

Election campaigns since the last Soviet era elections contained a lot of dirty tricks including vote buying and the use of administrative resources. However, since almost everyone was using these techniques the field strangely leveled. Furthermore there seems to be a resigned acceptance among candidates of the fact that elections in Kyrgyzstan contain irregularities. Also, the party system was extremely weak and the explanation is partly found in the institutional incentives with tough requirements on party nominations, while almost none on self-nominated candidates. Even though this might seem like a un-intended systematic glitch there is evidence that the authorities tried to undermine the creation of a new strong party system (Jones Luong, 2002).

Implications for further study

If the 'clan politics' hypothesis is insufficient, and perhaps even misleading, in describing electoral politics in Kyrgyzstan, then what explains extreme levels of vote dispersion (high competition)? Competition is clearly not explained by any of the standard explanations found in the democratization literature. As I have already noted we need to take both social forces and cleavages, but also the nature of the State into consideration. The Kyrgyz State in the transition period was challenged from many directions, both from neighboring states, but also, perhaps more importantly from sub-national forces. State institutions were disorganized and incapable of forcing its will on the territory of this newly independent state. Explaining the emergence of 'pockets of electoral competition' might be as simple as central authorities simply not being capable of fully controlling local level forces. Part of

the story is that central authorities simply neglected some rural districts, i.e. they decided not to assert their control of these districts. However, the 'Tulip Revolution' in 2005 clearly illustrated the danger with this strategy, since a lot of the revolutionary mobilization started in these peripheral districts.

Persistently high levels of competition in Kyrgyzstan in the period covered, 1995-2005, could also be due to a path dependency logic. The first elections in 1995, the ones that were arguably very competitive and provided many local elites with opportunities to test their strengths, can be considered as establishing a path that Kyrgyzstan has thereafter been following. This largely follows the work on the effects of elections on the ensuing regime type in other parts of the world (Lindberg, 2006). It might be as simple as elections, once held, do indeed lead to more competitive regimes. However, the case of Kyrgyzstan and the authoritarian consolidation under the current leadership challenges this theory. On the other hand one could argue that the increasing authoritarianism that we are now observing is only a temporary one and that soon enough elections in Kyrgyzstan will be competitive again.

Appendix I – Methodology: Candidate Survey Kyrgyzstan

The baseline unit of analysis in this research project is individual candidates. The selection of our sample of candidates was done through a selection of Single-Member Districts (SMD) in the February 2005 Parliamentary Elections in Kyrgyzstan. The selection was done in two phases: 1) random selection and 2) purposeful addition of SMDs of particular interest. The population is all candidates that officially registered to run in parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan. In addition we decided to back-track and interview candidates in the same region for earlier elections as well, in 2000 and 1995.

A total of 160 candidate interviews were conducted, a third by the PhD candidate himself and the rest by local assistants. All the interviews were conducted in the spring/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 previous experience of similar surveys conducted by Professor James Hughes (J. Hughes, 1997). The questionnaire contained 41 questions of which 15 were open-ended and 26 were multiple choice type questions. There were also two additional 'commentary' type questions where the interviewer noted the respondent's attitude to the 'clan' identity questions and other comments. 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. The interview was conducted in Russian or Kyrgyz. The PhD candidate coordinated all the interviews. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face and the duration of the interviews was 50-70 minutes on average.

Table 85: Collectors (Interviewers)

Collector Name	Number of Responses	*Oblast'*	Affiliation
Iliyas	21	Talas & Bishkek	Research Assistant
Jenishbek	9	Issyk-Kul (Balykchy)	Siar-Bishkek
Turat	8	Naryn	Siar-Bishkek
Azat	4	Issyk-Kul	Siar-Bishkek
Munojat[186]	62	Osh & Batken	Siar-Bishkek
Fredrik Sjoberg	56	Whole country	
Total	*160*		

Getting the candidates to agree to an interview was not always easy. This is partly due to the intensifying political intimidation in 2007/08. Furthermore some of the questions asked

[186] Several collectors, but coordinated by Munozhat.

were of a sensitive nature, e.g. questions about 'clan politics', that fore some people have connotations of political corruption and the like.

Sample

In order to get a regionally representative sample of SMDs we, as a first step, generated a region stratified random sample. There are nine administrative regions (*oblast'*) or cities with 'region' status in Kyrgyzstan. The sample was structured in the following way: 1) First we randomly selected SMDs one at a time separately in all nine *oblast'* (regions) of Kyrgyzstan. This was done until we had reached 50 percent of all the Single-Member District (SMD) in a particular *oblast'*. The total number of SMDs in the 2005 elections was 75. In this first phase we selected 40 SMDs.[187] 2) Secondly, we also added four of the most competitive, four of the least competitive, and one 'clan prone' SMD (in line with the hypothesis testing outlined in the research design).

A total number of 49 SMDs were thus selected. In consultation with local stakeholders, some of these SMDs were deemed to be very difficult to conduct interviews in.[188] In the selected SMDs there were a total of 389 candidates if we count the final number of candidates as reported in the CEC results publication (Tsentralnaya Komissia, 2006). However, in two of the SMDs with only one candidate we decided to include one of the withdrawn candidates as well in order to get a better picture of the district. Furthermore, in the selected SMDs we decided to include all the by-elections that had been organized in the period 1995-2007.

Table 86: Total Number of conducted interviews per Election Year

E-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	100.0

All in all we conducted 73 interviews with candidates from the February 2005 elections, which constitutes 20% of the total number of candidates running that year. In the next table (following page) we can see that relatively few interviews were conducted in Bishkek and the region surrounding the capital, Chui *oblast'*. The reason for this is simply the urban and

[187] In cases where the number of SMDs per *oblast'* was uneven we selected at least 50%, i.e. in Talas there were three SMDs and we selected two of them.
[188] For instance the SMD of the former President's son, Aidar Akaev, or the current President's, Bakiev's, district (SMD).

multiethnic nature of these regions, and especially the Slavic (Russian) influence in these parts of the country. In this research project the focus is on rural and non-Slavic dynamics and we therefore did not fully pursue the interviews in Bishkek and Chui. There is therefore a rural bias in the sample, with almost 90% of the interviews were from rural areas.[189]

Since the ambition in this research project is to say something about the development over time we decided to conduct interviews in a purposefully selected set of SMDs for the previous elections as well (1995 and 2000). As already noted we also added interviews for by-elections in the selected sample of SMDs. Furthermore, some of these candidates had been running in previous elections as well, but each interview nevertheless focused exclusively on only one election.[190] In total we conducted 83 back-track interviews (36 focusing on 1995, 33 on 2000, and 17 by-election), i.e. interviews with candidates in SMDs that had already been included in the 2005 sample. Here the rural bias is even more prevalent (see next table). If we examine the final column of the table we see the proportion of the total number of conducted interviews related to the size of the *oblast'*. Here we see that in six out of nine *oblast'* we conducted interviews with around 0.01% of the total number of voters in the region. In only two of the *oblast'* do we have significantly lower numbers, Bishkek and Chui, where that number is 0.001%.

Table 87: Sample characteristics

	2005 only (no by-elections)										Back-track	Total
	Oblast' voter population	No. of total SMDs	No. of selected SMDs	Prop. of selected SMD/total SMDs	No. of total Cs*	No. of selected Cs	Prop. of selected Cs/total Cs	No. of interviewed Cs (2005)	Prop. of interviewed Cs/selected Cs	Prop. of interviewed Cs/total Cs (2005)	No. of interviewed back-track Cs**	Prop. of total no. of interviewed Cs/Voters
Bishkek	355,412	11	8	73%	54	47	87%	5	11%	9%	0	1.4%
Batken	214,132	6	5	83%	34	28	82%	10	36%	29%	11	9.8%
Jalalabad	494,427	14	8	57%	76	41	54%	10	24%	13%	6	3.2%
Naryn	147,549	4	3	75%	22	15	68%	5	33%	23%	9	9.5%
Osh City	133,689	4	3	75%	13	10	77%	5	50%	38%	4	6.7%
Osh	536,832	14	8	57%	74	46	62%	24	52%	32%	33	10.6%
Talas	113,712	3	2	67%	18	12	67%	6	50%	33%	5	9.7%
Chui	429,759	12	6	50%	59	28	47%	5	18%	8%	0	1.2%
Issyk-Kul	231,741	7	6	86%	41	36	88%	7	19%	17%	15	9.5%
Total	*2,657,253*	*75*	*49*		*391*	*263*		*77*			*83*	
Avg				*69%*			*70%*		*33%*	*23%*		*7%*

[189] This in a country where 60% are rural (World Development Indicators, World Bank).

[190] In some of the interviews conducted by the PhD Candidate we also generated responses on several elections but the number of interviews conducted remained the same (even if the number of interviews in terms of data surged).

* Including withdrawn candidates from SMD no.16 and 45 ** 1995, 2000, and all the by-election candidates *** As a proportion of voters in 1000s.

In addition we also conducted a couple of interviews with candidates from the 1990 elections for a case study on a rural district (Kara-Kulja). Note that 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. As already noted, in some cases the interviewer was able to focus on several years in one and the same interview.

Table 88: Number of elections participated in (Candidate survey Sample)

Here we focus on the X elections, but have you ever ran in another parliamentary election? If so, what years?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1990	8.80%	14
1995	41.90%	67
2000	40.60%	65
2005	55.00%	88
2007 (PR)	15.60%	25
Other (by-elections)	14.40%	23
answered		*160*
Total		*282*
Avg		*1.76*

* (Q2).

Again, as a rule each interview focused exclusively on only one election. But from the table above we can see that each of the sampled candidates took part in 1.8 elections on average, either before or after the election that we are here focusing on (year X). The conducted interviews are not only skewed in the sense of over-representing rural districts, but there is also an ethnic bias in the sample. In reality the population of Kyrgyzstan consists of Kyrgyz 64.9%, Uzbek 13.8%, Russian 12.5%, Dungan 1.1%, Ukrainian 1%, Uygur 1%, other 5.7% (1999 census). In the table below we see the nationality of the sample as reported by the candidates themselves:

Table 89: Nationality of the Candidate sample

	Total		2005		2000		1995	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count						
Kyrgyz	91%	146	87%	68	94%	31	94%	33
Uzbek	7%	11	10%	8	6%	2	3%	1
Russian	1%	1	0%	0	0%	0	3%	1
Other[191]	2%	2	1%	1	0%	0	0%	0
answered		*160*		*78*		*33*		*35*

* (Q7: What is your nationality?).

[191] One Tajik and one Korean.

Here we can see that the sample used in this survey clearly over-represents the Kyrgyz. So how representative is the sample in terms of gender?

Table 90: Gender sample distribution

	Total		2005		2000		1995	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count						
Female	87%	139	15%	11	6%	2	8%	3
Male	13%	21	85%	62	94%	32	92%	33
Total		*160*		*73*		*34*		*36*

For the 2005 elections the population distribution on in terms of gender was 90% male and 10% female. From the table we can see that our sample slightly over-represents female candidates in 2005. On the other hand 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 (i.e. the total number of candidates).

Coding/Editing/Analyzing

Local assistants entered the data from the interviews directly into an Internet based database allowing for continuous (real time) checks by the PhD candidate. A first analysis of the data was printed out from the database. The complete data was later transferred into a SPSS file.

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